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THE YARDLEYS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO.2

MAY 2019

Opening of Cooper Hall...

On Thursday 14th February 2019 we hosted the official opening of our new extension- part of which has been named the Cooper Hall.

We were delighted to welcome governors, staff, pupils as well as representatives of architects, builders, project managers and other school partners involved in the work. Our newly appointed Head Boy, Mohammed Ismail Mahroof and Head Girl, Sadia Jawed did a fantastic job in launching the event by explaining the name of the hall and officially opening the building. The Cooper Hall is named after two ex-pupils who were killed in the First World War which ended exactly one hundred years before the building was finished in 2018. The name therefore is an act of remembrance for all ex-pupils and others who paid the ultimate sacrifice in serving their country in this and many other conflicts.

We are delighted with the way in which the whole extension has turned out, the multi-purpose Cooper Hall in particular exceeding our expectations. This hall with its foldaway tables is being used for a range of activities including lunch, lessons for more than one group, assemblies, PE and exams. Having a second venue for lunchtime was particularly important for the school in order to allay pupils' concerns over lengthy queues.

At the same time we have welcomed our new catering company, Aspens, to the school.



Former Yardleys School pupils Pt. Herbert A.E. Cooper (right) and Pt. David P. Cooper (far right) were both killed in action in World War One in 1916. The Cooper Hall has been named as an act of remembrance to them.

The rest of the extension contains two new classrooms which were allocated to the English department so that each teacher had the consistent use of one room. The new toilets are being used by younger pupils and the office given over to Mr Tilley and Mr Halliday.

We would like to thank various individuals and organisations for all of their fantastic work on this project including: our Academy Business Manager, Jill Wilson, for leading on the project together with support from Mr Benn Gray our Premises Manager; Faithful & Gould who have provided project management support; Tweedale the architects; and Arthur M. Griffiths & Son Builders Ltd. who carried out the construction with minimal disruption to the smooth running of the school.



new prefects, head boy and girl

We are delighted to have new prefects from year 10 and 11 appointed and in place from January this year.

The prefects were appointed after a rigorous assessment process including an application form and interview with members of staff. A second interview panel was convened to appoint the head boy and girl. All the interviewers were extremely impressed with the maturity, skills and qualities that the pupils displayed.

As a result we now have over 50 prefects carrying out a range of duties from being tour guides & ambassadors to visitors, mentors to year 7, assistants to staff on lunch duty and receptionists on parents' evenings. They are also supported by the leadership of our head boy and head girl.

All of the pupils have been given badges and a new prefect tie and they are real credit to themselves, their families and to the school.



Curiosity



Standards of achievement Government performance measures 2018...



We are pleased that the 2018 GCSE results have seen the school improve in terms of the government's school performance measures.

In particular the progress of pupils over the five years here at Yardleys as measured by 'Progress 8' (best 8 GCSE results) has improved from +0.16 (in line with the national average) to +0.25 (above national average). Similarly the pupils' achievement in English and maths and many other subjects is above the national averages for both grade 4+ and the new more challenging grade 5+.

teaching and learning...

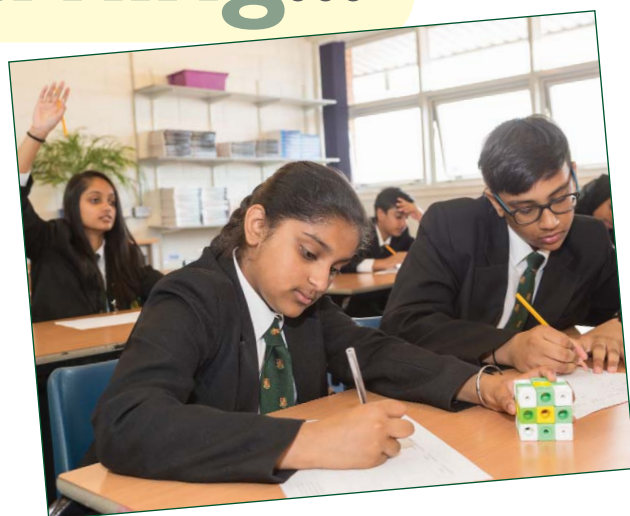
Assessment weeks

The last week of the autumn term saw the introduction of a whole school assessment week where every pupil sat practice exams in every subject.

