



ad altiora news

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Introduction

Welcome to Arden's new **monthly** newsletter. It has been devised to keep you informed on a more regular basis of the many activities, successes and events that occur at Arden. We really hope that you enjoy it. If you have any comments or suggestions for further editions, please email newsletter@arden.solihull.sch.uk

We have enjoyed a really positive start to the year and I have been delighted to see how everyone has settled into school life again. I often stress to the students that a 'good beginning makes a good end' and I am sure that the commitment and hard work they have shown so far this term will result in them enjoying a successful year ahead.

This approach is borne out by the comments from an external independent inspector who visited Arden in September; 'the relationships between teachers and students are outstanding', 'behaviour is exemplary', 'students achieve well and make above average progress', 'the ethos of Arden is one of challenge and high student expectations, within a remarkably supportive, well controlled and caring community'.

Fantastic beginning to the new term

We are delighted that our Year 7 pupils have such had a great start. Their term started, as it did for all year groups, with a [Dedication Service](#) at Knowle Parish Church. Year 12 students also enjoyed a fantastic start to their new life in the Sixth Form with an induction weekend at Symonds Yat where they all got to know each other in a less formal setting – please see the feature later in the newsletter.

Year 7 pupils were asked to write about their early experiences at Arden and the responses were truly wonderful...

Annabel: 'I have really been enjoying Arden. At first, I was a bit scared to come into a new school with so many more pupils and making new friends. However, it was much easier than I thought to fit into Arden. I like the range of clubs and activities and they really have a club for everything! The lessons so far have been fun and challenging in a good way!'

Sam: 'WOW! What a fantastic school! I love Arden... I absolutely love the school dinners...I have made loads of new friends who make me really happy and I am trying a few clubs too. I have even been nominated class captain.'

Mia: 'My first weeks at Arden have been amazing. I have made lots of new friends, experienced new lessons and had FUN! I have great teachers...I feel blessed to have this five year opportunity with such caring people.'

Ameila: 'When I first walked into the school, I felt nervous. Also a bit scared! When I first saw the teachers, I thought they would be scary and strict. Then I got to know everyone and the school a bit more and then I felt more at ease. There was no need to be scared. Yes, it looks big and scary on the outside, but it WILL be easy for your children to find their way around school. The Year 8s, 9s, 10s and 11s are great role models for us.'

Nathan: 'My first impression of Arden has been very good. On my first day, I was really surprised at how friendly everyone was, particularly people in other year groups...two Year 10 boys showed me to the door of one of my classrooms when I had got a bit lost.'

Charity

Arden prides itself on its commitment to fundraising activities. Each year we hold three main charity days (one per term) where funds are raised for charities nominated by the school; these are non-uniform days.

In addition to this students support other events over the course of the year such as harvest donations, Shoebox Appeal for Operation Christmas Child and, baking cakes for Marie Curie.

Charity days for 2016-2017 will be held on:

Friday 25.11.16
Friday 24.03.17
Monday 03.07.17

The first charity day of the year (Friday 25.11.16) will be in support of **Teenage Cancer Trust**.

Details of the activities planned will be available nearer the time but we are expecting that it will be a hugely successful day.

Teenage Cancer Trust is already known to many students as the charity delivered information sessions to Years 10 and 12 during the summer term which were well received by the students.



School production – 2017

The 2017 school production is 'Into The Woods', which is a dark twist of Grimm's Tales in a Sondheim musical. Original staging, creative costumes and bold characterisation are planned; we are even switching the orientation of the stage in the hall! We have had over 200 pupils audition this year and about 60 students have expressed their interest in backstage and technical roles including Jess Gardiner (Year 10) who will be heavily involved in the choreography. This will be the first Arden production for our Technician Mr MacDonald and Music teacher Mrs Hawthorn. The production which will rehearse every Monday and Friday after school will be performed on 1st - 4th March 2017.

We will need lamp shades of all shapes and sizes for the production, please send your donations into school!

Whole school photograph

Thankfully the weather on Wednesday 12th October was bright, if a little chilly as the whole school was involved in a huge logistical operation to photograph 1600 students and staff – all in height order! It was a fantastic example of team work – thank you to everyone for their efforts on the day.



Road Safety

We would like to remind students of the importance of behaving sensibly on their journeys to and from school in order to ensure their personal safety. We would ask that they remember to be polite and considerate to other pedestrians and road users. Also, it is worth mentioning that it is not safe to cycle on the pavement or without a cycle helmet. Finally, to ensure the safety of **ALL** our students could we please remind parents/guardians that the school campus is not accessible to cars after **8.00am** and before **4.30pm**.

