

Links Journal



Summer

School Calendar

Term Ends

Thursday 20 July 2023

@ 12.30 pm

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Autumn Term

INSET DAYS

Monday 4 September 2023

Tuesday 5 September 2023

No Students in school

**Student Parent Review
Day**

Wednesday

6 September 2023

Form Tutors will arrange convenient time to meet with Parents & Students

Term Starts

Thursday 7 September 2023



Dear Reader

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all students, staff, parents and Trustees for making this year as successful as it has been. You will know by now that the school recently had an Ofsted visit and it has been judged to continue to be Good. Had it been a full inspection under Section 5 we could have been graded as Outstanding.

Whilst we have not got many staff leaving the Links Academy St Albans I would like to take this opportunity to wish Mrs Yuen and Mrs Smith, who are leaving us at the end of term, all the best for the future. I would also like to congratulate Mr Broadbridge and his family on the birth of their baby boy and Miss Wilding and her family on the arrival of their baby son.

Could I please remind all parents/carers that students will be expected to return to school in September correctly dressed and wearing appropriate uniform. Should students arrive for Student Parent Review Day on Wednesday 6 September 2023 inappropriately dressed, they will be reminded that they must be correctly dressed in full school uniform on Thursday 7 September 2023. Failing that, students will be sent home to change into correct uniform.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the column on the right outlining the arrangements for the start of the next academic year.

Have a restful summer break and we look forward to seeing you all in September.

David Allen, Headteacher



Year 11 GCSE Results Day

Thursday 24 August 2023

School will be open for Year 11 Leavers to collect their exam results from **10 am to 12 noon**. If you are unable to collect your results on this day please email admin@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk

Links Academy welcomes comments from parents/carers and families about any aspect of school life.

Please contact us via our email admin@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk

www.linksacademy.herts.sch.uk to view Ofsted reports, key dates, journals and school information

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

The latest wonderments from the *Wonder Room*:



At the beginning of term, St Albans MP Daisy Cooper officially opened our building and took the opportunity to explore many of the various weird and wonderful items on display. She was also the first person to sign the Visitors' Book, giving her House of Commons official address!



Battling with lightsabres. Eat your hearts out Darth Vader and Obi Wan Kenobi...



The event was captured on camera by our staff and featured on the cover (and inside) pages of the esteemed Herts Advertiser.

Since the story was published, we have gratefully received wondrous donations from generous members of the public.



Recent donations have included a 'vintage' (1989) mobile phone and ancient laptop – each weighing roughly the same as a house brick – a 'Furby' with its travel pack, a reproduction General Post Office phone, and an antique ceramic male urinal bed pan (!)

Thankfully, all items were cleaned prior to donation...

Helping keep children safe:

On a more serious note, in May we supported Hertfordshire Constabulary's 'Knife Amnesty' campaign.

Members of the public were afforded the opportunity to anonymously surrender any knives in their possession which were unwanted (or not supposed to be owned in the first place), without question or consequence, to **Hatfield, Stevenage** and **Watford** police stations.

Temporary knife bins were also set up in locations around the county and there are now permanent surrender bins in Waltham Cross.





This initiative was a vital component of 'Lives Not Knives' – the nationwide focus on reducing knife crime and protecting young people. The campaign formed part of an over-arching programme of support and information for our students, related to PSHE (and drug awareness in particular).

As the police reassure us, *“knife-related crime remains lower in Hertfordshire than in other parts of the country, but the campaign aims to reinforce the message that carrying a knife is illegal and will not help to keep you safe.”*



July 3rd – 9th was *Alcohol Awareness Week* and our ever-game students took part in an interactive assembly using the 'Alcohol Goggles'.

These replicate the effect of what it might feel like to be drunk – and how our motor skills could be adversely effected.

Staff and students took part in various activities using the goggles, including attempting to touch fingertips, egg & spoon racing, remote control car navigation, throwing & catching, and walking the slalom. Not easy!



Of course, the great thing about feeling dizzy and sick whilst wearing the goggles is that you can remove them instantly... Unlike the reality of being drunk which can last considerably longer!



Mr R Boxer, Healthy Lifestyles Lead



Year 11 Leavers

LEAVERS
2023

On 12 May 2023 parents and carers along with staff and students were invited to attend our annual Year 11 Leavers Assembly.

The hall was decorated in traditional Links colours, a multitude of blues, with a magnificent balloon arch framing our leavers photos.



Mr Allen delivered a speech and then handed the Year 11 Leavers their photograph, certificate and a leavers card signed by all staff.

The obligatory t-shirt signing soon commenced with

good luck wishes being shared amongst peers and from staff.



