



Going for Gold! Special edition dedicated to the Arts at Park Hall.

Spring 2014 / #1  
The Journal of Park Hall Academy

# Parklife



**PARK HALL**  
ACADEMY

# Meeting our challenges head on

## Dear Parents, Carers and Students

**We have written to and met with many of you so that you are fully informed of the changes that are happening at Park Hall Academy.** We cannot disguise the fact that the examination results last year and the Ofsted Inspection in November were extremely disappointing. As sponsor, Arden has had to take control of the leadership and strategic management at Park Hall.

We have been working closely with the Park Hall Board of Governors and Senior Staff in order to move Park Hall forward with rapid pace. While we were greatly saddened by the recent Ofsted report, we believe there is no reason to be disheartened.

Education is currently undergoing major changes to examination structures both within the teaching curriculum and how students are examined. Standards have been raised particularly in English and Mathematics, all of which has received a great deal of media coverage. At Park Hall we have seen some remarkable improvements over the past four years, in fact; in May 2013 we received a letter from the Minister of State for Schools celebrating the fact that Park Hall was one of the top 100 most improved schools in the country. Despite the recent difficulties the skills of both academies will now be harnessed to move forward. Our challenge is to ensure our next Ofsted reflects this hard work and dedication, ensuring that the education of Park Hall students goes from strength to strength. These are very exciting times for every member of the Park Hall family – our students, parents and staff.

When we met parents in early January we made a pledge that together we will focus on the many opportunities available to further improve the outcomes and success of our students.

We must ensure the highest standards of behaviour, attendance, punctuality, dress, courtesy and work ethics as a pre-condition for effective learning. We believe the highest achievements occur in schools that are both orderly yet adventurous.

We will enhance the academic and positive behaviour culture that we believe is essential for success. We also want our most able students at Park Hall to benefit from the outstanding Arden Sixth Form as an entitlement.

We will embed across the Academy 'Clear, Challenging Expectations for all Students' as we must clearly understand what is core to our future success, namely providing outstanding teaching and learning underpinned by robust quality assurance and a determination to drive up standards.

We will introduce the academic and positive behaviour culture that we believe makes Arden so successful. We want our most able students at Park Hall to be able to attend the outstanding Arden Sixth Form as an entitlement.

This is a battle we firmly believe we WILL win. We have some fantastic ammunition in the shape of the best facilities we have come across in a school – anywhere. We have a really excellent teaching team; the student body is inspiring and simply brimming over with talent just waiting to be unleashed. We will further enrich the academic team with a number of important new appointments.

We also have some great news to share with you. It gives me great pleasure to announce that following the recent visit by Arts Council England, the Academy has been awarded the prestigious GOLD Arts Mark Award.

Congratulations to everyone at Park Hall on this superb achievement but special mention must be made to recognise the hard work and excellent results achieved by the Arts team. More information on this impressive award and other successes are featured later in this magazine. That is not all we celebrate in this, our first edition, of the new 'Park Life' newsletter which I hope you enjoy reading.

We have an exciting journey ahead of us and we look forward to working closely with the Park Hall family - parents, students and all staff in building a bright future for our Academy.

Best Wishes

Martin P Murphy  
Park Hall Executive Principal

Damian Burgess  
Park Hall Academy Principal

*Pictured: Mr Burgess, left and Mr Murphy, right.*



# Damian Burgess on Behaviour for Learning

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

**The key to any school's success, indeed to any student's success is maintaining the right behaviour for learning.** We are totally committed to enabling your child to get the best education and obtain the best job or access the course they need for a happy and comfortable future.

Any amount of exciting, stimulating learning can be planned but if students are not connected or focused they will not learn or develop. Having run successful schools, Mr Murphy and I cannot stress enough how important co-operation and good behaviour is to a young person's learning and school experience.

Behaviour at Park Hall will be rapidly improved over the coming months. All children will be expected to be on time and on task throughout the day. Students are expected to show great respect for each other and every member of staff.

Some students may not feel they are able or willing to abide by our requirements, however, we want everyone to learn and make rapid and sustained progress. It may be that some students choose not to continue with us if they do not wish to engage with all the exciting learning which we are offering.

Mobile phones are one of the major distractions from learning and we are therefore banning them from use in the building. Phones found in use will be confiscated and returned to students at the end of the day. Should the phone have to be removed for a third time it may only be collected by the student's parent or guardian. You may wish to share with your child just how inconvenient this will be. It IS however legal and provides a firm way to ensure that the school is for learning and future building and NOT texting or taking pictures.

Successful education is founded on a close, positive relationship with parents. In order to deliver a good education, parents are expected to work in partnership with the school and back our behaviour policy and sanctions.

We require all parents to fully support the discipline of the school, firstly as their contribution to Park Hall Academy becoming an outstanding centre of learning, but primarily to help young people understand that whilst

they have a right to a good education, with that right comes the responsibility to behave. Supporting school discipline will enable excellent teaching and allow your child to benefit now and in the future both socially and economically.

If students disturb the learning and progress of others they will be removed from the class to spend time reflecting on improving their behaviour for learning in a separate area of the school. We must not allow individuals to prevent or harm other students' learning. Clearly our expectation is that no child will choose to disturb the learning of others.

