



Headteacher's Letter

Dear Readers,

As we draw towards the end of 2012 there is a chance to look back at the previous twelve months.

This has been a momentous year for Aldridge School - A Science College; we have become an academy, achieved our best ever exam results at GCSE and A level and then been rated as "Good" in two Ofsted inspections. We will have to work hard to top this, but we will!

We wish all of you a peaceful and joyous Christmas and New Year break. We look forward to an exciting and successful 2013 and appreciate your support in all we are trying to achieve.

Mr D. Mounthey BSc MA

Kickboxing World Champion



Year 7 student Aryan Singh became under 12 -35kg Kick Boxing World Champion in November. Aryan won two Gold medals and a Silver at the World Kickboxing Championships in Paris.

Defibrillator

Following the non uniform day at the end of the last half term, we are pleased to announce enough money was raised to purchase a defibrillator. The device has been installed in school and our first aiders have received training on its use.

Ofsted - Good

Staff and students at Aldridge School are celebrating after inspectors gave us a glowing report, praising exam success and highlighting some outstanding teaching. The report released by Ofsted shows the school has jumped from a "Satisfactory" judgement two years ago, to "Good" in all of the four areas inspected.

We have been acknowledged as "Good" in the achievement of students, the quality of teaching, the behaviour and safety of students and leadership and management. The report said there has been a sharp increase in the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and Maths. The proportion of students gaining the highest A* to A grades has also shown a significant improvement and standards are well above average.

Inspectors found that the teaching at the Aldridge School is "Good" and that some is "Outstanding". Ofsted said that teachers have good subject knowledge and give good advice to students on how to improve their work.

Student behaviour was appraised as "Good" and inspectors noted students behave well around school, as well as in lessons. "Students are polite and respectful and enjoy school and feel safe," says the report, which adds, "students' moral, social, spiritual and cultural understanding is good and they are provided with many musical and sporting opportunities." Leadership and Management came in for praise with inspectors noting, at all levels that Leadership and Management was driving the school forward with clear direction and purpose.

Mr Mounthey, said we are all delighted with the inspectors' findings. "It is very reassuring to know Ofsted has clearly recognised the significant changes and improvements we have made over the past two years. Staff and students are very proud of their school and I am particularly pleased that inspectors described it as 'harmonious and orderly', where students feel safe and where they are able to make good progress."

Year 10 student Nikki Sehro, aged 15, said: "I love this school and I told the inspectors that I liked my lessons, especially Food Technology." Logan Pritchard, aged 12, who is in Year 8, added: "The effort that goes into this school is beyond comparison."

USA Internships

During the summer three Aldridge Students were given the opportunity to take part in an internship programme in the USA

Madeleine Turner was one of the students who took part in the exchange programme and had the chance to experience the business world of America. Madeleine spent two and a half weeks in Vermont, Boston and New York learning all about local and worldwide businesses and the American culture. Madeleine said "As part of the trip I stayed with host families, which added so much to the experience. I was welcomed into the homes of two families, and made numerous friends both from America and my fellow exchange partners from London. I could not have imagined a better way to spend my summer and am truly thankful for the opportunity."

American Embassy

Madeleine Turner chaired a lively discussion between Aldridge students and representatives of our partner school in Washington DC in response to U.S. Secretary of State Arne Duncan's statement on Striving for a Healthier Future Worldwide at the American Embassy on Wednesday 14th November.

WMST students in Washington are currently educated in a converted warehouse which limits their opportunities for the wide ranging sporting curriculum which is perhaps taken for granted by Aldridge students who came to realise their good fortune in this respect. Students shared their views on healthy eating and school meals and the pernicious invasion of fast food vending machines in many American schools. Students praised Michelle Obama's various initiatives to raise awareness of childhood obesity which is recognised as growing problem on both sides of the Atlantic. Both groups of students commented on the important role of school staff in raising awareness of a healthy lifestyle.

Oliver Parsons spoke about the wealth of House sporting activities at Aldridge and the enthusiasm of PE staff for extra curricular activities giving the opportunity for students to compete at local, county, national and international level. Oliver mentioned the support of the school's Gifted and Talented programme for aspiring sportsmen and women in addition to the academic life of the school.

