



THE YARDLEIAN

THE YARDLEYS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO.4

MARCH 2020

inside :

A Christmas Carol
Inspirational Author
Brilliant Club cohort
Careers Education
Visit to Birmingham
Royal Ballet

Yardleys' high academic standards...

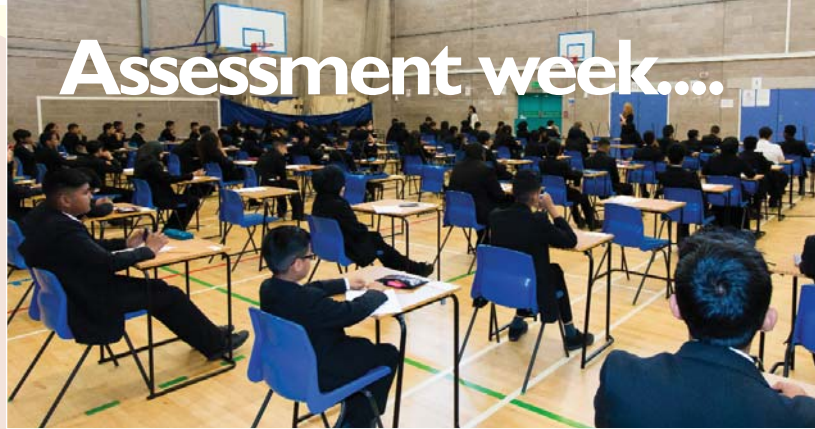
We were pleased to see the school's continued improvement in its academic standards being reflected in the publication of the government's official statistics on Yardleys.

The overall progress of pupils in the school is now in the top 20% nationally. Similarly the proportion of pupils passing English and maths at the new more demanding Grade 5 is above the national average. This again shows the hard work of the pupils together with the skills and expertise of all our staff and the wonderful support from parents, carers and family members.

Local litter picking

As part of Wednesday enrichment, a mixed group of conscientious students have been cleaning the local community. They all volunteered because they wanted to improve their local area. They also showed good responsibility and teamwork with their work on Reddings Lane and were congratulated by a member of the public.

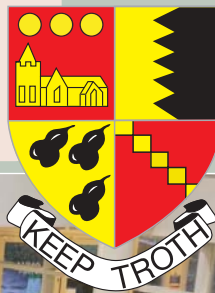
We aim to encourage all pupils to be environmentally responsible, recycle where possible and to use the bins provided.



Assessment week....

December saw our third whole school assessment period where for a week all pupils simultaneously sit practise exams or tests across the school.

Rather than formal lessons this is also a time for pupils to hone their independent study and revision skills using their knowledge organisers and other techniques they have learnt with their teachers and form tutors. Once again the pupils surpassed themselves with their ability to focus on their studies for prolonged periods of time. Pupils will receive detailed feedback and the results of the tests from their class teachers. Parents will also receive reports and have an opportunity to discuss their child's progress at the various parents' evenings held during the spring term.



Christmas at Yardleys...

As always Christmas was celebrated with a collection for local foodbanks and once again this led to generous donations from our pupils and families.

The term also ended with a fine collection of Yuletide knitwear accompanied by the traditional sounds of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' sending everyone on their way to enjoy their well-deserved holidays.



year 9 theatre trip...



Year 9 pupils went to see an adaptation of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' at the Crescent Theatre.

Pupils had read the novel in Year 7 and it was interesting to see how it had been adapted for the stage and for contemporary audiences. Not only was it a great opportunity to experience the theatre, but it will prove valuable for the pupils when they come to study their next Shakespearean play, giving them a greater insight into what it is like to be an audience watching a live production. Pupils enjoyed the experience and pleasingly the theatre staff were extremely complimentary of our pupils' conduct whilst there.

THE
YARDLEIAN

communication faculty...

English

Following another year of excellent results in English, the department have returned refreshed and keen to strive towards further improvements. One aspect of our curriculum development aims to give teachers more ownership over what they teach in order to encourage a deeper love of learning. We are excited to introduce 'Salt to the Sea' as a new text in the Summer Term for Year 8, and Year 7 teachers are currently working on their own choice of novel for Year 7 students based around the theme of identity. Once these texts have been agreed, teachers will be able to present their book to the department as part of a subject mastery training session, igniting the English teachers' own love of reading and encouraging the students in their enjoyment of reading too.