We expect polite co-operation, following instructions immediately and above all this term – every student is ON-TIME and ON-TASK.



**Rt Hon David Laws MP**  
Minister of State for Schools

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Mill Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 000 [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

The Principal  
Park Hall Academy  
Water Orton Lane  
Castle Bromwich  
Birmingham  
B36 9HF

Dear Principal

27 January 2013

## 2012 SECONDARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE TABLES

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on the excellent GCSE performance of your pupils in 2012.

There are many ways to access school performance. On this occasion we have looked at the performance of pupils in five GCSEs: English and mathematics, and the pupils' three best other GCSEs.

Your results show that you are amongst the 100 best improving schools in terms of the progress your pupils make between Key Stage 2 results, and their GCSEs. I hope that you are able to continue this rate of progress, so that one day soon I can write to you to commend you not only for being one of the most rapidly improving schools but also one of the highest performing schools on this measure.

I would like to congratulate your staff, governors and pupils for their hard work and success and thank you for your leadership in continuing the drive towards high standards of educational achievement.

Your sincerely

David Laws MP

# Presentation Evening 2013



**THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER 2013 SAW THE PARK HALL COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE OUR STUDENTS' IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE 2012-2013 ACADEMIC YEAR.** ■ We were delighted to welcome Chris Thompson, Accounts Director - Education for British Telecom as our distinguished guest. Chris delivered a superb, inspirational speech to the parents, students and invited guests. We were also joined by the Chairman of Castle Bromwich Parish Council, Mr John Wheelan and his Vice Chair Mrs Pauline Allen, numerous ex-students, along with local Headteachers, Governors, staff and of course many proud parents. ■ The evening also provided the first opportunity for new Executive Principal, Mr Murphy, to introduce himself to the school body. He took the opportunity to deliver a rousing speech that commended the exceptional talent which Park Hall possesses, both amongst its staff and within the ranks of students. Mr Murphy thanked Mr Morrison for his hard work and dedication and then went on to talk about the future, emphasising the extremely positive foundations Park Hall offers its students. ■ Everyone had a wonderful evening celebrating our student's outstanding achievements. It was a joy to be in the audience. Well done to Park Hall students, you are a credit to your community, school and families.



## Kieran Cronin winner of the prestigious Governors' Award

Kieran is both a top quality student and a delightful young man who has contributed much to Park Hall Academy and the local community. He is also an extremely talented student who succeeds in everything he does. His teachers have described him as 'outstanding', 'sensitive', 'perceptive' and 'highly articulate'.

Kieran is the first to admit that he has benefitted enormously from the opportunities made available to him at Park Hall Academy and feels passionately about putting something back into the local community. He is on the Academy Council and helped to plan, run and organise the whole Academy and United Kingdom Youth Parliament Elections earlier this year. He is also the current Vice Chair of Castle Bromwich Youth Parish Council, and has made a significant contribution to the local community. He has been involved in the upkeep of the sensory garden, established in memory of those who lost their lives in armed conflicts around the world, and numerous events, such as quiz nights in order to raise money for local charities.

We are particularly proud of the fact that Kieran represented the Youth Council at the Castle Bromwich Remembrance Parade and at the opening of the new Funeral Parlour in Castle Bromwich and is part of a team currently making a DVD on 'How to set up a Youth Council' which will be distributed nationally in February 2014.

Kieran is also on the Editorial Team of this magazine; a time consuming job which he pursues with his usual unassuming quiet and effective determination to succeed. Kieran gained work experience at Castle Bromwich Infants School where he helped deliver activities as part of a Sports Leadership Programme. He received excellent reports from the placement and was described as 'one of the best placement students ever' by the staff, which was reflected in the work completed.

Kieran has acquired a lot of experience working with students as a result of his role as Senior Student Councillor at Park Hall Academy. He has organised numerous activities for children in both formal and informal settings ranging from organising the workshops that were delivered at the Art of Being Brilliant day to 205 Year 6 students at the Park Hall Summer School, supporting Year 7 students on their Induction Day, Sport Relief and achieving The St John's Ambulance First Aid Award and the Environmental Champions' Award, as well as promoting Park Hall's rewards programme. Kieran has a lovely disposition and his quiet infectious enthusiasm clearly affects everyone around him.

The contribution Kieran has made to the Academy and local community is wonderful, Kieran is a really special young man who makes a positive difference to the lives of others.

## Olivia Waud-Shaw winner of the key Principal's Award

It has long been a tradition to present this highly prestigious award to a student in Park Hall's senior years. However, this year we felt we wanted to recognise the significant achievement of one of our younger students; Olivia Waud-Shaw.

Olivia was one of a group of students who started their GCSE Science course at the beginning of Year 9. It became obvious to her teachers very early on that she grasped some quite complex scientific concepts with ease and always completed tasks with great efficiency. Olivia showed the ability to work collaboratively and independently and put both approaches to great use throughout the course; consistently being a role model to other students around her.

It is to her great credit that whilst already undertaking a challenging GCSE course at a young age, her teachers consistently praised Olivia for putting in exceptional levels of effort and commitment and for her general approach to her studies.

