

Positiviti

Summer 2014/#3
The Journal of Park Hall Academy



PARK HALL
ACADEMY



From Strength to Strength

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

Park Hall Academy has gone from strength to strength in many ways this year. We are tremendously proud of our students and celebrate the many fields in which they have excelled during the year. In the sporting arena Park Hall Academy's Year 7 Football Teams talent has been recognised at the Solihull Sports Awards where they were presented with the 'Solihull Team of the Year' award and Park Hall Academy were also presented with the prestigious 'Solihull School Games (Secondary) Winners' award for winning the most sporting events across the whole of Solihull Borough.

Park Hall students have taken an active role in the community, working to make a difference to their environment by planting a bluebell walk, poppy seeds, making hanging baskets, painting and clearing areas of the Forest School on the Bromford Estate.

On the political front, Lewis Earp, Solihull member of the United Kingdom Youth Parliament represented the Academy at the recent residential event formulating policy for the British Youth Council. Kirsty Tuffin and Bradley Smith were keynote speakers at Warwickshire Youth Voice Conferences and Daniel Payne became Vice-Chair of Castle Bromwich Youth Parish Council. Our Year 10 students are currently on work experience placements in industry, at local schools, the 'Thriller' production and at The House of Lords!

We strive to involve as many young people as possible in active community involvement projects and they are certainly making a positive impact. Students and staff have worked tirelessly bringing together the 'Bugsy' production which was chosen, edited, planned and organised by some extremely talented Year 10 students who were responsible for every part of the production. A superb achievement indeed. We are sure everyone appreciated the community-spirited effort made by the young citizens of Park Hall Academy.

We would like to thank you for all of the positive feedback you have given us as a result of recent changes and developments. It was particularly interesting to receive feedback from the students via the Academy Council meeting on the 27 June. Students were extremely vocal and raised numerous important points during the meeting. **They are delighted with the new books and felt that the new rules on presentation were very important**, commenting that they liked the new books and that their own books are so much neater now. Students commented that the new format was much simpler and that everything is in the books to help them achieve. They're really pleased that staff can comment at the bottom of each page too and also like the concepts section, key points and feedback sections. Other issues, such as the wider line spacing were raised and although some students felt this was a waste of space on each page, the consensus was that it gave teachers room to write spelling corrections clearly above a word, note omissions or add important advice.

The students commented that the recent year group sessions were a good reminder of the importance of presentation. **They said the schools' emphasis on presentation makes them think that it is necessary to take a pride in their work.** They were pleased that this is being reinforced in every lesson.

Cover picture: Park Hall provides a broad spectrum of learning in addition to the traditional Three Rs - ensuring our students develop into happy, successful, well rounded young people.

Opposite: Mr Bugess, left and Mr Murphy, right.

Students like the 'parent stickers', stating that it is a good idea to involve parents in their learning, **stressing that their parents had a big impact on their learning.** They really liked the input they received from their parents, commenting that 'it is nice to be praised.' One student said that their parents can be quite critical about their spelling and also asked why there was not any work on a blank page, leading to a conversation about missing work, not being able to revise properly and having a pride in their work.

Sixth Form students stressed that they feel more motivated and that the 'Folder Trawl' was an excellent idea as it has made them more focused and aware of the importance of organisation to enable them to succeed in their forthcoming examinations.

Students also like the new homework sheets which set out a whole term's homework for English and French. They felt the simple tick list was very effective. They said this feeds into the **new 'Learning Maps' which have given them a better understanding of what they are required to do throughout the term.** They liked the idea of self and peer assessments, whilst a politics student felt this helped him understand the examination mark scheme and what is required in his own answer. Students liked the introduction of the 'green pens' as they can help each other check their work and see their own errors. **They have been made aware that this will make them more employable, will help them perform better in exams and improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar.**

These are just a few of the many comments and achievements made by Park Hall students during what has been a hugely successful and pleasing term. We would like to thank everyone who made these improvements possible - staff, parents/carers and Governors. To our students, we want you to know how brilliantly you have responded to the improvements and how proud we are of you.

We are delighted to be able to celebrate some real successes throughout the year and are proud of the progress being made. We are continually striving to move forward and are maintaining our focus on improving students' learning in a positive learning environment.

As we continue to progress, you be pleased to that we will further raise standards of behaviour and ensure excellent attitudes to learning. You should also be aware that every student at Park Hall will require a bag and pencil case with equipment for September. Failure to be properly equipped will impact on teaching and may result in disciplinary action. **The school's insistence on your child being fully equipped will enhance learning and support us in ensuring your son or daughter makes progression and fulfils their potential.**

We were delighted to welcome our HMI/Ofsted team into Park Hall during the penultimate week of term and they were very pleased with the progress we have made this year. We will get the full report in September. It just remains for me to wish you all a very happy and relaxing summer holiday and we trust that wherever you are you will experience some sunshine.

With kind regards,

Damian Burgess
Park Hall Academy Principal

Martin P Murphy
Park Hall Executive Principal





An Important Message

As the summer term rolls on through the examination season, when the majority of staff and students are working towards the 'final push' to squeeze every ounce out of their preparation for the last few remaining examinations, it is at this time of year, between busily planning for next year, that there is a time for reflection.

It is around this time of year when we see Year 7 showing signs of greater maturity and also less tiredness as they become acclimatised to life in a large secondary school. Year 8, prepare to move into their final Key Stage 3 year with a renewed sense of anticipation. Year 9, step up the responsibility of moving into Key Stage 4, and of course Year 10 will be thinking about the prospect of life in Year 11, with all of the responsibility, learning, pressure, and excitement that it will bring.

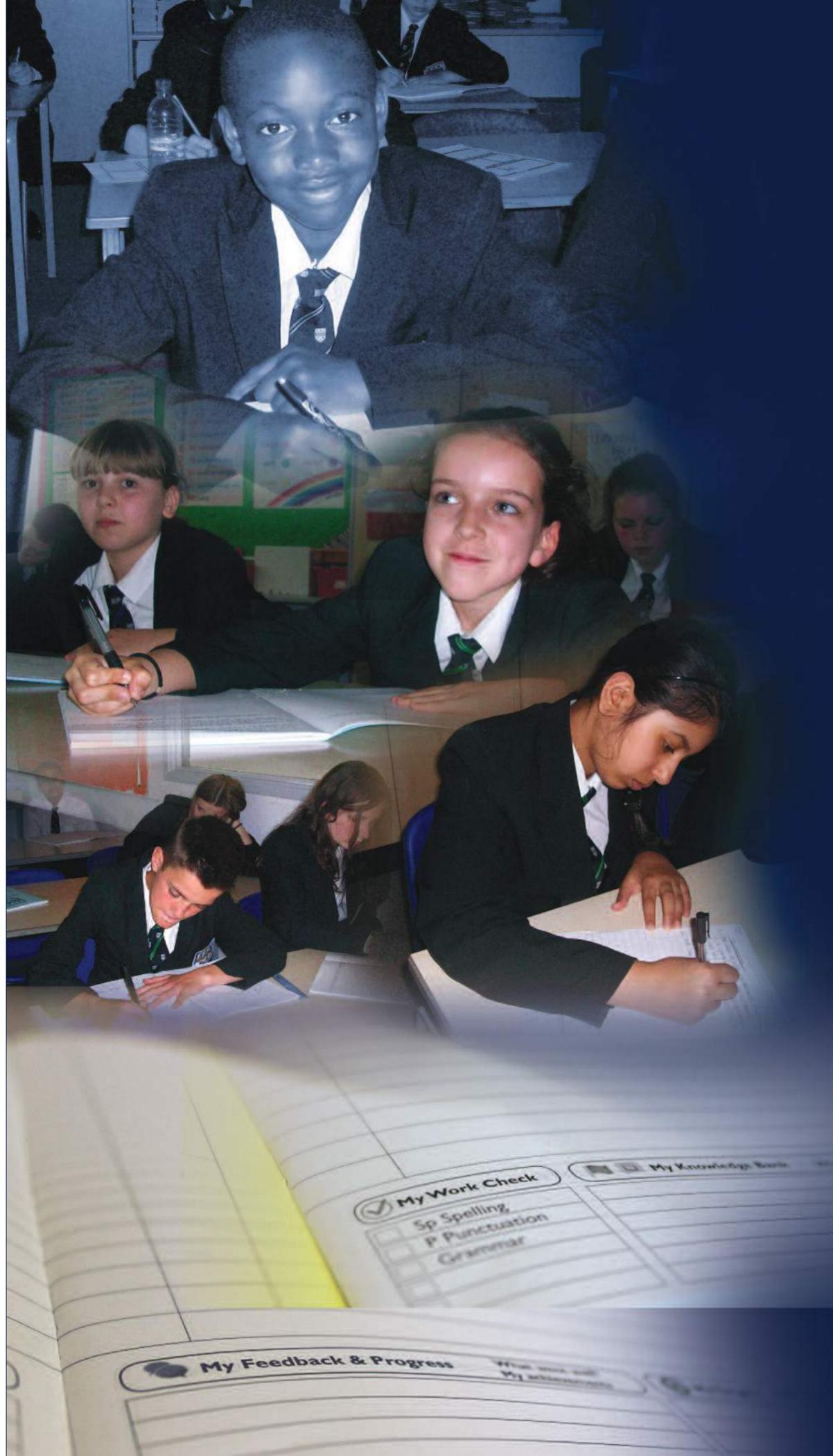
As I think about each year group, I also reflect on student discipline and behaviour. Mr Burgess wrote to you all in the first issue of Park Life explaining the Academy's stance and ethos in maintaining the right behaviour for learning and I can't stress enough how important co-operation and good behaviour is to a young person's learning and school experience. 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.

One of those new sanctions has been the introduction of the Behaviour For Learning room. This is an area of the school where students are sent to if they disturb the learning and progress of others to reflect on improving their behaviour. It is a central consideration to Park Hall Academy that we must not allow individuals to prevent or damage the learning of others.

Since the introduction of the Behaviour for Learning room, the majority of students have responded well, and behaviour is moving forward. I have had many conversations with students, teachers, external visitors, governors and parents who all say that behaviour has improved considerably since January. However, it is the support of parents that has really enabled this to work and be effective. I hope this parental support will continue as we move the school forward in terms of behaviour and discipline.

Despite the success and impact of the Behaviour For Learning room, it is imperative that we don't give up and become complacent. We must continue to strive for higher standards of student behaviour and discipline. Therefore, the Behaviour For Learning room concept, that has been embedded so successfully, will continue to be developed as we push towards those benchmark standards.

We are proud of the improvements in behaviour. We are clear that we must continue our policy of not allowing students to disobey instructions from staff and we insist that standards of politeness are met and exceeded. We continue to be clear that no one student can interrupt the learning of another at Park Hall Academy.



Pride in Our Work

During the Summer Term, many of our students are taking part in a pilot to help them understand the importance of taking pride in their work. This is not only as a means to improve the quality of schoolwork, but will also teach them the important skills they'll need in the future as they progress onto further education and their future careers. ■ Every student is completing a self-evaluation of their current exercise books and setting themselves targets for improvement during the next few weeks. Some Park Hall students are currently trialling specially designed exercise books which feature computer-style icons that highlight important tasks they need to undertake in order to produce a well presented and well organised piece of work, as well as helping them focus on important learning points and how to make further progress. ■ Students will be able to keep a record of all the work they produce in school and for homework in a format that they are proud to take home as they share their successes with their families during the year. In response to requests from parents and carers, we will also make students' books available at Parents' Evenings, and will welcome any feedback and suggestions on how to further improve them. ■ So far, the new books have been a big hit with our pilot group of Year 7 students, who have given them an overwhelming thumbs up...

