World Book Day

World Book Day 2016 saw GDA leap into the spirit with a range of activities enjoyed by the whole Academy (including the staff!).

Lessons saw a literature focus with teachers reading chapters from their favourite novels, sharing powerful poetry or simply sharing a piece of literature that enhanced the learning.

Over 40 staff took the opportunity to dress up as a famous literary character or writer and over 150 pupils exercised their right to vote and decided that Mr Brookes was the best dressed followed by Mrs Talwar and Miss Bi in third place. It was not just the staff that had fun; there was a literature trail around the academy with clues for pupils to solve based on famous novels. The winners were Saniyah Hussain, Tanya Singh and Saira Din in Year 7 but everyone who took part received a small prize.

Plans are already underway for next year to make it bigger and better with some departments planning a co-ordinated fancy dress to surprise the pupils.

Mr Else

Under the Speakers for Schools initiative, Dr Nira Chamberlain, a professional Mathematician from Birmingham, listed in the ‘Who’s Who’ and regarded as one of the UK’s top 100 scientists, visited George Dixon Academy to inspire the next generation. ‘Speakers for Schools’, the brain child of former BBC News Economics Editor Robert Peston was launched in 2011 to provide state secondary schools and colleges with talks from a range of industry leading professionals, public figures and academics, free of charge.

Addressing a group of Year 9 students, he stated; “At school I was not the best at Mathematics nor at first, was I very passionate about it.” This came as a shock to the pupils who listened with intent. But one day Dr Chamberlain’s father (a former worker at the now defunct Longbridge car plant) told him that, “You don’t need anybody’s permission to be a great Mathematician.” From this point on, Dr Chamberlain pursued Mathematics with passion and enthusiasm and went on to solve a number of complex Mathematical problems in a variety of different areas. See bit.ly/GDAMaths for more information.

Ms Hall

Top Mathematician Visits GDA to inspire the next generation

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Ms Hall

Dr Nira Chamberlain visits the Academy

On Friday 15th January 2016, Dr Nira Chamberlain visited the Year 9G band classes and held an assembly.

Dr Chamberlain is one of the UK’s top 100 scientists and he became the first black mathematician to enter the Who’s Who of 2015. His recommendation to anyone who wants to be a mathematician is “you don’t need anybody’s permission to be a great mathematician!”

He talked about how he helped out the Formula 1 team and Michael Schumacher and also his contribution to the biggest passenger airplane. His speech was very inspirational and inspired me to work harder in maths. If I get good grades for my GCSEs, in the future I can become a teacher, good jobs are available to everyone if you get good GCSEs!

Daniel Hussain, Year 9 Student Journalist
Sixth Form Dorset Trip

On the 17th to the 20th of March, the Year 12 Biology and Geography students went to Dorset for a 4 day field trip. We visited a range of beaches each day, including Lulworth Cove, Chesil beach, Studland Bay and Burton Bradstock. We studied processes such as succession and used quadrats to learn about sampling techniques. We found out about how biotic and abiotic factors (e.g. wind, light intensity and pressure) influence species diversity. The geography group taught us how sand dunes are formed and how marram grass plays an important role in this process. In the evenings we had time to relax and had lots of fun playing pool, football and badminton. One student also got rather wet running away from a wave that was bigger than expected!

Madiya Akhtar, Year 12

Debate Mate Tournament

On the 1st February 2016, GDA students went to Harborne Academy for the Debate Mate Urban League Round 1. There were 4 fixtures and GDA won 1, elevating us into the top 10 West Midlands schools! We entered two teams into the competition and both were drawn against Bishop Challoner who won both debates. Although we lost, we scored lots of points to put us in a good position. We won in the second round against Four Dwellings. Our speakers were outstanding. Special congratulations to Nawal who made a point so strongly that the opponents could not respond and had to conclude their speech.

Points are scored in two categories, the first is style which means the way something is said and the second is content, which means what is said. The winning team is who has the most overall points so you don’t need to win your debates to do well.

Round 2 was excellent on the Friday 11th March 2016, we won 3 out of 4 fixtures! We hope this second round performance puts us into the top 5 in the West Midlands and the top 80 in the country so we can go into the grand final in London!

Varun Sharma, Year 8 Student

Lessons from Auschwitz

Birkenau has been left the same as when the war ended. The atmosphere was very quiet and it is so vast. We saw the railway platform where thousands of people came through and never left and even the gas chambers blown up by German soldiers.