Author visit...Alex Wheatle

The author of 'Liddle Bit', Alex Wheatle, visited the school to present an assembly to Year 9. He inspired them with his life story and his journey to becoming a published author. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience and responded well to his warmth, enthusiasm and knowledge. During two further workshops Alex also gave a fascinating insight into the process of writing a novel and where ideas can stem from.



National Poetry Day

On National Poetry Day pupils from all year groups were encouraged to enter a competition to write a poem about themselves with the title 'This is Me.' It was pleasing to see so many students making the most of this creative opportunity. Well done to all entrants and congratulations to the winners: Harris Mohammed, Nusaybah Ahmed and Afia Begum.

Drama

In October Ms Clarke and Mr Thornton took the Drama GCSE Year 10 class to see 'Blood Brothers' at the Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre. This forms part of their Drama curriculum and it was a wonderful experience. As always the pupils were a credit to the school. For this year's school production pupils are currently rehearsing for a production of 'Hairspray'. We look forward to seeing the final show later this term.

vocational faculty...

Design Technology

There were pleasing exam results for our first attempt at the new 9-1 DT GCSE. Attainment was significantly above national averages for Design and Technology at every grade. The moderator was very impressed with the quality and variety of work shown by the students. A wide range of Design and Technology based activities have been offered as part of the Enrichment programme. These include: Drone Racing – the design and construction of micro racing drones for the National Airingers competition; Computer Aided Design (CAD) skills; Jewellery Design and Manufacture; Model Making and Furniture Restoration & Upcycling.

Computing & 'Cyber Discovery'

Both the Computer Science and IT results exceeded the 2019 national average, as well as improving on the 2018 results. Computer Science achieved 86% Grade 4+ compared to national average 62%. 67% of IT students achieved the equivalent of a Grade 4+, compared to the national average 46%. Well done to the 2019 Computer Scientists and IT pupils!

Head of Department, Ms Chauhan-Rowe, has also been working with a group of Year 7, 8 & 9 girls cracking codes and challenges as part of the Cyber Discovery project.

This is the government's online programme teaching cyber security skills to pupils and preparing them for possibly what will be one of the most in demand careers both now and in the future.

Maths Faculty

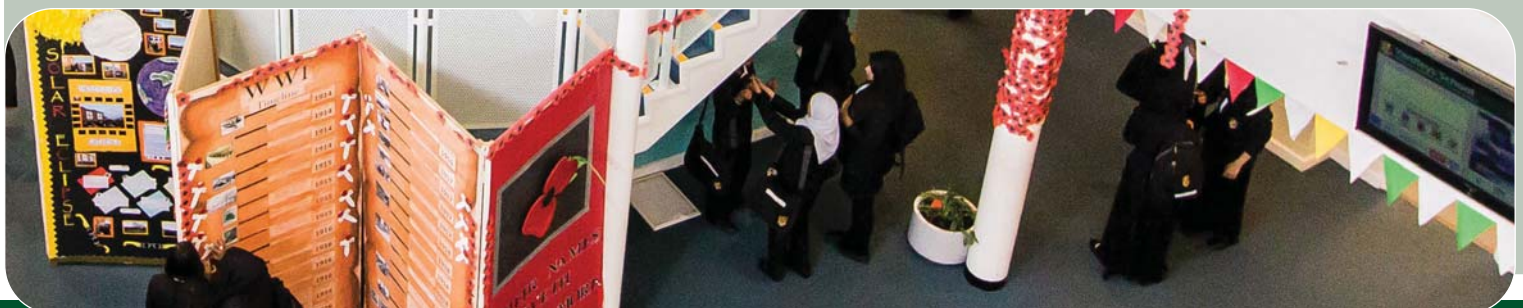
The maths faculty are very proud of the pupils and their achievements in their GCSEs. 66% of pupils achieved Grade 4+ and 25% Grade 7+. These results also represent continued improvement on the last two years and clearly shows the training, hard work and dedication of the maths team.

Times Tables Rockstars

Pupils in Year 7 & 8 have completed an astonishing 235,861 times-tables as they battled pupils from all over the country on the Times Tables Rockstars website. Well done to all those taking part and congratulations to 7HL who completed the most questions. The "most valuable" individual players will be rewarded with certificates but a special mention must go to Zahed Ali and Raheen Rahman who completed 17,467 and 11,634 times-tables respectively.

World Maths Day

On Tuesday 22nd October, Yardleys School celebrated World Maths Day. Students took part in a competition where they had to find and answer a number of maths related questions around the school. The students who took part really enjoyed the day. Congratulations and well done to the winners of the competition: Mikael Sadaqat, Essa Ahmed, Isa Deen and Ismal Waji.



science faculty...

science news

In November Dr Nick Barker from the University of Warwick delighted Year 8 pupils with an explosive and colourful set of science demonstrations.

