



## THE YARDLEYS NEWSLETTER

### From our headteacher...



It gives me great pleasure to bring you another edition of the Yardleian. This publication is a real opportunity for us to show why Yardleys School is such a special place. I hope you enjoy reading about all of our events, news stories and features. One of our school aims, as well as achieving academic excellence, is 'educating the whole child'. A great deal of learning takes place beyond the classroom and we are delighted to include the myriad of opportunities we give our students to make their school experience more memorable.

I would like to wish all of our year 11s the very best for the future. They have been an excellent year group and have risen to the challenges of sitting examinations straight after the pandemic. They have all worked so hard and we look forward to sharing their GCSE successes with them in August. We also welcome our new year 7 students and wish them a very happy five years at Yardleys School.

We are saying goodbye to some colleagues who are leaving us in the summer. They are detailed in this edition. They have all contributed to our school in so many ways and we thank them and wish them all the very best for the future. You will also see that we welcome new colleagues joining us. To them, we say a very warm welcome and wish them all the very best for their time at Yardleys.

Please do enjoy reading our latest edition. For all of our friends, colleagues, students, parents, governors and partners of the school, we thank you for your ongoing support and wish you all a very relaxing summer break.

*Neil Warner*  
Headteacher

### Attendance

At Yardleys School, we know that excellent school attendance is necessary if academic outcomes are to be achieved. Put simply, the more that students are in school, the better their outcomes will be; this is why our school attendance target is 97%.

Despite the continued disruption caused by Covid-19 this academic year, attendance at Yardleys school has remained above the national average due to the ongoing efforts of parents, students and staff – this success is evident in the data below, which shows that all of our year group attendance has been above national average this year.

Up until the end of half-term five, 75 students had 100% attendance and 346 students had at least 97% attendance; next year we expect these numbers to increase as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to subside.

As it is so important that every student attends school every day, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you that it is very unlikely that any student should not attend school for any of the following reasons:

- A headache.
- Stomach pains.
- A cold, runny nose or sore throat.
- Toothache.
- A sports injury that has not required medical attention.
- Going on a school trip or educational visit the previous day.
- Any other ailment that is non-contagious and is not sufficient to prevent your child's learning.



Positivity



Integrity



Curiosity



Resilience



Empathy



Reflection

# Governors News

## Congratulations

Congratulations to one of our School Governor's, Adill Hadi, on receiving a BEM for his services to vulnerable young people during Covid-19. Adill is a proactive Senior Youth Worker and Practitioner, who oversees the strategic development of Youth Service provision within the Hall Green Constituency.



*Adill Hadi BEM - West Midlands Senior Youth Worker, Concord Youth Centre, Yardley, Birmingham.*



**Jean Helme**, Chair of Governors

After a year away I missed Yardleys so much I have returned to the governing body with excitement and great pleasure. What a year!! Not only do we have a new Head Teacher who is quite amazing, we also have new members of staff and new governors- who are all adding to the diversity and expertise necessary to ensure Yardleys maintains its excellent progress.

We have lost a few governors- thank you to them, but fortunately John Gardner, another long-standing supporter of this school, is now a Member and part of the new overall team challenging the governing body.

This has again been a very difficult year, after many months of Covid and the consequences of it. Thanks to staff, parents/carers, and the students the attendance rate of our students is well above national average, and this includes to exams, where I hope our students will continue to shine.

Our parent governors are very committed and next term we will be working with staff to encourage and support more parental involvement in the school.

Along with our students we have adopted a greener governance policy and are looking to ensure the school and its PFI partners demonstrate their commitment to environmental sustainability.

There have been many changes within the school curriculum, for example from 2-year Key stage 3 to 3 years; and the reintroduction and reinvigoration of certain subjects, such as music, modern languages, and drama. I am really looking forward to seeing productions again here.

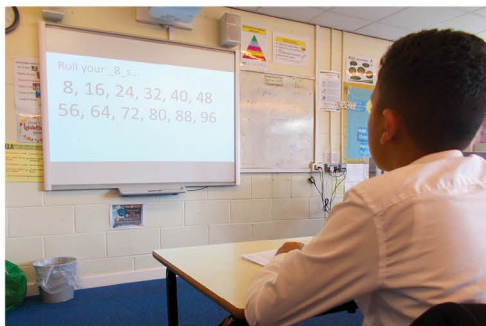
It was a joy to see so many parents/carers of the new Year 7 visiting the school, and also to hear how positive the on-line parent evenings were.

