



Principal's UPDATE

15th December 2023



Dear Parents and Carers,

With one week to go until the end of term, it was a pleasure to see years 7 to 11 celebrate their many achievements (both inside and outside the classroom) in an extended 'Celebration Assembly' this morning - with awards for 'Engaged Learners', 'DHBs' and much more besides. Year 7 also performed their Carol 'The Holly and the Ivy' and we look forward to hearing them again in the school Carol Service next Tuesday morning at St Nicholas Church in Alcester. Year 12 also started their mocks this morning and we wish them well with these, through until the end of term.

Next week, students will be visiting local hospitals to give out Christmas cards on Monday and we will have Christmas assemblies on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday, it is year 7-11 Christmas lunch. Please remember that there will be no break service on this day and students in 7-11 who have not booked a Christmas lunch will need to bring their own food/ a packed lunch. Year 12 and 13 students will be able to purchase food in the Studio as usual.

Looking ahead to April, I am delighted to confirm that at the request of the Student Senate, we have amended our Uniform Policy to allow for students in Years 7-11 to wear black tailored shorts in the summer term. Shorts must be of a 'tailored' fit. They must not have 'combat/cargo' style external pockets. They must be of the same material and colour (black) as the regular school trousers and like the skirt, knee-length. Further information will be shared in assemblies next term.

Finally, before I wish you well for what I am sure will be a busy weekend for many, as a school we are currently undertaking a 6-week consultation on our Admissions arrangements for 2025/26. Further details of this can be found on the front page of the school website should you wish to understand more.

Ms Rachel Thorpe

Principal, Alcester Grammar School

This Fortnight at AGS in Pictures

Egg Drop Challenge

As part of their current topic in GCSE Physics, Y10 students have been learning about Impact Forces. To enhance this, some students undertook an 'Egg Drop Challenge' where they had to drop an egg from height and deliver it safely to the ground. They only had an hour to complete the design, build and test the system. There were some novel design ideas, but the most successful designs involved the use of a parachute to slow the descent combined with cushioning inside a secure egg holder.



Great effort and teamwork from the first group of yr7 boys in their inter-house indoor row.

They worked out their 500m pace and individual targets before trying to achieve them.



MedSoc running First Aid with AC First Aid

This Fortnight at AGS in Pictures



Great result from year 9's first basketball game of the year in the South Warwickshire Cup!

Two lovely netball matches for our year 10 and 11 teams.

Our year 10s managed to try out lots of different combinations and our year 11s were able to think about GCSE moderation requirements (and secure 2 wins!) POMs were Sasha and Emily



ESAA Cross Country Cup Finals

Congratulations to the Senior girls and Inter boys cross country teams who qualified through 3 rounds to compete in the ESAA cross country finals at Woodbridge School, Ipswich. Although the temperatures were below freezing the team spirit was not dampened and all demonstrated fantastic performances. The teams finished in 13th for the senior girls and 21st for the interboys.



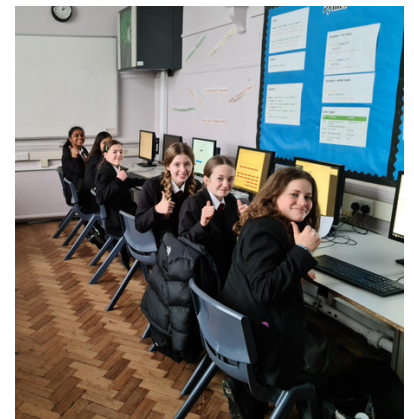
Computing News

CyberFirst Girls

The competition ran from the 20th-29th November. The CyberFirst Girls Competition aims to inspire girls interested in technology to pursue a career in cyber security.

The competition is a team event. Each team – consisting of up to four girls in Year 8 – tackle challenges from cryptography and logic to artificial intelligence and networking for the chance to be crowned cyber security champions.

29 girls competed in groups of 4 (making 8 groups), There are 55 girls in the year. They thoroughly enjoyed doing the challenges!



