



Principal's Update

Dear Parents, Carers and Members of the AGS Community,

The school has been buzzing this week as our students bring Little Shop of Horrors to life. Their energy and creativity has been wonderful to see, and I'm very much looking forward to watching the full performance this evening. You'll find a selection of photos later in this update—please do take a look.

Staff have also begun work on how we can better support our advanced bilingual learners. We are proud that around 250 of our students are bilingual, enriching our community with a wide range of languages and cultures. As part of this focus, we have translated the AGS Vision and Values into the ten most commonly spoken languages (after English) in our school community. You can view these translations [here](#).

23rd January 2026

Finally, I am establishing a termly Parent Forum to provide a space for constructive feedback on a range of school matters. Our first meeting will be on Wednesday 25th February at 5 pm (in person at AGS) and will focus on Safeguarding and Belonging. We are keen for the group to reflect the full diversity of our community, including multilingual parents and parents of SEND and PP students.

If you would like to take part, please register your interest using [this form](#). We can accommodate up to 30 parents; if interest exceeds this, we will select a group that represents a broad range of age groups and backgrounds, with others prioritised for the summer term.

Best wishes,

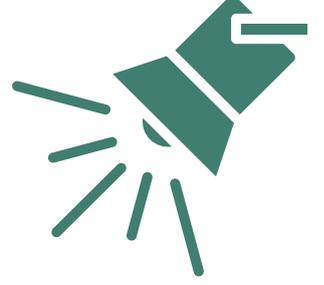


Ms Rachel Thorpe
Principal, Alcester Grammar School



Assist
Give
Support





Language SPOTLIGHT



Hindi

प्रधानाचार्य का अद्यतन

प्रिय अभिभावकों, देखभालकर्ताओं और एजीएस समुदाय के सदस्यों,

इस सप्ताह विद्यालय में खूब चहल-पहल रही क्योंकि हमारे विद्यार्थियों ने 'लिटिल शॉप ऑफ हॉर्स' का मंचन किया। उनकी ऊर्जा और रचनात्मकता देखना अद्भुत रहा, और मैं आज शाम को पूरा प्रदर्शन देखने के लिए बहुत उत्सुक हूँ। इस अपडेट में आपको कुछ तस्वीरें मिलेंगी - कृपया उन्हें अवश्य देखें।

हमारे स्टाफ ने उन्नत द्विभाषी छात्रों को बेहतर सहायता प्रदान करने के तरीकों पर भी काम शुरू कर दिया है। हमें गर्व है कि हमारे लगभग 250 छात्र द्विभाषी हैं, जो हमारे समुदाय को भाषाओं और संस्कृतियों की व्यापक विविधता से समृद्ध करते हैं। इसी उद्देश्य से हमने एजीएस के विज्ञान और मूल्यों का अनुवाद हमारे विद्यालय समुदाय में सबसे अधिक बोली जाने वाली दस भाषाओं (अंग्रेजी के बाद) में किया है। आप इन अनुवादों को यहां देख सकते हैं।

23 जनवरी 2026

अंत में, मैं स्कूल से संबंधित विभिन्न मामलों पर रचनात्मक प्रतिक्रिया देने के लिए एक त्रैमासिक अभिभावक मंच की स्थापना कर रहा हूँ। हमारी पहली बैठक बुधवार, 25 फरवरी को शाम 5 बजे (एजीएस में आमने-सामने) होगी और इसमें सुरक्षा और जुड़ाव पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया जाएगा। हम चाहते हैं कि यह समूह हमारे समुदाय की संपूर्ण विविधता को प्रतिबिंबित करे, जिसमें बहुभाषी अभिभावक और विशेष शैक्षिक आवश्यकताओं वाले और दिव्यांग विद्यार्थियों के अभिभावक शामिल हों।

यदि आप भाग लेना चाहते हैं, तो कृपया इस फॉर्म का उपयोग करके अपनी रुचि दर्ज करें। हम अधिकतम 30 अभिभावकों को शामिल कर सकते हैं; यदि इससे अधिक लोग रुचि दिखाते हैं, तो हम विभिन्न आयु वर्ग और पृष्ठभूमि के लोगों का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले समूह का चयन करेंगे, और बाकी को ग्रीष्मकालीन सत्र के लिए प्राथमिकता दी जाएगी।

शुभकामनाएं,



ags Assist
Give
Support

R Thorne

सुश्री राहेल थोर्प, प्रधानाचार्य, एल्सेस्टर ग्रामर
स्कूल



Safeguarding Spotlight

Today's young people are growing up in a world where news, opinions and videos appear instantly - often before they've had time to think them through. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and X (Twitter) are now where many children get their information about the world. Furthermore, the algorithms on these platforms are responsible for pushing news to our children that they might not search for.