I have been involved with Yardleys for well over 30 years, and I am proud that the ethos and values are always being strengthened to ensure we look after the whole child, not only high academic achievement. Next year we will be introducing the Yardleys promise, an exciting opportunity for our students to undertake new experiences.

Over the year I have met many of our students and am always stimulated by their confidence, friendliness, knowledge and desire to learn and share. Our prefects always do us proud and I look forward to the new prefects demonstrating their leadership and negotiation skills.

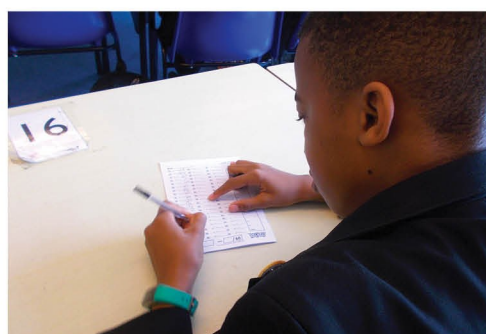
An enormous thank you to everyone involved at Yardleys.

# Numeracy and 'The Big 5'



## Guided Numeracy

During the Summer Term all of year 7 students have been practising their times tables during special "Guided Numeracy" sessions. Every day, students have taken 10 minutes to chant and recall their times tables before doing individual timed practice to improve their fluency in this important skill. As a result of the trial we have seen a positive increase in the times tables speed of our year 7 cohort, with an average increase of 0.6 seconds per times table and four students are regularly able to complete more than 60 times tables questions in a minute which is an impressive feat! Moving forward we want every student to be able to complete at least 20 times tables questions in one minute (3 seconds per question) by the end of year 7, with the majority completing at least 30 questions.



As part of the continued approach Yardleys has to further develop excellence in teaching and learning and help students know more and remember more, Yardleys Big 5 has been introduced. Yardleys Big 5 teaching and learning principles are 'feedback', 'metacognition', 'modelling and scaffolding', 'questioning' and 'retrieval'. Through a series of

deliberate practice cycles, all staff within the school will have an opportunity to explore these vital principles a little more and hone their skills to ensure we are giving the students at Yardleys the education they all deserve.

To help steer these conversations and developments, there are a number of key practitioners across the school working with faculties. 'Leaders of Pedagogy' will be guiding the practice within a specialist Big 5 area. They will be working with the 'Faculty Pedagogy Ambassadors' to ensure there is a subject specialist context to the developments taking place.

Following the whole school introduction, staff across the school are all sharpening their understanding and reflecting on effective application of feedback. In our strive towards using feedback to make the potential 6+month progress it can, the last six weeks has seen small scale action-research taking place across all faculties.

A range of pedagogy and research is being used within the school to enhance our general and subject specific understanding and application of 'The Big 5'. Each edition of the teaching and learning newsletter will focus on one of these and share an insight into the best that has been said and thought about each of these pedagogical approaches.

"In their final assembly of 2021/22, Year 7 students took part in an epic Times Tables Rockstars battle! Fourteen of the fastest students qualified for the event, which saw them battle in front of a very loud and very supportive fanbase to complete as many times tables questions as possible in one minute. In the end, our winner was Ahmed Rahman (7GXT) who completed more than 60 times tables in a minute, giving him an average speed of less than 1 second per times table! Ahmed takes home some Numeracy Ninja headphones, the coveted inflatable guitar and the moniker of Times Tables Rockstars Champion for 2021/2022. Well done to all involved and to all those who improved their times tables during the last half term -we look forward to staging more of these events in the future."



# Well-being and sustainability

## Eco Warriors

The eco-leaders have been busy, kickstarting the year with 'Switch Off Fortnight', a nationwide campaign raising awareness about how young people can make small changes in their lives that save energy and help to protect the planet. Students visited classrooms, and spoke with students and staff about the small changes we can all make in our homes and in school.

Students have also participated in the nationwide 'plastic count' campaign by Greenpeace which resulted in a shocking realisation of our use of single use plastics.

Over the year, the eco-leaders have met with the Chair Of Governors, and also attended an evening Governors meeting to share their concerns and interests that they are eager to see put in to action.

Eco-leaders enrichment has seen students get a taste of the different ways to make changes in their homes by learning basic food growing skills, in school the students made pen recycling containers, and within the local community through litter picking.