After lots of photos with friends, family and staff members, the BBQ was moved indoors as the weather was not playing ball!!!! However, this did not dampen the Links spirit. As per tradition, Mr Allen donned his chef whites and served up a delicious BBQ of burgers, sausages, chicken and prawns along with fresh salads followed by cakes and a platter of summer fruits.



Thank you to each and every student for everything that you've accomplished so far, and Good Luck to everything you will achieve in the future.



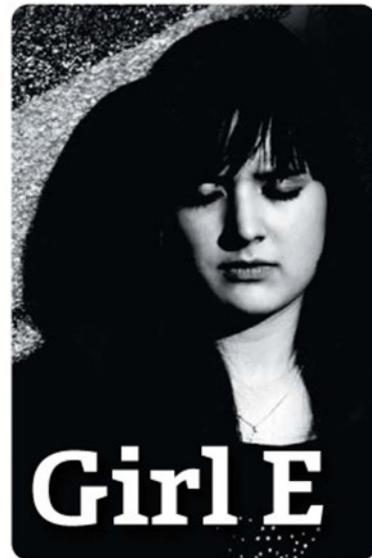
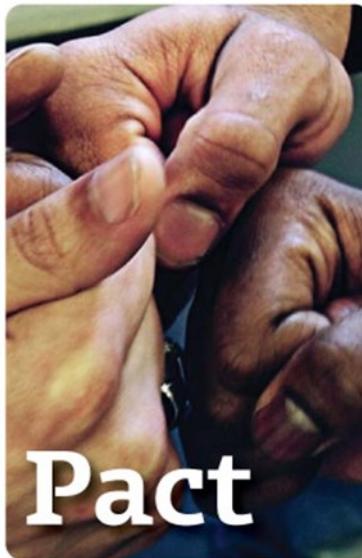
Mrs T Mehmet—Higher Level Outreach Worker

The story of Boy X.

PHSME assembly

The performance was focused on young people and how knife crime, drugs and gangs are impacting lives within our communities. The performance varied between the story of Boy X and the current concerns about youth crimes and gangs. The students were encouraged to engage in open conversations about drugs, gangs and violence with the performance team. It was informative for both students and staff and allowed an open a line of communication for support and ways to stay away from crime, as well as myth busting some of the students pre-conceived ideas. Students asked relevant questions and happily shared their views with the theatre company. Afterwards some students stayed to talk with the team further and others shared their thoughts, feelings and views with their tutors and peers. It was an assembly well spent by all who attended.

arc theatre for change



The Blade Trilogy by Clifford Oliver, directed by Carole Pluckrose

Miss J Coulson—Teacher of Maths/Science/Child Care

King's Coronation—6 May 23

This time last year we had been celebrating the Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. Following her sad death in September it seemed quite strange to be talking about a 'King' rather than a 'Queen' and to be planning our Coronation Celebrations. However, the Students were all keen to have a picnic style party and we decided to open the event to all of our families and our local community too.



Beforehand Mr Bailey and Ms Heagren spent every possible moment working on getting all of the dishes ready to serve. As well as the students deciding on the style of event they had also decided upon the menu. So our two staff had a high standard to uphold and very picky customers to please!

The staff also prepared various bunting and decorations for the event – which although it was a 'picnic' was held indoors on the day due to the unpredictable English weather!



Everyone worked really well together to make the event a success and then worked just as hard to clear it all up afterwards too.

Many thanks to Mr Bailey and Ms Heagren for all the amazing food, and many thanks to all of the Staff who contributed to the event by making bunting, clearing and decorating the Hall and for entertaining the parents and visitors who arrived to help us celebrate.



Our school business manager Rosie enjoying the festivities.



Mrs J Heagren—Teacher of DT and Construction

King's Coronation at Woollam Crescent



On Friday 6 May 2023, we celebrated the King's Coronation here at Woollam Crescent. Both Cedars Primary Support Base and Inclusion were invited to take part. We had set up a part table filled with scones, croissants, hot cross buns and other delicious treats. The students and adults enjoyed collecting a plate to enjoy with

each other. There were also lots of decorations which sparked many conversations about the King and Royal family.

All students also took part in decorating cupcakes with red and blue icing before putting on sprinkles and a Union Jack flag on top. The students showed a great deal of respect for



the special celebration throughout the day. A special thanks to Izzy for helping Miss Crawford make biscoff, vanilla and chocolate cupcakes and decorate the room the day before.



Thank you to all the staff at Woollam Crescent who came and participated throughout the day and celebrate alongside the primary and secondary students.



Miss M Crawford—Lead Practitioner PSB

PCSO—Richard Bunn

This year marks the end of my first full year with Links Academy. Having started at the school in June 2022 I have spent my time getting to know the students and building positive relationships and I can honestly say I have loved it. I have been kept busy working across the Trust at the Hixberry school, Hatfield school, at Cedars Primary Support Base and at Woollam Crescent, our pupil support base. From the moment I started I have been so impressed with the support and the opportunities the students have to succeed at school and it has been fantastic to see great moments where students have taken those opportunities and enjoyed learning new skills and gaining knowledge.