It's natural for children to explore big questions and look for answers. Online content that sounds bold or mysterious can feel exciting and convincing- especially when it's presented confidently or emotionally. Apps and algorithms can reinforce this by showing users more of the same kind of content they've watched before. For example: TikTok and YouTube use recommendation systems that can lead from harmless curiosity to more extreme or misleading videos. Instagram and Snapchat may spread rumours or fake stories quickly through friends' posts and private messages. X (Twitter) and Reddit often mix real news with speculation, which can make it hard for young people to tell fact from opinion. The more time children spend on these platforms, the more normal this flood of conflicting information can feel.

Misinformation, Disinformation and Malinformation (MDM)

MDM can be identified as three main forms of informational activity that can cause minor or major harm.

Misinformation refers to false information that is not intended to cause harm.

Disinformation refers to false information that is intended to manipulate, cause damage, or guide people, organizations, and countries in the wrong direction.

Malinformation refers to information that stems from the truth but is often exaggerated in a way that misleads and causes potential harm.

All of these contribute to conspiracy theories which can carry groups of young people on a tidal wave of emotion. The Government has asked schools to be extra vigilant with this kind of information, recognising how intertwined digital risk and pupil welfare have become and giving young people and families the tools they need to tell fact from fiction.

The 4Cs of online safety

At AGS we educate students about the 4Cs of online safety.

Content, Contact, Conduct, and Commerce, a framework that categorizes online risks to help children and young people stay safer online.

Content refers to exposure to inappropriate or harmful material, **Contact** involves risky interactions with others online, **Conduct** is about a child's own online behaviour, and **Commerce** addresses risks from marketing, scams, or e-commerce.

A shared responsibility

If our young people are using social media, we can't control every video or post they see, but we can teach them how to question and think critically about it.

By staying involved, showing interest and keeping conversations open, parents and carers can help young people grow into informed, thoughtful digital citizens who can tell fact from fiction.



Safeguarding Spotlight

HOW PARENTS/CARERS CAN HELP

- ### 1. STAY CURIOUS, NOT CRITICAL

If your child mentions something unusual they've seen online, ask open questions: "Where did you see that?" or "What do you think about it?" Listening calmly shows you're interested, not judging or dismissing them.
- ### 2. TALK ABOUT HOW PLATFORMS WORK

Explain that social media apps want people to keep watching, so they show content that triggers strong reactions – even if it's misleading. Understanding how algorithms work helps children step back and think more clearly.
- ### 3. ENCOURAGE THEM TO CHECK SOURCES

Show your child how to look for information on trusted news websites or fact-checking pages like **Full Fact**, **BBC Verify** or **Newsround**. Ask: "Who made this?" and "What's their reason for posting it?"
- ### 4. SHARE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES

Talk about a time you believed something online that turned out to be false. It helps young people see that anyone can be caught out and that being willing to question and correct yourself is a strength.
- ### 5. PROMOTE BALANCE AND PERSPECTIVE

Suggest following a mix of reliable sources – news outlets, educators and positive creators – not just influencers or accounts that share dramatic opinions. Remind them it's healthy to switch off and do things offline too.

In a world full of loud voices, the ability to pause, question and think is one of the most powerful skills our children can learn.

Please do take the opportunity to talk to your child about their online life, their stressors and their healthy taps.

In December The Children's Commissioner published a very useful article for parents on managing children's digital lives, which can be found [here](#).

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection ([CEOP](#)) command is a law enforcement agency within the National Crime Agency that has a wealth of useful information for parents and carers.

All of our staff are trained to listen, support and signpost students toward help. Our safeguarding team wears green lanyards and students can ask for help at any time through our [online portal](#). A link to this can be found on Satchel One and this is refreshed and reminded to them every fortnight.

If AGS can be of support to you please contact us at DSL@alcestergs.com

Mr Jones - DSL

This Fortnight in Sport at AGS

The Year 10 boys made waves at Kings Indoor Rowing Championships—outpulling powerhouse rowing schools with 1st and 3rd in the 5-minute event, 2nd, 4th and 5th over 500m, and an incredible relay finish for 2nd, just 5 metres short. Huge congratulations!