## The Yardleys Sensory Garden

On Thursday 30th June, Mr Warner and Mr Burton cut the ribbon to open Yardleys Sensory Garden. The garden was the brainchild of Ms Kauser, who following the ending of lockdown, spent countless hours researching well-being and mental health issues. Her investigation revealed that before lockdown 1 in 5 people were affected by well-being and mental health issues, however following the ending of lockdown it had increased to 3 in 5. After discussion with school the idea for a sensory garden was born.

The location for the sensory garden is the old roof garden, and over the next 14 months it grew, and developed into a safe, beautiful, relaxing, serene and therapeutic area, with flowers, wind chimes and water features adding to the ambience. The seating area allows both students and staff to benefit from this open space, and allows those with social, emotional and mental health needs a place to recharge, reflect and reinvigorate themselves.



We recently purchased and installed a covered bike shelter, in addition to the bike racks already in daily use. There are so many benefits to encourage children cycling to school. Not only will it reduce congestion and pollution around the school gates, but it will also help promote positive mental and physical health too. Hopefully, cycling will become a new way of life for many of our students.

## Visits/Trips

### Geography Trips

2021-22 has been a fantastic year for Geography and our fieldwork programme. It is the first year in a very long time that all Geography students in all year groups have had the opportunity to go out and practise their fieldwork skills! From their first steps in year 7 with an onsite microclimates study, building in complexity with a year 8 physical Geography visit to the Licky Hills to study deciduous forest ecosystems and a year 9 trip to Brindley Place to investigate the impacts of urban regeneration. By years 10 and 11 students are working much more independently studying the Bradshaw model at Carding Mill Valley, plant adaptations and economic opportunities of hot desert and tropical rainforest biomes at Birmingham Botanical Gardens and finally urban change and the Big City Plan at the new Gateway development around the coming HS2 station on Curzon Street.



### Art Exhibition

The year 10 art students visited the 'BCU School of Art' end of degree exhibition where our students got to see a range of degree artworks from courses such as 'Art & Design, Fine Art, Creative Technologies, Design for Performance and Art & Project Management'. This was a great opportunity for our students at Yardleys to see what a creative path looks like after school and to talk to current university students about their experiences. Our students commented on how impressive the student works were, especially the 'cardboard and paper' room where degree students collaborated to decorate an entire room using only cardboard and paper. This room was inspired by 'The Green Man' that included a life size woman, a huge green man portrait, water fountain and large tree made entirely out of brown paper!! This opened our students' eyes to understand that art can be much more than just drawing and painting. Throughout the whole exhibition, our year 10 students were tasked to identify one piece of artwork that linked to their own artwork which helped gather more ideas for their coursework and think outside of the box.

## Staffing update

This academic year we will be saying goodbye to the following colleague: Mr Tullett, our Attendance Officer, who is retiring after 17 years at Yardleys; Mr Meddings, Assistant Head of Year is relocating and taking up a new post at Edgar Wood Academy; Mr Cross, Head of Sport & Arts Faculty, is taking up a new post as Assistant Headteacher at Stockland Green School. Ms Kanwal, Ms Duncan and Ms Behreen are leaving from English and Mr Barlow, Head of Performing Arts will also be leaving us. We would like to thank them all for their dedication and work at Yardleys over many years and we wish them well for the future.

The following appointments have been made since our last Yardleian edition – Ms Pritchard joined us in January as Deputy Headteacher; Ms Ling has joined us in Drama; Mr Webb has become an Assistant Headteacher and a member of the senior leadership team; Ms Austin has been appointed as Head of Communication Faculty; Mr Hares, Ms Stringer and Mr Ziebeck have been appointed as Assistant Head of Years; Ms Hackett and Ms Chowdhury as Teaching Assistants, Ms Davies as Head of Art and Ms Norville as Lead exam invigilator.

We would also like to welcome the following staff; Sarah Khan in Computing and Aisha Jenat in English who have joined us this half term and for September 2022; Jennifer Robbins, who will be joining the leadership team as an Assistant Headteacher, James Dodds joining us as Head of Music; Richard Cravos joining us as Head of EAL and Tayiba Begum joining in English.