UK BEBRAS National Computing Competition

This year, 475 year 7 to year 12 AGS students took part in the UK BEBRAS Computing Challenge. This introduces computational thinking skills to students and allows them to complete a range of challenges designed to test their problem-solving abilities. BEBRAS is organised in over 60 countries and is designed to get students all over the world excited about computing.

38% of AGS students achieved a Gold Award, scoring within the top 10% of the country and as such will be invited to take part in the Oxford University Computing Challenge in February. The highest possible score achievable was 200 and one of our year 7 students, Eliot (Year 7) achieved this making him one of only 99 students out of 117,467 nationally to do so.

Overall in AGS, 126 (27%) students achieved a Distinction, 122 (26%) students achieved a Merit and 226 (48%) students achieved a Participation award.

Students had a great time taking part in the competition and many of them spent their lunchtimes practising the tasks in IT rooms which were made available to them for this purpose.

There was a real buzz of minds solving puzzles and a clear sense of achievement evident.

We could not be more proud of how students threw themselves wholeheartedly into this and of everything they have accomplished.



This Fortnight at AGS in Pictures



EcoSoc Tree Planting

In a fantastic display of community and environmental stewardship, EcoSoc (accompanied by Mr Gill and Miss Kaval) visited Coldcomfort woods to join forces with St. Benedict's to support students from Our Lady Primary in planting trees.

Despite the muddy terrain, the eco-warriors remained enthusiastic and determined, resulting in 97 trees of varying species being planted!

The collaboration between the local schools showcased a dedication to improving their local environment and highlighted the power of collective action. Each tree planted by the students represents a commitment to sustainability from our future generation.

A big thank you to Liz from LEAF, a local organisation who supported us in obtaining the trees and St Benedicts and Our Lady Primary for joining us in planting the trees.



News from WFL

LangSoc

LangSoc is a society for anyone interested in languages and languages! Come along for games, activities, help with studying, and to find out more about languages. Recent topics have included endangered languages, idioms, and language evolution.

- Year 7-11 LangSoc takes place on Monday lunchtimes in LA3
- Year 12 LangSoc takes place on Wednesday lunchtimes in LA1.

On Wednesday 22nd November we welcomed one of Ms. Valera's friends to give us a talk on becoming a translator. We would like to thank Hazel Underwood for visiting the school and telling us about this exciting career. Hazel is a self-employed translator who studied French and German at A Level and completed a degree in translation. We found it very useful to learn not only about the process of this, but also about the benefits of studying languages per se or as part of another degree. Hazel's talk was inspirational and it definitely opened our eyes to other possibilities.



Maria Stefanova, Lang Soc President, said: "I think Hazel's talk illuminated the vast opportunities that learning languages can bring. I believe this was helpful and insightful for everyone who attended as languages isn't a straight-cut career. It was nice to see some of the younger years' enthusiasm towards the subject as well. Overall I believe the session was a great success and an interesting alternative to our typical ones".

Isaac (Year 8) said: "The talk was educational and really inspired me. It made me think about different things I could do with languages. I would very much like another one of these to happen and I recommend it to everyone"

Junior Ambassadors for School Programme

We now have a great number of year 12 students involved in developing this programme, a unique opportunity funded by the European Government. They will be working in teams to develop their leadership and communication skills. Junior Ambassadors will be researching topics that are relevant in Europe and the UK. They will then organise sessions to deliver this information to KS3 students during life sessions next term. Some of the topics covered will range from learning about the Holocaust to women's rights, as well as other areas linked to life in Europe.

This is an exciting opportunity to support the personal development and confidence of our 6th Form students. The programme aims to increase their transferable skills needed for university and/or the world of work. It is not too late to be involved. If you are interested and would like to know more about it please e-mail Ms. Valera s.valera@alcestergs.com

Coventry City Mission - Giving Tree

In October, we were thinking of ways to be charitable at Christmas time. We realised that many forms do an annual Secret Santa, which is consistently met with amazing feedback year on year. If they are bringing in gifts for people they might not know in their form, why not do the same for people who would otherwise get nothing at Christmas time?