Year 11 Netball

Year 9 Netball



Internal Badminton Tournament

Senior Rugby



This Fortnight in Sport at AGS

Year 9/10 Hockey



On Saturday 17th January, 25 intrepid runners competed in the WSAA XC County Champs
Team results: Inter boys 1st, Junior Girls 2nd and Minor girls came 3rd.

Year 7/8 Athletics



Stand-out individual performances from George (6) Joel (4) Thomas (3) Amelie H (5) Isabella M (8) Floren S (9) Holly H (5) in their races

Year 7 Football



Little Shop of Horrors



AGS PRESENTS

SHOP OF HORRORS

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

21ST - 23RD
JANUARY 2026
7PM

TICKETS £8
PURCHASE VIA
EVOLVE SHOP

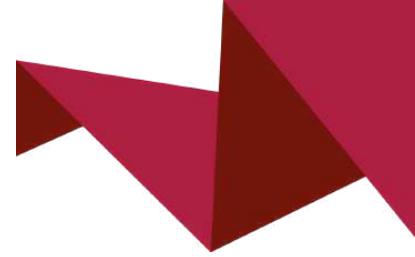
DESIGNED BY ELEANOR HOGAN

A large illustration of a Venus flytrap with a pink tongue sticking out. The text 'SHOP OF HORRORS' is written in a stylized font above the plant, and 'LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS' is written in a similar font below it. The background is white with red blood-like splatters at the top and bottom.



Little Shop of Horrors





Spring is coming!

As we leave the darkest days of the year behind, AGS sustainability initiatives are waking up from their winter hibernation for an exciting new year.

Bulbs

Many thanks to all of you who responded to our call for bulbs in the autumn. In October, several classes from across the school helped us successfully plant thousands of bulbs thanks to your generosity and a grant from Alcester Town Council.

We are pleased to report that our students did us proud and we are now seeing signs of life in all planting locations. Especially pleasing is that on Thursday of this week we spotted our first snowdrop, a sign winter is coming to an end and longer warmer days are just around the corner.

We were also delighted to be able to support Alcester Academy's Eco leaders with training and bulbs to create a spring display at their school too.



Pond and Planting

EcoSoc have been working hard over winter to secure funding for a new large raised bed for the biology garden as well as refurbishment of the surrounding pond area. This work is ongoing, but we hope to have a range of edibles growing on site which, if successful, will be served in our canteen and studio. Special thanks to Belinda Hay who has been volunteering with us and Liz Lake from LEAF for her continuing support.



Sustainability Research with Oxford Department of Education

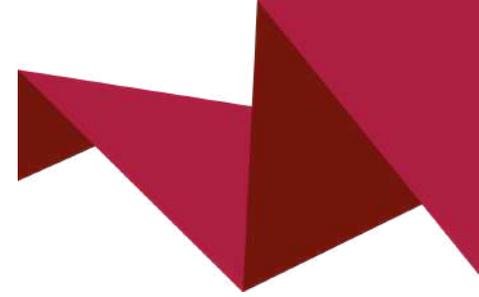
On Wednesday the 21st of January AGS hosted post-doctoral researcher Dr Isobel Talks as part of her research project in collaboration with the DfE titled:



NetZeroED: How can curriculum designers provide better NetZero education for the next generation?

As part of her day with us she saw lessons covering sustainability topics in French, Chemistry and Art as well as conducting detailed interviews with Mr Gill, EcoSoc and other staff. Many thanks to all those students who participated, Dr Talks was highly complimentary of the passion and knowledge of our students around environmental issues. As part of the Three Rivers Alliance sustainability group Mr Gill was also able to arrange visits for Dr Talks to Alcester Academy and King Edward's Stratford. We are looking forward to continuing with another successful partnership between AGS and the University of Oxford as Dr Talks' project progresses.

Mr Gill - Sustainability Lead



House News



Alder



Birch



Hawthorn



Oak



Willow

This might be a shorter half-term but there is still plenty of healthy competition between the Houses as we draw closer to the end of the House year at the end of next half-term.