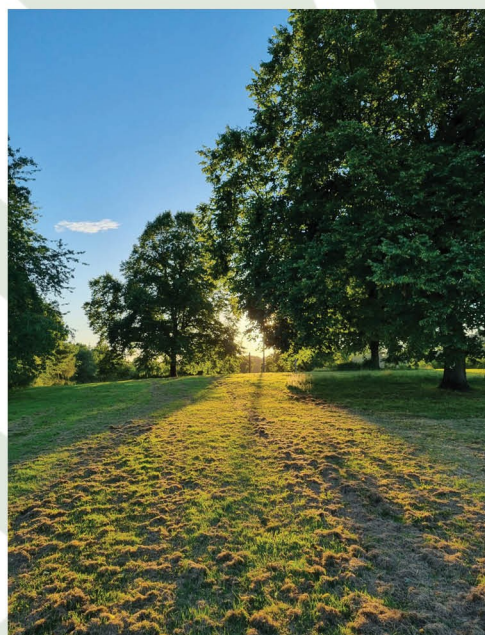
# DofE

We put a lot into our school values at Yardleys, and I am proud to say that this extends not just beyond the classroom but the school site itself. In the Duke of Edinburgh team's first year since the outbreak of Covid, we had twenty Year 9 students decide to take the plunge and try for their Bronze award. Along with the enrichment sessions to organise their volunteering, skill and physical sections, we ran a first-aid course and practised navigation and cooking skills in school. As always, a key part of the award is trying new things and in many students cases they pushed themselves out of their comfort zone to try something new (even if they were just delicious chocolate filled beaver-tails).

Mistakes were made on the practice expedition, but the students showed great reflection and resilience to learn from them and complete each day's walking, followed by pitching their tents and cooking a wide variety of evening meals on their tiny Trangia cookers. Sitting round the campsite, we as the staff got to hear about their success in the other sections, such as martial arts, learning new languages, or helping out in charity shops or at their local mosque.

The qualifying expedition was started in hotter temperatures than anyone would like, but aside from water top-ups, the groups navigated independently to the campsite. It was a real pleasure watching students who wouldn't necessarily speak to each other in school spend their evening cooking, chatting and laughing. The final day was hotter still, but with morale levels high, the groups pushed to the finish line. With the staff clapping them up the last slope, each group of students pushed up the final hill to the Lickey Hills visitor centre, tired but unbowed.

And my favourite moment? When one student took off their rucksack at the top of the hill and asked, "So when are we doing silver?"



# PE Events

This summer our SEND teams have been really competitive against other schools in Birmingham. Teams have been entered into the Boccia and Kurling tournaments as well as the Inclusive Commonwealth Games Festival taking part in archery and basketball.

After winning the level 2 Para-Athletics festival we progressed to the finals taking bronze medals.

Our girls cricket team have had great success coming joint first in their league to progress into the finals and winning bronze. Asima Waheed was woman of the tournament for her endeavours with the bat.

The PE department has built links with local elite sports clubs and currently running two projects this half term. The Canon Basketball Project with City of Birmingham Rockets and Sheffield Sharks. Students are receiving free coaching, kit, a basketball and came third in a tournament. Our Second project is with Warwickshire Cricket Board; ACE project which targets students from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds with coaching and links into cricket. We have had a Warwickshire cricket coach in for the day giving many students the opportunity to receive coaching at school.

For fundraising week there was a week of intra school competitions at break and lunch times – for a silver coin to raise money. Other activities included a sponsored run after school activity and the year 7 marathon challenge. Along with colouring competitions, sponsored silence, cake sale, name the teddies, selling red noses and non-school uniform day the school raised over £1000. All activities were organised and ran by year 7 leaders from 7PYE.



Commonwealth games



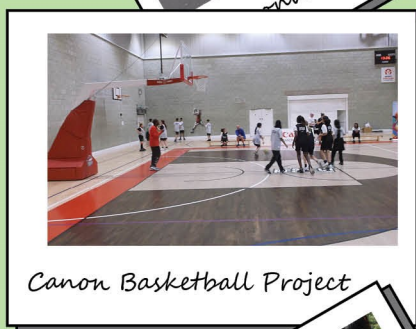
Commonwealth games at Nechells wellbeing Centre



Commonwealth Games



Canon Basketball Project



Canon Basketball Project



Canon Basketball Project



Commonwealth games at Nechells wellbeing Centre



Commonwealth games at Nechells wellbeing Centre

# Events

## Sport Day 2022

Sports day 2022 was a roaring success for both staff and students at Yardleys school. Students competed throughout the day in Commonwealth Games themed events featuring a range of activities from benchball to the more traditional athletics events on the track and field.

Even the staff were getting involved, taking part in a highly competitive staff relay which was won by the quartet of Tom Armstead, Jawairia Arshad, Jenny Pritchard and Shakeel Raffique.

