

# Pool Hayes Academy Newsletter



Pool Hayes  
Academy

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## DIARY DATES

**3rd May**

Red Cross & Red Crescent Day

**22nd - 24th June**

'Billy Elliot' Whole-School Show

**27th June - 1st July**

Armed Forces Week

**8th July**

Sports Day

**13th July**

Summer Concert

**14th July**

Non-Uniform Day

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## POOL HAYES ACADEMY OPENING

The opening day of our status as Pool Hayes Academy was celebrated by the release of 51 labelled 'Pool Hayes Academy' balloons to acknowledge the 51 years between the school first opening and our first day as an academy.

The Year 7 students had photos taken to mark the event before releasing the balloons which in the current weather conditions went zooming off towards the horizon.



Matt Allman, Principal, said: "We are delighted to have got through the rigours of the lengthy academy conversion process and wanted our local families and wider community to have a glimpse of the special day."

The balloon release was only part of the opening events which included special assemblies, Q&A sessions and first birthday cakes. Moving forward we have already benefitted from ATT funding, training events and school improvement support.

## Holiday Update

HALF TERM: MONDAY 30TH MAY - 3RD JUNE  
SUMMER HOLIDAY BEGINS: THURSDAY 21ST JULY



This term has seen Pool Hayes Arts & Community School become Pool Hayes Academy and whilst on the surface it appears to be only a minor name change, in reality it is already bringing improvements to our daily work.

Our academy partner, the Academy Transformation Trust (ATT) has already provided extra funding which has brought benefits ranging from new heating systems to football strips, new Food and DT clothing to new roofing, and new Sixth Form carpeting to new windows.

They have also come along to support our events, with representatives at our acclaimed Dance Show, they have audited out ICT facilities to identify areas we can develop further, and their School Improvement Team are already working with senior staff to assist in pulling out all of the stops before the Y11s hit their Summer exams.

Like any new relationship, there is a bit of 'getting to know you', but the early signs are positive and the ATT have delivered on all they promised. Equally, the ATT are a growing presence in the Walsall and the West Midlands so the localised support is only going to grow and grow.

Elsewhere, this has been a hectic term with stand-out events including the Enigma Machine Visit and the World Book Day visits, the E-Safety and local fund-raising work, and the trips to Bryntysilio and Paris. Even now we are amidst a busy Careers Week, have a Healthy Eating Campaign running, and have a series of National Science & Engineering Week events. Looking ahead, the Easter 'holiday' includes a ski trip and our Easter School which helps with revision and support for those facing their final exams this summer.

This term saw us gain the prestigious CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance) Award from Prospects, the leading education, employment and skills company. The award is only granted to academies who can demonstrate a full programme to guide students into the world of work and build up the skills to equip students for making informed and well-considered choice as the move forward with their lives. Many parents will not be surprised by this Award, having visited Aim Higher or Apprenticeship evenings, UCAS Evenings, talks for universities and employers, or student-parent meetings with a Careers Advisor. Equally, younger children benefit from a bespoke careers education package through L2L as well as headline events in Careers Week, National Science & Engineering Week, etc. It certainly is an area we hugely value at Pool Hayes so expect this high standard to roll on.

A big focus for us will be with our Y11s & Y13s who have just 34 school days left, but it is equally important that the Y12s perform well in their AS exams, the Y10s recognise their time is rapidly counting down, the Y9s realise that their GCSE courses are already beginning, and the Y8s and Y7s put themselves in prime position to succeed. Academy life runs at a fast pace, there isn't a moment to waste, and those students facing their last weeks will tell you that it only seems like yesterday that they walked through the main gates from their primary school.

This has been a great term for Pool Hayes Academy - but, alongside the ATT, we are giving all we can to make the next one even better!

Matt Allman  
Principal





## FUTURE CHEF

The first Pool Hayes Masterchef Competition was a roaring success and led on to our students competing in the regional 'Future Chef' competition. The event was staged at Stoke-on-Trent College and Quincy Salter and Matthew Winton were our entrants. They both did fantastically well with Matthew coming in as regional runner-up. Quincy commented: "I enjoyed the experience and I am proud of the outcome. However, next time I would present my dessert in a different format and cook my fish for less time. Meanwhile, Matthew said: "I think this experience will inspire me to carry on cooking and will help me improve the next time I cook."