Nicola Jones proposed the vote of thanks recognising the support of Wendy Parmley, CEO of Transcontinental School Innovation Alliance, who works with schools and the American Embassy to promote international educational opportunities.

This is the fifth discussion in what is now an established annual event thanks to Mrs Parmley's energetic commitment to this project. Nicola also thanked Bruce Bradford from WMST and his students for making thoughtful and insightful contributions and Mike Prosser from the embassy. Mr Prosser is the new assistant cultural attaché and he hopes to visit Aldridge very soon to meet students and continue to promote the very firm cultural links our students already have with the United States through embassy staff.

On leaving the embassy for a brief look at the festive lights in Oxford Street students were thrilled to meet Boris Johnson who very kindly forgave the unexpected interruption to his very busy day and generously stopped for a few words and gave autographs. Oliver hopes his English teacher will forgive the unorthodox use of his exercise book but feels that meeting one of his heroes outweighs any reprimand. All agreed that Mr Johnson cycling to his next engagement was the epitome of striving for a healthier future and Arne Duncan would approve!

Leukaemia Research

The Graham Hughes Memorial Concert raised £2376.97 for Leukaemia Research. Thank you to all who contributed to the event and everyone who made a donation.

Readathon - 2012

Young bookworms are helping to add a new chapter to their school's fundraising activities by taking part in a massive readathon.

Students in Year 7 and 8 are reading as many books as they can to raise thousands of pounds for good causes.

Money from the sponsored readathon will go to CLIC Sargent and The Roald Dahl Foundation.

Over the past five years we have raised more than £10,000 for both charities, by encouraging children to take part in its annual readathon.

Mrs Kaur, the school's librarian, who helps organise the reading marathon, said the children were reading classics by authors including Michael Morpurgo, Anthony Horowitz and Roald Dahl.

She said: "They are being sponsored to read two, three or four books over the next few weeks. We will hold a special assembly next year to celebrate the children who read the most and the money they all raised."

Peter Walker, aged, 11, said: "It is a good way to read books and help raise money for charity."

Election Night Fever

Two year 11 students were present at an exclusive screening of "The Choice" previewed at the American Embassy in October. The event was hosted by the American Ambassador and was followed by a lively debate on the merits of the two contenders for occupancy of the White House. Alice Rhind-Tutt and Ben Pickering enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with friends made on this summer's visits to the States organised by the embassy.

As a member of the political exchange in August Alice was thrilled to attend the election night party at the invitation of The Ambassador of the United States of America and Mrs Louis B. Susman at the embassy on Tuesday 6th November. Arriving at 11.00pm Alice joined the throng of some of the other three thousand guests making their way through security at the main Grosvenor Square entrance. Embassy staff handed out voting papers for guests to make their own declaration and handsome Stars and Stripes lanyards for delegate cards. Staff and guests were very well informed demonstrating unshakeable faith in the expression of democracy taking place.

The impressive ground floor was full of guests including Andrew Marr, Jonathan Dimbleby and Robert Peston watching live coverage on the many plasma screens. In addition the large media centre where interviews were taking place was open to all guests who could appreciate the tension and excitement of such a close race. The basement auditorium provided live coverage and comment, the closest thing to experiencing the election at first hand unedited and un-interpreted by the British media.

The Regal Eagle bar was open in the basement providing food and drink throughout the event, the endless provision of mini McDonalds and McFlurries ceasing only when Kellogg's provided a very welcome breakfast bar as daybreak approached, Music and dancing continued throughout the night with performances by Southern Rag-A-Jazz and James McCartney and his band among others. Ruby Wax appeared to be enjoying herself immensely and Ian Hislop very kindly paused his revels to give Alice a much appreciated autograph.

Festivities gradually came to an end and by 5.00am Alice was enjoying breakfast in Chelsea before catching the very early train to Birmingham. It is rumoured that Alice was a little late for school that day but the opportunity to watch history unfold was worth the lack of sleep.

WMKF World Championship

At the start of November, Year 8 student Tegan Kelly travelled to Sicily to represent Team GB in the World Martial Kombat Federation World Championships. Tegan was awarded second place in non-musical freestyle form and third place in freestyle form. Well done!