When it was dark, we had a memorial where a Rabbi spoke and lit candles, giving us chance to rehumanise those who died. There was so much more to the camps than what we learnt through textbooks. After the trip, our groups met for one last time, giving us the opportunity to share what we learnt with our schools/community.

The project gave us an eye opening experience and we learnt the stories of the millions of people who died at the hands of the Nazis. The trip to Poland proved to us that hearing is not actually like seeing.

Ravina Sabharwal and Haidea Hussain, Sixth Form

Academy Council Update

Council Outreach Service

The Student Council asked students what they wanted in school, and the need for a peer support system was highlighted. The Student Council listened and have set up this Drop-In service for all students.

The Council Outreach Support Service is EVERY Monday between 1:30-2pm. It will be held in SFR1 (Mr Keeley’s room in the Sixth Form Area).

The Outreach Service aims to provide help with:

- Revision skills/homework
- Support for Year 7 transition
- Year 9 options for GCSE
- Year 11 transition into Sixth Form
- Disputes between students
- Bullying issues
- Discussions on how to get more involved in extra curriculum activities

Above all, the Outreach Service aims to provide students support and friendly faces to talk with! Mr Keeley will be in the classroom to provide advice and support.

Academy Council visit Gogna!

Adama, Henry, Jenecha, Shelton and Ninvier from the Academy Council went behind the scenes at Gogna:

“We have designed and chosen a new warm, waterproof jacket that you can wear in PE! It’s not compulsory to buy, but we think it’s a great idea to wear in PE!”

The GDA logo being created!
Cardiac Risk in the Young

On 23 Feb 2016, the Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) team came to GDA and successfully tested 75 students and staff. CRY’s mission is to identify people at risk from sudden cardiac death syndrome. Twelve young people die every week and the screening program hopes to reduce this. Cardiac screening is not funded by the NHS and is offered by CRY at £35 per test. Pete Teale, who lost his daughter to sudden death syndrome in 2009, fundraises to prevent other families going through the same grief. The screening involves an Electrocardiogram (ECG) and an Echocardiogram (an ultra sound scan of the heart). CRY and Pete Teale want to visit GDA every year to screen staff and students. The next screening date is on 25 April 2017.

Realising Opportunities Workshop

Are you a parent of a child who has a Challenge Grade of an ‘A’ in any of their subjects? Wondering how to support your child at home? Miss Voyce and Miss German recommend the following:

- www.pegy.org.uk
- www.mensa.org.uk
- www.gov.uk (search ‘gifted and talented’)
- www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

Healthy Relationships

Three health related groups recently came to work with Year 9 pupils at our Academy to talk about positive relationships and promoting sexual health. They got students thinking about what makes a good and bad relationship and how different boys and girls views on the same things usually are! Students are now more aware of the range of services that can support with relationship/health issues as well as new things about sexual health - Mr Mann.

On Thursday 11th February 2016, three health related groups came to talk to Year 9 students in GDA about sexual health; the Umbrella Project, the Real Project and Loudmouth Theatre. Year 9 students were in the Academy Hall to see a performance by Loudmouth about April who was 15 and Dave who was 17. Afterwards, you could ask Dave and April questions such as “Why was a 17 year old dating a 15 year old?” I learnt that you can have a healthy relationship and also be kind to your partner and not judge them.

In N1, there was a talk about contraception, and also they demonstrated how to use them. In W20, there was a talk about STIs and students completed a worksheet (and got a free Umbrella pen!).

The day was great and we learned new things about sexual health and also how prevent diseases and STIs in the future.

SMSC Update

What is SMSC?
SMSC at GDA aims to help students’ understanding of themselves, their behaviour, their health and development. It develops the necessary skills and values for students to take on their future responsibilities as adults in our society.

Pupils’ spiritual development involves the growth of their sense of self, their unique potential, their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and their willingness to achieve. In all subjects, students are given opportunities to reflect upon their own opinions.

Pupils’ moral development involves an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of moral conflict, a concern for others and the will to do what is right. In all subjects students are encouraged to investigate independently.

Pupils’ social development involves acquiring the rights and responsibilities of being members of families and communities (local, national and global) and an ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good. Students at GDA work well together in the classroom from different backgrounds.

Pupils’ cultural development involves acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences. Students explore multi-cultural Britain and appreciate the variety of cultures that have contributed to everyday life in Britain.