"I think these books have helped me to improve my organisation" Muhamed Kinteh

"I like these new books. They help with key words because of the box at the bottom of the page" Tom Kitching

"The new books are good because they help me to remember what is homework or classwork. They also help me because at the bottom you can put key words. I like the checklist" Simran Sandhu

"I think my new book has helped me to keep my work neat" Rahmal Miles

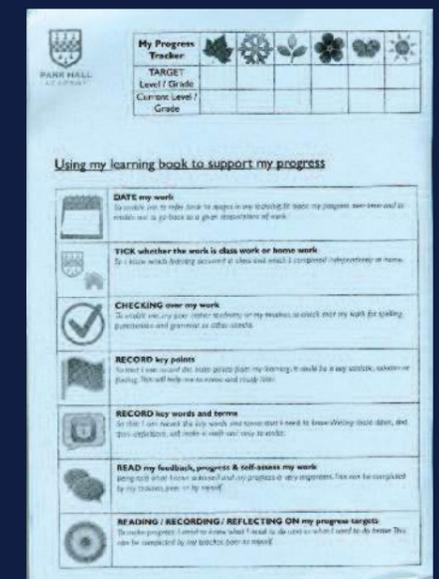
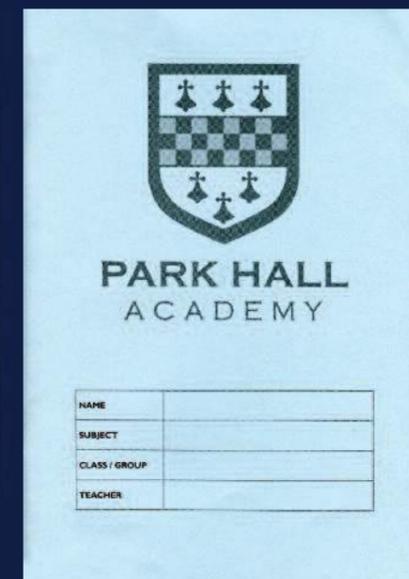
"The new books are helpful because they have a certain way to set your work out, with spaces where I can write the points I need to remember" Megan Corcoran

I like these books because they help me make my work neater and they help me to improve my presentation" Abbie Sonko

"The new books are good because they help make my work look better" Katie Tooze

"I think these books are good because they have little boxes to remind me what I need to do, such as checking my spellings" Molly Stronge

"I think the new books are good because they help me when I need to learn some new words, I put them in the knowledge bank" Matthew Parker





Parents: Help US to help your child be the best they can be...

Assessments

In light of the recent Ofsted inspection, we are now driving to improve the accuracy of our assessment process. To ensure success, we expect our students to now take more responsibility for their books and learning. Park Hall is committed to giving students clear feedback during lessons and in marking, ensuring your child will understand where they need to concentrate harder and how to improve their work. This is why we are revisiting our assessment policy.

Every Subject's assessment process will now have three elements:

Peer/Self-Assessment:

The peer and self-assessed element of the process will help your child understand how their work is marked.

Knowledge Tests:

These Knowledge Tests are short, factual assessments in which students need to score at least 70%. Parents, YOU can support your child by helping them to revise. If they miss the 70% target they WILL need to sit the test again.

Levelled/Graded Assessments:

Graded assessments will clearly communicate to your child where currently they are and how much progress they are making.

We Need YOU!

It has been clearly proven that parental support and interest in your child's progress and attitude to learning will help them value their education. Quality teaching is being provided by Park Hall, but to build on this we need your child to be keen to respond and participate in all learning opportunities.

You can help by looking at reports and discussing progress made in subjects, and by focussing on your child's attitude to learning.

'Attitude to Learning' - WHY is it important?

Parental involvement and monitoring of work is essential in supporting a child's education and progress.

Why do I need to support the School?

It is vital that as Parents and Carers you support your child's education by checking their books. Your support, encouragement and approval have an enormous impact on your child's progress. Your son or daughter is expected to bring equipment to school every day. We offer pencil cases to students to purchase. If students attend school with equipment they are prepared for learning.

What can I do to help?

Check to see if your child has packed their bag, do they have the right equipment? Have they completed homework? EVERY child has homework to complete - EVERY evening during the school week - make sure they are doing it. The staff at the Academy set homework on the VLE, known as FROG

Who can I talk to?

If you need help to access FROG please contact the school. Park Hall are always happy to assist parents, either in groups, or in one-to-one sessions.

Improving **Teaching** Improving **Learning**

This term has seen a variety of developments in Park Hall's continuing drive towards raising the quality of both teaching and learning at our Academy. We're now seeing a whole-school focus on the presentation of work in student's exercise books. A series of 'Learning to...' assemblies have been delivered, with all students in Years 7 to Year 11 attending interactive sessions focused exclusively on students becoming more self-aware of their attitude to learning and progress. The sessions have explored a variety of learning themes, including; the importance of raising students' own aspirations; taking pride in your work; independent study and the adoption of self-discipline and hard work in all that we do; and the ways in which key life skills are being developed each and every lesson. In addition, the assemblies have provided valuable opportunities for students to practice group-based learning activities and to consider the importance of every student's engagement in these types of interactive learning styles.

The introduction of the new exercise books has proved a very positive move, with students recognising how the ways in which they are helping them to produce and structure their work more clearly and more carefully. These books now provide a space for reflection and personal reviews on the key learning points for each lesson, as well as a offering more 'user-friendly' way for teachers, students and their peers to provide commentary on students' learning successes - 'What went well', 'How my/your work could be improved, and 'Even better if'.

To support students in their own understanding of the purpose, or 'The Bigger Picture' of their learning, all subject departments have produced 'Learning Maps'. These 'Learning Maps' provide learners with simple, structured overviews for each topic that they are studying; giving students, parents and carers, a simple snapshot of:

- What the key learning outcomes are for the topic.
- What skills the students will apply and develop as a result of studying the topic.
- How the student will be assessed to identify how well they are progressing.

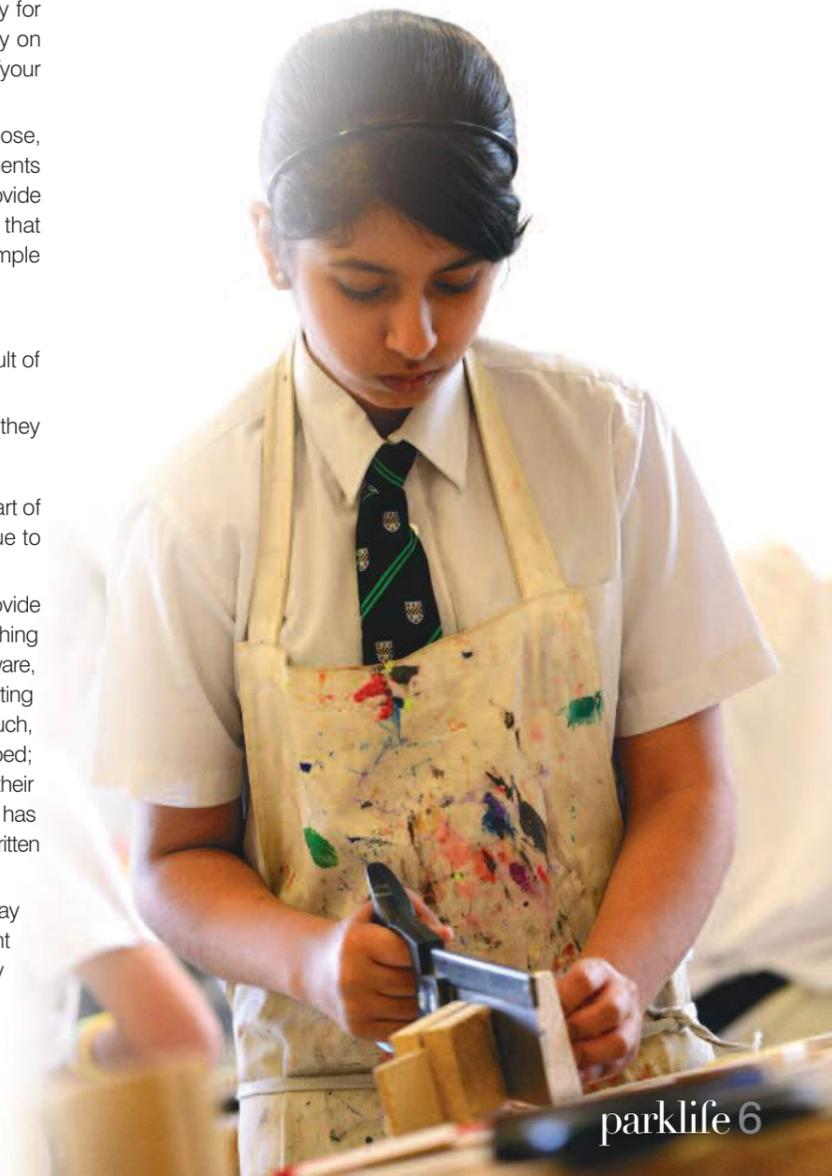
These 'Learning Maps' have quickly become an integral part of learning at Park Hall – in all subjects – and will be continue to be developed throughout the academic year.

The Spring Term Parents'/Carers' Committee meetings provide constructive feedback in relation to various aspects of teaching and learning at Park Hall that is most welcome. As we are all aware, parents and carers play a critical role when it comes to supporting and encouraging good progress in their child's learning. As such, the new 'Parent/Carer' dialogue stickers have been developed; providing opportunities for parents to review the learning of their child; signing them off to show that their child's exercise book has been seen and encouraging parents and carers to provide a written response about their child's work and progress.

As part of the Academy's ongoing monitoring of everyday student progress in their lessons, the Senior Management Team are and now using their learning walks as an opportunity

to give immediate recognition of pupils' excellent attitudes to learning by giving out Recognition Stickers for those that demonstrate consistently excellent effort, behaviour and focus in their learning and exercise books. Parents and carers are encouraged to look out for these stickers which mark out special recognition of ongoing hard work by their child in a specific subject area.

Whilst the drive towards improving the quality of teaching and learning at Park Hall continues to stem from our weekly Wednesday morning Teaching and Learning CPD, we are committed to seeing every pupil taking on increased responsibility for their own learning. Greater use of self-assessment will help make students more aware of how they will be assessed; encouraging independent learning and study through homework, revision activities and exam preparations; rewarding pupils' attitude to learning, commitment and pride in their learning; and critically ensuring that lessons are providing students with stretch and challenge so that no students, regardless of ability in that aspect of their learning, is not being pushed to make sustained progress, achieving their learning target and going beyond.



Remember... If the attitude to learning is outstanding, then the learning will be outstanding!



It's Cool to be in School...

Why Attendance REALLY Matters

As ever, Park Hall Academy aims to ensure EXCELLENT attendance and punctuality for EVERY student and to eliminate all but the most necessary and legitimate absences and/or episodes of lateness in individual students.

Excellent attendance, as measured against national norms, is a prerequisite for successful learning and good progress. Personal qualities, such as reliability, that are inferred by excellent attendance at school are amongst those most prized in society in general and by employers in particular. The promotion of excellent attendance is, therefore, a primary objective for us. Students are continually praised for their good attendance and as a school we are keen to reward them. Here are some of our attendance rewards:

- Students with 100% attendance from September to July will be rewarded with bonus ABAC points, these points can then be used for end of term trips and other prizes.
- Year 11 students who achieve 100% attendance from September to the Easter term break will receive a FREE Prom Ticket - last academic year FIFTY Year 11 students received their Ticket worth £25 for FREE!

By making your child's school attendance a real priority, you will be taking an important step in supporting their success in school, and setting a good example... **Remember that every day counts!**

What we need PARENTS/CARERS to do in case of an absence:

- Ring the school on 0121 748 0400 - preferably before 9.30am on the FIRST day of any absence.
- Send a note in on the FIRST day of your child's return explaining the reason for the absence.
- Whenever possible, make all medical appointments AFTER the end of the school day at 3.00pm.
- Please DO NOT plan family holidays during term time.
- Please ensure that we have your correct contact numbers and email addresses. Your home, work and mobile numbers are all useful if the Academy needs to get in touch.

What PARK HALL ACADEMY will do:

- Contact parents at home or at work to check the reasons for absence.
- Inform parents by letter of any unexplained absences and request reasons for these.
- Inform our Education Welfare Officer of any poor attendees who will act accordingly and can ultimately prosecute persistent poor attendees.
- All holidays will be unauthorised, except in exceptional circumstances.

ZERO-TOLERANCE for term-time holidays

At Park Hall holidays during term-time will NOT be authorised except in exceptional circumstances, if it is exceptional circumstances please put this in writing to the relevant Head of Year.

Please remember a two week holiday in term-time means FIFTY hours of teaching missed and several homework's too. Students often find it very difficult to catch up with work missed.