Lessons were suspended for this week and time was given for pupils to revise and for the teachers to be able to mark the papers.

We were very pleased with the way in which the pupils approached their revision and exams. The results were then reported to pupils and parents/carers through written reports and meetings during the spring term.

It also helped teachers to see what the pupils had learnt and where they needed further help. There will be second assessment week towards the end of the summer term.



Homework

With the introduction of the new 9-1 GCSEs and in line with substantial amount of current educational research and cognitive science, the school has promoted pupils' learning of the essential knowledge in each subject. To this end the school introduced knowledge organisers or summaries for each subject which are distributed to pupils. This is then followed up with the online homework quizzes which seeks to test pupils on their grasp of the key facts and information.

Under the leadership of assistant head teacher, Ms Maginnis, this work has continued to develop. Following a review of pupils' independent study skills in the summer term the school published a pupil learning development guide, which replaces the traditional homework diary and includes useful tips and resources such as revision guidance sheets and templates. Form tutors provide a weekly programme of tailored materials and strategies to model to the pupils so they have a better understanding of how they should learn or revise on their own. Homework has been adjusted this year so that that topics taught in lessons, knowledge organisers and homework quizzes are even better aligned. Weekly homework completion rates are good and improving (just under 90%) and the school continues to look for further improvements by monitoring current practice, providing further training to teachers and discussing homework with pupils. Pupils are beginning to reap the benefits of this deeper learning and we would like to thank all staff and parents for their support.

Higher Attaining Pupils

One of the school's priorities in recent years is to challenge and push pupils who, based on their prior or current attainment, should be achieving high grades (7+). This is done through subjects ensuring this level of work is provided throughout the curriculum. It is also supported by the work of the Higher Attaining Coordinator (HAC), Mr Smith.

Following two successful years Mr Smith has once again launched the Brilliant Club which gives pupils an insight in to academic study at university. The selected year 10 pupils visited Nottingham University to learn more about the programme. Pupils then worked with a post-graduate PhD student from Aston University who taught and mentored them on this year's topic - 'Can we make our muscles stronger by just vibrating them?' After writing their university style assignments and receiving their grades they concluded their studies with a graduation ceremony held at the prestigious University of Oxford. As well as a taste of university the Brilliant Club inspires the pupils to aim higher and reach even higher academic standards. The school is grateful to the organisers from the Brilliant Club and to the university students who give of their time so generously to help our pupils.

There is also an 'Aim Higher' mentoring scheme for pupils in Year 9 provided by students from Aston University to improve awareness of career progression post 16. This year mentoring is organised in to small groups of pupils rather than on a 1:1 basis in order to improve collaboration and teamwork skills.

GCSE examiners

We are extremely fortunate to have over 10 teachers who are trained examiners who mark exam papers every year for various exam boards. In turn they use this experience and knowledge to help teach our pupils and to train other teachers. We are very grateful to all teachers who have taken on this extra work and responsibility.

Trainee teachers

We are very pleased to welcome several trainee teachers from our partner teacher training providers: Teach First; University of Birmingham and King Edward Consortium. Each organisation provides a different route into teaching ranging from those who have relatively short placements at Yardleys to those who train here for 1-2 years. The school is pleased with the progress of our trainees and are constantly looking to improve the quality of the programme they receive so they can make the best possible start to their careers.

Leadership & management training

We are also working to develop the leadership skills of all middle leaders in school. As such heads of subject & faculties have individual meetings with a senior leader to discuss their individual leadership needs and career development. Training participants also have access to resources from the school and external organisations such as PiXL.

Attitude to Learning (ATL)

'Attitude to Learning' day took place on the 25th October 2018 when parents and carers of pupils were invited into school for a conversation with their child's form tutor and to obtain a copy of their child's effort grades. It was lovely to see so many parents & carers in attendance throughout the day with everyone appreciating the opportunity to discuss both positive achievements and areas for the children to improve.