Thought for the Term:

“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today”

H. Jackson Brown, Jr

FACE Update

The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) workshops are in full swing this half term. The partnership between home and the academy is key, to ensuring your child makes great progress in their lives. Helping your child at home with their learning is of huge importance. Both MFL and Numeracy sessions have taken place which have been incredibly successful and informative in helping families support their children at home.

Please look at the workshop schedule below. All workshops begin at 16.45, arrival at 16.30 is welcomed, refreshments will be provided and an opportunity to talk with subject teachers.

Families who have attended the workshops have said:

‘It was a very good session because I got to know how to assist my child in numeracy’

‘I enjoyed the session with my son, doing lots of fun activities and learnt how I can support my child with his languages.’

‘Practising skills learnt and confidence regarding maths on a day to day basis will be my strategy in helping my child achieve in maths’

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Sports Results Spring Term 2016

Basketball Boys - Year 9
St Thomas Aquinas 12 – 9 GDA
MVP - Ibrahim Osman
M.O.M – Louis Randacci
Year 10
St Margaret Ward 23 – 104 GDA
MVP – Mohammed Abushego
M.O.M – Vedhas Ghuman
Barr Beacon School 2 – 105 GDA
MVP – Mohammed Abushego
M.O.M – John Baker
Sir William Brookes 30 – 62 GDA
MVP – Mohammed Abushego
M.O.M – Romane Green
St Thomas Aquinas 36 – 45 GDA
MVP – Mohammed Abushego
M.O.M – Vedhas Ghuman
Football Boys - Year 7
Year 8
Broadway 3 – 4 GDA
GDA 4 – 0 King Edwards Aston
Year 10
GDA 1 - 1 Broadway (Aston League)
M.O.M: Emmanuel Lindsay
GDA 1 - St John Wall (Aston Cup Semi-Final)
M.O.M: Vedhas Ghuman
Year 11
Lode Heath 6 – 2 GDA (Aston Cup Semi-Final)
M.O.M – Alex Tesfom
Goals: Alex Tesfom and Domingo Lucas.
Holte 5 – 4 GDA
(Penalties – 1-1 FT, 2-2 ET)
M.O.M – Mohammed Raheem
Goals: Majideen Arif and Alex Tesfom
Girls Year 7-8
Stockland Green 1 – 0 GDA
Year 9-11
Nishkam 0 – 10 GDA
Holte 1 – 9 GDA
Perry Beeches Academy 5 – 5 GDA
Overall points: 23
Final playoffs V St Pauls Girls
Monday 14th March
Captain: Remmi Modoue

Professional Athlete visits the Academy!

Laura Samuel being interviewed by our journalists
On Tuesday 15th December, British triple jump athlete, Laura Samuel, visited the Academy and took some time to answer some questions from the GDA Journalists. Born on 19th February 1991, she was a silver medallist at the 2010 World Junior Championships and the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Who inspired you into going into triple jump?
I did not wish to go into triple jump, at school my coaches recognised my talent and pushed me into it.

Laura Samuel
British Triple Jump Athlete

In the future, what are your goals?
I would like to compete in the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Who do you go to for help and support?
My mother, she always supports and helps me whenever I need it.

Who do you wish to be like?
A Columbian athlete named Catherine Aburah.

How do you feel when you go and compete in events?
I feel nervous and at the same time confident.

Do you have any tips?
Try your best and don't give or let anyone in your way.

Of Mice and Men

Before the half-term holidays, there was a trip to see 'Of Mice and Men' at the REP theatre in Birmingham, a popular novella published in the 1930s by John Steinbeck. Without revealing too much, it tells the story of George Milton and Lennie Small, travelling from ranch to ranch to achieve the American Dream. During the performance, we could tell which character was which just from the actor's performance (behaviours, mannerisms and personalities), rather than hearing their names. Sound effects and music were by the cast, for example, the sounds of animals in the background, as well as occasional yelling of the off-set characters, giving the performance a true 'ranch' feeling.

As the novella is based in one location, there were not many set changes to make. This allowed for the audience to enjoy seeing more of the actors rather than constant scene changes that can be an annoyance at times.

The performance ended with the director's own interpretation of the novella, resulting in a dramatic climax.

Lina Nagra,
Year 13 Student Journalist

Visit To Old Trafford

On the 25th February, several students got the opportunity to go to Old Trafford, Manchester United's Stadium.
We went to watch Manchester United play FC Mldyttland (a team from Denmark), to decide who Manchester United beat FC Mldyttland 5-1, we finally arrived back at the Academy at 2am!

Aman Paul,
Year 7 Student Journalist