Through this commitment to Science and her strong desire to achieve excellence, Olivia gained a Science A\* Grade at the end of Year 9 studies ...And so, in recognition of this incredible success, Olivia Waud-Shaw proudly received the coveted Park Hall Academy Principal's Award for 2013.





# Presentation Evening 2013

## Art and Design Technology Awards

Presented by Mrs Jill Williams

KS3 Art	Ellie Cooper
KS4 Art	Jessica Ward
KS5 Art	Cara Beech-Webb 'The John Roberts Award for Art'
KS3 Technology	Tyrone Clarke
KS4 Technology	Darren Gray 'The Albert Collins Prize for Technology'

## Business Studies Awards

Presented by Dr Toby Close

KS4	Joseph Welch
KS5	Ben Haden

## English Awards

Presented by Mrs Alison Bennett

KS4	Laura Whelan
KS5	Ergul Ars

## Humanities Awards

Presented by Mr Dale Foster and Mr Aiden Heron

KS3	Nana Agyeman
KS4	Jodie Barnsley
KS5	Jack Rogers

## ICT Awards

Presented by Dr Toby Close

KS3	Evie Millward
KS5	Alex Dickson

## Mathematics Awards

Presented by Mrs Donna Davison

KS3	Alex King
KS4	Daniel Berns
KS5	Steven Mach 'The Maths Award'

## Examination Excellence

KS4 presented by Mr Spencer Gregory

Ellisha Sturridge	Gazal Raii	Georgia Harper	Joseph Welch
Laura Whelan	Samantha Edwards		

KS4 BTEC presented by Mr Spencer Gregory

Adam Jones	Louis Wakelam	Bobbi McDonald	Shannon Wright
Chloe Gallagher	Kurt Fox		

A Levels presented by Mr Ian Cornell

Ben Haden	Michael Sandall	Chloe Higgins	Rebecca Stewart
Lannay Tooze	Louise Hollingsworth		

KS5 BTEC presented by Mr Jay Barber

Alex Dickson	Chanel Ross	Daniel Maguire	Kacey Mason
Lorren Jenkins	Paige Roberts		

## Modern Foreign Language Awards

Presented by Mrs Alison Bennett

KS3	Niamh Strong
KS4	Megan Parfitt

## Physical Education Awards

Presented by Mr Kevin Crotty

KS3	Kane Wilson 'The Robert Freeman Award for Football'
KS4	Aaron Thompson Old Sattleians Rugby Club Starr Smith 'Sportswoman of the Year' Dominic Blackwell 'Sportsman of the Year'

## Performing Arts Awards

Presented by Mrs Louise Macarthur-Clare

KS3	Ava Hawkins
KS4	Hannah Twigg 'The Aubrey Tomlinson Prize for Performing Arts'

## Science Awards

Presented by Mrs Ruth Davies

KS3	Joe Evans
KS4	Ben Beach
KS5	Sophie Moss

## Social Science Awards

Presented by Dr Lesley Browne

KS4	Kirsty Tuffin
KS5	Louise Hollingsworth



# Crossing Continents

Sixth Former Eleni Harvey has a unique perspective on the differences and similarities between Park Hall Academy and Arden - because she has attended and thrived at both!

I started in Year 7 at Park Hall in the September of 2008. I had visited and considered many schools within the area before making this decision, but Park Hall was by far the most appealing – even more than Sutton Girls! Park Hall seemed enthusiastic, warm and welcoming - just what a young 11 year old needs from a school. I took my Maths GCSE a year early in Year 9, along with the rest of my class, getting a C grade on the foundation test. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond my control I wasn't able to take my higher exam until Year 11. In Year 10 I went on to take History, French, Art and Drama (which I studied after school), along with the compulsory subjects.

I left Park Hall last year with a total of eleven GCSEs; six B's and five C's. I wanted to do very well at A level, so I began looking for greater motivation.

I moved to the Arden Sixth Form in Knowle for KS5 in September and although it's an hour and a half bus journey away it's well worth it. I feel like I'm being challenged by the teachers to achieve my best and am being given many opportunities to better myself. I'm currently involved in an interview process to visit South Africa for four weeks over the coming summer. It's an opportunity few are lucky enough to be presented with. At Arden I now mentor two younger classes once a week during my free periods, which not only benefits the children I help, but me as well.

I'm taking four A levels at Arden; English Literature, Modern History, Psychology and Home Economics. A Levels are a huge step up from GCSEs - it's a culture change you just cannot prepare for... But, as long as you're determined and manage your time well, you WILL get through it.

As I mentioned it takes an age to get to and from Sixth Form, meaning I am out of my house before 7.00am and never get home until 5.00pm. I must admit I find it difficult, but it is worth it. I hope to be leaving Arden with some amazing A Level results that allow me to go to the university of my choice where I intend study English Literature with the hope of becoming a Fashion Journalist.

Although Arden is amazing academically with excellent individual support, it is very different to Park Hall. Park Hall was particularly good at 'pastoral care' - ensuring the wellbeing of its students... I know for me, they went above and beyond to ensure I was happy at home, as well as in school life, showing a level of care that you don't find at many schools.