The 2014 Sixth Form Prom

The end of May saw a fabulous parade of elegant, stylish young adults arrive for Park Hall 's Annual Sixth Form Leavers' Ball, held at the luxurious Grimstock Hotel in Coleshill. The event marks the end of the structured academic year for our Sixth Form and the start of the nail biting period as they await their results, before embarking on their lives beyond school.





The 2014 Sixth Form Prom



This year our Year 13 students celebrated their Leavers Prom at the Grimstock Hotel on Friday 23 May 2014.

The evening began with a 'Champagne Reception' for the Parents and Carers that offered a special opportunity to recognise and applaud their essential role in supporting their children through 13 years of education.

It was a real pleasure to be able to speak to our students and their parents about their experiences at Park Hall over the years, and to discuss their inspiring hopes and aspirations for the future.

All our revellers looked exceptionally smart and very much the happy, confident, stylish young adults they have become. Most of the gentlemen opted for suits and ties, whilst our young ladies displayed a level of grace and sophistication normally reserved exclusively for the catwalks of Paris and Milan!

Once parents had departed, staff and students enjoyed a three course meal and a night of dancing, shared nostalgia and an endless parade of group photographs by our official photographer - shots that I'm sure will become treasured reminders in years to come.

Of course Park Hall Sixth Formers do something of a reputation on the dancefloor - but I have to say this is the first year group to INSIST on laying down some serious moves BEFORE the main courses had even been served!

On behalf of everyone here at Park Hall I'd like to wish all of our fantastic Year 13 leavers the very best for results day, and in their future personal, academic and professional lives beyond the Sixth Form.

Mr Cornell, Vice Principal, Post-16





The 2014 Sixth Form Prom



Class of 2014

ENJOY THEIR FINAL 'FAREWELL'

Thursday 22 May was a day of mixed emotions for our departing Year 13 students. With crucial exams still to come, students celebrated their final day of timetabled lessons with a leavers' assembly, followed by presentations, group photos and preparations for the Leavers' Prom being held at the Grimstock Hotel the following day.

Students were treated to a nostalgic review of their time at Park Hall, thanks to photos contributed from a number of departments including Performing Arts, Geography and PE. The display was bolstered by some 'creative' photoshop work supported by Year 13 Media Student, Natasha Adcock providing an interesting glimpse of what the future might hold in store for them...

This significant milestone in their seven year Park Hall careers marked the 'handing over of the reins' as students take on the personal responsibility for revision and exam preparation.

Staff at the school have many, many fond memories of teaching this year group over the years and would like to wish every one of them the very best for a happy and successful future.



Right: Future World Cup Winner? Reece Sanders



Robocop? Rachael Wolliston



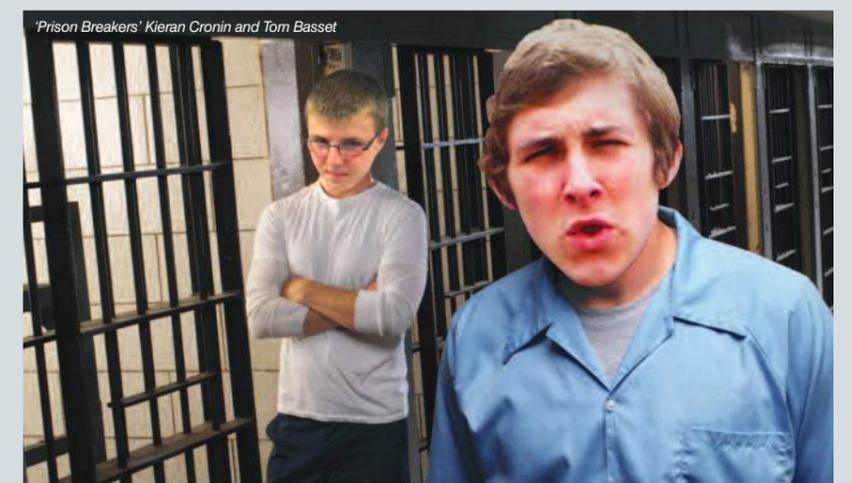
Future Prime Minister? Iron Lady, Jessica Scholfield



Ginger Crusaders? Brad Smith and Katie Timmins



Britain's Next Top Model? Reiss Brooke



'Prison Breakers' Kieran Cronin and Tom Basset





60 Park Hall years ago

Today Park Hall Academy may be housed in one of the most impressive and modern buildings in the West Midlands, but in fact the school has a long history on the site, dating back to 1951. We were very pleased recently to hear from one of our old students, Mr John Griffiths who now lives in New Zealand. John joined Park Hall almost SIXTY years ago in 1955, he obviously flourished at the old High School because he went on to serve as Head Boy from 1958 through to 1959.

My name is John Griffiths, I went to Park Hall from 1955/59 when it was still a 'High School' and was Head Boy from 1958 to 1959. Back then the school was divided into two, in the middle stood the boiler house and kitchens, the buildings then mirrored themselves either side. The Boys were on the left side of the boiler house and the Girls on the right. In four years I did not even get to enter the girl's school more than half a dozen times, and then only as Head Boy... The Girls' side was the 'holy of holies' to us boys!

We travelled to the school from Coleshill, Bacons End, Shustoke, Whitacre, Kingshurst, Minworth, Curdworth and Gilson on Jacksons Coaches. On arrival each day the routine was organised and strictly adhered to. Times were punctual and the 'Bell', which was rung by a Prefect, ruled our every move.

Everyone arrived at the school by 9.00am and went to the playground to await the bell marking the start of the school day. In lessons, each teacher had their own personal classroom, so for example if your next lesson was English with Miss X, then you would file into Miss X's classroom.

The main lessons comprised English, Maths, Technical Drawing, Science, and Games - which were Football in Winter and Cricket in the Summer. Art would nearly always be two periods long, whilst Metalwork and Woodwork would be allocated all morning, or all afternoon.

Until the Girls got their own Gym built in 1960, they had to come over to the Boys' school and use our Gym for sport; though they had their own showers and changing room on the opposite side of the corridor from us boys.

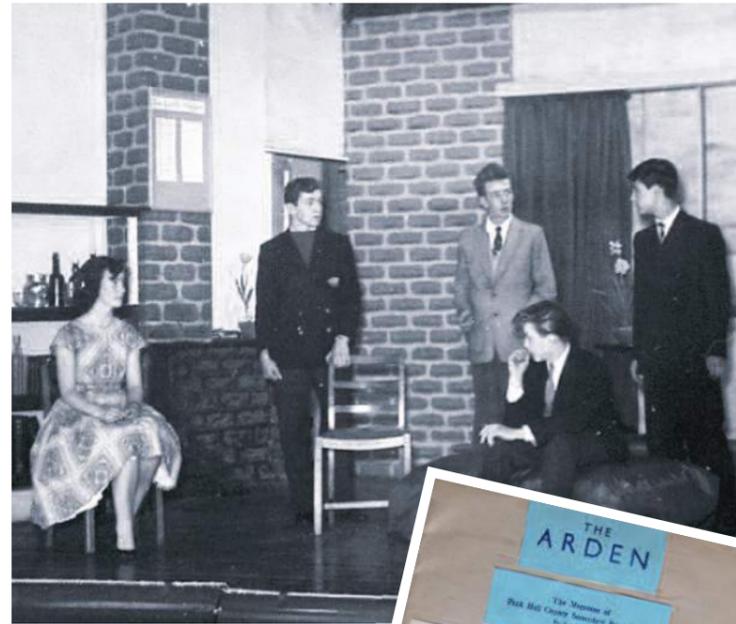
Even back then I remember Park Hall was well up with all the latest technology. In 1956 the school purchased its first 'reel-to-reel' Tape Recorder. We all viewed this piece of amazing piece of technological wizardry in absolute awe, and each class was allotted special time to use it.

It's amazing how much the area around the school has changed, I can remember looking out of the window in Art Class and seeing Farmer Thomlinson ploughing and tilling his fields across the road from Park Hall with a pair of Shire Horses!

Discipline was strict and swiftly meted out. The Headmaster handed out canings for breaking the rules, unruly behaviour or fighting anywhere in school. I was lucky because I only received two sets of two strokes - Mr Waite could put two sharp whacks across your backside in a split second.

The bright red wheals would be visible for two days after. It was hard to hold back the pain from welling up in the back of your throat into a sharp yelp as you squeezed your buttocks to try and ease the searing pain. After receiving your punishment you then had to apologise for your misdeeds.

School Sports day in 1959, left to right: *The Tug'o War with Laurence Attwood, Gerry Dawson, A Perry, John Griffiths, K Moore, R Stilgoe, L Keatly and Westwood.*



A Park Hall School Play 'Ten Little Indians' back in the 1950s.

Hard? Perhaps, but it certainly made sure you did not break that rule again... What it did teach you was that there are consequences for your actions.

Much like today, on joining Park Hall you were allotted a 'House'. They were Adderley which was Green, Arden - yellow, Newport was blue, whilst Devereux was red. I was Captain of Devereux House in 1959.

Sport was also part of school life in the 50s. I held the Shot Putt record from 1958 until I left, and proudly represented Park Hall High School and the County at the National Championships in 1959.

Those four years were golden days for me; life went on nicely at Park Hall, it was structured and very predictable; you did not have to worry about anything because everything was laid out for you and it ran like clockwork. You knew who you were, what you were and what you were there for.

John Griffiths, Invercargill, New Zealand.

Thank you very much indeed to Mr Griffiths for this absolutely fascinating and unique insight into Park Hall life back in the days before many of our Teachers' parents were even born!



Park Hall staff in the early 50s, left to right: *Back, Mr Hardcastle, Mr Taylor, Mr Shaw, Mr Allen, Mr Silk. At the front, Mr Hunt, Mr Wood, Headmaster Mr Waite, School Secretary Mrs McDonald and Mr Loveridge.*

The Park Hall school day in 1955

9.00am Bell: *All classes (average of 45 in each class) lined up in two rows in each playground and were then despatched to Assembly Hall for morning hymn and prayers. Movement in corridors by classes was monitored at all times by Prefects, keep left at all times, each class in pairs walking. Mr Woods complete in his immaculate dress standard and highly polished shoes would be standing on stage supervising entry, not that it was needed it all ran like clockwork. As Head Boy I was stationed in corridor waiting for the nod from Mr Woods that all was in order, then I would go and inform Headmaster G.W. Waite we were ready for him. I would then follow him back to the Hall and up onto the stage. Known by all as 'George', the Headmaster always had steel heels on his shoes, so we could hear him coming along the tiled corridors - concentration in class rose to the max when you heard the sharp 'click-clack, click-clack' of his approach!*

9.15-ish: *File out of Hall to your class allocated classroom for register and diner count. Monday Dinner Money was collected. It was 2s/9 pence (33p) for the WHOLE week. Some of the less well-off pupils had free meals, but I must add were in no way put down because of this.*

9.30 Bell: *File out to first lesson, as specified in timetable.*

10.00 Bell: *File out (when told too!) to second lesson. You will note our lessons were just half to three quarters of an hour long.*

10.25 Bell: *Our daily free school milk is handed out.*

10.30 Bell: *File out to playground for a brief break.*

10.40 Bell: *Line up in classes, in rows of two, ready to be despatched to the third lesson.*

11.15 Bell: *Fourth lesson.*

12.00 Bell: *First Diner... The First and Second Years line up in classes in pairs at stairs just in front of the Assembly Hall, waiting for Head Cook, Mrs Hamilton to give the word proceed to the Diner Hall (unless you went home for dinner, or had sandwiches - in which case went to first aid room to eat sandwiches). Each table sat eight students, with the top two, three or four pupils acting as 'servers' - depending on how many serving trays of food there were. Meals usually included potatoes, meat, veg and gravy. The servers' job was to divide each tray fairly into eight portions. Whilst the lower years were eating the Third and Fourth Years went to playground.*

12.45 Bell: *Second Dinner sitting, this prompted the same procedure as the 12.00 Bell, but this time the Third and Fourth Years filed into the Dining Room, whilst the First and Second Years went out to play.*

1.30 Bell: *Marking the end of Dinnertime and beginning of lesson five.*

2.15 Bell: *Lesson six.*

3.00 Bell: *Afternoon break.*

3.15 Bell: *Lesson seven.*

4.00 Bell: *The end of schools. Bus pupils proceeded to the front carpark to get on their coach home. The rest of us made our own way home on foot or by bike.*



Park Hall Shows Racism the Red Card!