PTFA events

The PTFA (Parent Teachers and Friends Association) put in a fantastic amount of work to raise money for the school and our students. There are various activities throughout the year with which you can become involved...recently there was an '80s disco' in the School hall which proved to be great fun. However the two most popular events in their calendar are coming up in the next couple of months. We sincerely hope you will find time to enjoy the Family Fireworks on Saturday 5th November and the annual Christmas 'Holly Bash' on Saturday 3rd December. More details can be found by following the [PTFA](#) link.

The funds raised by the PTFA support the school in many ways as can be seen in the short film made by our [Digital Leaders](#). We are immensely grateful to the PTFA and the work they put in to supporting our students and we are delighted to announce they have agreed to fund the lease of two new minibuses for the school which will be delivered in the new year.

Harvest Festival

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the 'Toucan/Two Can' Harvest Festival appeal. The food donated will be given to the Nathex Foodbank in Sparkhill and the Karis Neighbourhood Scheme in Ladywood. The food is then distributed to people within the local area who are living in poverty. It is a truly worthwhile appeal that supports families that are unable to provide for themselves. Thank you.



Staff news:

Congratulations to Mrs Dunbar and Mrs Petley who both gave birth to baby girls during September.

We would also like to wish Miss Endley all the best as she goes off on maternity leave. As soon as we have more news we will let you know!

Some fantastic rugby results already this term. Our teams did particularly well in their matches against King Edwards (Five Ways):

Year 7 won 20-10
Year 8 won 35-5
Year 9 won 32-28
Year 10 won 31-10



Sixth Formers Rosie & Sunand ready to hand out medals



Just one of the amazing cakes

Parents appreciate the extra-curricular activities available too... 'I cannot believe the many opportunities available for my child to join not just at lunchtime but incredible choice both before school and after school – please thank your colleagues'.....

Leadership team meets the Mayor of Solihull

On 9 September, Arden's Leadership Team visited the Council House in Solihull in order to meet the Mayor – Councillor Mike Robinson. They began their visit in the Mayor's private office where they got an exclusive insight into the variety of jobs that are required as mayor. Following this, they went into the debate room for a question and answer session with the Mayor. Councillor Mike Robinson was very inspiring with his answers and advice as well as enlightening the students with many facts eg, you have to be completely politically unbiased for the entire year you are in service in order to maintain a fair vote and discussion.

Arden's leadership team is involved in many projects at the moment including working with our feeder primary schools – of which there will be more in future editions of the newsletter.

Arden's Leadership Team are: Lucy Connors (Lead), Jacob Arnold (Lead), Lucy Bugg, Josh Craven, Mia Davies, Max Nagra, Hope Talbot, Kyle Watt

Year 7 visit art gallery

During October, our Year 7 pupils enjoyed a very 'hands on' visit to the [New Art Gallery](#), Walsall. The pupils were able to investigate the gallery's collection through discussion, writing and drawing activities. The visit was hugely popular with the pupils who engaged completely with the resources available.

Parent Information Evenings

There have already been a number of Information Evenings in the first half-term. Particularly well received were the Year 10 and Year 11 'Year Ahead and Revision' meetings and the Year 7 Numeracy Evening. Comments from parents have been very positive; 'the Year 11 revision evening was very helpful indeed – I now know how to support my child with all the changes to the syllabus – it is certainly much harder than a few years ago'.....'the Maths Year 7 Numeracy Evening was so informative – good turnout of parents but those who did not attend missed a very informative and worthwhile evening.' Year 7 Literacy Evening will be held on 1st November.

Tommy Godwin Challenge and cake bake

This year the students were asked to bake cakes in order to raise money for the Marie Curie Hospice in Solihull that looked after Tommy Godwin so brilliantly. Each year there is a Tommy Godwin Challenge (which was set up in 2013) and on 25th September there was an option for cyclists to complete a family fun distance (30km) or a more challenging 100km. Mrs Kay Jones (Tommy Godwin's daughter) collected all the cakes baked by Arden students and sold them at the event...a total of 345 cakes were baked and the winning house was Fleming! Congratulations.



Mr Singh and Mrs Foulkes in action...

Congratulations to Elise Glynn - boxing bronze medal winner at the EUBC European Women Junior and Youth Championships held in Turkey
<http://www.arden.solihull.sch.uk/news-events/latest-news/boxing-success/>

Extra-curricular activities

Many of the Year 7 pupils mentioned in their 'First Impressions of Arden' how much they enjoyed the wealth and variety of clubs and activities they could join/become involved with. The extra-curricular activities are not just open to Year 7 pupils but **all** year groups – so if you are interested in seeing what is on offer before school, at lunchtime and after school, please follow the link to the page on the [Arden website](#) – the lists can be found by scrolling down.