I built some close ties with fellow Park Hall students too and I truly believe they'll remain lifelong friends. I also forged strong bonds with the teachers and if it wasn't for their support I don't think I'd be where I am today... Needless to say I'd like to thank them for all the help and support they've given me throughout the years.



## South Africa Project

We are delighted to be able to offer this incredible experience for Arden Sixth Form students. It is a fantastic example of the Arden community working together to help others. Arden Sixth Form is working with Knowle and Dorridge Lions Club in conjunction with Leeds Metropolitan University to develop a project where a group of our Sixth Form students travel to South Africa in the summer to spend a month working at Mpondweni School.

Unknown to Eleni at the time of writing her article opposite, we are very pleased to announce that she's come up trumps on the summer trip to South Africa she was dreaming of. In fact, not only was she shortlisted, but she's about to receive official congratulations and an invite to join a select band of Arden students on the month long trip.

It was undoubtedly a hard-won place; the letter she's just received emphasises how very impressed the organisers had been with the overall standard of written applications, and the way in which everyone conducted themselves during the interviews in mid-December. They went-on to comment what an "extremely difficult task it was to select the students to take part in the project because everyone was SO good" and that they "hope everyone finds the experience both rewarding and informative".

So now it's time for Eleni to start planning, because the July departure date will soon be upon her, and there are a whole string of events and briefings she'll need to attend in readiness for what we have no doubt will be the adventure of a lifetime!

*Pictured below: The 2013 South Africa trip was just amazing!*





# Back to **WORK**

Following the Christmas break it was great to welcome our students back at Park Hall. On Tuesday 7 January we met every student and our message was "A good beginning makes a good ending - our expectation is polite co-operation, following instructions immediately and above all this term - every student is 'ON-TIME and ON-TASK'".



# Dates for the Diary Spring Term 2014

## January 2014

Monday 6	AS and A2 mock examination fortnight begins Sixth Form interviews commence
Thursday 9	HPV Vaccinations
Monday 13	Year 8 ICT exams week
Wednesday 15	North Solihull PE Conference held at Park Hall
Thursday 16	Year 11 History Mock PDS 1 and 2
Friday 17	Year 11 Performing Arts trip Y10 History Mock PDS 1 and 2
Tuesday 21	Year 8 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 29	Year 9 French CA
Friday 31	Year 9 French CA

## February 2014

Wednesday 5	Year 13 Media trip Year 10 French CA
Friday 7	Year 10 French CA

**Half Term** Monday 17- Friday 21 February

Monday 17	Revision day
Tuesday 18	Revision day
Tuesday 25	Year 7 A Band PSHE day
Wednesday 26	Year 7 B Band PSHE Day Staff Council Parents' and Carers' Council

## March 2014

Tuesday 11	Birmingham City Mission event Year 11 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 12	Year 11 French CA
Thursday 13	Birmingham City Mission event
Friday 14	Year 11 French CA Year 9-11 Big Bang Science trip
Friday 21	Sport Relief
Monday 24	Evening of Dance
Tuesday 25	Year 8 Science G&T Day Year 10 Parents' Evening
Thursday 27	Year 10 History trip

## April 2014

Wednesday 2	Governors' Discipline Panel Year 10 French CA Music concert
Friday 4	Year 10 French CA
Tuesday 8	Birmingham City Mission event
Wednesday 9	Governors' Attendance Panel
Friday 11	Birmingham City Mission event Media showcase at The Electric Cinema Geography trip to Sicily departs Celebration Day

**Easter Holiday 2014** Monday 14 to Friday 25

Sunday 13	Geography trip returns
Monday 14	Revision day
Tuesday 14	Revision day

Despite the hectic first day back for Park Hall students, Executive Principal Mr. Murphy took time out from his busy New year schedule to get to meet some of our Sixth Formers during the photo shoot on Tuesday 7 January.



# Going For Gold

Smashing the Arts Mark accreditation right out of the Park!

Park Hall's recent winning of the prestigious Arts Mark Gold award is all the more impressive because the accreditation was made upon the Academy's FIRST entry into the scheme! Scoring Gold represents a shining endorsement of the talent, hard work and dedication of Park Hall's students and staff within the fields of music, dance, drama, photography, art and design.

Arts Council England uses the Arts Mark to evaluate and celebrate the arts and cultural provision of schools across the country. To be rated at 'Gold' during our very first assessment period is a superb achievement and we are extremely proud to be able to share this news with the Park Hall community.



In order for Park Hall to receive the highest award of Arts Mark Gold, the Academy's Arts Department had to demonstrate that we could fulfil a set of strict criteria. Assessments were made of our curriculum, qualifications and successes, as well as our extensive extra-curricular activities, which were judged to be at the highest level of achievement.

The winning of this impressive accreditation rounds off a fantastic year for our Arts Department. Everyone at Park Hall is extremely proud of all the on-going work, achievements and accomplishments of our students and the Arts team. A big 'well done' goes out to every young artist and all the teaching team and staff involved.

Artsmark is Arts Council England's flagship programme to enable schools and other organisations to evaluate, strengthen and celebrate their arts and cultural provision. It is delivered by Trinity College London, with ten regional Bridge organisations driving participation. Any school, college or youth justice organisation in England can apply for accreditation. Artsmark is nationally recognised as demonstrating excellence in arts and cultural provision.