The beginning of June saw Park Hall students attending assemblies celebrating the launch of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, which also took the opportunity to express support for the educational charity 'Show Racism the Red Card', an movement which developed from the work to drive racial discrimination out of the beautiful game. ■ The assemblies focussed on the role that the World Cup played in celebrating global cultural diversity – a positive drive forward that, for example that has seen five places being made available for African teams in this World Cup compared to the measly one place offered back in the 1980s. ■ Whilst it is important to recognise that instances of racism STILL occur in football stadiums, both in Britain and abroad, the assemblies centred on the potential that football has to combat racism and make the sport, and society as a whole, more inclusive. ■ To show their support for the campaign, students have been given 'Show Racism the Red Card' badges that they have been encouraged to wear to school for the duration of the World Cup. All students were reminded of the importance of avoiding using racist language - even as a joke or amongst friends - and of reporting any instances of racist behaviour to a member of staff.



About the Charity

Established in January 1996, Show Racism the Red Card is the UK's anti-racism educational charity. The organisation utilises the high-profile status of football and football players to help tackle racism in society. The majority of the campaign's output is the delivery of education to young people and adults in their schools, their workplaces and at events held in football stadiums. Across Britain, Show Racism the Red Card delivers training to more than 50,000 individuals per year.

Over the course of the World Cup Park Hall Academy Year 7, 8 and 9 students have completed a series of lessons using Show Racism the Red Card resources to help promote a message of understanding. Films featuring professional football players such as Thierry Henry, Samuel Eto'o and Ryan Giggs have been used to address a range of issues surrounding racism. The films help students hear first hand experiences of racism in the sporting arena.

Show Racism the Red Card works extensively across Great Britain and has offices in North East England, East England (also covering South East England and London), Scotland (Glasgow) and Wales (Cardiff). In Scotland and Wales, the campaign also focuses on tackling racism within professional and grass-roots football.

The Charity Mission Statement

Show Racism The Red Card an anti-racism educational charity aims to combat racism through enabling role models, who are predominately but not exclusively footballers, to present an antiracist message to young people and others.

Through the use of Show Racism The Red Card resources, we have been able to show that racism changes, as do the experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the UK. Our message and activities therefore aim to respond to such changes as and when appropriate.

We achieve this through:

Focusing on Show Racism the Red Card has enabled Park Hall Academy students and staff to encourage all members of the community, including young people, to challenge racism. Students have also produced posters, used Show Racism the Red Card t-shirts during training and developed a greater understanding of the importance of promoting equality and challenging racism in the game of football and other sports.



Sicily

During the recent Easter break a group of 30 Year 8 and 10 students from Park Hall embarked on an exciting field trip that took their studies of volcanoes to the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily - the second most active volcano in the world.

The pupils spent four days in Sicily, giving them the opportunity to experience the ferocity and splendour of volcanoes first hand and witness the impacts that they can have on the surrounding population and landscape.

The trip departed Park Hall at midnight on the Thursday. Flying from London Gatwick, they travelled through the night, arriving in Catania, Sicily around 10.00am local time. The pupils were very well behaved throughout the journey; the Easyjet flight staff were extremely impressed with the behaviour and the well-mannered polite nature of our pupils. Despite being tired from the night flight, our students were excited and quickly re-energised by the warm Sicilian sun.

Having made it to Sicily there was no time to rest; we met our coach and tour guide, Francesco, and headed to Giardini Naxos to have lunch. This provided some of the us with our first chance to taste real Italian pizza - it's very different to the pizzas we're used to, but very tasty! After lunch, drinks and a few photographs of the beautiful bay we were ready to set off on an afternoon excursion before checking in to our hotel.

The afternoon took us to the amazing Alcantara Gorge, a beautiful and natural formation cut through the mountains by a combination of rivers and a large earthquake. The pupils trekked up the gorge stopping along the way to take in the spectacular views of the valley and the impressive basalt rock formations that had become weathered like the skin of an onion. The pupils really enjoyed the trek and were able to witness many features that they have studied in theory during their work on rivers in school. When we finally reached the top we got to take a cliff-side lift down to the river below, where we saw the fast flowing rapids that had helped form the gorge, gaining a different perspective on the valley as a whole. We also got to hone our all-important stone skipping skills before ice cream, drinks and returning to the hotel for some well-earned beach time before dinner!

Picture: Mount Etna - luckily it wasn't QUITE this lively when Years 8 and 10 visited at Easter!



Sicity

Having had a long day travelling and exploring, the pupils slept well on the Friday night, ensuring we were fully refreshed for a busy day exploring Mount Etna. As we left the hotel we could see Mount Etna standing tall over the island, capped with snow and a puff of smoke that had started to emerge from the crater that morning. It was a truly magnificent to see and the sights got more and more spectacular as the coach took us further up the slopes of the volcano past all the lava flows from previous eruptions. After an hour of winding roads and amazing views of the volcano and the island we arrived at the car park and the Etna visitor centre.

Day Two and Mount Etna

The first thing we all noticed was the significant drop in temperature as we got off the coach, having travelled up to 3,000 metres we were on the edge of the snow line and were soon reaching for warmer clothes! We started our final ascent in cable cars which took us up to 3,500 metres. The cable car journey was an interesting experience, the views on the route up were fantastic. Many Park Hall students loved travelling by cable car high above the mountainside, whilst others found the experience a little unnerving swinging from side to side as they go. On completing the ride we continued our journey to the top of the volcano using 4x4 minibuses. We got out at the top and walked across the snow to get a good view of the smoking crater. The snow was slightly grey due to the ash that had been falling on to it from the volcano and the altitude was starting to be felt by some of the pupils who were finding themselves getting out of breath a lot sooner than usual.

Whilst we were at the top several large plumes of ash and smoke were thrown from the volcano as it started to wake up for the day. Mount Etna is often active at this level, so there was nothing to worry about for the pupils, especially because there are many guides ensuring people kept to the safe areas. Visiting the Etna caldera was an incredible experience for all of us and highlighted just how powerful these daunting features can be and how they can impact on people. Having explored the top of the volcano and made a few Sicilian snow balls, we took the Jeeps and cable cars back down the mountain in time for lunch and exploring the information centre and shops at the base of the volcano.

Having had an exciting morning, followed by spending plenty of money in the shops we headed back to Giardini Naxos for an afternoon on the beach - local inflatable sales saw a sharp peak that afternoon! The pupils spent the afternoon paddling in the Mediterranean and playing football and cricket and winding down before going in for dinner and another well-earned night's sleep.

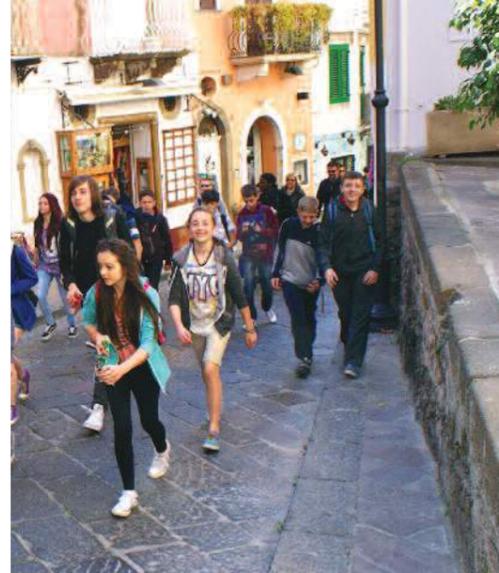
The Volcano at Vulcano

Our final full day in Sicily involved a ferry excursion to some islands just off the north coast. We took our coach to the harbour town of Milazzo, passing the narrow strait of Messina that separates Sicily from mainland Italy. We boarded a ferry which first took us to the island of Lipari passing the volcano of Stromboli rising from the sea. Sometimes a red glow can be seen due to the lava in the crater. On Lipari we spent time exploring the fort and the town centre, before continuing our journey to the island of Vulcano.

Vulcano is the island after which volcanoes are named. When we arrived we split into two groups, some pupils decided to join Mr Foster on the climb to the top of the volcano, whilst the others remained in the town with Miss Bloomer and Mr Cox and were able to explore the island in bike cars.

The climb up the volcano was very challenging, with much of the path being made up of steep, sandy slopes, but a good number of the pupils made it all the way to the top, including Daniel Ameghino who climbed back up a few times to help pupils make it to the top. At the summit we were greeted by a strong smell of rotten eggs caused by the plumes of sulphur gases coming out of the top. Students were able to look down into the crater and experience the heat that is given off from the volcano. There were some spectacular views of the islands, including Stromboli and many of the coastal features around the islands, such as natural sea arches and stacks that the pupils are currently studying in Year 8. We met up with the rest of the group at the bottom, before taking the ferry back to Sicily and travelling back to the hotel in good time for dinner.

The next morning we went to the airport for the return flight to Gatwick and our coach back to Park Hall. The pupils had behaved impeccably on the trip and were praised by a number of people, including the hotel, the coach driver and the other school in the hotel with whom we made friends during our stay. This was a thoroughly rewarding field trip and very educational for everyone - an excellent experience for the students involved.





GCSE Textiles' visit to The V&A

It was a lovely sunny day when the GCSE Textiles class set off for London accompanied by Ms Bloomer and Mrs Kernan. ■ We got the train to London Euston, the tube across London and finally arrived at The Victoria & Albert Museum for the amazing Wedding Dress exhibition. ■ A quick scoot through the 'Fashion Through The Ages' exhibition kept us busy while we awaited our time slot. ■ When we went into the 'Wedding Dresses' exhibition, we were greeted by a range of the most amazing designs and craftsmanship. ■ Wedding dresses belonging to Kate Moss, Gwen Stefani and Dita Von Teese were all on display (along with their incredible matching shoes!). ■ There was a film on the Royal Weddings through the ages showcasing the dresses of the Queen, Princess Diana and Kate Middleton. ■ The students were able to see designs by Jenny Packham, Ian Stuart, Bruce Oldfield, and Vivienne Westwood and to consider what they liked or disliked about each one. ■ There was a focus on the style of display by the students, in order to take some of these ideas and translate them into their own coursework pieces. ■ A spot of lunch followed by a quick bit of sightseeing around Leicester Square rounded off the day before we headed back to Euston and the train home... A lovely day out all round!





Winners!

Park Hall Academy's sporting heroes have had a simply amazing year, we have not only been crowned 'Year 7 Solihull Football Team of the Year', but also the 'Solihull School Games (Secondary) Winners'!

Tuesday 1 July proved to be a VERY special evening for Park Hall's sports teams, as current Solihull Cup and Birmingham Cup Champions, the Year 7 Football Team have scooped the 'Solihull Team of the Year' and 'Solihull School Games (Secondary) Winners'. The team also reached the last 32 of the ESFA National Cup following wins over St Peters in Round Two, Priory School in Round 3, Rawlings Academy in Round 4 and Kirk Halham in Round 5.

The team are also the North Solihull and Solihull Indoor Five-A-Side Champions, going-on to the Midlands' Finals where they won ALL THREE group games against Heath Park, Twycross and Ormiston. In the semi-finals the team beat Woodrush, before sadly being defeated 1-0 in the Final by Thomas Telford; a brilliant team that went on to hammer home a blazing 8-0 WIN in The National ESFA Final!

Well done to Park Hall's Year 7 Footballers on deservedly becoming 'Solihull Team of the Year' - we're all thrilled to bits with the Football Teams' amazing achievements. The icing on the cake was rounding off this fantastic season by winning 'The Solihull School (Secondary) Games' title on points gained for their FIRST, SECOND and THIRD placings through the year.

Park Hall Academy sporting teams also WON the Year 7 and Year 8 Boys' Indoor Athletics title; Year 7 Boys and Year 8 Girls are the Outdoor Athletics Champions; Year 9 Rounders - Champions; we're Girl's Badminton Champions, as well as Girl's Under 16 Badminton and Boys' Under 14 AND Under 16 Badminton Champions. We also took the titles for Under 13 Table Tennis and Year 9 Boy's Indoor Rowing - amazing!

...But it doesn't stop there, because Park Hall were also Runners Up in the Girls' and Year 7 Indoor Athletics; Trampoline Runners Up for both Years 7 and 8; Under 13 and 15 Girls' Football and Indoor Rowing Runners Up. We also came Third in the Year 7 Netball; Under 14 Basketball; and Under 16 Table Tennis... Wow!

