

The Rockwood Standard



The Newsletter of Rockwood Academy
8th Edition April 2019

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HEADTEACHER



DEAR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY,

As we reach the end of the spring term, we have so many incredible

achievements to celebrate. I'd like to start by thanking the staff and parents for their continued support of the academy and our students. I am very proud of all of our students' achievements, including some excellent academic progress made by students across the academy.

Our year 11 students are working hard in preparation for their summer examinations, and all of us at Rockwood Academy wish them the very best in their studies. We are delighted that, yet again, there has been an increase in the percentage of Year 11 students who have secured conditional places at King Edwards School Sixth Form. We are pleased to see an increase in girls applying for Science and Maths courses at A level across post 16 providers following our practical integration of STEM subjects across the curriculum.

We have been able to award special badges to students who have displayed exemplary behaviour in promoting our CORE values of Collaboration, Opportunity, Respect and Excellence. Thank you for your continued support in ensuring the highest expectations of learning, behaviour and uniform with each of our students. Several leadership awards were also given out to students this term for various projects. For example, over 150 students from Year 7 & 8 have had their poetry work selected for publication in an upcoming regional

poetry anthology published by Young Writers.

Our students were also very successful in demonstrating resilience and building confidence on our March SMSC day, which was delivered through interactive workshops hosted by external agencies. The Workshops focused on subjects such as FGM, the impact of knife crime, forced marriages and developing confidence. We also held a number of events during British Science week including schoolwide interactive quizzes, and element-themed scavenger hunts. Year 7 attended a workshop on different species habitats and adaptation delivered by Dudley Zoo, whilst Year 8 investigated which fruits generate the most amount of electricity. Year 9 and 10 took part in the University of Birmingham's annual Physics and Big Biology Quizzes.

Our students joined fellow members of the WE Movement at Wembley Arena for WE Day UK, an international celebration of young people making a difference in their local and global communities. This term, we also held our annual careers fair for Year 11 students as well as a 'Mock Interview' day delivered by industry professionals. Our Year 10 students are currently preparing for another great success during world of work week in the summer term.

We look forward to sharing more news in the summer term. I'd like to wish all our students and their families a restful Easter break.

Ms Sofia Darr Headteacher

CORE-US



We are immensely proud of the Rockwood contingent of the CORE-US choir. Having recently joined the CORE choir at City Academy, Rockwood students shone, with Haider receiving Rockwood's first solo part in one of the songs. We are extremely proud of the level of confidence that the students have demonstrated.



CORE VALUES

COLLABORATION ECHO ETERNAL PROJECT

Students have been participating in the Echo Eternal project where Rockwood Academy has been working with key organisations to explore and promote the significance of the Holocaust. Students created a video to pay homage to the survivors of the Holocaust that was shared with the public both in the Library of Birmingham and at a Town Hall performance. Finally, the history department are currently working with the UCL centre that focuses on Holocaust education and are currently shaping the way Holocaust education is delivered within schools. By the end of this year, Rockwood are hoping to become a Beacon registered school, which means that they can provide assistance and guidance to other schools about Holocaust education and the importance of reflecting on the social and political impact of global mass genocides.



OPPORTUNITY TANZANIA

Year 9 and Year 10 have been offered a fantastic opportunity to attend a 4 week expedition to Tanzania in Summer 2020. Rockwood Academy is working in partnership with Camps International, who is offering an authentic cultural experience for our students. Students will have to spend a year fundraising for the expedition where they will learn many new skills and test their resilience. The expeditions will help to challenge their view of the world, understand the day to day challenges rural communities' face, help work on projects which transform communities and help them to overcome significant issues they face including access to clean water, education and housing. In addition, they will undertake

a 3 day trek through the rainforests of the Usambara Mountains. The unique climate of these mountains is unlike other Tanzanian ranges, creating a cloud forest which make it one of the world's most biodiverse hotspots. The trip will increase student's self-worth and appreciate the impact that they, as an individual, can have on the world. The students will meet the world famous, tall, red-robed Maasai tribe who live around Tanzania.

We hope this will be a life changing experience for our students and we look forward to documenting their journey over the next year! If you have not signed up already please see Mrs Sahota.



RESPECT LGBT HISTORY MONTH 2019

At Rockwood Academy we celebrate LGBT History Month every February because we believe it's important that all our students and staff feel safe, secure and happy at the academy. During February all the departments taught about LGBT in their subject areas. Our Pride Youth Network students made and sold ribbons to raise money for Educate and Celebrate. Rockwood Academy proudly holds the Best Practice Status Award for an LGBT friendly school.



EXCELLENCE POETRY ESCAPE COMPETITION

On Tuesday 15th January, 175 students from Rockwood Academy gathered at the school to celebrate their success in having their literary work selected for publication in an upcoming regional poetry anthology published by Young Writers.

In December 2018, 280 students from Year 7 and 8 submitted poetry for the Young Writer's annual Poetry Escape competition. The competition challenges students to unlock their imagination and embrace creativity in their writing, encouraging them to understand the power poems have in persuading, informing, dividing and wowing audiences. Students are required to write a poem that is either in the style of an ode, lipogram, haiku, or rhyming couplets and the poems theme could be about current affairs, inner feeling, the future or adventure.