## WONDERFUL WOODY

The mascot for Walsall's Year of Reading, English Setter Woody, popped into Pool Hayes, to congratulate Year 7 student, Amy Fox, on becoming the academy's first word millionaire, during rewards time, in her morning assembly. Since joining Pool Hayes, last September, avid reader Amy Fox, has read 17 higher level, contemporary fiction books, on the school's reading programme, 'Accelerated Reader'. A massive well done to Amy! Meanwhile, Woody has gone on to appear on regional news programmes and to star at Crufts.



## ENIGMA MACHINE

On Thursday 10th March, Pool Hayes Academy were lucky enough to have an original Enigma machine which was used during WW2 at the academy. Star pupils from the academy who had demonstrated a keen interest in the topic were invited to participate in a two hour workshop delivered by Thomas Briggs from Bletchley Park. Furthermore, Pool Hayes were delighted to be able to welcome a number of Year 5 students, from local Walsall and Wolverhampton primary schools, to the event.



## POOL HAYES VISIT WOODLANDS

We have organised lots of exciting things in local primary schools recently. Staff led an Arctic Day for the students at Woodlands and there have been Maths and English workshops happening at Fibbersley. Mr Ahmed has been teaching Year 5s how to create animations and there have been exciting Dance and Drama sessions at several other local schools. There are many more activities planned including a visit from the Enigma code breaking machine and a day of Drama and English with Macbeth!



## BLOOD BROTHERS WORKSHOP

Year 10 GCSE Drama students had the amazing opportunity to work with Mike Southern, a professional actor who had appeared in the West End Musical 'Blood Brothers' for over 11 years. As part of the day students engaged in performance work from the play and were directed one-to-one by Mike to help students understand character and motivation ready for their Unit 1 exam. Mike commented on the amazing talent we have here at Pool Hayes Academy and left by saying he was "blown away" by all of the students, who conducted themselves "professionally and respectfully".



## NATIONAL STORYTELLING WEEK

Pool Hayes Academy were delighted to welcome Birmingham's former poet Laureate 'Spoz' to celebrate National Storytelling Week with us. During the day, we used poetry as a stimulus for creative writing, including figurative descriptions and a wide range of poetry. There were rhyming battles, raps about chocolate, rhyming couplets about love, and unique poetry based on the theme of change. Every single one of the 115 students who took part in the day worked hard and the imaginative writing produced was a credit to those involved.





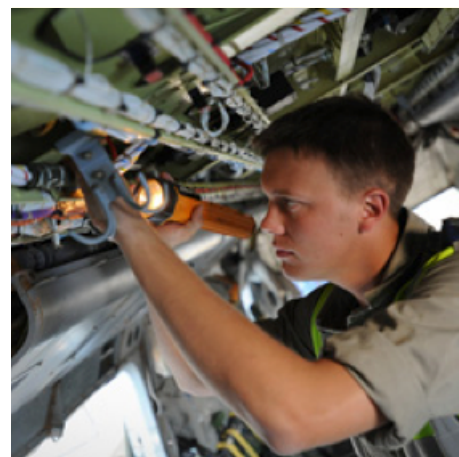
## YEAR 10 E-SAFETY DAY

Y10 students spent their E-Safety PHSEE Day watching a tailor-made Drama performance by Year 12s based on the risks of sexually-related activity online and sexting. The performance focused on Year 10 and the nature of relationships, pressure of relationships, sexting, sending personal messages and privacy settings online. After the performance, the Year 10s had to work in Houses and answer a series of questions based on one of the characters from the performance and offer advice that would help them in the future.



## UNIVERSITY VISIT

Year 9 students went on a trip to BCU, the second largest university in the West Midlands. They have 23,500 students from across 80 different countries studying around 400 different courses. Our students took part in a range of activities, spoke to student ambassadors and had a tour around the university. Our other Year 9 cohort went to Aston University where they watched a presentation and learned that there are over 37,000 different courses on offer across UK universities and that a quarter of all jobs require you to have a degree.



## ENGINEERING - RAF

Pool Hayes students sat in on a very informative talk given by the RAF on the wide range of apprenticeships they offer, particularly the two engineering apprenticeships. Applicants need to have good GCSE grades and sit the aptitude tests required by the RAF. Apprenticeships last three years but are paid from day one. At the end of the three years, apprentices will have City and Guilds L3 in Heavy Vehicle Maintenance and Repair. This allowed students to see what options are open to them in the RAF and what types of courses are available to them.