Well done every Park Hall Academy sportsmen and women on playing your part in securing our title as 'Solihull School Games (Secondary) Winners'.

Park Hall's incredible 2014 Sporting achievements





Another Red Letter day for Park Hall sporting achievement!

Wednesday 11 June proved to be a highly successful day for the PE Department as a total of 21 young sports stars earned prestigious places at the upcoming County Games in July.

Our Year 7 Boys' Super6 Athletics Team absolutely dominated the event - winning by a simply massive margin. The Year 8 Girls' team also won their events, edging out our four regular North Solihull rivals.

It was very nearly a clean sweep for our four teams, but despite some fantastic performances from our Year 7 girls, they were just beaten into the Silver Medal slot. The Year 8 boys also missed out on a win - this time by just TWO solitary points... Disappointing - but when all's said and done, if you add our four teams' points together, Park Hall's teams proved they are still the overall NUMBER ONE ATHLETES in the Borough!

Individual Park Hall placings were also extremely impressive across the board. The Year 7 boys scored a FIRST - Mikkel Boone, SECOND

- Rahmel Miles, FOURTH - Alex Knowles, AND FIFTH - Remi Colebourne Boxhill. Park Hall's Year 7 girls saw Shannon Eldred ranked SECOND and Holly Palmer FOURTH in their age group.

Year 8 Girls' Katie Lund came SECOND and Katie Schofield FIFTH, whilst Daniel Ameghino was SECOND, Luke Smith FOURTH and Isaac Toranzo FIFTH for the Year 8 Boys.

July will be a very busy month, with The Solihull Under 13 Table Tennis Champions contesting the extremely competitive County Championships. On 2 July our two winning Super6 Athlete teams traveled to Warwick University for the County Games and then competed in the Solihull Championships on 3 July. The Year 9 Rounders Team are also competing this month. We are extremely proud of the achievements of our sporting stars!

Below: Our Year 7 Super6 Athletes - winners by a 'massive' margin!



Year 8 Super6 Boys - beaten into Silver by just TWO points!



Year 7 Super6 Girls - Silver Medalists!





Under 14's Rounders Success



On Wednesday 11 June nine Park Hall students; Millie Hall, Aimee Crisp, Darla Caraher, Amaani Raja, Aliyyah Raja, Aliyah Ataria, Emma Williams, Courtney Groves and Amy Nicholls; made their way to John Henry Newman School for the North Solihull Rounders Championships. There were five teams entered but our girls only had to play three matches due to Smith's Wood dropping out at the last minute. Our team went into their first game against CTC Kingshurst.

We won the toss and chose to field first. At the end of the first innings CTC had six Rounders. It was then our girls' turn to bat; they really tried their best and batted extremely well, winning the match by half a Rounder at six and a half Rounders to CTC's six. Going into the second match, the girls were excited that they had won the first round and were determined to do it again. The second match was against a good John Henry Newman Team. Once again our girls won the toss, gain opting to field first. John Henry Newman scored just two and a half Rounders, so all we needed was three to win! Aliyah Ataria was first in to bat, she made a great start to the match by scoring a Rounder. Aliyyah Raja was up next, this time scoring a half - Park Hall were on a roll! At the end of the Inning Park Hall had scored four and a half Rounders, beating John Henry Newman fair and square.

Going into the final match against Grace Academy, Park Hall had won two out of their three matches. Again the girls won the toss and once again opted to field first. Grace Academy had a strong batting team,

gaining six and a half rounders after 18 good balls. Now it was Park Hall's turn to bat and the girls were perhaps a little over-excited due to their wins and started to take a few risks when batting. Unfortunately we paid the price, with Park Hall losing their final game two and a half rounder's to six and a half.

It then came to the presentation and the girls sat nervously. There was Forth for John Henry Newman and Third for CTC Kingshurst who, though they had tied with JHN on points, had scored more Rounders. Then there was also a tie on points between Park Hall and Grace, so the North Solihull Under 14 Championship all came down to who had scored the most Rounders.

The Judges totted up the score... Grace Academy had scored twelve - but Park Hall Academy had gained a fantastic fourteen and a half rounders - making our girls the clear Under 14 North Solihull Rounders Champions!

This impressive win now sees our team go through to the Level Three Warwickshire County Games as representatives of North Solihull on 1 July. Well done girls! And good luck in the next round.



Sport Relief the final score

With the sponsorship money now all in we are very proud to announce that Park Hall Academy broke all previous fund raising records this year to collect an incredible total of... **£5,713.98**

This fantastic sum exceeds all expectations and will make a significant contribution to the work of Sport Relief. This money could...

- Pay for 1,142 young people with disabilities in the UK take part in sport.
- Pay for 114 children living in poverty in Peru to attend pre-school for a whole year.
- Finance 38 Bicycle Ambulances to help pregnant women in rural Malawi reach life-saving health services.
- Provide 380 people with clean drinking water - **FOR LIFE!**

Many thanks to the numerous students that took part and to their generous sponsors.

All students that participated and raised money will be receiving a Sport Relief certificate to keep in their Record of Achievement – showing how far they ran and the money they raised. Thank you for all of your support.



Y7's Ace Tennis Day

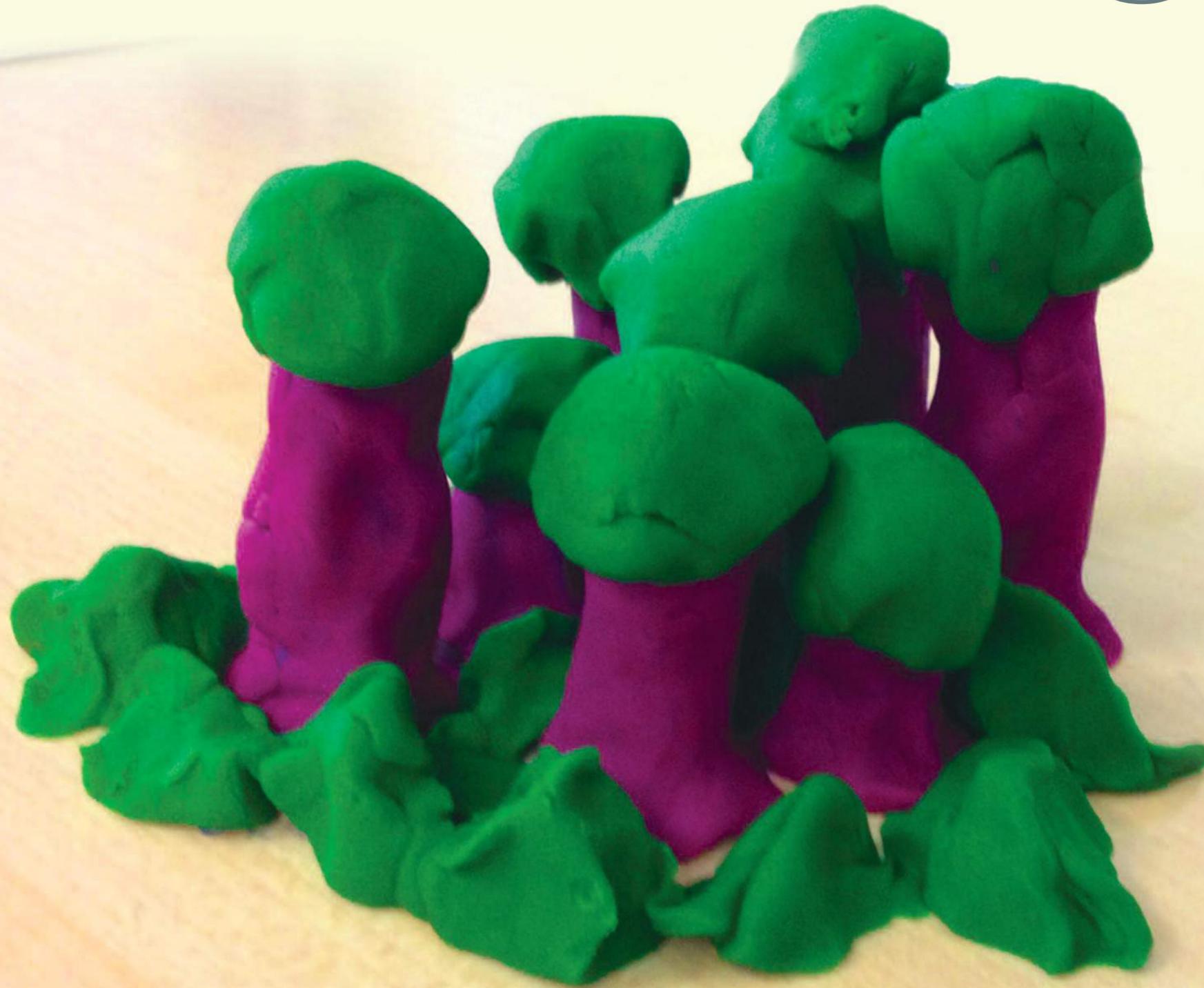
Friday 13 June might be unlucky for some - but not Park Hall's Year 7 Tennis Players! Miss Sauvage, Miss Loynes and Mrs Gellion took 45 Year 7 girls to Edgbaston to watch the quarter finals of the prestigious Aegon Championships.

On arrival, our students were treated to an intensive 45 minute coaching session. This was followed up by an afternoon of watching some truly world class Tennis Doubles. Doubles is a particularly skillful form of the game, requiring players to be closely in tune; knowing when to chase the ball, knowing when to leave it to your partner, using each other's strengths to win through. This close teamwork makes for a fantastic, skillful spectator sport that is less dominated by the sheer brute force of the modern 'serve and volley' singles game of today.

We had a lovely day and our students were even complemented on their behaviour by another school's Headteacher who was sitting in the crowd!



Spotlight on Geography



Recently some may have noticed Park Hall Geography students going ‘all Blue Peter’ on us, with Playdoh, tape, glue and lollipop sticks very much in evidence as Years 7, 8 and 9 get to grips with using modelling techniques to simulate and investigate a range of different features of the world around us.

Geography Playdoh Modelling

During the Summer Term our Year 7, 8 and 9 Geography students have had the opportunity to use Playdoh to enhance their learning.

Year 7 have been studying tropical rainforests, learning that these dense jungles are not as chaotic as they seem, but that they actually have a clear structure comprising four distinct layers. The pupils found out that the main layer is the Canopy where the highest trees meet. There is an Under Canopy below it made up of smaller trees, with a layer of tall shrubs at the bottom.

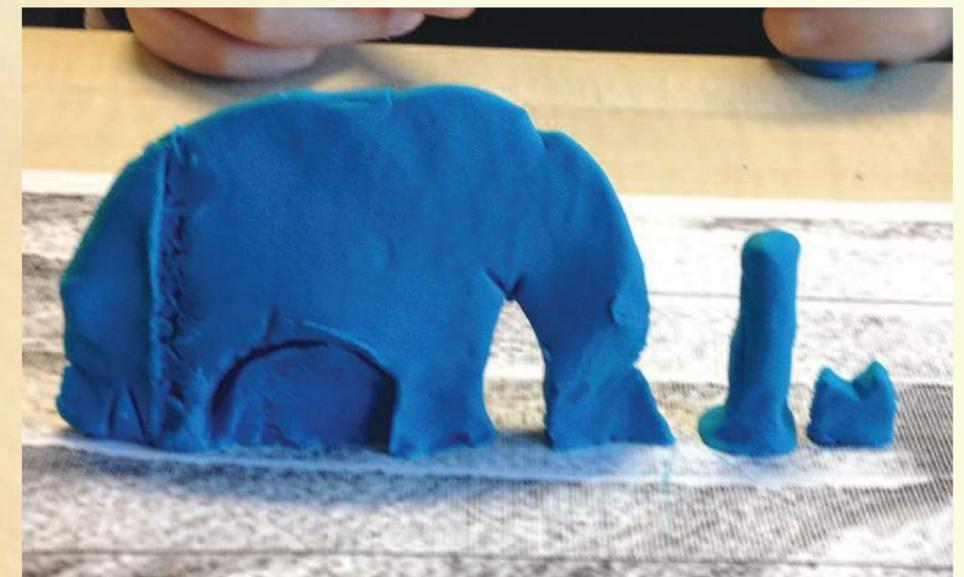
We learned that some of the tallest trees are up to 50 metres high. They stick through the Canopy, forming what is known as the Emergent Layer. The Year 7 Geographers worked in pairs creating a model of this structure using Playdoh.