Over half of the poems submitted have been successfully selected for publication

in their next regional anthology collection. To celebrate the student's success, a special awards ceremony was held on school grounds to present the winning poets with their certificates. The evening also featured readings of the student's poetry, showcasing the extraordinary literary talent on display at Rockwood Academy.

Following Rockwood Academy's student's success in the competition, Young Writers have requested to work with the school in the future to provide students with further opportunities to have their written work published.

Young Writers was established with the aim of encouraging young people to engage in creative writing, by running national poetry and creative writing competitions through schools, as well as providing free resources to teachers, providing creative workshops, and publishing students work.

We're very proud of all of the students involved and we can't wait to read all the poems!



FEATURES

CAREERS

As part of Rockwood Academy's careers provision and the work we are doing to strengthen the Gatsby benchmark, pupils have been engaged in a range of activities both in the academy and have also participated in a number of external events.

Year 7-10 have had employer led assemblies at the academy, pupils have learnt a wide range of information about different jobs and sectors that pupils are involved in. Each employer emphasized how each pupil needed to develop a wide range of skills to be ready for the

world of work.

Year 9 have participated in a range of business walks in Birmingham, this was a fantastic opportunity for pupils to find out about the professional services that are available to young people in Birmingham.

Year 7, 8 and 9 girls attended a fantastic stem related event at Sandwell Academy. The day was part of celebrating International Womens Day.

Year 10 participated in a range of workshops arranged through the HS2 project.



SMSC

Year 7-10 participated in the second SMSC drop down day which took place at Crystal Plaza. The theme of the day was "building resilience in young people"

Students engaged in a full day of workshops which were delivered by facilitators specialising in their own key areas. The Birmingham resilience team supported the academy in vetting all facilitators.

Workshops included:

Gangology: (a real insight into the impact of gang culture and the effects it has on young people)

FGM (A real survivor's perspective)

Extremism/radicalization

Healthy relationships

Hate crime

Honour based abuse/forced marriages

Pupils engaged in a range of discussions which highlighted issues facing young people and how, through discussion and dialogue they can be resilient when facing these. Paired work, group work and individual reflection shaped how pupils engaged with the key themes that were delivered to them.



STEM

New data published by the Department of Education shows that school girls in England are substantially less likely than boys to consider taking Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects at A Level than boys. Not only that but girls enjoy STEM subjects less than boys, and girls they are less likely to say STEM is their best subject. School Standards Minister Nick Gibb has used these findings to call on teachers, parents and society in general to challenge and dispel misconceptions some girls have about STEM subjects.

At Rockwood Academy, we are leading the way by embracing and embedding equality and diversity in all we do. No child, no matter their background or gender is left behind. That's why offering girls opportunities to get hands on experience and make informed decisions about STEM subjects is a huge priority.

Rockwood, integrates STEM in a practical way across the board. Engaging girls in STEM through projects, such as partnering with a local engineering firm, Atkins Global, captures their interest long after a 30 minute lesson is over.

Getting them involved in real life engineering solutions – Year 10 girls at Rockwood are currently helping to come up with engineering solutions for the Commonwealth Games in 2022 – moves away from abstract and traditional concepts that are easily forgotten, and makes these meaningful life experiences for them.

Teachers at Rockwood have found that one of the biggest barriers to girls taking up STEM subjects is accessing opportunities beyond their community, so building and developing long term relationships with engineering companies and universities gives not only our students, but also very importantly their families, more confidence when it comes to choosing STEM subjects. It enables us to support informed decisions, and understand in real terms how A level and university choices link to their career plans.

At Rockwood, student voice feedback tells us that careers advice doesn't work as an add-on. So we are now working with Year 8 girls to empower them to consider STEM from a young age and inspiring them throughout their school journey. We do this by inviting women working in engineering into school so they can begin to form relationships with mentors, embedding career discussions in to the entire curriculum and instilling a real focus on problem solving in all subjects. For example, in Geography students work in groups to propose

innovative solutions to plastic pollution.

Rockwood's focus on STEM is seeing results, with over 32% of female students going on to take up A level sciences – a 12% increase compared with last year. Rockwood has also seen an equal balance of girls and boys choosing to study physics and computer science at Key Stage 4. These subjects are no longer dominated by boys.

Ms Sofia Darr, headteacher here at Rockwood Academy, said:

"This is about transforming how we're teaching maths and science. It's a real shift from a traditional way of teaching STEM subjects, to a hands-on approach of getting our girls to engage – ultimately so they can see clearly how what they're learning links to the world of work. In the past, examples used in the STEM curriculum focus on male athletes or male engineers for instance. Our pupils are designing, making, building for themselves – so these examples go out the window and they now have their own experiences to draw on."

Adrian Packer, CEO of CORE Education Trust, said:

"Ultimately we have a responsibility to ensure that our workforce reflects society. At CORE Education Trust we pride ourselves on putting equality and diversity at the heart of all we do and Rockwood lives and breathes that mission. Initiatives like this are what makes Rockwood Academy so special."



A selected cohort of Year 9 students were involved in a STEM project with Balfour Beatty Vinci who are closely involved in the upcoming HS2 projects. Student developed the communication, teamwork, and investigation skills. Students found this to be a beneficial experience and loved constructing their own railway tunnel.