The main purpose of my role is to be a positive representative of the Police for the students and to demonstrate that our goal is to help our communities and keep people safe. As a constant presence around the Trust, I hope that I have been able to act as a positive role model and, for some, be someone that they feel they can talk to if they are experiencing any problems. It has been a pleasure to spend time with the students, get to know them and to join in with lessons, activities and trips.

Over the summer holidays I will be returning to my duties as a PCSO in Welwyn Garden City and then I'll join back up with everyone at Links for the start of the new school year, which I am very much looking forward to. In the meantime, I hope everyone has an enjoyable summer break. Stay safe.



Mr R Bunn—PCSO

Gym Club

The first rule of Gym Club is that you can always talk about Gym Club! And that's exactly what I am about to do. This term I have been opening the Gym on a Monday lunchtime for the students to join me in a workout. With a maximum of 5 students per session it has been relaxed, informal and a chance to let off steam and focus on fitness. We put on some music and I let the students lead themselves; so it



could be a session on the running machine, maybe some weight lifting, rowing, cycling and of course there is the ever popular punch bag! It is open to all students and I plan to continue the club next year so if any students are interested then they can find me for a chat.



Mr R Bunn—PCSO

Careers Assembly

On Friday 12 May 2023, Links Academy was visited by Scott Parker from Skillnet. Skillnet is one of the UK's leading training providers in the automotive sector and Scott spoke to our students about the prospect of apprenticeships and other various opportunities.

Scott explained that employers value real working skills when they are selecting new employees and promoting existing ones. Apprentices who have worked for and achieved qualifications, as well as those who have gained work experience, will be in a good position to further their career.

It was an exciting prospect for many of our students, particularly those who already have a keen interest in cars and vehicles.

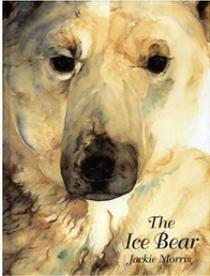


Mr M Broadbridge -Teacher of PE

Primary Support Base

The Summer term at Cedars has been an exciting one. Although we had to say goodbye to four of our students, we welcomed four new fantastic children to our class. Throughout the term, we have had plenty of time to enjoy the sunshine, soaking up the sun with the occasional ice lolly treat. Although we have welcomed the summer sun, our children have also been working exceptionally hard in all areas of their learning.

Throughout the week, children engage in a range of different lessons, completing lessons in the core subjects of Maths and English and a range of exciting topic lessons.



Each term, our **English lessons** are based around a book. This exposes children to a range of different texts and authors and focuses our writing around a theme. During the first half of the term, our lessons were based around the book *Ruby Finds A Worry*. This allowed a cross curricular link with PSHE and introduced our class Worry Monster, who has a very special place in our classroom.



Children also complete a **phonics lesson** weekly and have been working their way through phase 2 successfully. During the second part of the term, lessons focused around Jackie Morris's *The Ice Bear*. Once again, children engaged eagerly and offered their thoughts and perspectives around the text with insight. Children conducted their own research on Polar Bears and produced incredible written tasks producing texts such as letters of advice, diary entries and a non-chronological report on Polar Bears.



At the end of term, children wrote their own instructions for making **glitter slime**, which we then followed to create our very own take-home pot of slime.



It has been in our **Music lessons** that we have discovered that we have some incredible musicians amongst us. Children have learnt to play the recorder and have demonstrated some real talent in this area. Children have learnt to play notes B, A, G and D and have performed various songs to showcase their knowledge of these notes. The children were proud to perform their renditions of *Mary had a Little Lamb* to various staff members at Woollam.

In **RE lessons**, children have looked closely at 'Belonging'. We started by looking at who we are and how we belong. We have looked at what it means to belong to various religious communities including Christianity, Judaism and Islam.



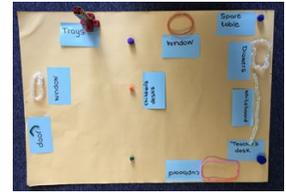
During **Design and Technology**, children tried their hand at designing, creating and grouting their very own mosaics, producing fantastic mosaic photo frames. Children were given wooden frames and a backboard which they needed to construct together using wood glue and patience. Thereafter, children chose their colour scheme and design, choosing their tiles accordingly. Thereafter, they showed their patience and determination by placing their tiles along the wooden frames to create their mosaics. Children learnt to grout, finishing off their frames and showing great pride in their creations.



Primary Support Base

In **Science**, we looked at seasonal changes, observing and describing the changes that occur across the four seasons. We looked at why seasons occur and characteristics of each. Children looked at the different ways to keep safe during Summer and showed that they were ready for their summer holidays.