Holding Artsmark status demonstrates that a school or setting values the arts and culture. It raises the public profile of a school or setting in the eyes of prospective students, their families and across the wider community.

It also contributes to the cultural aspect of Ofsted's requirement that a school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.



# The Performing Arts

Here at Park Hall Academy the Performing Arts Department continually strives to create an exciting curriculum for the students which moves with trend as well as tradition.

In September 2012 we introduced a new Thematic Curriculum at KS3 where Dance, Drama and Music will be taught through a combined method of delivery with exciting resources and the use of innovative performing arts pedagogy.

The concept of creating a more cohesive KS3 curriculum with the combination of the three different pathways, Dance, Drama and Music, is designed to engage in a style very much supported in Primary Education, thus making the transition to Park Hall seamless in a child's learning experience. For every unit each pathway is specifically devised by a dance, drama and music specialist who draws upon their own vocational experience to increase the opportunity of success when leading students through KS3 to course opportunities at KS4/5.



# Macbeth

**Park Hall Academy students worked hard over many weeks to perfect their production of Macbeth for their moment of glory.**

The infamous 'Scottish Play' explores the story of a tyrannous king and his gory rise to power in 15/16th Century Scotland. The play opens with three witches who make prophecies to Macbeth and his friend Banquo. They tell Macbeth he's going to be King, twisting his personality with greed and ambition, they then tell Banquo his children will also be Kings.

Macbeth's prophecy leads him to kill King Duncan, ensuring his ascent to the Scottish throne. He then sets out to kill both Banquo and his son Fleance to ensure he retains the Throne as long as possible; but Fleance escapes his father's fate. Next Macbeth moves on to plot against Macduff and his family, leading to a bloody civil war which sees Macduff triumph with the death of Macbeth himself. Malcolm, who is King Duncan's rightful heir, is then crowned King.

The Park Hall production was based upon the classical version of 'Macbeth' as originally written by Shakespeare, but the cast utilised dance and physical theatre to portray some of the scenes. For example, during Banquo's death and his later re-appearance as a ghost and during the final, tumultuous battle scene. The aim of using dance and physical theatre was to give the audience a better understanding of the play beyond the complex and often archaic 'Shakespearean' language, as well as demonstrating the expansive range of skills the cast possess... And of course simply to put on a great show!

Finally, I would like to talk about how The Shakespeare Schools' Festival has helped me develop as a student. Before doing Macbeth I lacked confidence when performing or speaking in front of a large audience. In realising my role in the play I have been able to develop that confidence by rehearsing in front of people, receiving feedback and then using the input to improve my performance and skills.

The Shakespeare Schools' Festival has given me the confidence to showcase my skills and has provided the opportunity to improve on my areas of performance where I was less strong, such as speaking on my own when on stage. I feel Macbeth has given me an extra push to try as hard as I can; to let go and to really give it all I've got! It has also helped me mix with other students of all ages, many of whom I was working with for the first time. The Shakespeare Schools' Festival has also helped me academically as it has given me a better understanding of Shakespearean language. I am now able to apply this expanded vocabulary of unusual words and phrases to my work in other lessons.

*"IT WAS AMAZING... Macbeth was one of the best shows I've had the privilege of working on. It was amazing and I am so thankful that I got this opportunity. It has been so beneficial to my drama and performing experiences"*  
Tom Anderton.

I am really glad that this theatrical opportunity was given to the students of Park Hall as it has helped not only myself, but many other students to develop their skills and confidence. It was a really positive experience to take part in, and all the arduous learning of lines, costume fittings and rehearsals were really worthwhile as we bowed in front of the audience's the final applause at each of the two shows.

Katie Payne

*"IT'S BEEN FUN! I'm tired, very tired. After this is done, I am just going to collapse on my bed. It's been fun though, god it's been fun. I'm glad that I committed to it and saw it through to the end. It was seriously worth it"* George Chance-Osman.





# Alice in Wonderland

Like Macbeth, Park Hall's recent production got some rave reviews from members of the audience. Here's just a few of the great comments that the school received following the performances...

*"I just had to get in touch with you to give my heartfelt congratulations on your phenomenal success with the production of Alice in Wonderland, which I saw last night. I have been a governor at Park Hall for quite a few years now and have been with it through its travails and its struggles to become a successful school. Last night I felt very emotional because there in front of me was the living proof of a successful school."*

*I was absolutely blown away by the quality of your production, the wonderful actors and characters that they created, the stunning dancing and choreography and the minimalist but very effective stage setting, it was stunning. What was the most important to me was that the students were obviously enjoying themselves, the confidence to stay in character and had developed such good stage craft."*

*Please pass on my congratulations to them and the supporting team and tell them how proud we are of them and their wonderful skills and very impressive talents. You must be very pleased and proud of this production, it is testament to your hard work and what you have brought to PHA, thank you so much it is so important and what a gift to be able to bring magic into peoples' lives!" J.Hiorns.*



*"Wonderful!... The performance was simply stunning and 'wonderful'! You must be so proud of all involved... Huge congratulations to everyone. We still have a smile on our faces"*  
D. Hearsey.

*"Well Done! Superb performance tonight. We thoroughly enjoyed it. Well done everyone!"* S.Partlett.