Other year 9 students visited the Big Bang Fair at the NEC, this was a fabulous opportunity for students to meet and interact with a range of science and STEM experts from different fields. Staff and students thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity and loved participating in some phenomenal interactive activities.

Some Year 10 students have had the opportunity to work closely with Atkins Global, an engineering firm based in Birmingham. With guidance and supervision from a range of engineers, students are devising innovative solutions to problems faced in projects such as HS2 and 2022 commonwealth games.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2019

On Friday 8th March 2019, Rockwood Academy Science students were celebrating and advocating International Women's Day. The theme for International Women's Day this year, "Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change"; puts innovation by women and girls, for women and girls, at the heart of efforts to achieve gender equality.

As part of our celebrations, our female Year 10 scientists took part in a series of Engineering workshops hosted by Bournville College; the activities included robot design, infrastructure design and a panel discussion on "routes into engineering".

Our students learnt about the importance of female engagement in the Engineering

and design sectors. One of our students, Zainub Shah said "I was really surprised by the lack of women in senior roles within Engineering, today has taught me a lot about the value women can add to the sector. I particularly enjoyed the robotics workshops". Other students were highly engaged in the infrastructure design workshop, with both teams collaborating to construct a tower.

Overall our students loved the opportunity to celebrate their gender and identity whilst fulfilling their ambitions in developing as successful scientists of the future. The Rockwood Science department is very keen for our students to continue to advocate for changes in Science that go beyond acknowledging the gender gaps to addressing the needs of men and women equally. We are very proud of our girls, their commitment, resilience and boundless energy in pursuing positive social change.



COMIC RELIEF 2019

Comic Relief 2019 was a day of fun and reflection for our students. The day started with our students participating in form time activities, enabling them to explore the many ways in which the money raised helps people facing poverty around the world, as well as here at home, in the UK. We held a bake sale with delicious cakes donated by staff and students. Students replaced an item of their uniform with an item of red to commemorate the day and our SLT joined in by wearing their Comic Relief Disney character t-shirts. Your efforts, the efforts of our students and staff

raised £397.06. This, as always shows our continued commitment to supporting people who need our help. We would like to thank you, our students and staff, for all of your support with all our fundraising events which help to truly change lives.



HOLOCAUST

During the week commencing 21st January 2019, students and staff from Rockwood Academy took part in a range of classroom-based activities to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, which was on Sunday 27th January 2019.

Students led an exhibition focusing on key Holocaust survivors, including Mady Gerrard, whose UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF) testimony was gifted to Rockwood Academy as part of the commemorative arts, media and civic engagement project Echo Eternal. All students from Year 7 to 11 were able to visit the exhibition which emphasised and explored each of the Holocaust survivors' stories. 10 Year 7-10 students re-enacted each survivor's story to enable other students to empathise with the struggles each survivor faced. The exhibition was visited by local MP and Shadow Minister for Digital Liam Byrne, who commended the students for their engaging, inspiring and mature work.

Throughout the week, students from Year 7 to 11 took part in form-time activities which focused on learning about a range of genocides that have taken place around the world. The concept of Genocide was discussed, including exploring questions such as: "what role do we as individuals living in society have in stopping these genocides from reoccurring?"

On Friday 25th January, all students at Rockwood Academy wrote postcards to a chosen Holocaust survivor, expressing their emotions and feelings in reflection of that survivor's story. Selected postcards were sent to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to be sent on to the survivors.

Holocaust Memorial Week was a real opportunity for students at Rockwood Academy to learn and empathise first-hand the tragedies that the Holocaust and genocides have brought. It was a real SMSC opportunity to learn about personal loss, sacrifice and above all sheer human resilience to survive such atrocities that have taken place in the world we live in.



CURRICULUM

ART & TEXTILES

It has been a busy term in Art and Design with Year 11 focussing on the coursework component of their GCSE, comparing artists work and interpretations of key concepts as part of their ongoing portfolio of work.

It's vitally important the high standards the groups have set themselves continue right through till May, when their final examination takes place.

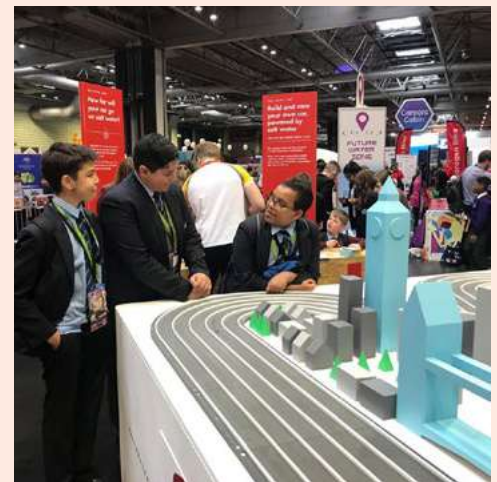
In Key Stage 3 students have been looking at Mauri and street art; comparing and contrasting styles to create pieces of work which symbolise culture with creativity.