## PARIS TRIP

During February half-term, Creative Technology students set out to tour the world of media in the city of Paris. There were a range of activities within the tour; including a 'set film' location tour with trainee film producers and media students looking at key spots where some well-known films have been produced. There was also the opportunity to discuss the culture of the city and the way it has been portrayed in the film industry. Students were able to get to know Paris inside out through a walking tour, starting at its very centre on the bustling Île-de-la-Cité and making their way to the truly Parisian, low-key Île-Saint-Louis. It was clear why Hollywood directors love filming in Paris.



## CAREERS WEEK

Our annual Careers Week was an outstanding success with a wide range of guest speakers from college, universities and training providers coming into our academy to meet with students and explore their option routes with them. Each lunch-time saw market-stalls set up in the foyer and these dovetailed with events in assemblies, tutor times and after-school. The week also saw prize draws, House competitions and a balloon launch with the message that they - like their balloon - could aim ever higher. Students gave hugely positive feedback of the event and it is a key feature of our extensive programme that recently brought our success in achieving got the prestigious CEIAG Award.



## WORLD BOOK DAY

World Book Day is a celebration of books and reading. Publishers, booksellers and other organisations work together to encourage children and young people to read, by giving them the chance to have a book of their own. Art students made a creative response to a relevant piece of literature in celebration of World Book Day. Year 7, read the Aesop's 'The Lion and the Mouse' then learnt how to make a clay mouse with ears made from recycled book pages. Year 8 classes explored 'wow' words from 'The Jabberwocky' poem in 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' and Year 9 students experimented with different ways to personalise their work and how to present their work creatively as a group.





## 'A NIGHT WITH THE STARS'

Miss Williams would like to take this opportunity to say a huge congratulations to all of the dancers that were in the dance show. The dancers were extremely professional on stage and behind the scenes. Their hard work and commitment to the department was second to none and it was reflected in the performances during the evenings. The response from parents, students and staff say it all - you are all an inspiration. We would like to thank all of the parents that have supported the dancers over the past years - it really is much appreciated. Roll on "Billy Elliott".



## REWARDS...

Unfortunately, some young people have problems at school and have to attend House Support Sessions to get them back on track.

However, we have hundreds of students who never put a foot wrong, do all they can every time, and respect the support they get from their parents and staff. Likewise, hundreds more students have great records bar a minor blemish here or there.

Over the next few weeks we will be staging special 'praise' assemblies and many children will be put into special draws to win special prizes, including tablets. Watch out for more details...



## GCSE GRADES CHANGED FOR Y10 & BELOW

Recently, Year 9 parents have been helping their children to choose their GCSE options and have been made aware that there are changes to the way GCSE grades are set up.

Year 10 already face these changes in English & Maths but for Y9 and younger all grades are moving this way.

The current letter system will be replaced by a number system as shown in the chart. (right hand side)

Perhaps the most important change is not whether your child gets a letter or a number but more that GCSEs are getting harder.

A 'good' pass is currently considered to be a 'C' but at the moment it is switching to a '5'. The difficulty is that it is harder to get a '5' than it is a 'C'. A '5' is actually a top C / low B so though we will be pushing students as hard as we can to get there the likelihood is that more students are going to miss out on a 'good pass'.

This will have implications for Sixth Form, college and apprenticeship entries and it is all the more important that every parent avoids sitting passively back waiting to see what turns up.

Missing a 'good pass' can mean up to 2 more years funding your child through their education and though we can never discount the government making late changes it is vital we all impress on our children the importance of getting 'good' grades now.

Equally, the current Y11s have not escaped - any student missing out on a C in English or Maths has to retake it at college - but they will most likely be re-taking the new tougher exams! Very much a case of get it now or huge regrets in September!

## DO YOU ATTEND PARENTS EVENINGS...

The Open Evening, Sixth Form Options Evening and Y9 Options Evening were all full to bursting but the Parents Evenings never quite bring a 'sell out'.

Your child can only reach their full potential if we work together, so do look to add these evenings to your family calendar - if you are not sure when they are then either check out the school website or call the main switchboard.

We also run ACE (Achievement Concern Evenings) after-school so if you are asked to attend one, then do make sure you come. These sessions specify exactly what the issues are, tell you how we can help, and give you guidance on what can be done at home.

