



Headteacher's Letter

Doesn't time fly? As we prepare for the "exam season," it always seems such a short time since the same students were making choices or just settling into "big school". However short the time, we must say we are very proud of how well our students have progressed in 2013. The present indicators for exam results are positive, the work done in revision is clearly paying off and those hard working students can feel confident for the future.

Whilst all of the hard work has been taking place the activities that make Adridge School special have, as ever, thrived: productions, concerts, trips, visits and visitors have all been important in making learning here special for all.

I am, as always, truly grateful to the outstanding staff and students and to you, our parents and carers. Your encouragement and hard work make this all possible, and long may it continue.

Mr D. Mountney BSc MA

National Netball Finals



The Under 16s netball team have had another fantastic year reaching the National Netball Finals for the 3rd successive year. The girls have worked extremely hard to develop their skills and court play and show determination and use good technique to win matches. They finished second in their group (beating the eventual National winners Beaconsfield High 6-5) and won five, drew two and lost one match along the way. Aldridge School reached the semi-final stage of the National Finals for the first time in the school's history. They played their best netball of the day in the semi-final but eventually lost 9-8. The girls should be extremely proud of their efforts and we are very proud of their achievements. Well done!

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Building Work Summer 2013

We are delighted to announce a £500,000 building improvement programme for Summer 2013. The money, awarded by the Department for Education, will enable the replacement of the second and third floor windows in B-Block along with the associated refurbishment and refitting of rooms. The grant was won in competitive tender and means over £600,000 of funding has been secured this year. A great compliment to our site team.

National Youth Market

Young people from all over the UK pitched up in Albert Square, Manchester on Saturday, May 11 to trade in the country's first ever National Youth Market.

From 11am to 4pm, over 80 young people aged 11 to 21 ran 44 stalls, including eight of our own Year 10 students, touting their wares and 'flashing up their gear' for Manchester's shopping public.

Daniel Boot, Rebecca Barley, Nicholas Headley, Charlie Thorn, Rebecca Suckling, Chloe Earl, Paige Jackson and Sarah - Jayne Bucknall ran two stalls selling sweets. Although they didn't win, they were highly commended by organisers. Aldridge School was the only school in Walsall to qualify.



Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Project

Over the past year a number of students have been involved with a mixed heritage project, spanning the last 60 years in Walsall. They have worked with partners from the Common Ground Foundation, The Oral History Society, Walsall Local History Centre and Museum Service, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

They initially worked with their own families and then with volunteers from the wider community. The result of their activities is now being incorporated into a work book and DVD for other schools and interested groups to use as a basis for their own projects.

The Oral Histories that were collected will be transferred to disc and held at the Walsall Local History Centre as a reference source for the future.

'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?' was highlighted by the British Council as best practice at an international seminar in Birmingham, exploring solutions to the challenges faced by young people living within urban areas of Europe.

The students, their families and partners to the project were all invited, very appropriately, to a celebratory dinner.



Social Club

Once a year the social club look to raise funds for charity. This year we supported Red Nose Day once more and also asked other students who are regularly in the student development department to help us with this. The students made crispy cakes with red noses in school and craft items to sell including gnomes and bird boxes. Students also made cakes at home and brought them in to sell. In total we raised £123.23. It was a tremendous achievement and we are proud of all of our students.

Discovering Dudamel

Twelve sixth form music scholars had the good fortune to attend a workshop at the Barbican led by "the very embodiment of the modern maestro" Gustavo Dudamel, music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra.

While their peers enjoyed a relaxed start to a staff training day, students took advantage of a few hours in London to see the sights and enjoy the cultural diversity of Covent Garden before meeting staff at the Barbican. The orchestra consisted of young musicians from London and Los Angeles and we were delighted to see that Tom Hickman, a past scholar now studying at the Guildhall school of music, was on stage. The workshop was immensely entertaining and educational as the audience watched Dudamel coax the very finest musicianship from his young players. Using "Romeo and Juliet" as his theme, Dudamel led the orchestra through the tragic conflict between the Montagues and Capulets until the heightened tension expressed through the music was almost unbearable. The Elgar finale left the audience feeling they had been privileged to witness something very special, a glimpse of the magical synergy for which Dudamel is famed.