Teachers' Continual Professional Development (CPD)

We continue to place high importance on the quality of the teaching in classrooms and the support we provide to constantly develop our strategies to maximise pupil learning.

A key strategy which is making a significant difference to the quality of teaching is 'subject mastery' where every Thursday after school all teachers work collaboratively in their subject teams to plan lessons and share best practice. Another key strand is the teacher training or CPD programme work lead by our lead practitioner Mr O'Brien. All teachers have to select one area to improve of teaching from the Yardleys' standards. Teachers are thereby given greater ownership of their training. They also decide on the style of programme to use –either a reading & seminar model or one that involves being coached by another teacher.



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communication faculty...

guided reading

With literacy continuing to be a key focus for the school we launched a new 'guided reading' initiative in September.

Every morning for the first 25 minutes pupils read a class reading book in their tutor groups. They are led by their form tutors who use a technique called 'control the game' to ensure all pupils have an opportunity to read aloud. This has been successfully embedded into the daily routine of the school and external visitors have been very complimentary about the focus and concentration of pupils. Some pupils receive extra support from teaching assistants in smaller groups. A huge thank you goes to every member of staff that plans and delivers the reading sessions and for their positive commitment to this important work. Thank you also goes to Ms Wilshire in leading this project together with the support of heads of faculty. The books currently being read in years 7-11 respectively are: The Graveyard Book (N.Gaiman); Chinese Cinderella (A. Yen Mah); The Book Thief (M.Zusak); Born a Crime (T.Noah) & Beartown (F.Backman).

author visits

The school librarian, Ms Keskinilinc, ably supported by our fantastic pupil literacy ambassadors, has organised several author visits this year.

Billy Bob Buttons treated some of our Year 7's to a lively session talking about how to write a thrilling storyline to captivate their readers.

Similarly Jenny McLachlan gave an entertaining talk about her books and her journey to becoming an author. This visit was also celebrated in the 50th Anniversary Edition of the Federation of Children's Book Groups national newsletter.



drama english

In terms of the Drama GCSE the department has worked on the planning for coursework and practical elements.

Extra rehearsal time outside of lessons has been provided. Drama GCSE pupils also contributed a very thoughtful and sensitive piece for the First World War Centenary Remembrance Event. The pupils also saw a wonderful performance of Macbeth at The Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton. The production was given a modern, even futuristic setting but the story remained powerful and dramatic. This will really support both year 10 and 11 in their analysis of a live theatre performance. We were also delighted when several members of the public commended our pupils for their behaviour and politeness throughout their visit. As always our pupils were a credit to themselves, their families and the school.

English continues to develop its curriculum in both language and literature across all year groups.

One way this is being done is by encouraging all teachers within the department to share and lead subject mastery sessions. Challenging the very highest attainers is also a key aspect of the department's work.

Pupils are being encouraged to engage closely with university level critical essays to help them to develop both their understanding of texts, the way in which they interrogate what they read and relate texts to the real world of today. Finally all pupils are being supported by ensuring that written pieces of work have a clear focus which helps prevent pupils from being overwhelmed by too many areas to improve.



World Book Day 2019



Author Jenny McLachlan is pictured above with some of our Literacy Ambassador students who are keen to read her latest book -Truly, Wildly, Deeply.

mathematics faculty...

The maths faculty is again looking to build on their positive results last year.

For example the maths team all meet together for an extra training session each week where they work collaboratively to look closely at how a topic or concept could be taught more effectively.

The faculty also uses regular assessments to analyse pupil strengths and weaknesses and to incorporate this into their planning and teaching. In terms of homework, the department has continued with IXL as the online homework platform.

The Maths team also provides extra revision sessions outside of lesson time. In some of these they use peer teaching whereby pupils who have already mastered specific content teach other pupils.

Science curriculum

From this year, starting with the current year 9 cohort, all pupils will study the three separate sciences of physics, chemistry and biology rather than a double or combined science course.

This change will benefit pupils by having greater exposure to specialist teachers and more flexibility in terms of exam entry tiers in each science. This is also part of our overall school aim to deliver 'academic excellence' for all of our pupils.