Highlights included deflating and re-inflating balloons using liquid nitrogen (or slowing down the particle movement inside them to make it appear as though this was happening), a cool trick with dry ice and a rubber glove (solid carbon dioxide) and ending as the universe began - with a Big Bang! Thank you so much to Dr Barker for taking the time out to visit and we look forward to your return.



ECO leaders and 'switch off' fortnight



Back in November the Eco-Leaders participated in 'Switch Off' Fortnight to help mitigate climate change and save the school money.

During this time they were diligently patrolling the school at lunchtimes, switching off lights and leaving friendly reminders for those unoccupied rooms with computers and lights switched on. As a result the school saved approximately £398 on electricity alone. This is around 7% of the monthly kWh usage!

We have seen a change in "switch off" behaviours particularly during lunchtime, so we are hoping we will see a continuing reduction in monthly usage. Well done to the Eco-Leaders for this fantastic achievement. The Eco Leaders have also recently met with the Chair of Governors, Ms Jean Helme, to discuss further ideas to make the school more eco-friendly and sustainable. Ideas included more recycling, reducing plastic use, meat free canteen days and many more. We look forward to seeing some of these ideas arriving in the school in the near future.



brilliant club...

This year's Brilliant Club cohort completed their studies with a graduation ceremony held at University of Warwick.

This powerful experience allows students to visit a prestigious university to receive weekly tutorial sessions from a PhD student. The twelve successful Year 10 students worked hard completing a university style assignment on the project named 'Protecting Human Rights in the UK - Is it important?'. This will help raise aspirations and ensure students are familiar with the expectations of assessments within higher education. Thank you to Mr Smith and our guest PhD student, Stefanos Xenofontos, for working to provide such an invaluable opportunity to our pupils and congratulations to the 12 students who graduated.

humanities faculty...

Geography

As ever, fieldwork is a fantastic strength of the Geography department here at Yardleys School. Head of Department, Mr Porter, has collaborated with and has written the 'living world' booklet for the AQA exam board and Birmingham Botanical Gardens. This formed part of a very successful visit last July together with the Science Faculty. In September Year 10 were commended by the National Trust for their excellent behaviour and attitude at Carding Mill Valley in Shropshire. A pupil noted that 'I enjoyed measuring all the important factors for a river cross profile as it was very practical. However, the walking was quite annoyingly long!' Year 9 survived the rain for their first GCSE fieldwork experience at Brindley Place. A pupil commented: 'We looked at how deindustrialisation took place and if the regeneration that had taken place was successful. We started to measure the differences between the types of building and how to identify the places on a map.'

History

The History department were pleased with the 2019 results. Pupils achieving Grade 4+ (73%) was again above the national average. In the previous term, the History department offered the Battlefields trip to pupils in Years 8-10, resulting in demand so high that the trip was sold out by the end of the week and there is a waiting list of over 20 pupils. The trip has now been expanded to 50 pupils and we are looking forward to what is always an amazing experience.

RE

Members of the RE department have adapted the schemes of learning in Year 8 to allow for an increase in challenge; building in more scriptural links, religious terminology and real world examples. It was decided that a new topic covering prejudice, discrimination and methods of reconciliation would replace the ethics topic, since it is better suited to the GCSE syllabus and is also relevant to the current social/political times we live in.



Quaker visit

A group of RE students in Year 8 had the opportunity to visit the Quaker meeting house in Hall Green. They listened to the beliefs and practices of Quakers and were able to ask reflective questions. They spent some time studying features of the meeting place and were able to look at photos demonstrating Quakers in action – for example, peacefully protesting. The afternoon was enjoyed by all and students commented on how useful it was to be able to explore another faith within their own local area.

pastoral care & personal development...

Wednesday afternoon Enrichment session

Attendance

As with exams Yardleys is also in the top 20% of schools for attendance. The level of persistent absence (pupils below 90% attendance) has almost halved in the last 18 months. We also have many pupils who have 100% attendance with some of these having never missed a day during their time here at Yardleys. These significant improvements are down to the pupils increasing demonstration of one of our school values – resilience. It is also testament to the collaboration and support of our parents and families, as well as the hard work and diligence of our pastoral support team. We have, however, even higher expectations and will strive for further improvements in the upcoming months. This is because we know the importance of good attendance on the educational success and subsequent life chances of our pupils.