As guests of the American Embassy, who are sponsoring the L.A Philharmonic's International Associate Residency, students were delighted to attend an afternoon tea reception after the workshop where Deborah Barda, the L.A Phil. President and Dudamel himself spoke briefly. It was also an opportunity to thank Sue Wedlake and Mike Prosser for their much appreciated invitation to the Barbican.

Before departing, the party was delighted to see Tom Hickman who was eager to speak with old friends from Aldridge and share some insights into what had been an inspirational experience.

Hands on Careers Day

Over fifty students attended a Careers Day in Whitman Hall on 17th April. Students were given an insight into a variety of careers and apprenticeships. The students were able to sample a number of activities which included plumbing, carpentry, bricklaying, fashion, car mechanics, engineering, dentistry, police, the fire service, and gain an understanding of what these jobs involve.

Students also had the opportunity to discuss possible careers and apprenticeships available to them on leaving school with Prospects, Nova Training and Walsall College. All the students enjoyed the day.

Charlie and Samuel Evans

Congratulation to Mr Evans and Ms Dawes on the birth of their twin sons Charlie and Samuel, born on 28th January. Miss Dawes and Mr Evans would like to thank staff and students for their gifts and good wishes. Charlie is pictured on the left and Samuel on the right



The School Council

Hello. I am writing to express how much I like being on the School Council. In my previous school I never had the chance as when I stood for election I was never voted for. I really enjoy the School Council because I love a challenge and change; I have made some key decision and have made some wonderful new friends. I think that the School Council aim to improve the School and make it a brilliant environment to learn in. For us to make those changes, we need you to make suggestions on the School Council Page on the School website. I am glad to be your voice but please have your say.

by Megan Cheetham Year 7

UKYP Elections

As you know we now have the new representatives of Walsall on the UKYP (UK Youth Parliament.) and they are Jade, Omo, Lydia, and Jack. Unfortunately no one from Aldridge School got through however we can make a difference by joining YOW (Youth of Walsall). They are not the only ones who can make a difference as young people can inside school. The school and house councils make a difference within the schools and that is what inspired me to run to represent Walsall on the UKYP. Also, I want you to help make a difference by helping those who need it. If you don't, who will?

by Nicola Giles Year 11

Non-Uniform Day

The Non uniform day in April raised £2,186.83 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Humanities Club

Humanities Club have worked hard over the last 12 months. We have organised many events, for example near Easter we held a craft sale involving items made by members of Humanities Club. We have made cupcakes and raised over £50 for Water Aid. We have also organised several bake sales and raised over £100 for selected charities. We are now planning to raise money for an animal charity by planting flowers and seeds to sell. They will be ready for selling in mid-Summer time. Come along and support the Humanities club in our next sale!



Easter Performance

April saw two successful presentations of "Showcase Performance" put on by the Drama Department to raise funds for Ben Sambrook's Brain Tumour Charity. The Showcase was based on the theme of nature and the seasons, showing a range of performance techniques including acting, singing, dancing and musicians playing a variety of instruments.

Over 100 drama pupils from KS3 and KS4 were involved, showcasing their many talents and their commitment to supporting Ben in his fight against this illness. Ben was initially diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour when he was seven and is still undergoing treatment to fight against this terrible condition.

Ben took on an important role at the performances acting as compere to introduce the events for the evening and to voice a vote of thanks at the end. His bravery at being able to stand in front of an audience of two hundred and talk about his condition was amazing and shows Ben's strength of character, and that of his family.

We are delighted to announce that students have raised over £1000 for Ben's charity. It is heart-warming to see how everyone in Aldridge School has rallied around Ben and it is testament to the nature of the pupils and staff in the school who show a real sense of community and support.