Specialised cell - homework challenge

Year 7 took part in an exciting challenge set by Ms Shan last half term. Pupils were taught how the human body is made up of many specialised cells and how the structure of these specialised cells are related to their function.

The subsequent homework challenge required pupils to create a 3D model of a specialised cell of their choice.

A range of wonderfully creative cells were produced. All pupils who took part were awarded a certificate with winning entries receiving a science badge.

science faculty...

Science 'Big Bang' Fair

The UK's largest STEM (Science, Technology, and Engineering & Maths) fair was attended by all of Year 9 recently.

Pupils interacted with scientists and professionals from a wide range of STEM careers to find out more about what they do and how they can get involved.

There were many interactive workshops which pupils participated in including using medical equipment such as an ECG & ultrasound machine, participating in dance workshops, making slime, constructing Lego robots and playing with drones.

They also watched the live stage shows which included LOUD explosions and stunning science demonstrations.

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Science enrichment

Members of the science faculty also provide extra opportunities for pupils to learn about Science.

For example Ms Kondrat has started an eco-committee with appointed eco-leaders to look at various issues in and around school. Ms Begum and Mr Kobir have set up science Crest Award programme with a focus on clean drinking water and disease prevention.

Mr Green has also worked with pupils on building and launching rockets as part of the enrichment programme for physics.

humanities faculty...



Geography fieldwork

The Geography department continues to organise many field work opportunities for our pupils.

Our Year 9 geographers recently went on their first field trip to Brindley Place to look at urban developments and regeneration. Pupils also took part in a photography competition as part of the trip.

Year 10 Geographers ventured out of the city to the wilds of Shropshire, to Carding Mill Valley to investigate the Ashbrook and its valley. While a lot of Geography was carried out and important work for the pupils GCSEs was completed, many pupils also made more personal discoveries. Questions were asked and answered and hypothesis tested. Questions such as "What exactly is a sheep?" or "Why isn't the water in mountain streams heated?" The geography department also organised a successful residential to Snowdonia where pupils took part in a range of geographical and outdoor activities.

Thank you to Mr Porter and other staff members for all their work on the planning and supervision of pupils.

A particular thanks also goes to Mr Minshall and Ms Hiley who stepped in at the last minute to manage the residential visit.



History

History, under the leadership of Ms Deakin continues to develop an innovative curriculum based on some of the most recent research into cognitive science and other areas of educational expertise.

For example the department uses common booklets on each topic to support pupils' reading and extended writing as well as the use of regular quizzes or tests to support the learning and retention of essential historical knowledge.

Ms Deakin has also supported the teacher training programme by sharing with colleagues educational research she has read and how she has implemented this practically in history.

RE

As well as successfully supporting pupils to achieve outstanding grades in RE the department under Ms Jones has also provided some wonderful enrichment opportunities.

Most recently two speakers were invited into school – one Israeli, one Palestinian – to discuss their different viewpoints on the conflict.

Pupils asked many questions and our visitors commented that they were a 'credit to the school'.

Careers Education

Under the leadership Ms Price our careers advisor and deputy head, Mr Pohl, the programme is constantly developing to meet the needs of pupils and to fulfil the requirements of the government ('Gatsby') benchmarks.

As well as personal interviews the school has also included some of the following activities. In October, Ed Couchman, General Manager UK for Snap Chat visited to talk to Year 11 pupils studying Media Studies. They learnt about the social media and media industries and how the mobile phone has changed our lives and culture. 'The talk was interesting and it was good to hear from someone about what it's like to work in the media industry.' (Year 11 pupil)

Also in October, twelve Year 11 pupils, together with Ms Wareham and Mr Thornton, attended a college taster day at SCC's Bournville campus in Longbridge. The day included lessons and activities including pizza making (and eating!), a tour of the facilities, a health and social care event, a spooky 'Halloween art' activity and several quizzes. All in all a very productive day. Thank you to SCC Bournville campus for organising the day's activities.