BUSINESS & ICT

The spring term has been a busy one for the students in Computing, Business and ICT. Year 11 students are working towards their GCSE in Computer Science which is now just two academic weeks away. Business and IMedia students are working very hard to complete their coursework components to ensure they achieve successful outcomes in the summer. I would just like to take this opportunity to say a massive well done so far to all the students within the faculty for their continued effort in lessons and in their morning, lunch and after school intervention sessions. Keep up the effort and the results will follow!

On the 13th March, our Year 9 Computer Science students visited the NEC to take part in the Big Bang Fair. This allowed our students to engage with and speak to professionals in various STEM industries. Much of the focus was on taking part in engaging activities which included cyber security, robotics and game development. They also had the opportunity to discuss further career paths that will challenge and stimulate their thought process with industry professionals. All of our students enjoyed the day and were a credit to the school. Well done Year 9!



ENGLISH

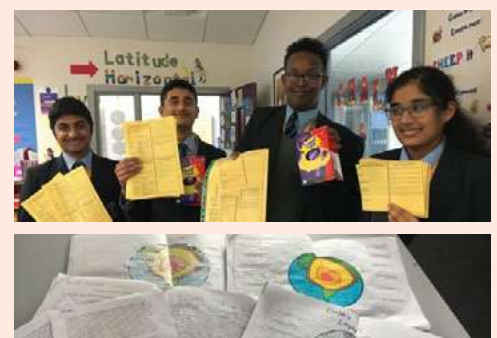
Last term, the Year 10 students in the English Department studied Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' and Year 11 focused on Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. The English Department invited the Fred Theatre Company to come and stage both texts for the students. The performances were lively, true to the text and very entertaining. It was endearing to both see and hear the students' participation during the performances and the subsequent questions they asked during the feedback session. The students appreciated the live action which clarified their understanding; a crucial element as Year 10 approach their end of year English mocks and Year 11 prepare to sit their GCSEs. The visit from the Fred Theatre Company was beneficial to the students because it provided an opportunity for the students at Rockwood to meet professionals from the Arts and the Stage. It also allowed them to gain an insight into Drama provision within their local communities.



GEOGRAPHY

Our amazing Geographers in year 8 have been following in the footsteps of Jules Verne and have been working hard on their creative, but factual journey to the centre of the Earth. They have been learning about the structure of the Earth and how natural hazards have an impact on people and the environment.

We would also like to say well done, with chocolates, to our year 11 Geographers who have been working hard to complete their revision packs and we wish them all the success in their upcoming exams.



HISTORY

Year 8 students have explored the impact of the Civil Rights in America and the importance of living within a multi-cultural society. Students have shown great maturity when examining the harsh treatment Black Americans faced during the Civil Rights movement and have been truly inspired by the great leaders of this time like Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. Year 7 students have been focusing on the key theme, power and the struggle that took place between the Church and the Crown. Pupils have enjoyed exploring the impact of power and have learnt the importance of treating people with respect.



HOSPITALITY AND CATERING

"I am so delighted with my controlled Assessment; I have already secured 60% of my GCSE grade." Salma Hussain

Hospitality and Catering, the subject that everyone chooses because it's "easy", but it's much more than that. The subject itself is an art, the art of designing and preparing a new nutritious dish each session. Hospitality and Catering is all about discovering new methods, new techniques, and new dishes, and the excitement that comes from finding something new is unexplainable. To everyone, catering is that one subject that's just chosen to pass time however, the experiences and opportunities that come from it are beyond just passing the time. Catering gives every single student a chance to express themselves, and their creativity.

"Our teacher expects the highest grade from each of us. For me, catering is that one lesson I look forward to every week, it gives me an opportunity to learn new skills and develop the ones I already possess. I came into catering not knowing any cooking skills, or any techniques. As a result of catering, I was able to learn how to make red velvet cakes, chicken and mushroom pie, lasagne, and many other dishes. The best part of making all of these delicious dishes is, I added my own twist to each dish, and every single dish was made according to my taste, my preferences and the way I wanted them to be made.

It doesn't stop there because, I am able to transfer information to other subjects, for example we are learning about nutrients and it is like in a science lesson. There is so much to learn and enjoy." By Savera Ghaffar, Year 10

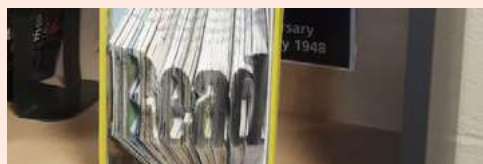


LIBRARY

World Book Day Thursday 7 March 2019

There was a great response to this year's World Book Day Library Quiz Competition. The World Book Day Quiz proved to be very popular. The two highest scoring students will receive a gift voucher each. Winners will be announced shortly, due to a Tie Break. Activities in the LRC included - make your own cuboid "Harry Potter" - How to Draw like Greg Heffley (Illustrator, Diary of a Wimpy Kid), various popular book title word searches and colouring activities.

The book sale was a huge success with students. Feedback received from students, said they would like to see another book sale held in the future. A big "Thank You", to staff who donated towards the sale and Student Librarians who helped promote the event. Finally! Members of staff who dressed up for the event, I don't know who enjoyed it more the students or the staff! Fantastic and hilarious way to show the students that teaching staff have a sense of humour and can show their fun side too. I did spot a Banana in Pyjamas running down the stairs.