House information

Final results for the 2015/2016 academic year were:

1st: **Baird** 967 points
2nd: **Fleming** 861 points
3rd: **Eliot** 785 points
4th: **Aylward** 687 points

So far this term the house point totals are:

Eliot: 200 points
Fleming: 165 points
Aylward: 145 points
Baird: 145 points

Attendance:

Fleming: 97.2%
Eliot: 96.0%
Aylward: 95.9%
Baird: 95.8%

Achievement less

Behaviour points:

Eliot: 1172 points
Baird: 961 points
Aylward: 851 points
Fleming: 754 points

Congratulations to students that took part in the indoor athletics at Open Evening, as well as Bake Off and cooking competitions hosted by the D&T Department.

Lots more competitions to come after half-term!

ROTARY YOUNG WRITER COMPETITION

We were delighted to acknowledge earlier in the year the phenomenal success Arden students had enjoyed in the Rotary Young Writer completion, securing the top three places in the senior district category and second place in the intermediate.

However, we were particularly proud of Lucy Jones who was the winner in the national competition. Her wonderful words can be read on our [website](#).

Congratulations to our fantastic wordsmiths!

Arden to welcome Headteachers

In early November, Arden will be welcoming thirty Headteachers from around the country who wish to visit the school to see what makes Arden a very special and outstanding school. Their focus will be observing our high quality teaching and how the '[Arden values](#)' are at the heart of all that we do. We have also been asked to showcase our high quality music and drama at the Leading Edge National Secondary Conference in Birmingham in December which will have over 1500 leaders and teachers attending - a totally fitting tribute to our incredible talented students and Music and Drama team. They will perform a [Sound of Music](#) medley from our amazing summer production.

Pastoral Support at Arden

We are delighted to welcome Mr King, Student Support Officer, to the pastoral system in school. Since September we have increased the pastoral facilities available to students by establishing a new support office within the school. Mr King is situated in P2 along with Mr Spence and Miss Berry. Additional pastoral support is offered by Mrs Quinney in P1 along with Mrs Brennan and Mr Reed. Mrs Llewellyn can be found in P3 along with Mrs Crawford.

In addition to this, our Learning Support Team welcomed some new part-time staff in September to support our teachers and students in the classrooms- Mrs Batten, Mrs Smith, Mrs Sherrington-Blane, Mrs McGee and Mrs Munn-Smith. These staff bring with them a wealth of experience in supporting students.

Upcoming dates: NOVEMBER 2016

Tuesday 1 st November	Year 7 Literacy Evening
Thursday 3 rd November	Year 11 Apprentice Event
Friday 4 th -Monday 7 th November	Year 12 Visit to Cern
Saturday 5 th November	PTFA Family Fireworks
Thursday 10 th November	Beyond 16 Exhibition
Friday 18 th November	Presentation Evening
Thursday 24 th November	Sixth Form Open Evening
Monday 28 th /Tuesday 29 th November	Year 9 WW1 Living History
Tuesday 29 th November	Online Safety Meeting
Wednesday 30 th November	Upper School Concert

Congratulations to Christian Mobsby in Year 7 who recently won a silver medal on vault and bronze on the parallel bars at a competition which is the precursor for the National Grading Finals in November.

Restart a Heart CPR campaign

On Tuesday 18th October over 40 medical practitioners were in school to teach valuable [CPR skills](#) to students. The day was part of a Europe-wide initiative to teach members of the public how to restart the heart of someone who has suffered a cardiac arrest. Arden was proud to be involved with such a worthwhile campaign and the feedback from students about their new skills was very positive.

Year 12 Induction weekend

The first weekend of the school year is a wonderful opportunity for our Year 12 students to enjoy a couple of days together at Symonds Yat. It allows all the students to integrate and get to know one another before the serious work commences. To read an account of the weekend, written by an external student who joined Arden Sixth Form in September and see how beneficial and enjoyable the time was, please follow the [link](#).

Myth buster...

'Arden is getting too big and has hundreds more students'. FACT: there are 84 more students attending Arden now than in September 2011. The increase is due to the 400 homes that have been built in the catchment area in the last five years.

'All the good teachers are leaving Arden to work at Park Hall'. FACT: staff turnover is low compared with many schools and is the lowest for five years at Arden ie 10% (10-12 teachers per year and much is linked to maternity leave). Only seven of the teachers who have left over the last four years now work at Park Hall.

'You can wear multi-coloured scarves and hoodies around school as they are part of winter uniform'. FACT: multi-coloured scarves and hoodies are not school uniform and must not be worn.