In November all of Year 11 attended the World Skills UK Live event at the NEC. This was a fantastic afternoon with pupils meeting a wide range of employers, sponsors and careers advisors as well experiencing some of the many exciting displays, exhibitions and taster activities. The day was supported by the school with activities such as an interactive 'Careers Cloud' questionnaire which matched them to 'dream jobs' and 'apprenticeship opportunities' based on their skills and interests.

vocational faculty...

Tweedale Architects presentation

Year 10 Design Technology pupils attended a presentation by Ms Mandeep Mattu and Mr Nick Chapman from Tweedale, the architects of our Cooper Hall.

Pupils learnt about career opportunities in architecture and construction, the different aspects of an architect's work, the opportunities for women in the construction industry.

They also emphasised the importance of employability skills & personal qualities and not just qualifications. The visitors also looked at the light design project that the pupils were working on.

Both were very impressed with the quality of work and the pupils' attitude to learning.

This was a very successful visit and we are very grateful to Mandeep and Nick for giving up some of their valuable time to speak with our pupils.

pastoral care & development...

Visit to Parliament and Facebook Headquarters

Our School values

The Yardleys' values were selected several years ago as they are considered to be the foundation to a high quality academic education as well as pupils' character development.

In order to embed them even further in the curriculum and school life we are using the values as categories of positives or merits. The number of positives received in each category will be monitored throughout the year, with awards being given in each category in celebration assemblies. This will also feature on pupils' PEP (Personal Development Plan) – which we started with our pupils this year.



Wednesday Enrichment

Every Wednesday afternoon we have an enrichment session where all staff and pupils participate in a range of clubs, sports and activities. We have a fantastic range of classes for the pupils to choose including tap & Bollywood dancing, various arts and crafts, boxercise, weight training, various sports (rugby, football, netball, & basketball), exploring Birmingham, singing, drama, chess & board games, model car construction, computer coding & design (CAD), cooking, cake decorating, Duke of Edinburgh Award, science clubs, jewellery making, origami, public speaking, debate and current affairs and many more.

Thank you to Mr Cross for organising the programme. Thanks also to all staff members for sharing their expertise and passions with pupils and giving them so many new and varied experiences.

Charity work

As always pupils have been enthusiastically engaged in a variety of fundraising activities.

In November some of the PE Ambassadors; Juwairiyah, Ayesha and Muqaddas organised a week of fundraising activities such as sports, a cake sale and sponsored silences which raised £170 for Children in Need.



At Christmas Ms Jones, head of RE, organised another collection of goods for the food-bank organised by the local Mosque. Also at Christmas staff and some pupils also wore Christmas jumpers to raise money for Save the Children. Mr Thornton also organised the regular end of term staff breakfast which raised money for a local children's hospice. During the spring term Ms Perry once again set up a variety of activities for Comic Relief.

Thank you to all staff and pupils for their work and generosity in supporting so many good causes.



In October some year 10 & 11 girls visited London to celebrate the International Day of the Girl.

They visited the Houses of Parliament, and heard an inspirational speech from local MP Jess Phillips about the importance of the empowerment of women. Pupils were able to ask her questions about her role in parliament and issues they are concerned about. They then had the opportunity to go to Facebook Headquarters London, where they heard Nicola Mendelsohn speak about the importance of young girls aiming high and seeking leadership positions. The girls took part in an exciting global live stream and heard the voices of girls around the world discuss the need to actively strive for gender equality.

One of the pupils wrote "I thought the Girl2Leader campaign event was amazing as we got to explore the Facebook headquarters and listen to some inspirational speakers. I really admire the 23 year old who ran the campaign, she is doing such a huge event at such a young age, which makes me want to be like her when I am older!"

PSHCE (Personal Social, Health & Citizenship Education)

PSHE is an essential part of the curriculum and a wide range of topics are being delivered through assemblies, form time (on Thursdays) and some of the Wednesday enrichment sessions.

This is being further developed ready to meet the statutory requirements from September 2020. We also use a range of external organisations to help deliver this vital work. We have a long standing relationship with Loudmouth theatre who deliver thought provoking and educational plays covering issues such as personal safety, relationships and growing up. Another regular visitor to school is PC Rob Pedley who presents 'Precious Lives' which focusses on the law surrounding and risks associated with knife crime and the possession of weapons.