*"A Fab Evening. I just wanted to congratulate you all on your wonderful production. It far surpassed all of my expectations, the singing, dancing and acting was of such a high quality and a thoroughly enjoyable evening was had by all. A remarkable achievement to be very proud of – all your hard work certainly paid off! Thanks again for a FAB evening"* H. Rhodes.

*"The Students did you proud last night! I really enjoyed it!"* Y. Smith.





# Narnia

This fabulous wintry extravaganza based on CS Lewis' famous 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' series of books played a significant positive role in Park Hall's application for Artsmark status. The professionalism of the Academy's young performers, writers and stage team as evidenced by the sheer quality of the show much impressed the assessors, helping achieve our coveted Gold Award accreditation on first application.



## Dramatic Hall Of Fame

Six examples of building a career on the values, experiences and learning opportunities that Drama at Park Hall Academy offers.



### Michelle Roberts:

I believe that studying BTEC Performing Arts at Park Hall gave me many opportunities to look at the different aspects of Theatre and Performance and the different careers that the course can lead into. It gave me the chance to be in different performances that I would never have considered being part of before, such as Musical Theatre! I found the course extremely exciting with many challenges that helped me to increase my confidence.

As a result of finding the course so exciting I chose to continue my studies in this area of work and I am now coming to the end of my first year at Birmingham School of Acting where I am studying Community and Applied Theatre/Dance Theatre. I feel that Performing Arts prepared me well for this course and gave me a head start for many of the practical and written assessments I have been given during my first year!

### Adam Williams:

I did Performing Arts at Park Hall Academy for 4 years. I gained loads of experience and new skills such as drama techniques, different ways to devise and create a performance and also made great friends throughout the course!

Taking part in this course has given me the opportunity to go to Hull University and study Theatre and Performance, to gain even more skills and pursue a career I am interested in.

### Charlotte Savage:

I studied Performing Arts when I was at Park Hall Sixth Form; the course was very enjoyable and taught me a lot throughout the two years from theory to the practical elements. The teaching staff were extremely good and were always there to help you out. The course helped my confidence a lot and I was able to develop my skills and I feel I improved throughout my time on the course, I was mainly interested in acting and wasn't so confident with dancing and singing but this didn't cause me any problem with this course and I was always encouraged to try my best. It helped me to gain a strong knowledge of different areas within theatre. I am now at Coventry University studying Theatre and professional practice and my time spent studying Performing Arts set me up well for my time at university.

### Vicky Ahmed:

Having left Park Hall, I am now studying Drama and Theatre at the University of Chester. Studying Performing Arts at Park Hall was a great two years because everyone in the group was close and we gained a lot from the course.

We had so much fun going through rehearsals and shows and explored a lot of different kinds of plays and theatre. We went from musical theatre, to contemporary, to devising our own work. This gave us a lot of different experiences and a taste of different things for us to determine a preferred area of drama.

### Luke Elliot:

I'm currently studying Drama and Theatre Studies with dance at Liverpool Hope University. I've just completed my first year and gaining a 1st in many of my assignments. Since arriving at university I was elected as the University Glee Society President. This year I have performed in a vast number of shows and have appeared on a number of top TV programmes, including 'X Factor' and 'Britain's Got Talent'.

I wouldn't have been able to audition for any of these shows without the support I received from Park hall staff. They were able to teach me the skills and give me the confidence to believe in what I do and showed me how to achieve my goals. Thank you Park Hall!

### Jordon Harrup:

I am now a fully trained and qualified Door Supervisor, whilst this may not seem relevant to 'Performing Arts', the whole journey that I have been on within the group and the people who taught me over the four years of doing Performing Arts made me into a much more confident, authoritative person.

Before Performing Arts I was simply not able to take to the stage and feel confident in myself, but now after numerous successful shows and building many friendships with in the Performing Arts, I could get up on stage any time I liked. The confidence I have gained is invaluable in my new career.



# Amy’s Dance Scholarship

Richly deserved congratulations go out to Park Hall’s Amy Wright who is now into her second year studying Performing Arts at the prestigious Laine Theatre Arts College in Epsom on the outskirts of London. Amy won her place as a result of numerous auditions, becoming one of an elite group of students selected for the very generous scholarship. Everyone at Park Hall Academy is tremendously proud of Amy. She is a superb role model and contributed so much to the Park Hall Performing Arts Faculty as a student. As a result of gaining her Laine Theatre Arts College’s scholarship Amy is now well on the way to pursuing her dream career as a professional dancer.

Amy recently returned to Birmingham to help choreograph floor routines for gymnasts at The City of Birmingham Gymnastics Club. When ‘Park Life’ caught up with Amy she spoke with infectious enthusiasm about the numerous different aspects of theatre and dance. She is particularly enjoying the classes that replicate real world auditions, which she feels will be extremely useful when she starts applying for professional roles. She said that having the opportunity to dance with superb male partners is a special highlight of her training. She recalled the excitement of the first time she was lifted above someone’s head, because as a tall dancer no one had been able to lift her before; “Wow, I was so excited, some were a little nervous, but I kept saying ‘me next, can I have another go’. The Laine Theatre Arts College in Epsom is an amazing place to study and I realize how lucky I have been to be awarded the scholarship”.