Geography looked at the topic 'My World and My Classroom.' We started the topic by looking at towns, villages and cities. We had a look at Google Earth and identified where the school is on the street and learnt how to write an address, using the school address as the learning point. We also looked at the countries that make up the United Kingdom and expanded this by looking at the seven continents of the world. Children used a globe to find the UK on the world map and identify the continent we are on.



PSHE covered a range of important topics. We started by looking at the Zones of Regulation and children decided on their own strategies which they incorporated into creating their tool boxes which they could use to help support them during each of the identified zones.

We also looked at the 3Rs of our **Character School** - Respect, Responsibility and Resilience and children worked hard throughout the term to earn stickers for each of these areas and successfully earned a token for our book vending machine.



We looked closely at keeping safe and during **Road Safety Week** we had PCSO Bunn visit our class to teach us more about this topic. We even took our learning outside to complete a practical task of crossing the road safely.



This term also saw our very first **Cedars Photo Day**. Children participated in a fun outdoor photoshoot producing some wonderful photographs which truly captured their happiness and positive feelings towards school.



We were also treated to a **sushi making lesson** with Miss Crawford, where children learnt to make their very own Makizushi which they got to enjoy both at school and take home to share with their loved ones.



We have had an incredible term filled with learning, fun and laughter and of course our pizza Fridays! We wish everyone a relaxing summer break and look forward to another exciting term ahead.

Miss R Gray—PSB Teacher

OUTREACH TEAM

The secondary Outreach Team have had a busy summer term. Covering 25 schools across St Albans, Harpenden, Welwyn, Hatfield and Hertsmere, the team have provided in excess of 450 hours supporting students in their existing mainstream settings.

The team of four, managed by Fiona Haynes, provide a pivotal role providing a service that supports schools in understanding and developing practical and creative strategies to enable students with social and emotional needs and challenging behaviour, to become more successful learners in school. The outreach team work with school staff, parents/carers and the students to help:

- To reengage disaffected pupils in their mainstream school
- To support students on reintegration or managed moves
- To engage and work with parents/careers in their child's educational provision



The Outreach Team use their knowledge and skills to provide practical interventions within mainstream settings and have a proven track record in successfully supporting and enabling schools to aid students with social emotional and mental health needs to find practical, creative ways to meet the needs of the school and students alike.

The team provide 1-1 support developed to suit the needs of the individual and Alex Harris and Fiona Haynes have recently delivered bespoke group work sessions.

The team work collaboratively with their schools to help ensure a joined-up approach.

Some of the areas of behaviour the team work with are:

Defiance: Although there's a wide range of possible explanations, the most common disruptive behaviour disorders include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD). Often, these disorders showcase overlapping symptoms, and excessive refusal to obey authority figures is often apparent within cases of CD and ODD.

Inattention: All kids struggle to focus from time to time, especially when they are disinterested. However, a child that struggles to concentrate, or they continually move from one task to another without completing any may show impulsivity and overactivity, these may be a sign of ADHD.

Physical Aggression: From tantrums to negative interactions with other children, physical aggression is most certainly a behaviour that needs to be addressed. For those with Conduct Disorder, for instance, this can evolve into the hurting of animals and an increase in fighting, destructiveness and disobedience.

Blaming Others: When a child misbehaves, are they quick to blame others? It's normal for children to want to avoid getting in trouble, but this will be much more noticeable along with a consistent lack of responsibility and a refusal to own up to their own mistakes.

Antisocial Behaviour: A child with Conduct Disorder, in particular, tend to exhibit antisocial behaviour with repeated violations of social rules, which will also tie into defiance of authority and disregard for others.

Mrs T Mehmet—Higher Level Outreach Worker

PASTORAL HUB

Links Outreach Manager Fiona Haynes and Outreach Worker Tracy Mehmet attended the last **Pastoral Hub** of this Academic year. Hosted by Jon Buckland of Townsend school, the event took on a new networking format.

We went equipped with examples of how The Outreach Team support students across St Albans and Harpenden both on a 1-1 basis and group work, sharing resources and ideas. We offered support in how to complete referrals and discussed best practice strategies to try and ensure children feel comfortable talking with teachers, pastoral staff or a member of the Links Outreach Team about issues they may be having.

The Pastoral teams from the thirteen secondary schools across St Albans and Harpenden were invited to attend the Hub meeting where they were greeted by a number of agencies and organisations holding stalls bearing their goodies knowledge sharing and offering specialist support to Pastoral school staff.

Some of the agencies included:

Youth Talk - Youth Talk provide free, confidential counselling to 13–25-year-olds in St Albans and the surrounding areas.