West Midlands Police World Café

On Wednesday 24th October, four pupils attended the West Midlands Police World Café event at Ark Boulton School. There they joined with other pupils together with police representatives to openly discuss the problems in our area, and how we can all work together to improve the community. All of our students were confident and expressed their views maturely and sensibly.

sport faculty...

Sport & PE

The school PE & sports programme includes a good range of sports which are played in PE lessons, enrichment sessions on Wednesdays and in the many and increasing fixtures & competitions with other schools.

We are pleased that we are getting increased number of girls involved in extracurricular sport such as football in year 7. With all sports we would encourage even more pupils to participate. To do so they should speak to their PE teachers about opportunities and training times.

As always we are grateful for the dedication and expertise of our own staff as well as those individuals and organisations from outside the school who coach and support pupils.

Football

The school's various football teams have had nearly 20 fixtures this year and although only a minority have resulted in wins we have been pleased with the committed group of players who have trained consistently every Tuesday. This dedication is impressive and as a result they are collectively and individually showing real improvement in both their football skills and their teamwork.

Basketball

The KS4 boys' basketball team travelled to Waverley to play a series of league games. The first game was against the hosts Waverley which we managed to win 28 – 0. Next up was Archbishop Illsley and another win. Well done to all the players.

December then saw this year's first boys KS4 basketball match. Whilst the team suffered defeat to Lordswood Boys (previous league winners), they should be proud as to how well they played and continue to work hard in training in preparation for their next games.

The Year 9 girls' basketball team started their season with a fantastic win against Kings Norton Girls' School. It was their first away game and they won by 30 points to 20. The KS3 girls' basketball team continued their winning streak by winning all three of their games in the Central Collegiate KS3 Basketball tournament with all girls getting on the score sheet.

The KS4 girls' basketball team had their first fixture against Bartley Green and they finished with a score of 18 points to Bartley Green's 8. It was many of the girls' first basketball match and they all played very well.

Cricket

This year the ever popular indoor version of the game has seen considerable recent success for our pupils. Both the year 7 and 8 teams won the West Midlands tournaments. Year 8 and 10 teams also did well coming a very creditable 3rd in their respective tournaments. Well done to all pupils for their tremendous effort and successes.

Boccia & Kurling Tournament

In November Yardleys pupils took part in a Boccia and Kurling tournament. Boccia is a precision ball sport, similar to bocce, and related to bowls and pétanque. It was a new game for our pupils and they showed real skill from the outset.

They won the majority of their games and gained a fantastic second prize. Kurling is a form of the original curling game on ice, but adapted so that it can be played indoors on any smooth, flat surface, such as a sports hall. Once again, after a few practice runs, Yardleys pupils found that they were really good, winning the majority of their games, coming a very respectful 4th place. Well done to the Boccia team: Ikrah Mahmood; Malaikah Hussain and Samuel Chowdhury and the Kurling team: Rumaysa Ashfaq; Evie-Leigh Berrow; Moiz Hussain and Danyal Hafee.

Badminton

In February a group of key stage 3 and 4 boys participated in the badminton finals and came so close to bringing a trophy home. Well done to them all for getting to the finals and playing so well in the tournament. Congratulations to the following boys on their fantastic achievement: Ramiz Ahmed, Umair Ahmed, Zachariah Winnicott, Hamza Imran, Zaid Al-Rawni, Luiz Bozu, Mohammed Sulaiman and Mohammed Arshad.

Rugby

The rugby programme at Yardleys School continues to develop both in terms of regular sessions in PE, during enrichment and fixtures with other schools. There have been both wins and defeats against our regular rivals – King Edward Sheldon Heath (KESH) and St. Georges School in Edgbaston. We are grateful for the ongoing support from the English RFU who assist us with visiting coaches and training for our own staff.



Pictured right (top) some of our Girls' Badminton team, Year 9 Cricket team, and (below) our Year 7 Cricket team

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look out for issue
3 coming soon...