Every student thoroughly enjoyed the lesson using Playdoh, learning lots of information about the structure of tropical rainforests. We are thoroughly looking forward to using Playdoh again in Geography lessons.

Year 8 and 9 pupils have been studying coastal areas and the impact of erosion. This has involved the study of a range of features developed as a result of coastal erosion. Students focussed their investigations on Old Harry Rocks in Dorset and how the famous ‘Stack’ was created by erosion of the headland over millions of years. In order to show how erosion affects the features, pupils spent a lesson creating models of Old Harry Rocks, later adapting the models to show how they will change with future erosion.

The Year 8 and 9 pupils thoroughly enjoyed their lesson. They found that the modelling of the coastal change helped them to understand what effect erosion has on the features of our coastline. They will now be going-on to study the ways in which coastal erosion affects the people living by the sea.

Pictured: Main picture, the Rainforest canopy is split into four distinct layers. Inset, coastal erosion in Playdoh.





Spotlight on Geography

Year 9 Coastal Defences

As part of their GCSE Geography work on coasts, Year 9 students have been looking at the impact of coastal erosion, and the ways in which we can protect our coastline against it. During their lessons the Year 9 pupils were given a box of raw materials, including stones, lollipop sticks, a toilet roll and some glue for us to use in developing a coastal protection solution. Once the sea defences were constructed, we tested them by spraying them with a water gun to see how strong they would be. The sea defences made had varying levels of success and the pupils were able to analyse the benefits and problems of each design. As a class we learnt lots of information about what makes a successful sea defence, and of course also what makes a bad one!



Year 7 investigates Park Hall's Weather

During their Geography lessons Year 7 have been studying weather and climate. As part of this work the students have completed an investigation to find out whether Park Hall has a 'microclimate', where the weather varies slightly around the school. The pupils decided what information they would need to record around the Academy site, and locations which would be best to record this information. ■ Having planned the investigation, the pupils were then sent around the site armed with thermometers, anemometers, balloons on strings and a compass to help them to record the temperature, wind speed and direction, moisture levels and some general observations about the weather and the location. On their return to class the students were then able to use this data to create maps and charts that illustrate whether Park Hall Academy has a microclimate or not. ■ The pupils worked very well on their weather investigations and learnt lots about weather and climate, as well as about planning, carrying out and writing up a geographical investigation. Having studied and analysed the graphs, maps and charts produced from their data, the pupils were able to conclude that Park Hall Academy does indeed have its own a microclimate as the weather does vary around the site, especially in respect of wind speeds and directions and temperatures. ■

The pupils used observation and measurement to establish that the microclimate is caused by the effects of shadows from buildings and the shelter that the buildings and hedgerows can provide from the wind.





Park Hall InBrief

Well Done Charlotte!

We recently received a communication with regards to the charitable work carried out by Charlotte Steele, one of Park Hall's Year 7 students. "I am writing regarding my niece who is one of your Year 7 pupils, her name is Charlotte Steele. Charlotte has worked tirelessly in the past week making bracelets for me to sell at a charity event we have hosted today for McMillan's. I am delighted to say that we have sold all of her bracelets and also have orders which will keep her busy for the next week! We have managed to raise over £500 today and £30 of that has come from Charlotte."



Lee Vaughan



Park Hall's Lee Vaughan took part in the prestigious Winter League Showjumping Championships in Wales during April.

The competition was fierce, with many entries in each class – in fact qualifying for this show was an achievement in itself. Lee and his horse 'Apache Blue' were placed Sixth and Eighth in their two speed classes against some of Great Britain's best junior riders.

He also rode a young horse 'Cappaquin Boy'; its first outing at such a big show. Lee had only brought him along for the experience, so it came as a big surprise when he secured FIFTH place out of more than SIXTY entrants!



Media Studies

Park Hall Media Students made their Red Carpet debuts at The Electric Cinema, which is Britain's oldest working cinema, recently when they attended an event showcasing their own film production work. ■ The Sixth Form students got to see their work projected on the Big Screen at the famous Birmingham venue. The quality of the films was impressive, reflecting excellent teamwork across all areas of directing, filming, cinematography and editing. ■ It was a great event with many film genres showcased, including promotional films made for The Castle Bromwich Youth Council, a promotional film for Becketts Farm and a short horror film featuring flesh eating zombies.

Park Hall First Aiders

On Wednesday 11 June twenty five students from the BTEC National Diploma in Children's Play, Learning and Development, A Level Politics and Sociology attended a First Aid course delivered by Mike a representative of the St John's Ambulance.

This training forms an important part of the Sixth Form Enrichment program of study. Early Years students found the course particularly useful, as they had the opportunity to learn basic First Aid techniques which may come in very useful at school or during their nursery placements. This course is especially important because knowing just what to do in an emergency can make the difference to a child's recovery - and could even save a life.

The A Level Sociology and Politics students found the course provided them with important information on resuscitation and treatment of broken bones, burns and scalds, bleeding and asthma. The BTEC students all intend to pursue careers in Teaching, Social Work and Nursing and felt that the course will be extremely useful in their chosen careers.

The Park Hall first aiders clearly appreciated this opportunity, with one student commenting that "Additional opportunities to gain recognised training like the St John's Ambulance First Aid qualification is one of the highlights our course, as it will enhance my chances of becoming a teacher". Another added "I really enjoyed the session with Mike, it was practical and will make me feel more confident on placement if I have to deal with a First Aid issue".

If any other students would like to attend a First Aid training session, the Emergency Services will be in attendance at the special 'Save-A-Life' day on Saturday 27 September, held at Coleshill Town Hall between 9.00am and 4.00pm. The Midlands Emergency Response team will be providing expert trainers with extremely valuable life-saving skills at the event.



Top: Resuscitation dummies receive heart massage. Sadly, despite some excellent life saving work, our First Aiders were unable to raise a pulse.

Above: Preparing to role the patient over in the Recovery Position, very important because it helps keep the airways open and clear.

Below: The best way to apply use a sling to an injured or broken arm.





Azad Choudhury Update

Park Hall Academy has a partnership with Azad Choudhury Academy in Bangladesh. Students regularly exchange letters with Azad Choudhury children. Park Hall Academy Council also continues to sponsor five students from the Azad Choudhury Academy each year. We were delighted to be visited by Academy Headteacher, Mr Choudhury two years ago. Last month Park Hall Academy also welcomed Mr Barry Badham, who updates us on developments at Azad Choudhury and is extremely informative. He delivered assemblies to each year group which were most educational.

After opening its doors to 250 High School children January 2008, and boasting two floors the change in six years is little less than miraculous. Today the Academy offers an education to over 650 Primary and High school children who otherwise would have no opportunity of an education.

Size and numbers are not the only changes, from a very basic education the school now boasts a computer room, a science laboratory (although more equipment is needed), and the top floor is given over to teaching skills in carpentry and sewing. The cost of tools for teaching these skills was provided by Trade Aid, who has pledged to continue to support the project by making it possible for those children doing well in these areas to leave school with a well equipped tool box, or a sewing machine, enabling them to start up a micro business in the surrounding villages.

In addition to the developments mentioned above, the trustees of the Azad Choudhury Academy made it possible for the Head Master to visit the UK for the first time two years ago. He spent time in a variety of British schools during his stay, including an important visit to Park Hall Academy, and was able to see what schools here had to offer academically, after school activities, pastorally, and how the administration was organised, including teacher training and parental involvement.

On his return he put together a number of changes, including dividing the school into four houses named after the four main rivers in Bangladesh, who now play each other at cricket, badminton and other sports. Traditional dancing and drama are now enjoyed by the children and visits by a teacher to the local villages who is available to talk to and answer any questions that the parents may have. Most importantly, the school's results achieved by the children in the district exams have been outstanding and the Azad Choudhury Academy is out performing all other schools in the district.

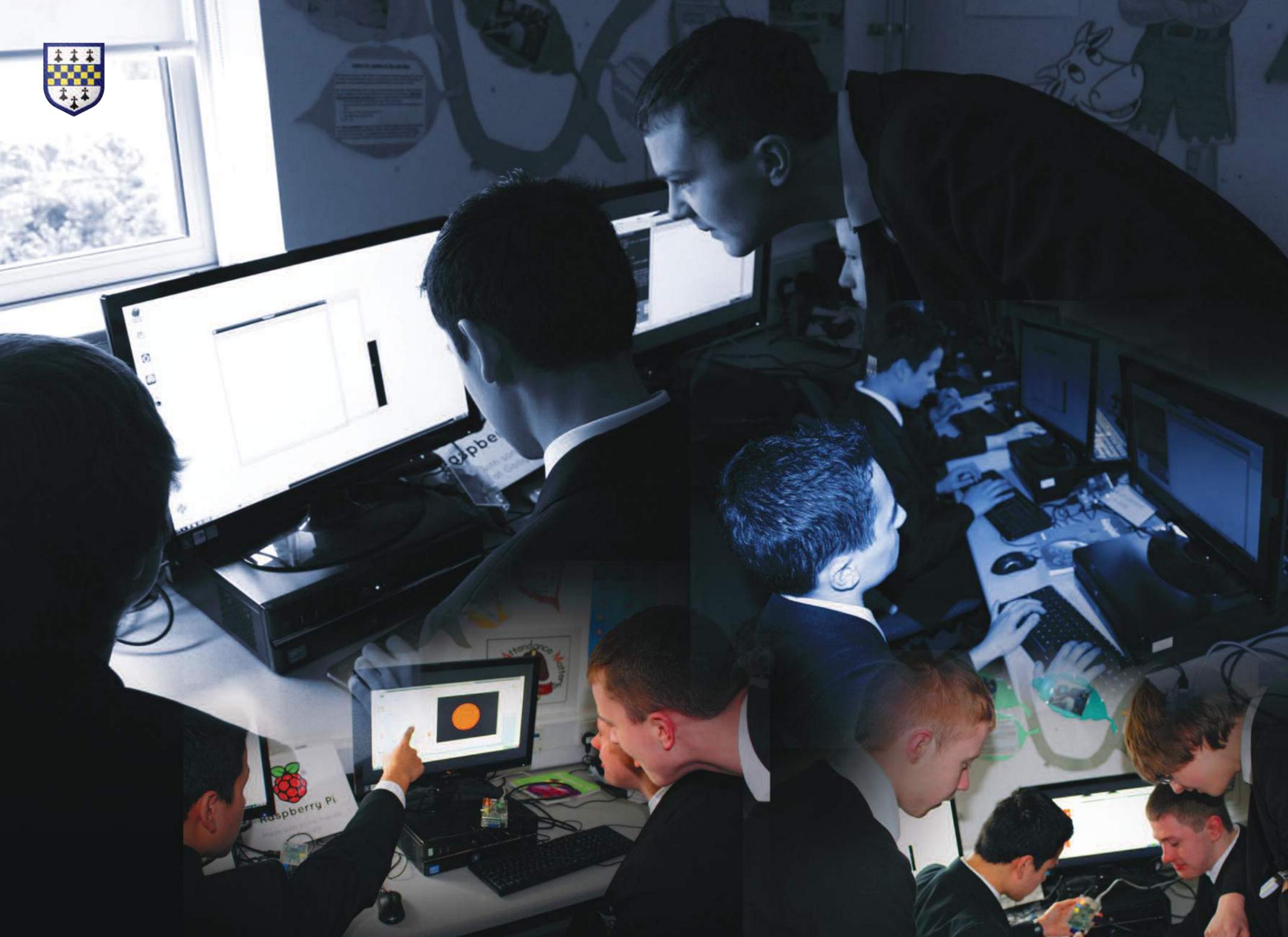
All this has been made available through the goodwill of Azad Choudhury and his family, the Rotary Clubs of Birmingham and Solihull, over a 120 people who sponsor children, a few people who regularly give donations, Trade Aid and the trustees who work hard in talking about the school to clubs and raising funds and awareness through dinners. But to continue to succeed the Academy needs more funds and if you wish to help, contact Barry or Monika Badham on 01564 823 191.

Barry and Monika Badham,
Trustees of Azad Choudhury Academy.