MATHS

Well done to Ayesha Sadiqah (9B) Suhail Hussain (9b), Aisha Abdulahi (8C) and Leena Hussain (8b) for their participation in the Regional final of the annual UKMT team challenge on the 5th of March 2019 at Rugby High School. The competition combines mathematical, communication and teamwork skills and offers students another way to express and develop their enjoyment of mathematics

It was a fantastic experience for the students to represent the Academy.

They all did Rockwood proud and were great ambassadors for the school.

Well done to all the students who participated in this event!

In addition, well done to all year 11's for their continuous dedication and hard work in maths.

Staff and students have been spending a lot of time doing key intervention sessions on Saturdays, Wednesdays, Lunch time and holidays to help our year 11 students make rapid progress.



MFL

Café Rouge Trip

Selected year 7 and 8 were extremely fortunate this term to have a taste of the French gastronomy available at Café Rouge, a French restaurant in Harborne. Students invited on the trip were chosen from years 7 and 8 as a reward for their outstanding effort and behaviour for learning, in addition to their commitment to French this year.

This visit was filled with opportunities to communicate using the French language as well as tasting traditional French food.



Whilst in Café Rouge, students used the target language to interact with French speakers as they ordered their meals using only French.

This experience not only exposed the students to gain the confidence to speak French spontaneously but it also widened their knowledge about French etiquette.

It was a fantastic opportunity to immerse our students in a real linguistic atmosphere where they were able to see the purpose of learning a language.

Year 11 Spanish PiXL Conference

On the 4th of February Year 11 Spanish students had the amazing opportunity to attend the Spanish PiXL Conference in Nottingham. The aims of this educational visit were to further develop their exam strategies, nourish their confidence and continue to raise their attainment. During the conference students enhanced their understanding of the four linguistic skills that they will be tested on. For example, the conference included an exam visualiser as the PiXL professionals demonstrated strategies to improve listening skills. On arrival all students were provided with a workbook to complete alongside the PiXL professionals and also fellow students from other schools around the country. During the

conference I had the opportunity to observe and be proud of our students as they were fully engaged and contributed the most out of all attending schools. The feedback from students was very positive and they mentioned that they felt inspired and motivated to continue working in order to achieve their personal target in Spanish.

World Arabic Day Celebrations

In December we were lucky to celebrate World Arabic Day in school. Students and parents who have an appreciation of the Arabic language attended the event and enjoyed food, music and poetry which all showcased the target language.

Zainab Ali, a previous student at Rockwood, spoke to our current Arabic students about the importance and joy of learning languages. Whilst year 7, 8 and 9 students performed exciting pieces of drama and art which they had created.

The whole event was very positive and a brilliant celebration of Arabic!



MUSIC

The Music Department has started 2019 with a BANG! Our students have been involved in a huge array of brilliant opportunities this half term and have really showed off their musical talents and passion to succeed and do well!

Symphony Orchestra Trip

Some of our year 7 students found out just how much amazing culture we have right here in Birmingham during January. We received tickets to attend a special Key Stage Three concert at Symphony Hall with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra - one of the best in the world! Our year 7 band jumped at the opportunity to see a real life orchestra performance and had a great afternoon out. We are now very inspired to keep practising so that we can be that good too!

Embracing Music Technology

We have recently started to explore music technology more within the department and the beginning of 2019 has seen an explosion of activity in this area. Firstly, in February three of our students were selected as "Track of the Month" by a real music producer who created our VIP Charanga software. Atif, Usman and Hasan used the software to create their own Grime track and were chosen nationally as the best track in February! Finally, in March we were visited by the team from Pirate Studios to have a workshop on how to DJ. Our year 9 and 10 GCSE students jumped on the decks and had a go at mixing tracks together. We really enjoyed it and loved the fact that all of the students were MUCH better than Miss Wilkins!

We can't wait to see how many more amazing opportunities we have coming up this year!



PE

It's been a busy term in PE and Extra Curricular. In Key Stage 3, boys have been introduced to handball and hockey as part of their core lessons and are really developing their skills in these sports. Girls have been undertaking personal fitness and short tennis and have thoroughly enjoyed these activities.

The department has introduced star performers each lesson. The concept has been greatly received with students keen to appear on the "Twitter" wall and also gain a star certificate at the end of each lesson.

The department has been very busy offering a variety of Extra Curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school. If you are interested in attending any of these activities, please see Miss Smith in Girls PE.

The year 8 boys football team reached the semi-finals of the Birmingham Cup where they were defeated by a very strong Arthur Terry side; but none the less a fantastic achievement to get to this stage.

The Key Stage 3 and 4 boys badminton team and Key Stage 3 girls team were crowned East Birmingham Champions as part of the Birmingham School games competition.

Students are experiencing new activities both in core and extra-curricular which is really pleasing to see. Athletics and basketball teams have been formed and students are really engaging with sport.