DSPL7 - DSPL7 is a Hertfordshire-wide partnership approach where parents, carers, staff in early years settings and schools, further education colleges, local authority officers and representatives from other agencies, work together as part of an Area Group to ensure that there is a range of provision and support services available in their local community.

Lives Not Knives - Jules and Fiona are key members of the Lives not Knives team and represent an innovative, award winning, youth-led charity that works to prevent knife crime, serious youth violence and school exclusions by engaging, educating and empowering disadvantaged young people and supporting them to enjoy their lives and improve their future prospects.

HCC Services for Young people - provide youth work, information, advice, guidance, work related learning, outdoor education and wider support for young people. The majority of its work is with those aged 13 to 19 and up to 24 for young people with learning disabilities and care experienced young people.



The event was a huge success and made even better with the sun shining and we were even treated to bags of sweets and a sausage sizzle!!!



Mrs Tracy Mehmet—Higher Level Outreach Worker

Mental Health Awareness Week

It was Mental Health Awareness Week in May, and it was time to go green!

1 in 6 of us are affected by mental health problems every week. During Mental Health Awareness Week 2023, the **Primary and Secondary Outreach teams** decided to join in with 'Wear it Green Day on Thursday 18 May' to help raise mental health awareness.



This year's theme is Anxiety.

Anxiety is a normal emotion in us all, but sometimes it can get out of control and become a mental health problem.

Lots of things can lead to feelings of anxiety, including exam pressures, relationships, starting a new job (or losing one) or other big life events. We can also get anxious when it comes to things to do with money and not being able to meet our basic needs, like heating our home or buying food. But anxiety can be made easier to manage.

Focusing on anxiety for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week will increase people's awareness and understanding of anxiety by providing information on the things that can help prevent it from becoming a problem. At the same time, we will keep up the pressure to demand change - making sure that improving mental health is a key priority for the government and society as a whole.

Anxiety is something we can all experience from time-to-time. There are lots of reasons why we get this feeling. It can be connected to a job, school, a relationship, social situations, how we feel about ourselves, or a change in our life.

If we don't know how to cope with our feelings of anxiety, they can get out of control and stop us from doing the things we need or want to do. The more often and the longer we feel anxious, the more it can become a problem.

Dealing with anxiety can be hard. But there are some things the **Outreach Team** suggest we can do to manage these tough feelings.

1. Focus on your breathing

When you're having anxious thoughts try focusing on your breathing, concentrating on the feeling of your body as you breathe in and out. It can help you control the thought.

2. Get moving

Exercise is a good way of dealing with anxiety.

Remember, activity doesn't have to be vigorous; try some gentle stretches, yoga, or seated exercises. Or just go for a walk. Any amount of exercise will help.

3. Keep a diary

It's important that we don't try to ignore our worries. Taking the time to keep a record of what's happening in your life and how it's affecting you can help you understand what is triggering your feelings of anxiety. Knowing this can help you better prepare for and manage situations that may cause anxiety.

4. Challenge your thoughts

Anxiety can lead us to think about things over and over again in our brain. This is called 'rumination' and it's not helpful. When you catch yourself ruminating try to write down the thought and to challenge it. Is what you're worrying about likely to happen? Are you being realistic? Have you had similar thoughts which have not turned into reality?

5. Get support for money worries

A common cause of anxiety is money. If you're worried about not being able to pay bills, are struggling to repay debt, or aren't sure if you can cover your family's living costs, seek help. Make sure you are claiming all the government supports that you're entitled to. You can also speak to an organisation such as Citizens Advice or StepChange.

6. Spend time in nature

We know that spending time in nature has a positive impact on our mental health. It can help us feel calmer and less stressed. This can be as simple as tending some flowers in a window box or going for a walk in the woods.

7. Connect with people and talk about how you feel

Anxiety can feel very lonely. Connecting with other people can help a lot. Spend time with friends or meet other people through activities such as volunteering, sport or social clubs, or peer support groups. If you're able to talk to people about how you feel, it can help to reduce your anxiety. Sometimes saying what's worrying you out loud can take away its power over you.

8. Try to get some quality sleep or rest

Resting and having a good night's sleep is hard when your head is full of worries but there are some things that can help.

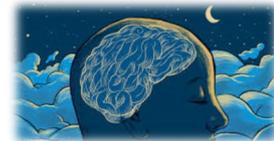
If anxious thoughts keep you awake, write them down in your diary.

9. Try to eat a healthy diet

For many of us, feeling anxious might cause us to reach for sugary snacks, junk food or alcohol.

It's important that we don't turn to unhealthy foods or drinks as a way to cope as they will do more damage in the longer term. Similarly, we should avoid smoking or taking recreational drugs.

Eating healthy food regularly helps us to regulate our blood sugar and gives us the energy we need to live well.