School Council

The School Council met to discuss a variety of issues around school life. Discussions centred on classroom routines, homework and also the school environment as a whole. The discussions were positive, with effective ideas and thoughts shared. The council also met with the Canteen Manager to discuss the school catering. Prices for food, menus and other important factors were discussed. It was an excellent opportunity for the council to discuss and communicate ideas from pupils throughout the school.

Enrichment News

During an enrichment session Ms James gave an informative talk about her pet baby bearded dragon, Rexy. Pupils learnt how to care for a bearded dragon, including the fact that it needs UV light for warmth to help him absorb the calcium from his diet and to imitate his natural habitat in Australia. Pupils found out that Rexy eats live crickets, fruit and vegetables and only drinks one drop of water a week! They were also able to stroke and even hold Rexy. Some were unsure at first but everyone was all smiles at the end of the session.



Yardleys' PE pupil leaders organised and led a week of fun activities to raise money for Children in Need. Pupils were spoilt for choice for activities with boules, face splat, pin the eye on Pudsey, name the teddy, Pudsey pong and cake sale stalls at break time and sports competitions every lunch. They also organised a sponsored silence and a sponsored mile challenge. Shahid Mahmood from Year 8 was the fastest boy with an 8.08 minute mile and Manahil Shahzad, also from Year 8 had the fastest mile for the girls with her mile taking 9.24 minutes. Ifrah Amehd from Year 7 raised the most money for her sponsored silence, raising £45. Thank you to all the leaders for their work.



Support for SEND pupils



The SEND team who support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities have been busy on a variety of projects and changes. They have successfully relocated their base to another part of the school to ensure closer links with the pastoral team. The team have organised support for pupils in exams, extra literacy, staff training as well as ensuring pupils participate in both sports and careers education. In October a SEND team of students came second in a Boccia tournament, and have qualified for the finals. We have also taken Year 11 pupils out to various colleges to help them making decisions about their next steps after Yardleys.

Enrichment activities have ranged from community litter picking to ballet and with the usual favourites such as combat sports, model making and scrapbook making. Enrichment time is also used to support activities such as the school production of Hairspray and training time for the 'elite' sports teams. During this term Ms Patrick has been appointed as the new Head of Enrichment. She will work alongside Mr Cross in the first instance looking for further improvements in the programme.

Virtual Reality – decision making experience

In January some students took part in a 'virtual decision making' experience, aimed at highlighting the dangers of risk-taking behaviour. Through the virtual reality headsets pupils experienced a scenario based on street crime and personal safety. They then had to make various choices to see how the scenario would play out. There were discussions between the pupils and adults around the issues raised, particularly how actions have consequences and repercussions. The students very much enjoyed their sessions, and this is something we hope to repeat with other students in the future.

Macmillan cake event

Yardleys staff raised £120.08 for Macmillan Cancer support with a cake event held after school. Thanks to everyone for their participation, and special mentions go to star bakers: Mr. Porter; Ms. Doherty, Ms. Austin, Ms. Czosnyka, and Mr. Evans' youngest daughter.

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT



careers education...

World Skills UK Trip



The World Skills UK event at the NEC provided a great opportunity for Year 11 to find out more about a huge variety of different career opportunities.

All the employment sectors were represented – health, hospitality & lifestyle, engineering & technology, digital business and construction & infrastructure. This event will help pupils think about their future careers choices particularly as they near the end of their studies at Yardleys.



**BIRMINGHAM
ROYAL BALLET**

**Birmingham
Royal Ballet
opened its
doors to
some of our
Year 8
students...**

Year 10 Careers Presentation - HSBC

All of Year 10 attended a presentation in school on 4th November 2019 by Ian Stuart, Group Managing Director HSBC UK. The presentation was organised through Speakers for Schools and gave students an opportunity to find out what it is like to be a top flight business person. His presentation included an overview of the HSBC banking group as well as his typical working day. This gave students an opportunity to learn about hard work and that it was definitely not a 9 – 5 job! Mr Stuart also spoke about his own personal career journey which included leaving school at 16 but then later studying at 'night school' before eventually going to university in his thirties. Students heard about the importance of not only having qualifications, but how employers also greatly value 'soft skills' including communication and emotional intelligence skills. The speaker also touched on some of the career opportunities that technology has brought to the banking sector. This very informative presentation enabled students to see the success that can come through hard work and application.

A visit from Doctor Lad...