Amy is an outstanding student who took the role of The Snow Queen in the Academy’s production of ‘The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe’ and achieved outstanding success as a dancer, having performed with the Birmingham Royal Ballet and at Coventry Belgrade Theatre.



# The Art Department

*"No society can afford to ignore the fact that the capacity for behaving artistically is inherent in every human being and cannot be neglected without detriment to the individual and to society as a whole" Rudolf Arnheim.*

Art offers unique opportunities for students to reveal their potential, express their ideas, develop their imaginations, and investigate a wide range of images and artefacts. The individual engaged in an art activity, whether it is expressive, imaginative, productive, reflective or critical is developing knowledge: about themselves, others, culture, society, and about the interaction of these with ideas, processes, techniques and media. As such it is an invaluable part of the education of young people.

Art develops a visual language that complements other languages such as those used in mathematical, scientific, literary and factually based subjects. It encourages personal expression, imagination, sensitivity, conceptual thinking, and powers of observation, analytical abilities and practical-orientated attitudes. It is especially concerned with mental processes involved in visual and aesthetic experience and develops a range of skills and concepts that can be used throughout life. This fully justifies our commitment to art education.



Pictured: Molly Patel



## 'Fine' Art

### Brooke Cope, Key Stage 4 Artist

I am currently studying Art, which is really great. The course involves a load of different things, such as researching artists' work, using numerous different media and taking photos.

We have already completed one project and are currently working on the second which will later lead to our final piece for the course. This final piece of work draws on projects we have done to-date, refining those ideas and selecting appropriate media and techniques. If needed there are catch-up sessions after school, providing a great opportunity for those who need to do extra work.

Park Hall's art facilities are extensive, and are very useful in providing us with a range of different options and media. GCSE art is brilliant, with some excellent teaching making it all the better and easier to get through!

## GCSE Food

Our students currently do GCSE Food and will be taking their exam this summer. Students are working hard to develop some fantastic recipes. We also deliver a BTEC in Hospitality.

This vocational course sees our students cater for some of the many open events held at Park Hall.





# Photography

**Ryan Sherwin tells us why there's a great deal more to photography than merely 'point and click'.**

GCSE Photography encompasses a wide range of topics. Many people embark on Photography as both a hobby and a GCSE course in Year 9.

Initially the teacher provides the starting point for projects. For example, a topic might be 'Natural Surfaces' and photographs would have to be taken of objects such as wood, leaves and grass that explore the way their surfaces interact with light, shade and colour. The second year of the two year course sees students get to choose from a variety of starting points, enabling them to develop ideas independently.

Before taking the Photography course, many people have preconceptions of what it is going to be like based on previous experience of snapping away with a camera or phone... But since starting the GCSE Photography course, I have learned that Photography is an artform in its own right. There are a lot of techniques covered during lesson time, such as traditional 'wet film' darkroom practices (these are quite scientific, involving a variety of chemicals, careful timing and use of enlargers - all of course undertaken in near, or total darkness), Photoshop (which enables you to edit and manipulate photographs in interesting ways) and the methods of other artists and technicians (we learn a lot about other artists and photographers and try to take inspiration from them). All this academic photographic study enables us to develop our own ideas as we become more confident with our camera and the projects we tackle.

So, taking Photography at GCSE Level really IS hard work as there's a lot to do, but I have to say I have really enjoyed the challenge and find the lessons fascinating as we learn and develop a range of useful new skills.

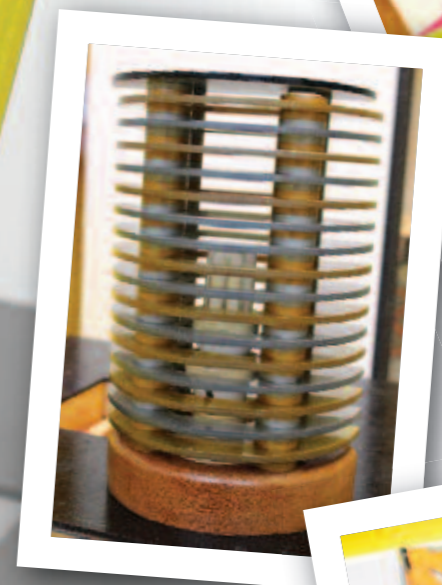


# Product Design Lamp Concepts

GCSE students in Years 10 and 11 gained the best results in Product Design to-date. We are extremely proud of how hard they worked to realise their creative concepts.

A recent project that showcased some impressive young Park Hall talent saw a brief to design a lamp that took its style and conceptual cues from a specific design movement.

With an ever-present designer's eye on commercial viability and the manufacturing processes required to put their ideas into production, our young Product Designers came up with some beautiful and practical concepts with striking Pop Art, Art Nouveau and Art Deco sensibilities.





# Creative Writing

This year students at Park Hall have been focussed on exploring the world of creative writing. Some mini-sagas and poetry have been published, with lots of keen Park Hall parents eager to own their own copies of their child's work.

Park Hall Academy was successful in reaching the final of 'The Poem', a Solihull-wide poetry competition. Several students and their families were invited along to the Presentation Evening where they met performance poets, the Birmingham Poet Laureate and the Mayor.