RE

Independence and Creativity

The RE department has been focusing on creativity and independence for this half term; where students have been given the opportunity to explore learning outside the school. Our KS 3 students have been asked to complete their homework in a creative, practical, and fun way to show their understanding of they have been learning in lessons. They have carried out a 'Project in Shoebox' activity where they have created a particular aspect of their learning in the classroom; for example religious parables. They have carried out this project exceptionally well; showcasing their dedication, creativity and excellence by using their artistic imaginations. Their final pieces of work were so phenomenal; that it was very difficult to choose the winners of this project. It was a great opportunity to give learners the opportunity to take ownership of their own learning, which makes RE an exciting subject to study at Rockwood Academy.



SCIENCE

Our Science students have been exceptionally busy this term representing the school in competitions, taking part in a range of workshops, quizzes, practical activities and representing the Academy in an external industry programme.

We were awarded a science grant in recognition of our programme of activities for "British Science Week (BSW) 2019", which ran from the 11th to 15th March 2019. Below is a flavour of what some of our students got up to during this last term.

All our students were involved with British Science Week through an interactive quiz delivered during their form time. There was also an opportunity for students to get involved with an element scavenger hunt, where elements from the periodic table were displayed around the academy.

Year 7: Our year 7 students started of British Science Week with a visit from Dudley Zoo, in the workshop students learnt adaptations and habitats of a range of species. Some of our students were eager and brave enough to handle the animals!

Year 8: The year 8 cohort spent a week carrying out an electrifying science investigation into which fruits generate the most amount of electricity. Once

students had completed their research, they developed their core practical skills and examination technique by producing a report on their work.

Both year 7 and 8 students are involved in the academy's Science Club, which takes place every Thursday with Mr Shah. Here the students carry out some flaming fun practical's whilst developing their scientific knowledge and laboratory skills. So far this year they have done fire writing, methane bubbles, slime, flame test and much more! If you want to find out more about the club, speak to Mr Shah to find out more about the club.

Year 9: Our year 9 students have showcased the range of skills they have learnt since starting their GCSE Science studies. A group of 12 students competed in the annual Physics Quiz held at the University of Birmingham with over 65 teams participating; one of our teams won the spot prize round. Our students felt they had learnt a lot from the experience and are eagerly anticipating the upcoming Biology Quiz.

Year 10: Similar to the year 9 students, our year 10 cohort is taking part in the annual Big Biology Quiz; this opportunity will enable them to refresh their knowledge ahead of their internal examinations.

Through equipping our students with invaluable skills, experiences and opportunities, we aim to prepare them for a society where STEM careers are transforming the world in which we live.



KS3 PASTORAL MANAGER MESSAGES

YEAR 7 – MS SHAHEEN

I am pleased to share that year 7 has had another fantastic term at Rockwood Academy. It has been another busy term.

This term, year 7 experienced a workshop delivered by Dudley Zoo. Students had the opportunity to hold animals, such as snakes and chinchillas that they wouldn't get to experience on a daily basis. Some students had the courage to touch animals, like the snake and overcame their fear, which was great to witness.

The inter-year football competition has continued this term. It is great to see team work and a healthy competitive attitude amongst our students.

I am thoroughly looking forward to the summer term, when 40 of our year 7 students will be visiting France to see the beautiful country, experience the French lifestyle and get the opportunity to speak the French they have been learning since September. I know the students are as excited about going to France as I am.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank parents for their support in encouraging their child to get involved in extracurricular activities, to broaden their experiences at school.



YEAR 8 – MR DHILLON - SENIOR PASTORAL MANAGER

It has been a wonderful spring term, I am pleased to say that year group is well focused on their goals and aspirations. On a weekly basis year 8 are encouraged to take part in fitness and football classes, with our year 8 football team winning every game they have played. We had a very successful options evening with a 100% turnout and all pupils picking the options they would like to do for their GCSE'S.

Year 8 Pupils from Rockwood Academy also gathered at the school to celebrate their success in having their literary work selected for publication in an upcoming regional poetry anthology published by Young Writers.



KS4 PASTORAL MANAGER MESSAGES

YEAR 9 – MS WALKER

Year 9 have had a great year so far with some fantastic opportunities to date. Whilst education is at the forefront of the academy; extracurricular activities have further shaped the experiences our pupils have received. They have been fortunate enough to be part of the Echo Eternal Project, Pride Youth Network and Mosaic Mentoring. The year 9 Cadets are going from strength to strength and have learned many skills that they are excited about putting into practice with the many trips they will be going on in the coming months. On a weekly basis year 9 pupils are encouraged to take part in Fitness, Basketball and Football which they really enjoy.

To recognise and celebrate International Women's Day I took 20 female students to Sandwell College, where they took part in activities within male dominated trades such as Engineering, Mechanics and construction. It was a fantastic day, which was fully enjoyed by all that went.



YEAR 10 – MR ALI

It has been a wonderful term for the year 10 students both in terms of success academically and participation in opportunities. Year 10 boys and girls are currently the reigning year group champions in the inter school football competition, which takes place at lunch time on the astro turf daily, both teams remain undefeated. Year 10 also had the opportunity to attend a concert at Wembley Arena to celebrate the WE Movement for WE Day UK; an international celebration of young people making a difference in their local and global communities.