We all want your child to stand on their own two feet when they leave school, and it is parents who have to pick up the pieces if they slip up. Let's talk and work together to bring success.

## SUMMER IS ON ITS WAY...

The lighter mornings and evenings are more than welcome, but they do make it easier to spot the summer 'shoes' and clothing that materialises as the new 'Spring Collection' wardrobe emerges.

We rely on your support to keep uniform standards high so make sure the latest fashion accessories do not compromise things for us and make sure your child appears just as we know they should.

If in doubt ask - never presume. The hair colour and the cross shoes-trainers, the piercing and the jewellery, are not going to go down well and will complicate your child's life at school. The demands of working hard and keeping focussed make it hard enough as it is.

## WAKE UP IT'S A BEAUTIFUL MORNING...

Our attendance levels are better than ever - above the important 95% threshold - so well done to all of the families who are making sure their children make it into our academy.

Even so, we are looking to keep these high standards running and this includes punctuality - not only getting through the school gates on time, but also heading straight into tutor time. Please keep any eye on your child's planner to ensure there are no late comments and let's work together to get them work-ready whilst at school.

Old System		New System
A*	+	9
	=	8
	-	8
A	+	7
	=	7
	-	7
B	+	6
	=	6
	-	5
C	+	5
	=	4
	-	4
D	+	3
	=	3
	-	3
E	+	2
	=	2
	-	2
F	+	1
	=	1
	-	1
G	+	1
	=	1
	-	1
U	U	U



## BILLY ELLIOT WHOLE SCHOOL SHOW

'Billy Elliot' rehearsals are coming along nicely. We have already blocked the biggest number in the play 'Solidarity' and have started working on characterisation and the songs with the principle cast. The whole cast is working hard to learn their lines to be off script after Easter in order to have the freedom in rehearsals and explore the characters movements. We hope you all come along and support our terrifically talented and hard working cast in the summer term. This will follow on from the fantastic performance of 'Beauty and the Beast'.



## SKIING TRIP

Next term brings our annual skiing trip - this time to the Grandvalira region of Andorra where students and staff will be skiing for 6 days. Grandvalira is a region with over 190km of skiing and is currently -6 degrees so it is going to be a little chilly! The apres ski includes a trip to a spa, ice skating and ten pin bowling. Many students will begin not being able to stay on their feet and return as competent skiers. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for many and is always a popular and successful trip. This annual trip is planned in for next-year so interested students need to talk to current students about how the trip pans out.



## EASTER AND SATURDAY SCHOOL

Our hugely popular Saturday School has ran throughout this term with students polishing coursework, performances and accessing booster support and masterclasses every weekend. These supplement the excellent 'Period 6' sessions which run on a daily basis across the academy - whether it is Mrs Smith in Maths or Mrs Bains in Science, Mr Franklin in Computing or Mr Carthy in DT. Our Y11-Y13 Easter School programme will be circulated via text messages and our website just before the break and May School is already being plotted. These extra sessions often mean the difference between a glorious 'pass' and a narrow 'fail' so we ask all parents to play an active part in making their child attend.



## YEAR 11 PROM

It's that time of year again, exams fast approaching, but also the much anticipated Year 11 Prom. This year's Prom will be held on 7th July from 7:00 - 11:00pm at Ramada Park Hall Hotel & Spa. The Prom Committee are busily working on the leaver's book and arrangements for the evening which including an official photographer and an inflatable LED photo booth. The event will provide the students with some unique memories of their time at Pool Hayes Academy.



## SPORTS DAY

As the Summer term approaches, the PE department will be starting to put plans in place for the annual House Sports Day. Sports Day is a whole school event with students competing within their Houses with the hope of becoming victorious and lifting the Sports Cup - currently held by Carpenter. Leading up to the event, students take responsibility for arranging their own teams within their Houses and ensuring all students are involved in the day. Sports Day sees the school coming together to support each other show responsibility, aspiration, perseverance, support and success.



## SUMMER CONCERT

Pool Hayes Academy will be hosting its Summer concert on 13th July 2016 which will showcase the musical skills of its students. We very much look forward to seeing you to celebrate an end of term extravaganza of music talent. The concert will involve a whole range of performances and is designed to give all tiers of musicians a shot at performing live. This show also leads into the renowned Rockfest show which is staged shortly before our event.

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