Walsall Netball

Aldridge School has had another successful year in the Walsall Schools' Netball League. Each team/year group play home and away fixtures before Christmas with schools divided into two pools. Teams also have a tournament night where all Walsall Schools come to Aldridge and play each other after Christmas. The tournaments are a great event with up to 13 schools taking part. Unfortunately, the Year 7 tournament was cancelled due to the snow and continued poor weather. Year 11: Walsall Schools' Pool winners and Tournament winners. Year 10: Walsall School's Pool winners and Tournament winners. Year 9: 2nd place in Walsall Schools' Pool and 3rd place in the Tournament. Year 8: 3rd place in Walsall School's Pool and 2nd place in the Tournament. Year 7: Walsall Schools' Pool winners.

School Uniform

We at Aldridge believe that our school uniform promotes a professional and affirmative approach to study, leads to positive behaviour and reduces distractions. Wearing our uniform makes everyone in our community respect our school ethos. After consultation with parents, staff and pupils we have decided to make some changes to our existing school uniform from September 2013.

We are pleased to announce that we are introducing house ties, each based on the current school tie but incorporating the house colour into the stripe. Linley House has been chosen to keep the tradition of Aldridge School alive and retain the current school tie. These changes aim to help maintain and strengthen our uniform standards, further develop pupils' sense of House and School pride along with consideration of costs and availability of uniform to parents.

Years 7-9 Boys/Girls compulsory uniform from September 2013: Blazer - Navy blue blazer with school badge on breast pocket. Trousers / Skirt – Black 'suit' style material – no jeans or jean type material. Skirts to be knee length. Shirt / Blouse - Saxe blue only (tucked into trousers). Tie - House tie – each student will be issued with a free tie reflecting House colours during the last week of term (w/c 22 July 2013). Pullover – Blue plain 'V' necked long sleeved pullover (with school badge)– no cardigans. Socks – Black. Tights – Plain black / tan / natural. Shoes – sensible black shoes – no motif, no

trainers, no canvas shoes. Coat - Sensible outdoor coat no denim / leather / hoodies.

Years 10 -11 Boys/Girls compulsory uniform from September 2013: Trousers / Skirt – Black 'suit' style material – no jeans or jean type material. Skirts to be knee length. Shirt / Blouse - Saxe blue only (tucked into trousers). Tie - House tie – each student will be issued with a free tie reflecting House colours during the last week of term (w/c 22 July 2013). Pullover – Black plain 'V' necked long sleeved pullover (with school badge)– no cardigans. Socks – Black. Tights – Plain black / tan / natural. Shoes – sensible black shoes – no motif, no trainers, no canvas shoes. Coat - Sensible outdoor coat no denim / leather / hoodies.

Year 9 Bryntysilio Visit

Bryntysilio has provided us with many amusing memories. When we first arrived we explored the premises and went by Horseshoe Falls. The staff were very helpful as they taught us life skills that can only happen with support from friends and the instructors. We were so confident that on the canoeing session, my group stood up and raced away from the rest. These are the things that make a brilliant school trip. Because of this, I feel that I have learnt a great deal of leadership skills.

However, it was not just the Brynty staff but also the great teachers that arranged the trip, Miss Gittins and Mr Patel (although, Mr Patel wasn't so great at setting examples as he fell into the canal). I wish I could go there again as it builds friendships and teamwork due to all of the staff and activities. Luke Wilson 9.15S

I really enjoyed Bryntysilio, it was lots of fun and full of adventures. I loved every single moment, especially when we chose our own activities. I chose kayaking and Mr Patel fell in trying to turn around. We all laughed so much at him and our instructor told us that he was a good example of what not to do.

We also took part in a lot of group activities (day and night) which were fun. We learnt to listen to each other's opinions and how to work well with someone we might not choose to work with. I was dreading the day we went home as it had been so much fun. The instructors were so helpful, informative and liked to have a laugh...especially when Henry outsmarted them with his Brynty rap! Amy Jevons 9.15S

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