Walsall Heat Enterprise Challenge Winners

A group of Year 10 students took part in the Walsall heats of the Black Country Enterprise Challenge. The team from Aldridge, pictured, won the challenge. The team will now be entered for the Black Country final taking place in the new year.

Bookweek 2012

Year 7 students were entertained by author, Andy Briggs, as part of the school's annual Book Week in October. They were fascinated by the insight he gave them into the world of writing.

Andy Briggs not only writes novels for children but also writes movie scripts for Hollywood. He created the Hero.com series and Villian.net anti-series of books, which have been published around the world. Andy Briggs has also "rebooted" the Tarzan character in his two Tarzan novels, "Tarzan: The Greystoke Legacy" and "Tarzan: The Jungle Warrior."

During the course of the first term students took part in a number of book-related competitions and over 100 of them won a prize, they were presented with a copy of one of Andy Briggs' books at the prize giving ceremony on Thursday 18th October. The school was pleased to welcome Richard Shepherd MP to present the prizes.

Year 7 student Thomas Waltham, said "I enjoyed the interactive assembly with Andy Briggs as it was moving and persuasive in terms of wanting to be an author."

A Taste of The Apprentice



New sixth formers at Aldridge School got a taste of "The Apprentice" when they met one of Lord Sugar's TV candidates, Paula Jones.

The Walsall Council worker, who appeared on the hit BBC series three years ago, was at the school to judge a business competition.

More than 120 Year 12 students, took part in the

entrepreneurial Apprentice Challenge Day organised by Walsall Education Business Partnership.

Students were divided into teams and given three hours to develop a new business model which they had to present to a panel of judges including Paula and local business leaders.

Paula Jones said: "In a relatively short space of time, students came up with some very inventive business proposals and all of them gave fantastic pitches, even Lord Sugar would have been impressed."

Lorenzo Cosco, from Walsall EBP, added: "They were incredibly enterprising and came up with creative ideas for new phone apps, food and hair products. This is a simple but great event because it really challenges young people to think about starting their own business at the same time as identifying their enterprise capabilities."

Geographical Quiz

On Thursday 22nd November, directly after Ofsted had left the school the Geography Department took eight Year 9 students to Shire Oak Academy to compete in the Geographical Association Worldwide Quiz. Aldridge were competing with teams from Shire Oak, Willenhall and St Thomas More. Aldridge School won the quiz with a score of 101, Jack Kinder, Sam Lee and Adam Lansdown collected medals and a trophy. Their all round geographical knowledge was fantastic!

Health and Social Care

Year 11 Health and Social Care students recently participated in a 3- 5 day research work placement in various Health, Social Care and Early Years settings. The research they carried out will be used to help them complete their controlled assessment in the New Year. Their experience has helped them gain an inside view about what it's like to work in the various healthcare settings.

One student said 'I had a great time. I was working with young children in a primary school. I want to be a primary school teacher so this experience helped me realise what it's like. It was hard work, the teachers were really helpful and the children were lovely and they enjoyed me being there. I know now it's definitely what I want to do in the future and this experience has made me focus on getting the grades I need to get into Sixth Form'. Well done to all of the students!

Christmas Concert

Music students will keep an unbroken Christmas tradition alive when they perform at a Carol Service supported by Aldridge School for more than 50 years. Students will get into the festive spirit at the Carol Service at St Mary of the Angels' Church in Whetstone Lane, Aldridge.

Members of the school orchestra, as well as the school's junior and senior choirs, will help lead the service on December 20, starting at 7.30pm.

Mr Turner, Head of Music said: "The school has held its Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols since 1959. It is an unbroken tradition and we hope lots of people will come along this year and join us in what is a very festive service."

Ahead of the Carol Service, music students performed in the school's annual Christmas Concert on December 10th.

Talented musicians from the school's junior and senior wind, brass and jazz bands, the orchestras and choirs, are promising a packed night of musical highlights.

Poppy appeal

Many thanks to all staff and students who supported the appeal this year. We raised over £325

Aldridge School - A Science College

Your future starts here

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