The weather was perfect, the atmosphere incredible and the competition was fierce – but there could only be one winning form per year group. Taking home the glory was 7PYE, 8WCN, 9VNR and 10 ANB. A big well done to all competitors.

A huge thank you for the efforts of all who competed, officiated, organised and supported the Yardleys annual Sports Day, in what was a thoroughly memorable occasion.



## Brilliant Club

A small number of Yardleys students were awarded the opportunity to study with a PhD student in a supra curricular programme that involved university trips, tutorials and the submission of a university style assignment, designed to offer students access to the most competitive universities.

Our Yardleys students were outstanding throughout the programme which started earlier this year. They visited the University of Warwick to celebrate all of their successes and achievements and they received graduation certificates for recognition of the tremendous work they had done.

One notable mention must be given to Yaseen Khan 10TDN who delivered a speech to around 130 people discussing the course he studied, the challenges he faced and how he overcame them. His speech drew a huge applause from everyone and it was a really special moment!



## The Breakfast Crew

The Breakfast Crew handed a cheque for £168.78 to Acorns Children's Hospice. The money was raised through the staff breakfast, which was held at Christmas, where colleagues buy and cook a range of breakfast fayre to celebrate our school and its values, as well as raise money to support local charities, and is a long held tradition within Yardleys School.

Olivia Guglia, from Acorns, came into school, and was handed the cheque by Ms Mitchell, a key member of the Breakfast Crew, supported by our Head Boy and Head Girl, Abu Bakr Fageer, and Huma Mahmood.



# Events continued

## Career Events

The last half term included a range of careers events aimed at helping Year 10 students to develop employability skills, and to help them with their post-16 and career decisions and understanding of the Labour Market.

This series of events started with a Careers Fair which was supported by representatives from 26 different organisations including colleges, universities, Apprenticeship Training Providers, and some large employers including the NHS, Mott MacDonald, Amazon, and National Grid. Students had the opportunity to move round the event, talking to employers about career opportunities, different routes into careers and the qualifications needed to help them follow different career paths. Employers were very complimentary about the way in which students engaged with them, and their communication skills.

Following the Careers Fair, Year 10 students attended a CV and Letter of Application Workshop delivered virtually by the Department of Work and Pensions. Students then produced their own CV and had to write a letter of application for a job that they chose from a range of jobs. This was in preparation for the Mock Interview Session where students had a one-to-one interview with a person external to the school. Students rose to the challenge and again demonstrated some excellent communication and presentation skills.

The final careers event was a Taster Day at Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College for Year 10 students. Students were able to choose 4 different subjects that they wanted to 'have a go at'. The day enabled students to experience a college environment and to find out about different subjects that they might be interested in studying. Feedback from students confirmed they gained a lot from the visit which has helped many of them focus on their learning and their post-16 pathway choices.

## Matthew Johnson Visit

'Continuing Yardleys' commitment to supporting our students both during their time with us and beyond, 30 Year 10 students met with Matthew Johnson, the Head of Year 12 from King Edwards Camp Hill Grammar School, about life in the school's Sixth Form and how to apply. The event was part of a broader programme that has involved a trip to Cambridge University and a visit from Muhammad Saad, a former Yardleys and Camp Hill student, who is currently in his second year studying Physics at Cambridge. The aim is to show students a pathway, one that we hope will become well-trodden, from Yardleys to wherever they want to go...even to one of the top universities in the world like Cambridge.'



# “The changing of the guard”



With our year 11's going we also lose our prefect team, however they have passed the torch to a new generation. We have now enlisted our new Student Leadership Team with 64 prefects! Their role involve a range of responsibilities such as (but not limited to): Duties, mentoring and leading on organising student voice. They have already started their role now that year 11 have left and they are doing a truly amazing job!

Allow us to introduce you to our new Head/ Deputy Head prefects below. We know they will make us all proud:

## Head prefects:

### Shafim Rahman

I was in fact made an honorary prefect at the start of year 10 by Mr Pohl, as I would volunteer to assist staff with their duties. Being a Head Prefect means a lot to me. I am able to give excellent support to every young student with their learning. I am a conscientious, hardworking, dedicated student who is willing to help and assist in any way I can. The school has offered me many opportunities and has given us experiences at various careers events.

I look forward to helping others and myself achieve the best we can.