This builds on successes from the last academic year when over twenty students had their work published in The Young Writers' Poetry Anthology. In English lessons, students from Years 7-11 were asked to write a poem expressing their own personalities or individual beliefs. Over half of the Academy's entries were published in the anthology, which contained poems selected by a panel of judges, based on the author's creativity and expression, with themes ranging from family to pets and dreams! Well done to all our young poets!

Year 6 were also encouraged to get artistic with their poetic writing when they came to Park Hall Academy for sessions in the English Department. They created some wonderful examples of acrostic poetry (poems which use the initial letters of a word to start each line) and collaborative poetry writing.

'Let's get writing' encouraged everyone to become involved and resulted in some impressively artistic use of words around the theme of 'Alice in Wonderland'. Some of the short stories that resulted are now on display, demonstrating some wonderful aspects of tension building and scene setting.

## Drop Everything and Read!

Students have also been involved in reading projects such as the 'Drop Everything and Read' programme in which lessons focus on the importance of developing students' reading, which is of course an extremely important skill.

For example reading teaches you about the world around you. Through reading, you will learn about people, places and events outside you own experience; exposing you to ways of life, ideas and beliefs about the world which may be different from those you normally experience.

Whilst reading is a form of learning that is important for its own sake, it also builds an invaluable store of background knowledge and understanding which helps younger children learn to read confidently and well.

## Chatterbooks

Students and tutors involved in 'Chatterbooks' had a mini reunion on Friday 29 November to celebrate the success of the unique literacy programme delivered by Coventry University.

In addition to building an appreciation of a variety of authors and genres, the students created their own stories and designed artwork which were published as amazing books.

Chatterbooks students were given the opportunity to browse through scrap books containing special memories from the ten workshops they attended. They were all awarded with a copy of their own published work. Well done to the all the Park Hall Chatterbooks students.

## Punctuation

**Punctuation:** A familiar term to us all, but for some a scary prospect.

To encourage students to think about punctuation more carefully, some of our Key Stage 3 English classes have been taking a new approach to punctuation; combining capital letters, full stops and more, with Kung-Fu!

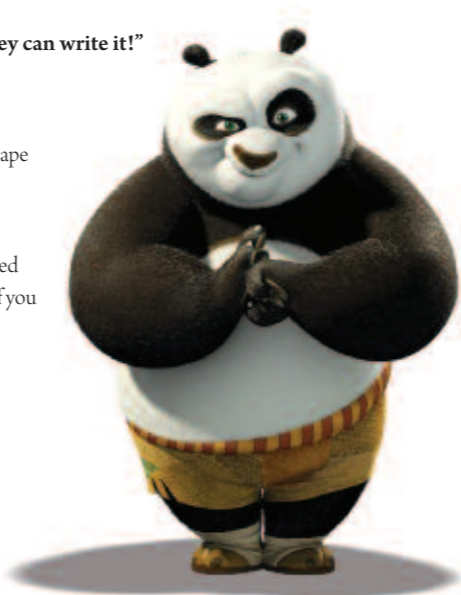
Our students have been taught some punctuation-based moves and have been putting them into practice, demonstrating that they know where the correct punctuation should go and then, transferring these skills to their written work.

Park Hall staff and students are working hard to be as creative as possible in lessons making learning fun and enjoyable to ensure students fulfil their potential. Park Hall student Annabel Lloyd has been particularly supportive of the project which she reported on eloquently during her weekly Freeradio slot.

**Kung-Fu Panda say**  
"If a child can say it they can write it!"

**Capital Letter:**  
Place hands over your head in a triangular cap shape and say 'Capital Letter'.

**Full Stop:**  
Throw a short, right-handed punch in the air in front of you and make the noise 'Ha'.



# From Liverpool's Cavern Club to Birmingham Symphony Hall!

Music at Park Hall Academy is an extremely important area of the curriculum which students value just as much as our staff.

The Academy works in close partnership with specialist teachers, professional performers and a host of other organisations, including those from the arts, charity and voluntary sectors.

Our students have had the opportunity to work with professional performers as part of the Academy's own productions, as well as at some of the most influential venues in the country, ranging from the legendary Cavern Club home of The Beatles in Liverpool to the world-renowned Symphony Hall in Birmingham.

Music students will also be contributing to numerous special events, ranging from the Academy's productions of Narnia and Alice in Wonderland for Jubilee Gardens Care Home to the Celebration Evening in December. As a result music touches the lives of every single student at Park Hall Academy.

Students now experience a combination of classroom teaching, instrumental and vocal tuition, opportunities to play at famous venues and the chance to learn from professional musicians.

We aim to provide opportunities that reach beyond the school boundaries to draw on the expertise of a range of education and arts partners.



# artscene

The Art Department are currently nurturing some impressive talent!



**PARK HALL**  
ACADEMY

'ParkLife' magazine is published by Park Hall Academy:

Water Orton Road, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, B36 9HF. Telephone: 0121 748 0400

[www.parkhallschool.org.uk](http://www.parkhallschool.org.uk)

©2014 Park Hall Academy. Designed/produced by CarneWhitney.com 01228 596 895. Printed on environmentally friendly paper.