Park Hall's Young Consumers

Year 12 students taking part in the Young Consumers of the Year Quiz with Birmingham Trading Standards. Park Hall students did extremely well in winning the Solihull Schools' competition. They qualified for the West Midlands finals, but unfortunately due to upcoming examination were unable to attend. It was a great experience for Year 12 and they thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the quiz.





Simply Celebrate Celebrate Success!

Young Enterprise is a charitable scheme that gives students a taste of operating their own business over the course of a year as part of a National Competition. Our students' business, named 'Simply Celebrate' entered the competition selling homemade craft goods. This included scented candles and scented hanging hearts.

Each of our five budding entrepreneurs took on official roles within the business in order to make it a success. Tia Jones was Sales Director; Georgia Harper, Managing Director; Gazal Raii was Financial Manager; Alicia Morris, Marketing Director; and Katie Rimmer took on the role of Product Manager.

Simply Celebrate has proved extremely successful throughout the competition and received seven awards. The business women worked extremely hard, giving over their free time to making the products and conducting market research in order to ensure their products sales were as successful as they could be. The five Park Hall students planned the business processes in great detail, this is reflected in the impressive reception they have received from both the public and the Young Enterprise moderators.

Simply Celebrate has won numerous Awards:

- Chelmsley Wood Shopping Centre, winners of Best Trade Stand.
- Touchwood, Solihull, winners of Best Overall Company.
- Gracechurch Shopping Centre, Sutton, winners of Best Trade Stand.
- Deutsche Bank Area Final, winners of Best Overall Company and Presentation.
- Deutsche Bank London National Final, winners of Best Marketing Award.
- Arup Young Enterprise Solihull Final, winners of The Best Presentation Award and Runners Up.
- Aston University Young Enterprise Area Final, winners of Best Marketing Award and Best Presentation.

ICT As part of their GCSE in Computer Science, the Year 11 students have recently been carrying out a practical investigation task in which they are using a piece of software known as the 'Little Man Computer Simulator'.

The students have been designing and writing programs in a low level language using the software which emulates the inner workings of a Central Processing Unit (CPU). It certainly had them scratching their heads to start with, however, once the initial fears had been dispelled, many of them found the challenges very interesting as they started to learn how an actual computer works behind all the fancy graphics and sounds they are normally used to.

Simple tasks, like getting the computer to add two numbers together or count up to 10, made the students aware of how even these basic process we take for granted are difficult for a computer to do. Hopefully the exercise will bear fruits, providing our young Computer Scientists with a good grounding in the fundamentals of programming and many of the theory aspects of the course.





World Challenge

Preparations for World Challenge India

Our eleven intrepid World Challenge India students are now counting down the days before they depart for Kerala in Southern India on Saturday 12 July. Our delegates and their parents attended a kit presentation by staff from Cotswold Outdoor on Wednesday 4 June – where they received invaluable advice on correct lightweight kit for use in the hot, humid conditions of India in Monsoon season. Students and staff were also given important tips on how to avoid mosquito bites, sunburn and blisters! The two week adventure will include an expedition phase involving four days' trekking and camping around Munnar, part of the Western Ghats mountain range that fringes along India's south west coast. The unique ecosystem is home to an abundance of butterflies, birds and fish, and an exciting terrain comprising high altitude forests with giant redwoods, craggy peaks, tea and cardamom plantations and vast lakes.

The project phase will involve staying with a rural community and working with the local children teaching, organising sports, and installing much needed facilities for a local school or orphanage. Our World Challenge team will arrive home – no doubt happy, but exhausted – on 25 July and are looking forward to sharing their experiences with you in the next edition of Park Life. The students and staff would like to thank the school and the Governors for their kind support in making this incredible trip a reality. The Park Hall World Challenge team are Brad Smith, Ellie Trowman, Dominic Blackwell, Katie Timmins, Zoe Purnell, Joseph Welch, Beth Loxton, Daniel Payne, Starr Smith, Mitchell Cooper and Emily Bibb, with teachers Mr Cornell and Ms Slater and Expedition Leader, Carwyn Thomas.

Picture: Kerala in India's South Western tip is home to incredible Hindu temples - undoubtedly some of the world's most beautiful places of worship, magnificent mountains and amazing wildlife. But our team will also be working hard to improve conditions and education for the children of the region.



Year 7 Study Skills

The Year 7 Study Skills groups have had a busy term bringing learning to life! We have been very lucky and enjoyed lots of educational visits to loads of exciting places in support of the topics we have been covering in lessons. Before Easter the groups went to the Electric Cinema with our families as part of a home learning literacy and numeracy project, over the holidays we completed tasks at home with our families.

We have been studying habitats in Science and visited the Park Hall Nature Reserve; we took part in several activities, such as pond dipping and got to see lots of creatures, including frogs and newts. We also went deep into the forest and made our own dens! We also visited the Monkey Forest and learnt all about what monkeys eat, how they interact with each other and how they survive in the wild.

In Technology we have been learning about healthy eating and food preparation. A chef from Solihull Catering Services visited and showed us lots of different fruit and vegetables, which we got to peel, chop and taste. The following week our parents, carers and grandparents came to school for a two hour cooking lesson. We made ratatouille and meatballs and strawberry shortbread. There was enough to take home and share with the rest of our families – it was delicious!

We have also visited our local Toby Carvery to see how the chefs prepare and cook the vegetables. We also took part in a healthy eating workshop at the Toby. Our favourite part was getting to enjoy lunch there!

In English and History we have been studying the Titanic – we explored the differences between First and Third Class and described the ship using all five of our senses. Later, in art lessons we made our own suitcase, boarding cards and menus. We then linked these studies to our food lessons as well; using the menu to recreate afternoon tea for First Class passengers on the Titanic. Miss Meade from Solihull Council House also came in to teach us some of the special skills required to do Silver Service food presentation and to work as Wine Waiters and Waitresses. She knows all about 'First Class' as she prepares all of the dinners and functions for the Lord Mayor! We chose some appropriate fancy dress and all got into character, producing some great pieces of writing about our experiences.





Park Hall in the Community

Park Hall is proud to be a school at the heart of the local Castle Bromwich community. Our students are closely involved with a wide range of projects and organisations which make a significant positive difference to the people and places around the school.



The Civic Service: Castle Bromwich Parish Council.

Park Hall students have continued to take an active role in the local community and were recently invited to attend the Parish Civic Service which celebrates the start of the new Civic Year. Students were surprised to find two rows of seats reserved for them and Daniel Payne, the new Vice Chair of the Youth Parish Council who had the role of meeting and greeting the Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Joe Tildesley and the Mayoress of Solihull, Mrs Joan Tildesley.

Each year the Civic Service is held at St Mary and St Margaret Church and welcomes the new Parish Council. Revd. Gavin Douglas, OBE delivered a beautiful and thought-provoking service commemorating World War I.

The service was both informative and engaging. Our students commented on how interesting it was and just how much they had learned about the 1914-1918 War. There will be another service marking the hundredth anniversary Britain's entry into one of the most destructive conflicts in history. It continued bitterly for four years causing millions of deaths until Armistice on 11 November 1918.

Park Hall Students had their photographs taken with the Mayor and Mayoress of Solihull, Solihull Councillors and Castle Bromwich Parish Councillors, Solihull Councillor Mike Robinson and Park Hall Academy Governors, rounding-off the day at Arden Hall for a lovely evening spent with members of the local community.



Daniel Payne

Vice Chair of Castle Bromwich Youth Parish Council

Tuesday 6 May saw Castle Bromwich Youth Parish Council hold their AGM and annual elections. We are delighted to announce that the new Vice Chairman of the Parish's Youth Council, is Park Hall Academy student Daniel Payne. ■ Year 12 student, Daniel is understandably chuffed to have been selected by his peers in a democratic vote to take on this new role. ■ Daniel said, "The prospect of representing young people in the local community as Vice Chair of Castle Bromwich Youth Council is a real privilege and I look forward to this new opportunity and challenge".



Citizenship Community Action Project

A number of Park Hall Year 7 students have made a real difference to the local community by getting involved in a several important local Community Action Projects. Park Hall Academy is delighted to be able to continue their partnership with 'Worth Unlimited'. Based at The Hub Community Centre, the organisation supports a number of Community Action Projects on The Bromford Estate. Paul Wright from the Hub has worked closely with Park Hall over the past few years on a projects such as transition meetings, The Breakfast Club, one-to-one sessions and small group work with numerous Academy students. A number of our students have also been involved in The Gratitude Project.

Steve Hirst and Flo Berrow recently delivered an assembly to Year 7 students on a number of Community Action Projects that young people could get involved with in their local community. Our students were inspired by the presentation and associated Citizenship classes and decided to 'make their mark' in their local community by making a positive difference through involvement in The Wasteland Project, Ambridge House Senior Citizens' Project, The Tame Valley Academy 'Forest School' Project and The Hub.

Park Hall students 'Make their Mark' in the Local Community

Most recently on July 2 and 3, working with members of the local community to really make a difference, one hundred and twenty five Park Hall students set themselves the challenge of planting a bluebell walk, poppies, making hanging baskets, painting and clearing areas of the Forest School.

The project is a superb example of Citizenship Education at its very best; involving young people in their community to make a positive impact. We hope to return to view the bluebell walk next year and we are sure everyone appreciated the community-spirited effort put in to by the young citizens of Park Hall Academy



25 June, The Wasteland Project:

Creating a bluebell walk, clearing path, weeding, planting bluebell seeds.

'The Wasteland' is a large area at one end of the Firs and Bromford Estate. The space has great potential and local people would love to see it become 'Bromford Meadow' instead of just a wasteland. Earlier in the year a number of Year 10 students visited The Wasteland and planted 3,000 daffodils and further work will help transform this space, making it a pleasant amenity that the local community can use and be proud of.

This time round it was the turn of thirty Year 7 volunteers to do their bit in working hard to improve the open spaces in our local community. The Wasteland has a path that leads from the Firs and Bromford Estate to Castle Vale which was a bit overgrown and really needed clearing and improvement.

The students from Park Hall spent the whole day clearing a lot of weeds and brambles, so that people could access the path more easily. The Wasteland also includes some concrete pillars, the plan is to decorate them in future to help make the area look even more positive.



26 June, Ambridge House Senior Citizens' Project:

Weeding, planting poppy seeds, making hanging baskets, helping with bingo.

Ambridge House is a facility on the Firs and Bromford Estate that runs events and activities for older people in the community. It offers a 'safe' space for elderly people to meet together and feel a sense of community. They are keen to have a better environment around the outside of the building, which could include planting poppies, clearing graffiti, clearing leaves, weeding etc. It will be really good to have young people come down and doing something positive around this space showing some of the older people in the community that young people do want to contribute and help within their communities.

Elaine Tarpey, Worth Unlimited for East Birmingham & North Solihull commented "It was an excellent day, the students are a credit not only to themselves, but to Park Hall and to the wider community. They did fantastic work, to which the residents on the scheme and Ambridge House belongs will greatly benefit. I would not only like to personally thank everyone involved in making today a great success, but also thank you all on behalf of the ladies who were there today and the residents on the scheme. Branch Director, Paul Wright and I wholeheartedly agree this is what 'community' is, and should be, about".



3 July, The Hub Wall Design Project:

Creating murals at The Hub.

The Hub Youth and Community Centre on Bromford Drive is a converted shop which now has a small office, kitchen area and an open space.

This popular facility is used for community meetings, youth clubs and community lunches, amongst many other activities. There is also a pool table, a table tennis table and Xbox space available for use during youth club evenings. The walls are currently plain cream and it would be great to have more colour and vibrancy in the space.

Park Hall students were invited to the Hub to work on creating wall displays to improve the environment. Students created art work for the walls with specially prepared canvases, adding a lot more colour and vibrancy to the space.





2/3 July, Tame Valley Academy:

Clearing overgrown section, games with Primary School students.

Tame Valley Academy is a Primary School on the Firs and Bromford Estate. The Academy has a 'Forest School' space which provides children with an area where they can learn about the environment, have outdoor lessons and do practical activities. The school was looking for volunteers to help expand the available space by clearing an area where more activities can take place. There is also a longer-term plan to make this space available to the wider community.

Working with members of their community to really make a difference, Park Hall students recently planted a bluebell walk, as well as painting and clearing areas of the Forest School.