In October we were visited by Dr Lad, a former pupil as well as a practitioner at Solihull Healthcare Partnership.

Dr Lad took a Year 10 assembly and spoke about the risks and health hazards of energy drinks. After the assembly 24 students took part in a workshop with Dr Lad, where they asked him questions about careers in the medical field. The workshop was very inspirational, particularly because Dr Lad was a former student at Yardleys and lived nearby in Sparkhill. Students learned about education and career pathways into medicine and the attributes a medical professional should have. He also spoke about medicine being a vocation and that you need to be passionate about helping people and compassionate about their problems.

The trip to Birmingham Royal Ballet on 20th November 2019 was a fantastic opportunity for them to not only hear from a variety of people about their careers at Birmingham Royal Ballet, but also to learn about opportunities in the creative arts industry. Pupils met people from the costume and wigs department and were able to see some of the costumes that will be used in the Christmas production of the Nutcracker. They were amazed to learn that a typical ballet tutu can cost around £2,500. Staff from Human Resources and the Learning Education, Access and Participation Team also spoke to the group about the work that they do. The group were given the opportunity to watch one of the performers from the Nutcracker apply his stage make-up whilst talking about his career, before disappearing off and reappearing wearing his full costume. Pupils were able to look round the Birmingham Hippodrome and to go back stage and see some of the rehearsals as well as the rigs that control the props as they move on and off stage. Finally there was a trip to the medical suite where dancers can receive treatment for injuries or as part of their warm up before a performance.

sport & arts faculty...



Art

In Art we have introduced a new curriculum which is designed to develop a range of Fine Art disciplines. New equipment and resources have been purchased with an emphasis on implementing more advanced printing techniques into the department. Etching, stencil and linoleum prints are now available to GCSE pupils.



Girls' Football

In November the Year 8 girls' football team played in a tournament against six other teams at Waverley School. Their Wednesday training sessions with Ms Davies were evident with Rhea Rakhmat the top scorer, excellent defensive work by Ibtisam Ali and fantastic skill by Manahil Shahzad.

KS3 Boys' Basketball Tournament

Well done to the Key Stage 3 Basketball team for winning their regional tournament and progressing into the Birmingham finals. Yardleys entered three teams across three year groups with each team managed by Year 11 students. Everyone was impressed with both coaches and players. As a result Yardleys progressed by taking the top three spots. Our Year 11 coaches also impressed when they officiated games when their teams were not playing.

PE & Sport

The Yardleys sports programme is going from strength to strength particularly with Wednesday afternoon given over to coaching the various teams in a variety of sports. We have been able to enter two teams for each age group of girls' competitions in football and basketball when previously we have struggled to enter one. Rugby has also excelled with the Year 9 and 8 teams currently undefeated after playing against teams that include a grammar school and club academies.

Para-Sports Hall Athletics Tournament

Year 9 pupils recently attended the Para-Sports Hall Athletics tournament held at Billesley Tennis Centre. The pupils took part in a range of activities from speed bounce to the up and under assault course sprint. Yardleys were able to finish in second place overall and progressed through to the Birmingham School Games finals.

Girls Active event

A group of Year 7 and 8 girls attended the Girls Active event held at the impressive new Birmingham City University campus in Edgbaston just before the Christmas holidays. The event aimed to increase participation of girls in sport. Our pupils thoroughly enjoyed the dodgeball and basketball competitions once they had warmed up. They then clearly wanted to win - resulting in them receiving bronze medals.



Collegiate Dance Festival

Yardleys hosted a dance festival for schools in our Central Collegiate. It was clear to see how much hard work and effort had gone in to all the performances. Yardleys, with pupil choreographed performances, won 'Best Costume' and 'Best Concept'. Well done to everyone who took part but particularly to Alishbah Ahmed, Muskan Anwar, Aisha Yahya who will progress to the finals as solo performers along with Madiah Khan. Thank you to organiser, Hannah Reed and Michelle Homer from Hall Green for judging the performances.

Girls' Basketball

The KS4 girls' basketball team had their first match in December against Kings Norton Girls' School. The teams were drawing with 10 seconds remaining and finished the game with a 2 point shot from Laiba Malik, who scored just before the full time whistle, giving Yardleys their first win. In November, Yardleys hosted the annual KS3 girls' basketball tournament for the Central Collegiate. The Year 8 girls achieved their first win over Holy Trinity 22-10 and the team have been entered for the Birmingham Basketball League this year.

THE
YARDLEIAN
look out for issue
5 coming soon...