YEAR 11 – MR KHAN

After a really busy 6 months with; interventions, mock examinations, and the geography fieldtrip, year 11 students are ready for their GCSE examinations. PiXL is a strategy that is available for all year 11 students in all subjects. Some recent events that have been attended include; the Spanish revision conference, in Nottingham, which provided the Spanish students with some valuable revision tips. In addition, 17 students had the privilege of visiting Aston Villa football ground which hosted the national PiXL conference looking at Russell Group universities, they shared tips on how to apply to UCAS, and what subjects to choose at A Level to ensure their choices support their future aspirations.



PARTNERSHIPS

BEACON SCHOOL

Rockwood are currently in the process of applying to become a Beacon School. We are working with the UCL centre that focuses on Holocaust education and are in the process of reshaping the way we address and deliver Holocaust education within the academy. By becoming a Beacon School, we will provide assistance and guidance to other schools about Holocaust education and the importance of reflecting on the social and political impact of global mass genocides.

As part of the Beacon School status, Mr Singh organised a full day of training, on the 23rd of January 2019 for 15 colleagues who attended from various secondary schools. The focus of the training session was to share best practice in delivering Holocaust education to students. Some of the topics discussed included; pre-war Jewish life, unlocking anti-Semitism, perspectives of the Holocaust from both perpetrators and victims and resistance towards anti-Semitic crimes during the war. The powerful thought provoking session, allowed colleagues to analyse the various aspects of the complex history and work collaboratively to identify resources that can help teachers to teach the Holocaust within the classroom.



CCF

The Combined Cadet Force is a partnership that Rockwood Academy is incredibly proud to be a part of. Once again, the spring term has seen a number of opportunities arise for all members of the CCF.

Cadet L/CPL C Azaan has made it through to the selection phase of the six week trip to Canada. In April he will attend a 5 day selection course, where he will be amongst 110 cadets vying for one of 42 places available on a trip of a life time. If successful he will depart in July 2019.

On Saturday 16th March, a group of cadets took part in a leadership and development day at Bear Grylls at the NEC. April will see the cadets take part in a leadership and development weekend in Leek, Staffordshire. June will see the cadets visit Windsor Castle for the day.

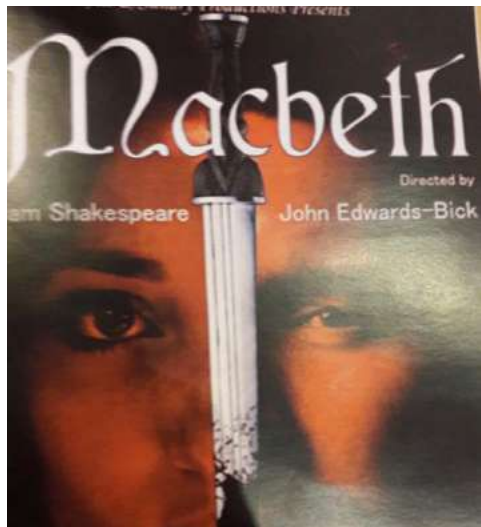
Our pastoral managers have now qualified as instructors within the contingent of Rockwood. They took part in a five day course which saw them take part in lessons built around the Combined Cadet Force Syllabi, lesson such as drill, field craft and communication. Massive congratulations to Mr Khan, Mr Ali and Ms Shaheen for completing their Combined Cadet Force, Basic course at Frimley Park, cadet training centre in Surrey!

Finally, in June, the Contingents Annual Camp will be held. Cadets will be taken to Crowborough training camp where a multitude of adventurous activities will take place. Some of the activities include mountain biking, canoeing, archery, shot gun, camp craft and laser quest, there are also many other activities taking place, it will be a fun packed week of hard work and enjoyment.



THEATRE CLUB

Our Theatre Club is going from strength to strength. Since starting in November 2018 with 15 members, it now has over 60 members who have already been to see *Breaking the Code*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Orange Polar Bear* and *Pinnichio*. The plays are all chosen by the students. Theatre Club isn't just about watching plays it's also about understanding literature, drama, the process of getting a play from the script to the stage and also about giving students a safe environment in which to enjoy the theatre. Our most recent visit to the Crescent Theatre to see *Macbeth* was enjoyed by all. More visits are planned for the coming months with *A Thousand Splendid Suns* at The Rep in June already causing ripples of excitement around the academy.



MOSAIC MENTORING

Since the start of the year we have had four sessions of mentoring with our year 9 students focusing on building confidence, presentation skills and having a positive mind set. There will be another four sessions over the coming months with the last session being a celebration of the students' achievements, where they will receive their certificates of completion. There will also be two World of Work visits to two of the mentors' places of work which could mean our students visit prestigious employers such as KPMG, West Midlands Police or even a military base. We would like to thank our dedicated mentors who volunteer their time so generously.



BEYOND THE BASELINE

Twenty five of our year 8 students are participating in Beyond the Baseline which is a free, secondary schools programme that uses tennis and inspirational tennis mentors to nurture pupils' aspirations and put them on the path to achieving them.

The Tennis Foundation and the Youth Sport Trust have partnered to create the Beyond the Baseline programme. Mentors inspire pupils with their experiences of playing tennis and the obstacles they've overcome both on and off the court. They will link their journey to four key Employability & Life skills – Personal, Social, Creative and Thinking Skills – that everyone needs to be able to achieve their goals.