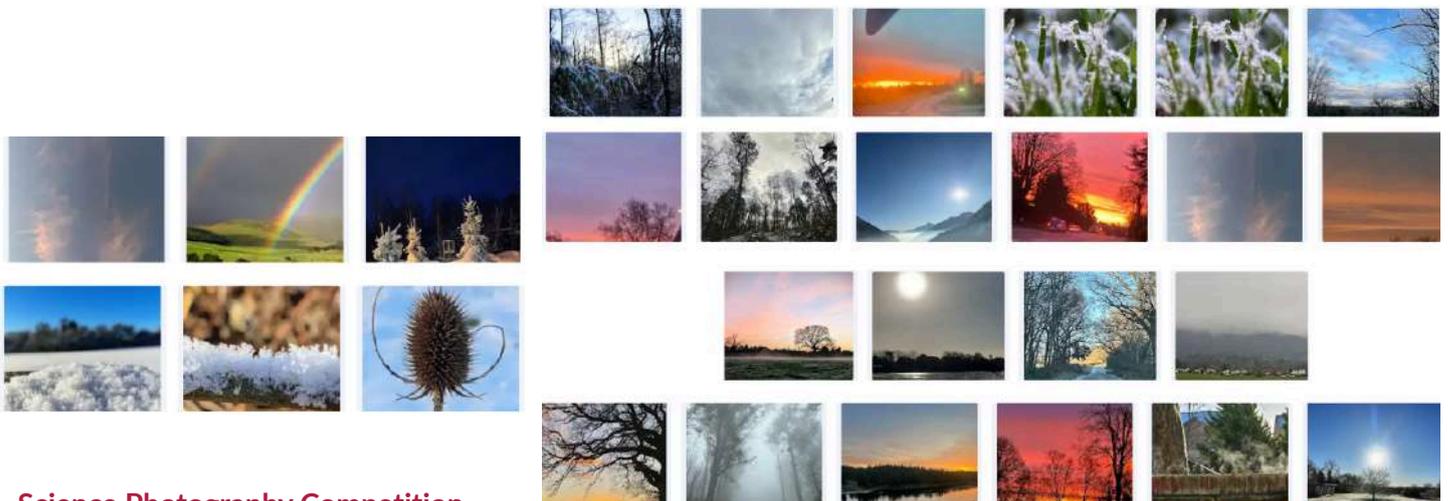
Sixth Form inter-house Sports Competition

The Sixth Form inter-house Sports competition was a great success. Students from all houses competed with enthusiasm and sportsmanship, playing in the right spirit from the first whistle to the final whistle.

Well done to all houses for contributing to an excellent afternoon of sport!



Mr Bayliss

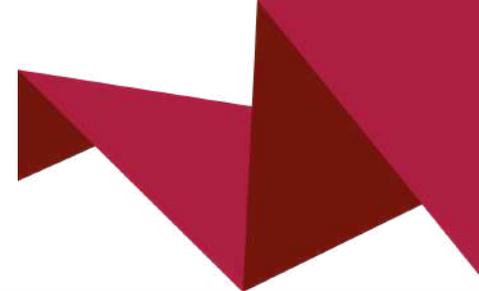


Science Photography Competition

Students demonstrated their photographic skills with some amazing entries for the Science Photography competition. Move over David Bailey!

Y12- in Life straight after half-term we will launch the Senior Ambassador Leadership Team election process. You might like to start thinking if such a position of responsibility is something you would like to run for.

Mrs Bremner-Smith



What's on?

**House Fantasy
Wealth Builder**
Run by Economics Society

Can you turn £100,000 into
1 Million?

BS3 Wed 11.2.26
12.45pm

**Y7-9 DESIGN A
CARD
TO CELEBRATE
CHINESE/ LUNAR NEW YEAR**
17TH FEBRUARY 2026
DEADLINE 30.1.26

2026
YEAR OF THE HORSE

ags

House Points
**WEEKLY
UPDATE**
23.1.26

Alder
25741

Willow
25362

Hawthorn
24050

Birch
23625

Oak
23345



Lottery Results

A big thank you to everyone who signed up for this half-term's AGSF Lottery - **your support makes a real difference.**

The lottery was drawn at our AGM on 14th January - congratulations to our lucky winners below:

1st Prize - £80

Joanne Handford (No. 166)

Kindly donated her winnings back to AGSF - **thank you so much!**

2nd Prize - £60

Veronica Davies (No. 238)

3rd Prize - £60

Kuehl Family (No. 59)

4th Prize - £40

Madeleine Birch (No. 100)

5th Prize - £40

McLean Family (No. 165)

6th Prize - £40

Jeremy Cope (No. 133)

7th Prize - £32

K Ellicott (No. 5)

8th Prize - £32

Redden Family (No. 90)

Our lottery is a simple and effective way to support AGS Friends, costing just £2 per month, or a one-off payment of £16 for the remaining draws in the 2025/26 lottery year. If you'd like to take part, please register using the [sign-up form](#) or [click here to purchase a rest-of-the-year ticket](#).