### Sahib Saleh Mohammed

As a student at Yardleys school, all students have been provided the opportunity to excel educationally as well as allowing willing students (like myself) to partake in extra curricular roles and activities; like being a Prefect. Therefore this expands our skills and varies them because we uphold responsibilities and do activities that would not typically be practised in lessons. I have been able to overcome any struggles or issues within my school life- both educational and personal- through the support of staff and peers throughout school. Over these years I have spent in school, teachers have helped me find my feet and improve my behaviour where needed. I believe I am a hard working student with great ambitions, and through the support available to me from school, my goals can be attained. While at Yardleys, I have been involved in many extra curricular activities, enrichment for everyone, and trips- such as visiting universities- I find these very useful as it helps students decide what they want to do in later life.

Being a Head prefect is a great achievement and a privilege which I am proud of because of the competition for the role. It raised my confidence in upholding roles of seniority and responsibility.

### Rhea Rakhmat

I have been very grateful for being given many opportunities such as being trusted to hold responsibility over the Yardleys school environment. Being Head Prefect has allowed me to become more open minded and confident when dealing with situations within the school, sometimes with the help of extremely supportive staff members. Some of the roles I have been given previously included jobs such as: giving tours around Yardleys to visitors, while thinking of new, innovative ideas for improving the 'Yardleys Experience'. I believe that being a Head Prefect will benefit me massively by opening new doors for me in the future, since the role will teach me many important life skills (communication and teamwork to name a few) which will hopefully support my development in becoming a good role model for others.

## Deputy Head prefects:

### Ahmad Ali

Yardleys is more than just a school. Throughout my time here, my mind has opened up to just how much we can achieve with our self-belief and efforts. The nurturing nature of the school staff has increased my level of self-confidence and I feel that I am being prepared to succeed in the wider world. Here at Yardleys, there is an excellent education system which provides quality teaching across the full spectrum of subjects. With the support of the teachers, I truly believe each and every one of us can achieve our goals.

### Roohan Rashid

As a student at Yardleys school I have been able to refine my weaknesses through the help of the various staff and support available over the course of these 4 years. I am a hard working student with specific goals in mind which I hope to achieve post-16 and I persevere through every task I am given. At Yardleys there are many

# ‘The next chapter’

opportunities such as extra-curricular activities, STEM project in Year 7 which is science based, Enrichment which allows you to choose from a variety of events and activities which let us have a break from traditional education life.

Being a Deputy Head prefect is a great achievement and increases my confidence overall as it helps to extinguish my weakness - having a lack of leadership roles. Overall, a Deputy Head prefect will provide many benefits to me personally and essentially help mould me into a better individual.

## Paradise Edwards

I'm a dedicated student who enjoys English, Chemistry and art! I have gained so much experience at Yardleys School, including being one of the 30 students who was chosen to go to Cambridge, becoming a Prefect and then becoming Deputy Head Prefect! Each of these experiences that the school provided has helped increase my knowledge, understanding and fascination for subjects I want to study in the future, including my leadership and teamworking skills! Yardleys has given me the opportunity of being Deputy Head Prefect, which I take very seriously and I am extremely grateful. It is because of this reason I have continued to push myself to achieve the perfect working environment where we can all feel safe, accepted and comfortable no matter our race, religious beliefs or sexuality for I know that this will help keep Yardleys and our community a positive, creative and thriving place to be!

## Induction day

A change of environment can be a daunting experience for any adult so imagine the feeling at year 6! Having said this however, it was clear to see that our new year 7 students are confident and enthusiastic individuals. They had an amazing time on induction day getting familiar with their form tutor, form peers and the school environment. They spent the day doing fun formtime activities, tours around the school and then outside for some fun sports related, team building activities. We hope we put at ease any worries/concerns they might have had (this is for parents and students alike).

We hope they all have an amazing summer and look forward to welcoming them in September.



# Year 11 Leaving

'All good things must come to an end'  
A brilliant send off for a brilliant year group! Due to covid our year 11 missed out on many events so it was great being able to put these events on for them in order to give them the send-off they deserved.

They loved the thrills of the rides at Alton Towers (even though it snowed!) and then they all had an amazing day saying their farewells in leavers assembly and the prom where they danced the night away.

Take care year 11, you will be missed!

## Student Leadership

We want to take this opportunity to say thank you to our year 11 prefects who did an absolutely amazing job during their time here, they were an inspiration to students and staff alike and they held these positions of responsibility with dignity and respect. A special thanks to our Head/ Deputy Head prefects who were exceptional role models to the rest of the prefect team and their peers throughout the school. Thank you to:

**Head prefects:**  
Huma Mahmood



Abu Bakr Faqeer



**Deputy Head prefects:**  
Amina Younis Om Patel