This year our mentor is Yasmin who will visit us three times in the coming year.



FUTURE EVENTS

Graduation evening will take place in the Legends lounge, Birmingham City FC Football Ground. This will be the final opportunity to enjoy and have fun with their school friends and celebrate their time and achievements at Rockwood Academy.

There will be presentations of awards followed by an opportunity for students to enjoy a meal and to socialise. The dress code for the evening is formalwear. Males are required to wear a suit or trousers and shirt; females are required to wear dresses or gowns.



Coming soon! First international trip for Year 7 and 8 to the Opal Coast in France, in July. For further information, please contact Ms Rida, Head of MFL.



NEW DEVELOPMENT

Presently the academy has a capacity of 648 students and is undergoing expansion to increase its student number to 1050 by 2020. With this in mind, the current size of the school does not address the need for this extra capacity.

The design includes an extension to the front of the existing Academy building, along with the reconfiguration of space within the existing school building. The two will be joined together by a delicately detailed link.

Working in conjunction with Morgan Sindall Construction Limited.

Ms Sofia Darr, Headteacher

As part of the CORE Education Trust, Rockwood Academy will take a 3 form entry increase as part of the additional secondary places programme with Birmingham City Council. But this project

isn't just about the increase in pupil numbers, it's an opportunity to positively change the outward perception of the School to the community as a whole.

The School is set back from the road with the main teaching blocks hidden from view so it's only the signage which alerts you to what's actually there. The buildings you can see are stark and the perimeter is an imposing steel palisade fence. They do their best to make the School open and welcoming but the site seems to work against them.

When we met with the Head Teacher and the CEO and COO of the Trust I couldn't help but be inspired by their passion for their School and the huge opportunity for change this project could provide them with. They enthused about reimagining the School for pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. The focus of the project team shifted very firmly to providing a frontage to the

School site which was secure but in a way which didn't create visual and physical barriers while also meeting the Client brief on budget and meeting lean targets. Some joined up working by Acivico Ltd, Morgan Sindall and Associated Architects is now striving to make this a reality for them. I just can't help but be excited by the opportunity to be involved.

It's a stark reminder that the built environment does more than just shelter us from the elements or provide a space for teaching and learning. Buildings and hard landscaping can help to welcome people in or conversely create physical or psychological barriers. As designers and professionals we have a huge responsibility to see the bigger picture. To consider the impact on the wider community, not just meeting space requirements or cost per m² rates.

Senior project manager

Acivico



MEET YOUR STUDENT COUNCIL

As the school council, we are voted for by the students in our forms and year groups. It is our job to share the views of the students at Rockwood Academy and to work with the teachers to make improvements. So far, we have given our thoughts on how we would like to be rewarded and the types of reward trip we would like. We are also working on ensuring the system for awarding merits and demerits is clear. We are working with the pastoral team to eliminate the poor punctuality of some students.

A big challenge this term has been adapting to the new caterers. We have had a number of meetings with the caterers, and have seen an improvement. We now have a more diverse menu and prices are available, to help us make our lunch choices. Some other areas we are working on include; mending the football nets, opening a tuck shop, improving assemblies to become more interactive.

As a school council, we feel like our voices are listened to and heard. We now need to make sure all members of the academy know who we are and will approach us if they have any suggestions for improvement. (The School Council)

Head Girl and Head Boy



Deputy Head Girl and Head Boy



Year 11



Year 10



Year 9



Year 8



Year 7



GOVERNORS

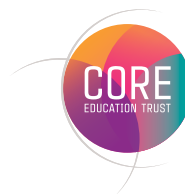
As a member of the Local Governing Body for Rockwood Academy, I have made several visits to the academy this term. My visits have shown me the wonderful work that our students are completing, as well as the large number of opportunities on offer to Rockwood students.

During my visits, I have seen a celebration of excellence, for year 7 and 8 poetry writing competition winners, where our students displayed their confidence and demonstrated their creativity when they performed their poems on stage, for the many parents who attended. I was impressed during year 8 Options Evening; all of the departments in the school showcased their GCSE work, for parents of year 8 students, so that students, with the support of their families could make important decisions about their future. In addition, I have witnessed the year 11 students in their new supervised after-hours study space. Our school is constantly responding to the feedback from students and families to improve the experience for all. I look forward to many more visits in the coming term.

Mr Syed-Shahzad Hassan
(Local Governing Body)



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TED Ed Clubs



Join Ted Ed Club Now! Year 7 – 10 Join now

Do you feel you could talk about something you believe in passionately? Join us in G10 during Friday Lunchtimes!

Students have been working hard on their presentation skills and are beginning to shape their thoughts and opinions on topics of their choice. TED is a brilliant opportunity to support you in public speaking as well as building your confidence!

Do you want to discuss an idea you feel your fellow peers should be aware of?

Do you want to join a global movement which is committed to spreading youth ideas? Come and speak to Mrs Sahota (Head of Wellbeing) about joining.

This could be your time to stand up and speak up for yourself! We will be meeting once a week at lunchtime – there are limited spaces so be quick and sign up!

The world is waiting to be redefined by the biggest, smallest, boldest, quirkiest, bravest, most inspiring and most brilliant ideas from young people around the world.