The decision was to select Coventry City Mission (CCM) as the recipient for our collection; they run a Giving Tree event every Christmas, enabling the children of Coventry and surrounding areas to be given at least 1 present (when they otherwise wouldn't have been able to receive one). The charity even allows the parents to get involved with wrapping the presents for their kids, to have a sense of ownership and so that they too can feel what it's like to give their child a gift and be filled with happiness at Christmas.

The children who will receive the donated gifts are up to the age 17, so all of the students had some idea of what would make for an amazing Christmas gift. The gifts were mostly focused on teenagers, but all age groups weren't overlooked.

From all forms across Years 7-11, on top of contributions from parents and many teachers, we received around 50 individual gifts, and in addition raised over £200 in cash so that we could purchase exactly what CCM was hoping for. We send huge thanks to everyone who donated, helping those who need it most to enjoy the wonder of Christmas. We would also like to thank Mrs Dolphin, who helped us to organise everything perfectly, and the prefects for enabling this admittedly huge task to be a success, and making this dream a reality.

Oliver Haywood & Ola Kikiowo, Y11 prefects, Mrs Dolphin

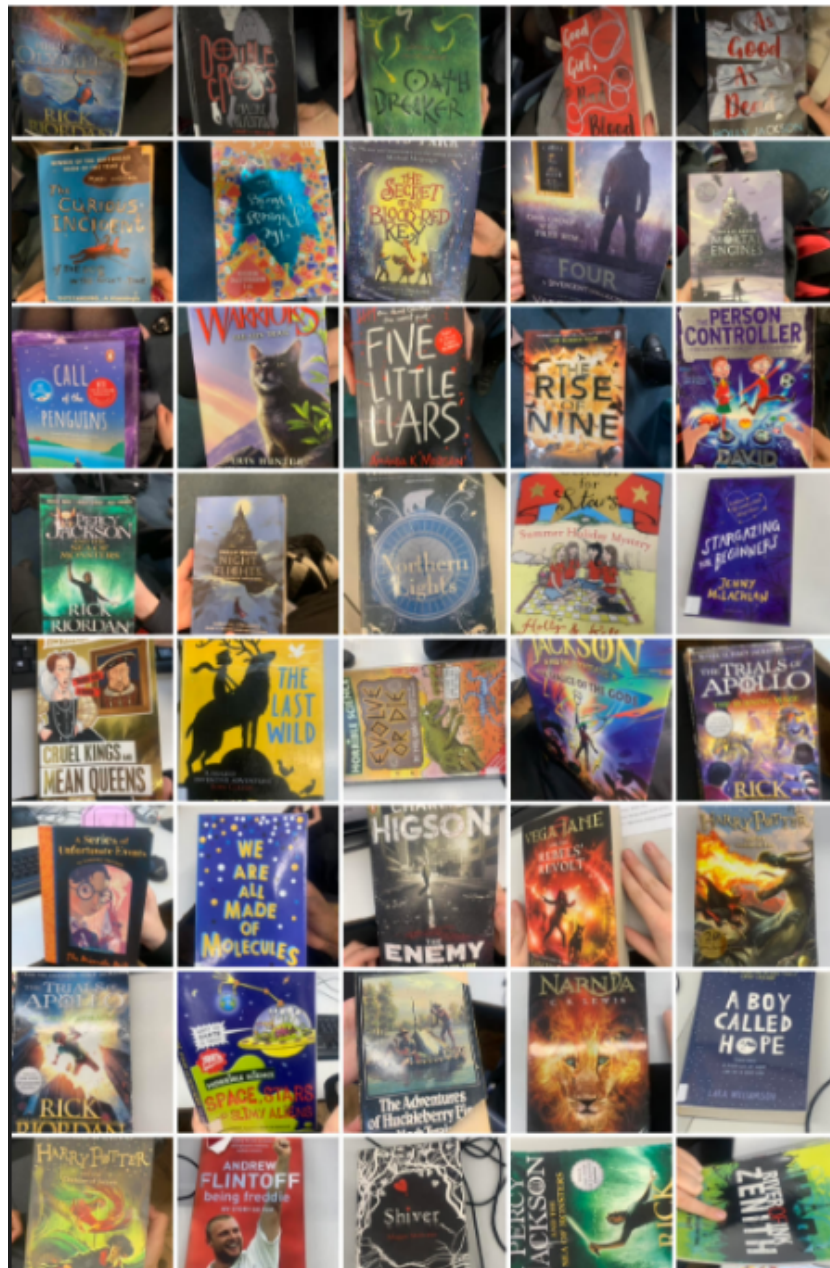


Literacy Update

Message from Mrs Tingle

As I've worked with Y7 & Y8 students this week, they have been sharing with me what they are reading (see photo). If you are seeking inspiration for Christmas gifts, then a book gives many many hours of pleasure - do refer to the recommendations in our [AGS Reading Challenge](#) (slides 7-9) for ideas.

Whilst you are talking about what you enjoy reading, do ask Y7-11 students what they took away from Ms McLean's fascinating assembly this week about Words...
Also, following on from a very informative reading survey, our team of Y12 & Y13 reading champions have created a Christmas Quiz for Y7&Y8 students. It will appear next week on SMHW SatchelOne. Enjoy!



News and Notices



English
Department

The WORD

AGS launches inaugural festival of words

4th-8th of March 2024

In assembly this week, Years 7-11 were informed about The Word, a new festival week which will take place at AGS in March around World Book Day.

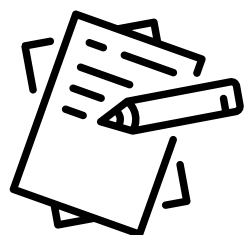
During that week, there will be various events celebrating words in all their forms, including: a student writing competition (opening at the end of this week), visiting speakers, quizzes and special lessons/tutor time activities.