We also have some exciting events coming up, including a Year 7 film night after school on Thursday 26 February, and the annual AGS Friends Quiz Night on Friday 20 March.

More details on both events will be shared soon! **AGS Friends**

Exams Notice

Our next set of mocks are for year 11 and year 13 which take place from Monday 2 February until Friday 13 February. No exams are taking place on Friday 6 February which is an INSET day.

Pupils should check their timetable on their MyAGS. Once logged in select assessments and then examination timetable. I will update everyone once the rooming has been completed.

Any queries please email exams@alcesterags.com

Pupils should check their AGS email account regularly for information.

Good luck.

Mrs Silcox
Examinations Officer

A Message from Design Technology

The DT department are hugely thankful for generous donations from local businesses. These are also brilliant opportunities to forge links with relevant industries for our subject.

Mr Connah from HPL Prototypes has donated various off cut's of modelling board. This will immensely help our GCSE and A level pupils with a variety of projects that they will complete across their respective journeys. We are also looking to continue to build on this link in the future.

On Friday, 16th January, the Head of Design Technology, Mr Dickinson, welcomed Will & Hayley from a local manufacturing company Accrofab Ltd. Will & Hayley have given the department several precision measuring tools. These tools will be a great asset to GCSE and A-level students when making their exam projects. Soon, it is hoped that students can gain valuable work experience at Accrofab Ltd. Students will be able to learn about:

- the use of metal laser cutters.
- forming using hydraulic presses.
- Parts finishing: polishing, deburring, barrelling and blasting.
- Engineering software: Solidworks and SolidCAM.

The Design Technology department are very grateful for the generous tool donation.

Mr Dickinson
Head of DT



University of Oxford Flash Fiction Competitions - French, Spanish and German

A fantastic opportunity for all our students from the university of Oxford. Please read the guidelines from the university itself if you would like to participate.

“Our annual Flash Fiction Competitions invite secondary school pupils to submit a complete story of no more than 100 words, in French, Spanish, or German, for the chance to win up to £100.

Our 2026 Competition marks the first year in which German will be included and we're excited to be expanding the Competition after many successful years!

Entries are judged by a panel of academics who are primarily looking for creativity, imagination and narrative flair, as well as linguistic accuracy. Pupils' language skills will be considered in the context of their age and year group: in other words, we will not expect younger pupils to compete against older pupils linguistically. Each language competition is divided into three age categories:

- Years 7-9 (ages 11-14)
- Years 10-11 (ages 14-16)
- Years 12-13 (ages 16-18)

The judges will award a top prize of £100, as well as prizes of £50 to a maximum of two runners up, in each category. Certificates will also be awarded to pupils who have been highly commended by our judges. Results as well as the winning, runner up, and highly commended stories will be published on our blog, [Adventures on the Bookshelf](#), if entrants give us permission to do so.

More information and links to the submission forms can be found on [our website](#). Pupils may only submit one story per language but are welcome to submit a story in two or three languages if they would like to. For some inspiration, they can have a look at last year's winning entries in [French](#) and [Spanish](#). Please note that pupils must enter the competition themselves: teachers cannot enter on their behalf for reasons of GDPR compliance.

FAQs can be found [here](#) and any other questions can be directed to schools.liaison@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk.

The submission deadline is 12 noon on 31 March 2026.

Bonne chance à tous! ¡Buena suerte a todos! Viel Glück euch allen!"

Good luck to all
Susana Valera



We're HIRING

Governor with Educational Experience

Teacher of Psychology (MAT Leave)

Cover Supervisor



LAMDA Lessons

*What will set you apart
from the crowd?*

*1:1 Public speaking lessons
in school on Fridays*

*Earn extra qualifications
and skills*

*For details:
speakingmatters121@gmail.com*

*Higher grades
award UCAS
points!*



2025/26 Term Dates

Autumn Term

Term begins: Wednesday 3rd September 2025 - Years 7 and 12 only
Thursday 4th September 2025 - All students return
Half Term: Monday 20th October to Friday 31st October 2025
Term ends: Friday 19th December 2025

Spring Term

Term begins: Tuesday 6th January 2026
Half Term: Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February 2026
Term ends: Friday 27th March 2026

Summer Term

Term begins: Monday 13th April 2026
Half Term: Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May 2026
Term ends: Friday 17th July 2026

Inset Days (No school for students)

Monday 1st September 2025
Tuesday 2nd September 2025
Monday 5th January 2026
Friday 6th February 2026
Friday 22nd May 2026
Monday 20th July 2026