Mrs Tracy Mehmet—Higher Level Outreach Worker

INCLUSION

The Inclusion Unit based at our Woollam Crescent site has had another busy and exciting term with many new students starting and transitioning to Hixberry successfully. We would like to congratulate all the students for displaying resilience during their move to a new setting.

In **Maths** we have focused on a range of topics, such as representing data, algebra, ratio and proportion. There has been plenty of amazing pieces of work completed as well as several students undertaking Functional Skills Exams. Mrs Harding, our wonderful supply Maths Teacher has been supporting Inclusion frequently this term. She has been undertaking 'Mindful Maths' with the students focused on curves of pursuit, which has seen great engagement and been a great accomplishment overall. Many students enjoy Mrs Harding's lessons and we would like to say a big thank you for all her support this past term. It has been a successful term in the Maths department at Woollam and we are excited what learning the next term will bring.



The Inclusion students have also celebrated a range of **cultural days** such as Budda's Birthday. The students are able to learn about a range of religions and cultures which is vital for learning respect and understanding about the wider world.



Fridays at Woollam have seen a **new tradition** come to light this term - bacon and sausage butties which students (and staff) have been happily enjoying! Maddy is often the first to put up her hand to help Miss Crawford; taking everyone's orders, buttering rolls and making sure the bacon is extra crispy – just the way everyone likes it! A big thank you to Maddy, other students who have helped and Miss Crawford for ending the week on a delicious note.

The Food Technology room has also seen many other delicious treats made by students this term – biscoff pancakes, pepperoni pizza, flapjacks and more. Several students like to share their creations with other staff and students, showing a great deal of respect and kindness towards others. I wonder what recipes we can make next term?

I would also like to thank Mr Marland for a wonderful first year as part of the Inclusion Unit at Links Academy. He has been a great addition to the team and I look forward to another successful school year ahead.



To all our students and families, I hope you have a great summer holiday and I look forward to seeing you in September after a well-deserved restful break.

Mr Tim Holgate—Lead Inclusion Teacher

Links Academy Babies

There must be something in the water here at Links Academy as we are experiencing a baby boom coming along from staff members.

We look forward to hearing the patter of tiny feet in the coming weeks and we would like to CONGRATULATE our parents-to-be.



Miss T Wallace—Senior Pastoral Leader



Links Community Event

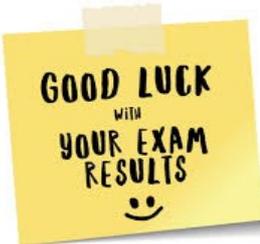


On Saturday 10 June 2023 we held our first Community Event. I would like to thank everyone who donated clothes and food for the event and all the staff who came and supported the event on the day. There were clothes and food available for anyone who wanted to come and take away what they could use for a donation. We raised £120 which is great. We are going to donate this to the Guide Dogs and sponsor a puppy. The students will be able to vote on a puppy they would like to sponsor for the year.

We will be running another community event soon. Look out for the details!

Mrs C Brown—Head of School

GCSE Exams



I would like to say a big 'well done' to all the Year 11's who completed their exams during May and June 2023.

You will be able to collect your results on **Thursday 24 August 2023 from 10 am – 12 noon**. We look forward to seeing you then. There will be teachers available on the day to give advice and guidance on 'Next Steps' if you would like to access them.

Mrs C Brown—Head of School

TRIPS



Science Trip

On 12 April 2023 we embarked on our Epping Forest Science Trip. When we arrived we decided on a short walk around a small part of the forest just to loosen up our legs and get some fresh air after our car journey. We got right to work and started our Science investigation taking soil samples and using the quadrates



to count up species. We then started our nature walk. Not happy at first to do the exercise, everyone soon realised how beautiful the forest is, so fun and relaxation kicked in. The highlight was Mrs Trotman slipping in



the mud trying to cross the stream.

Mrs G Trotman—Teacher of Science

Rock Climbing



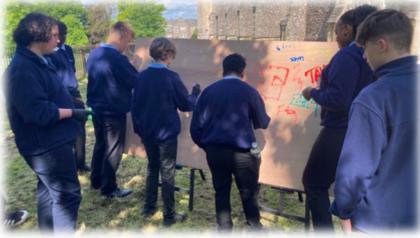
On 25 May 2023 we took our students to the University of Hertfordshire to use their sporting facility. We chose to do the rock climbing to the horror of some students who are not ok with heights but accepted



the challenge to try. Our instructor was amazing and patient, encouraging the students to try but in also stressing the need for safety. We have some natural climbers who were right at the top in no time but we were also so very proud of the students who by their third go made it to the top by overcoming their fear. Very proud Links moment.