There are so many skilled writers at AGS, and we would like to celebrate their work - but if you haven't previously taken part in anything to do with reading, writing, and speaking, there will be lots to get involved with anyway.

Students: there will be a notice on Satchel One at the end of this week, inviting you to join a Google Classroom, where we will share information, ideas and competition details in the coming months.

Sixth Form: you did not have an assembly, but you are very much included! Please join the Classroom, and if you would like to be involved in supporting some of these events, come and speak to Ms McLean.

Parents: We are aware of the incredible range of experiences, contacts and talents in the wider AGS community. If you think you might be able to contribute to this week, please get in touch with Ms McLean (j.mclean@alcestergs.com).



Exams Update

Year 12's start their mocks Friday 15 December until Friday 22 December. Pupils should know their timetable which is available on their AGS portal and arrive 20 minutes before the start time of the exam so that registration can be completed. Information can also be found [here](#).

Good luck to everyone!

If you have any questions, ask them now via exams@alcestergs.com

News and Notices

PTFA Update

The initial meeting of our new PTFA was attended by 13 people on Monday 4 December, a mixture of parents and staff. The next step is to call an AGM so that we can agree on our Constitution and to elect the committee. We are looking for a Chair, Co Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Anyone interested in a role on the committee should complete this [google form](#). The date of our AGM is **Monday 29th January 2024, at 7pm**.

During the initial meeting we had time to brainstorm ideas - family quiz/games night, discos, sponsored events, a second hand uniform sale, a Summer Fayre and reinstating the 50/50 club which ran until 2021. More information will be sent out in the New Year.

[Here](#) is a reminder of how you can Assist, Give and Support AGS in the meantime.

Thank you.

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Key Dates

Autumn Term

Term ends: Friday 22nd December 2023

Spring Term

Inset Day: Monday 8th January 2024

Term begins: Tuesday 9th January 2024

Inset Day: Friday 19th January 2024

Half Term: Monday 12th February to Friday 16th February 2024

Term ends: Friday 22nd March 2024