This superb example of Citizenship Education at its very best involved young people in their community to make a positive impact. We're really looking forward to returning to view the bluebell walk in the Spring of 2015. We are sure everyone appreciates the fantastic community-spirited effort put in to by the young citizens of Park Hall Academy.

The FREDA Equality Programme

As part of Park Hall Academy's ongoing commitment to celebrating and promoting awareness of community, equality and diversity, the school has set up a new forum of Student Equality Ambassadors. The FREDA programme is a key element of the training for these Ambassadors. FREDA has been developed to address issues relating to 'Fairness', 'Respect', 'Equality', 'Dignity' and 'Autonomy'.

The first FREDA theme was based on Disability Awareness, delivered on 19 May by Birmingham Disability Centre, it was developed by Pete Millington, Bianca Jarrett and Naomi Smith in partnership with Year 10 Park Hall student and Lead Ambassador, Courtney Swallow. The day consisted of five sessions exploring Language; Attitudes; Human Rights; Empathy Building and Community Action in relation to disability.

FREDA Ambassadors include Student Council representatives, plus Rian Bashir, Bahija Fearn and Amari Card from Year 7; Madison Evans, Ben Brassington, Kia Hutton and Nana Agyeman of Year 8; Zunaira Taimoor, Misty Bish and Daniel Mach from Year 9; and Year 10's Afsana Hussain and Adama Sonko.

The Community Action Ideas, developed as a result of the day by the Ambassadors have been forwarded to the Academy's Equality Committee and will now be added to the Park Hall's 'Whole-School Equality Action' plan.



YPI delivers £3,000 to Local Cancer Support

On Friday 13 June, several groups of student finalists came together to compete in Park Hall Academy Citizenship Department's Third Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) Final. Grants awarded to local charities from Park Hall YPI students since 2012 now stands at an impressive £9,000, and over these three years, 536 students have been involved, 219 of which were involved in the 2014 programme – the largest cohort to date! This year's YPI Final certainly did not disappoint. Having won their class-level competition, the six groups of student finalists had all visited, or corresponded with their chosen charity and had developed a presentation to reflect its values, vision and work. The students delivered creative and passionate interactive presentations to an audience of parents, carers, invited charity representatives, Student Councillors and members of Park Hall's new Charity and Equality Committee.

The event was judged by guest of honour, Vice Chair Councillor Pauline Allen working alongside Academy Governor, Gail Allen, Park Hall's Dr Browne and Student Councillors. The winning YPI 2014 Charity and recipient of the £3,000 cheque was Whitehouse Cancer Support, represented by Thomas Anderton, Harrison Birch, Jack Butler, Jake Collyer, Ciaran Doherty and Rhys Farrell. These students will now be heading down to London this summer to attend the YPI National Celebration Event. Other Year 9 YPI finalists who deserve recognition for excellent skills of advocacy and representation were: Arron Gibbs, Leah Nicholls, Callum Sale and Leah Vokes representing Acorns Children's Hospice; Faraday Woodfield and Amy Wilkins representing Sifa Fireside; Olivia Cox, Maisie Davies, Hannah Keogh and Lauren Johnston representing Acorns Children's Hospice; Joe Evans and Daniel Power also representing Sifa Fireside; Lottie Harris, Ellie-Mae Jones, Aimee King and Emily Palmer representing SANDS.

The final was complemented by presentations and speeches given by 2013 YPI winning group, Dreammakers (comprising of Year 10 students Cara Butler, Charlotte Ford, Chloe Hall, Afsana Hussain and Sophie West) and 2013 Finalist for Birmingham Disability Resource Centre (Courtney Swallow and Saffron Horne). Credit goes to all Year 9 students; the Finalists and the continued contributions to the community that each of the charities make towards the lives of those around us.

Update On Tuesday 1st July, six Year 9 students travelled to London to take part in the '2014 YPI Celebration Event'. Thomas Anderton, Jake Collyer, Harrison Birch, Jack Butler, Ciaran Doherty and Rhys Farrell successfully won the £3,000 grant for their chosen local charity "Whitehouse Cancer Support" and they were welcomed into "The Troxy" to enjoy an afternoon of motivational and inspirational speakers, student presentations, and performances by singers and a magician. After entering the theatre, the students were approached by a London Broadcasting team and were asked to describe their experience of YPI in one word. Their responses included "inspirational", "exciting" and "enjoyable". Students were given the opportunity to work on their social contracts and to pledge their support in developing their relationship with the charity and continuing their philanthropic work. Of the 63 schools present, Park Hall Academy and another school were chosen to represent their ideas to the audience. Thomas and Jake successfully discussed the group's ideas and the YPI Programme Manager for Scotland who was sitting on our table felt very honoured to listen to their proposed contract and thought "that the team had many creative and interesting ideas about developing charitable work in their community". YPI has given over 1 million pounds to local grass root charities and thousands of students have raised awareness of the issues that affect themselves and those in their local communities. The students are now planning further fundraising activities to ensure the legacy of their YPI involvement lives on.





GYLC

This year we, Gazal Rai and Kirsty Tuffin, were nominated by Park Hall Academy to attend the Global Young Leaders Conference (GYLC). Our excitement knew no bounds as by accepting the nomination it not only meant that we would be travelling across the globe to Washington DC and New York, it further meant that we were going to be immersed in different cultures along with over 200 students in the same shoes as us from around the world! This was a unique opportunity, as all participants are recognised for their efforts and even more so as leaders of change.

What really struck us most was that the whole concept of GYLC was similar to that of school. We were able to make friends and meet new people from a variety of places, ranging from Singapore, India, China and the Philippines to Sweden, Argentina, the USA, Zimbabwe and so many other places! Moreover, we attended classes and had lessons on various political issues which in our instance was known as our Leadership Group Meetings, where we gained first-hand exposure to the challenges of international diplomacy and became divided into country groups where we would challenge each other and our own leadership skills in GYLC's very own version of the UN and the Global Summit. To top it all off, we were going to sight see around New York and Washington DC, so yes, our timetable for two weeks was totally jam-packed!



Even though we as students recognise that we are both fairly confident people who don't often get nervous when put into social situations, or in terms of speaking in front of a large audience, what GYLC had to offer for us was still overwhelming! Why? Because we were going to travel and live in a foreign country, meet so many people from across the globe that we didn't know, submerge ourselves in the current political issues of today as well as learn about ourselves as people and as leaders, all whilst representing the UK, bearing in mind there were only three British people present including both of us out of the 243 other students that attended GYLC! Evidently, this left us very overwhelmed by the sheer gravity of how important these two weeks in the USA would be as we would be responsible in having to look after ourselves as well as respecting everyone around us.

However, the first skill we gained as Global Young Leaders was the ability to enhance our decision-making skills in an atmosphere of mutual respect and challenge ourselves further in broadening our views on present global issues in order to get our voices heard and acknowledged over the other students, notably when interacting with a United Nations speaker and participating in a Global Summit simulation, where we were given the opportunity to help draft policy proposals, debate issues of international importance and pass resolutions –just like the leaders of today! Additionally, we had the opportunity to visit the international embassies of Saudi Arabia and Burkina Faso, evaluate nations' interdependency in trade, and learn about the art of conflict resolution. All this gave us a global perspective on issues which would normally never cross our minds in our day-to-day lives such as Peace and Security regulations as well as Human Rights Commissions.

Speakers from organisations such as 'Invisible Children' (IC), professors and UN representatives came to GYLC and inspired us, taught and gave us another perspective on real life issues with their speeches which covered subjects such as stereotypes, the role of the World Bank, terrorism and of course, politics. In particular, one notable speech was given by Hailey Mitsui-Davies, who was the Mobilization Manager and Advocate for the 'Invisible Children' organisation. She opened our eyes to how she oversees the organisations mass communication and aids in engaging and mobilising the organisations supporters towards



bringing a permanent end to rebel groups like the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which operates in Uganda and South Sudan.

Hailey Mitsui-Davies taught us that it is situations like this, where children and in fact adults are being taken, exploited and stripped of their fundamental human rights in third world countries, which motivates us as leaders to promote change for the better and alternatively makes us appreciate what we already have before us. Henceforth, the second thing we learnt from GYLC was that we were proud to be from the UK as student representatives and ambassadors, as we came to appreciate the vast amount of opportunities and the bare necessities that we often take for granted. This was because we learnt that a lot of the people we met had come from countries where their political system has anchored them in terms of gaining or seeking certain opportunities, ranging from women's rights, gay rights and segregation laws such as being able to drive as a woman in Saudi Arabia to miniscule things like having a decent and easily accessible Forever 21 store in India, a Starbucks in Sri Lanka or even being able to chew gum in Singapore!



Nevertheless, attending the GYLC opened our eyes to a whole new world of possibilities. In-between the sightseeing and indulging in the vibrant culture that the USA has to offer, visiting incredible and moving places like The Lincoln Memorial, The 9/11 Memorial, Time Square, Fifth Avenue and even Central Park. We also gained a long-lasting network of friends and peers from across the globe, with whom we have developed close ties in the hope we will soon meet up with again. We embraced the experience immediately, and it has had a life changing impact on us and we are truly grateful that our school gave us the opportunity to go as it is definitely something we will look back at and smile about in the future. We developed a strong understanding of the cultures of people, notably from overcoming awkward greetings and handshakes and even speaking to some of the students in their native languages. We learnt about their complex and diverse social structure, quaint and fascinating traditions and even added a few interesting new words to our vocabulary!

We also learnt that wherever you are from in the world, whatever creed or background you come from, it doesn't always define who you are as a person or who you want to become in life, because at heart we are all very alike and often have the same goals in life.

In studying Politics in the Sixth Form, we learnt that a Leader can be considered 'the first among equals'. We applied this concept a lot at GYLC as it made us realise that a 'leader' is no different from anyone else. It's also important to remember that it is not necessary to be the next Barack Obama or Nelson Mandela to become a great leader, and that you don't have to dominate others with your leadership all of the time.

In turn, the final thing grew to understand as Global Young Leaders is that everyone has some leadership qualities, making them ready to lead their own lives and reach their own goals. What's more, we learnt that we should be proud of who we are, where we come from and who we want to be - to appreciate our lives, as well as what we can do with them to make the world a better place.

Contributed by Gazal Rai and Kirsty Tuffin

Park Hall's visit to Parliament



Park Hall Academy politics students and members of Castle Bromwich Youth Parish Council visited the Palace of Westminster on Monday 7 July 2014. We were delighted to be accompanied by members of Castle Bromwich Parish Council including the Vice Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Mrs. P Allen; Councillor Mr Eric Knibb; along with the Clerk to the Council, Mrs Cathy Tibbles.

The students enjoyed a guided tour of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords chambers and the historic Westminster Hall. Our tour guide spent a lot of time explaining how parliament works and the lobbying system. Students were told about the 'Green and Red Card' system that allows members of the student body to see their MP or a Member of the Lords. We also learned about the significance of the building and numerous paintings such as the Battle of Waterloo and Trafalgar.

We then walked to Portcullis House in Westminster to meet Caroline Spellman, Meriden MP who provided lunch and gave our students the opportunity to ask questions about the role of an MP. Students asked a number of questions including:

- Were you interested in politics when you were our age?
- What ambitions did you have when you became an MP?
- Would you encourage young people to participate in political activity such as joining the Youth Council?
- What topics do you feel particularly strongly about?
- Have you always enjoyed debating or do you prefer other aspects of the job?
- Do you think more should be done to create jobs for young people as there are lots of agency work and zero hour contracts?

Caroline Spellman was extremely generous with her time and discussed jobs available in the Midlands, Fare Trade and delivering a speech on the Slave Trade. We had a wonderful time and were extremely fortunate to secure 18 seats in the House of Lords Gallery to watch 'The House of Lords' Question Time. We listened to a fascinating debate on the conduct of Lords in the House and support for and guidance given to the British Council in respect of its staff serving on the governing bodies of English schools abroad; and why British embassies can no longer support schools and other bodies.

Students also saw a number of famous politicians during the visit including the former Labour Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, David Trimble the First Minister of Northern Ireland from 1998 to 2002 and Baroness Doreen Lawrence, who founded the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust in memory of her son Stephen.

Everyone had a wonderful day and learned so much as a result of the visit to Parliament. We thoroughly enjoyed our joint visit, yet another example of Park Hall Academy working in Partnership with the local community.



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