Mrs G Trotman—Teacher of Science

St Albans Cathedral



On Tuesday 16 May 2023, we took a group of our students to St Albans Cathedral to take part in two activities. The first was a graffiti workshop held in the Orchard with the Cathedral's Artist in Residence, Ant Steel. The students loved spraying their 'tags' onto a wooden canvas before getting to work on a graffiti masterpiece! The idea was to show that quality graffiti art can transform and give great aesthetic pleasure. With Ant's guidance and finishing touches the students got stuck in and created a magnificent piece of art with some of them showing a real talent and flair for it. We were so proud of their creation that we made sure we were able to bring the artwork back to school to be displayed for all to see.



After lunch, we headed inside to take part in a short guided tour of the Cathedral followed by a Labyrinth exercise, which encouraged our students to be reflective and think about their place in the world. This also included dressing up as monks, which went down well with a number of the students! It was a great visit overall and we now have a piece of art on display to remember the experience.



For any students that might be interested, Ant will be hosting free drop-in sessions in the Orchard at the Cathedral on 24 June, 12 August (11.30 am-1.30 pm) and 21 October (10.30 am-12.30 pm). Best to get in touch with the Cathedral themselves for further details.

Mr R Bunn—PCSO



TRIPS



Hare Krishna Temple



On Monday 12 June 2023 we took some of the students to Bhaktivedanta Manor, a place of worship for followers of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, informally known as the 'Hare Krishna Movement'. Described as a 'spiritual sanctuary, a temple, a monastery and a place of contemplation and exploration for the spiritually inquisitive, this is a unique place of worship. If you were to imagine a temple, I doubt that you would conjure up what can be found at Bhaktivedanta Manor. Previously known as Piggott's Manor,



this temple is a stunning mock-Tudor building surrounded by beautiful gardens that was donated to the Hare Krishna movement by former Beatle George Harrison in 1973 who famously followed the movement, endorsing the Krishna Conscious principles in his 1970 solo album 'All Things Must Pass' (a bloomin' great album too!). Harrison had a close relationship with ISKON's founder A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who resided at the manor and Harrison visited him there on several occasions.

As a nod to Harrison and as we waited for the second school bus to arrive, we played a selection of Beatles songs in the bus, which had a mixed reception from the students but it was good to explain the context. We received a warm welcome from a member of the faith and were taken into the temple, making sure to remove our shoes as we entered as a sign of respect. We learnt about what the Hare Krishna Movement is, its teachings stemming from the Hindu scriptures, particularly the Bhagavad Gita and the different avatars of God (Krishna) that they worship. The students had lots of fun when they were finally persuaded to dress up as the various deities!

We were invited into the main worship space where there were two shrines, one dedicated to Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and another dedicated to the gods. We were treated to some live worship music consisting of the Hare Krishna mantra, otherwise known as the Mahamantra, as members of the public came in to worship and the students even had the chance to join in by playing various percussion instruments. It was amazing to see all the students taking part and showing the utmost respect to our hosts.

We then took a stroll over to the Cow Centre (yes, they have a cow centre!) via the cafe where we were treated to some delicious Bhajis to snack on along the way. The students loved not only meeting the cows but feeding them too! The New Gokul is the name for the cow protection centre and organic farm on site that is home to a herd of 63 cows and bulls, modern and traditional cow care facilities and acres of pastureland, just what every cow wants. We learnt how the aim is for harmonious living between nature, humans and animals.



All in all, the day was enjoyed by all. There was lots to learn and new experiences to be had in a peaceful and meditative environment that is good for the soul. As Ringo likes to say, peace and love.

Mr R Bunn—PCSO

IWM Duxford



IWM Duxford is an Air Museum located near Cambridge. On 14 June 2023 a group of our students went along and had a lovely morning. When we arrived we stopped and had a drink and some cake and then wondered around the museum. The students were lucky enough to walk through the aeroplane 'The Concorde'. The history of the aircraft was explained and some of the students showed a real interest. We then went for a walk outside and it was such a beautiful day. We stopped and sat for lunch in the sun and then the students played in the play area. IWM Duxford is a very large area which is perfect for a summer's day out. There are plenty of things to see and due to how big it is we were unable to visit all of the areas.



Mr S Bailey

Duke of Edinburgh Expedition



On June 28 to 29, four of our students (Mujahid, Charlie, Jakub and Bruno) completed their Duke of Edinburgh expedition. They walked from Bramfield (near Hertford) to Tolmers scout camp in Cuffley. The students did exceptionally well on the first day, walking 20 km with all of their expedition kit, including their large rucksack, tent, cooking stove, sleeping mat, sleeping



bag and their food and drink for the two days. The first day took the students 7 hours to walk from the drop off point to the campsite and once we got there they were exhausted. But they still needed to pitch their tents, cook dinner and prepare for the next day. In the evening Mr Allen, Mrs Brown and Miss Wallace came down to see the students and watch them make dinner. Later that evening we had a bonfire and toasted marshmallows over it and as it was Jakub's birthday we celebrated with a cake. Throughout the night it rained and the students left their tent unzipped and they woke-up with a large puddle in the middle of the tent. The rain continued through the morning whilst we packed up and walked back to school, but in the afternoon the sun came out and made the final push more manageable. We got back to school at 3 pm after a 6 hour walk. The students should be extremely proud of themselves for achieving this, well done!!!



Mr S Bailey-Teacher of Business/Geography/Leisure & Tourism

Mountfitchet



The enrichment trip to Mountfitchet allowed our students to show the best of themselves. They had the opportunity to explore and engage with a wealth of historical resources in the Norman Village. From day-to-day tools, to weapons and armour. The students who chose to engage were able to enjoy a real feel for



time period. Throughout the village we came across a variety of animals and the students enjoyed being able to observe them and the brave petted the goats. As a teacher I felt a lot of pride regarding the students' behaviour, as I watched them support students from a primary school access some of the resources with patience and respect. The second part of the trip was in the toys museum. It was packed full of old toys and games and some of the students recognised these from their own homes or homes of family members. They had an opportunity to use old money to work the machines and treated the space and games with respect.



Miss J Coulson—Teacher of Maths/Science/Child Care

Buffet Breakfast Trip

On Thursday 13 July 2023 we had an unusual rewards trip this term - an unlimited **buffet breakfast**. We all ate until we could fit no more in. We even witnessed the usual combination of pancakes and vinegar! Not on purpose though. The vinegar jar was mistaken for syrup. We had the time to talk and laugh and even made a slight detour on our way back to look at all the super cars. The students are definitely up for another food trip. Maybe we can talk to Mrs Abraham for something next term!



Mrs G Trotman—Teacher of Science

Attendance Update – Summer Term 2023

Wow – what a journey Links Academy has been on over the past year with attendance and punctuality.



Way back in the Autumn Term the new DfE guidance, *'Working together to improve school attendance'*, gave Links Academy the opportunity to review our practice and throughout the year this has been woven into all areas of school life in various guises; from all staff training/input, visits from Local Authority Attendance Team and the student voice, have all played an important part and provided a good foundation for Links Academy to continue with in 2023/24.

This year Links Academy has seen an increased number of students in years 7-9 (KS3) coming onto school roll and this change has resulted in an overall decline on school attendance stats compared to last year. However, the reasons for this doesn't necessarily mean that the students are not attending school. Some of our students have adjusted timetables in place to help accommodate their individual provision need. By being more specific, it allows the student access and re-engage with learning and attending school in a positive and more manageable way.

Further DfE guidance, *'Summary of responsibilities where mental health issue is affecting attendance'*, published in February 2023 is an indication that mental health issues for pupils and the impact this is having on school attendance, is a country-wide concern.

Please be assured that this does not mean that school staff can now diagnose mental health issues. The guidance clearly states; *'school staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions or perform mental health interventions, but they are expected to work to ensure regular attendance for every child'* and this can be in the form of reasonable adjustments for the student.

Throughout the year, time keeping has never been a strong point for many of our students, however, punctuality has improved this term, with an increased number of students arriving at 8.30 am for breakfast and most arriving in time for morning registration, before 9 am.

School Matters!



Attendance 'Hop to it Bunny' Rewards for Cedars



Well done to Cedars students for earning their 'Hop to it Bunny' awards at the tail end of the Spring Term for some fantastic attendance, ranging from 75%-100%!



A well-deserved visit from Mrs Porritt and the 'Hop to it Bunny' (otherwise known as Daisy!)



The next round of awards will be winging their way to Cedars very soon for the Summer Term... yet more great attendance to celebrate.



Mrs S Porritt—Attendance Officer

Year 11 Thorpe Park Trip

Every year we enjoy taking our Year 11 students on our annual Thorpe Park trip. We had some anxious students to start who were a bit dubious about going on the big rollercoasters. After a bit of coaxing and encouragement we all managed to brave the first big ride. Once this had happened there was no stopping them!



Swarm was a big favourite but trying to get an action shot proved difficult. We do believe that we had staff and students on this ride!

Some rides were a bit scary for some and we had some moments of fear and panic but we managed to overcome them and smiled when the ride was over; we also had some tears of relief!

The students were very good at encouraging one another to challenge their fears and push themselves.



Some of students wanted to test their strength against the Comboboxer machine. I think it was fair to say Cameron was the winner in this match... sorry Jordan!



As much as we shouldn't have myself and Mr Bailey had a little chuckle watching Jordan and Cameron getting wet on the Water ride!

great day was had.

The students were a pleasure to take out and we look forward to doing the same again with Year 11s next year.

Even though we all left with a headache and tired bodies, overall a



Miss G Nash—Assistant Headteacher and SENCo

