Michael Gove (Former Secretary of State for Education), Gisela Stuart MP and James Dixon take part in ‘Question Time’ event at the Academy

The Rt Hon. Michael Gove (Conservative party) came to our Academy in September 2016 with the Rt Hon. Ms. Stuart MP (Labour party) and James Dixon (descendent of George Dixon, founder of our academy). Alongside Mr Hamilton, they held a ‘Question Time’ style session in the Academy Hall that was packed with students, we were very excited as there was much to talk about!

Students asked them many questions, such as ‘why did you play a major role in the UK’s referendum on EU membership as the leader of Vote Leave and what were your thoughts about Britain leaving EU?’ Ms Stewart and Mr Gove agreed that leaving the EU is the best thing for the UK, both played big roles in the Vote Leave campaign, despite being in different parties.

Mr Gove is the former Secretary of State for Education and Secretary of State for Justice, he also ran for Prime Minister last summer. He told us about why he became a politician, a political leader and a member of the conservative party. Mr Gove talked about how he wants to support people and become the voice of the speechless. Mr. Gove & Ms. Stuart discussed working together to improve Education facilities in the UK.

Mr Dixon was introduced to the students by Mr Hamilton. The Dixon family have been donating £25,000 for the last 3 years for sixth formers so they can go to university. Former GDA student Toseef Hussain is currently studying the field of dentistry at University of Birmingham. He got A levels in Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics in 2014. He talked to the students about the bursary he received from Mr Dixon and the Dixon family and how the family have continued to donate to the Academy every year since. Before finishing the assembly, our headmaster along with Mr. Gove told us that we should continue to work hard in school and should support people who are in need.

Mr Hamilton showing the Rt Hon Mr Gove around the Academy.

Kanika Ratui, Year 9 Journalist

GCSE - PROGRESS 8

George Dixon Academy students do it again! Academy makes more than expected progress

The recently released data by the government shows clearly that our students made good progress. On average, GDA students gained about a quarter of a grade higher than expected when compared with the performance of all GCSE students across the country. The students who came in with the lowest levels of attainment in English at Key Stage 2, on average, made the most progress to be placed almost in the top ten percent in the country. All subgroups of students shown here in the diagram made sufficient progress. Not only that, our students achieved parity with the national average when looking at the percentage of students gaining English Baccalaureate. It is a tribute to students’ hard work and teachers’ dedication to their professionalism as well as parents’ active support in promoting their children’s education. Sir Robert, the Chair of the Board of Trustees said ‘our students have lived up to the Academy’s motto A posse ad esse – from possibility to reality’. The Trustees of the academy and the Headmaster Mr Hamilton, congratulate and thank all students, staff and parents and wish them success in the future.
When I met Suzanne Virdee, I felt shocked because I didn’t think that I would ever get to meet a news/TV journalist. She had to hear sad stories and abusive content. and she said that working as a journalist could be tough at times, such as when 'A Teenage Girl’s Guide To Being Fabulous'. When asked why she wrote this book, Suzanne Virdee told us about her background and where she grew up. She told us that unlike a lot of other children, she knew what she wanted to do at age 8. Suzanne was selling copies of her own newspapers to family members by the age of ten. At her secondary school, she decided to take action and make her lifelong dream come true. It took her six months to finally get a job after her A-Levels and she went through many rejections but kept moving forward and always looked on the bright side of things. Suzanne Virdee came to GDA on 14th November. Ms Virdee became a journalist at the age of 18, working as a trainee reporter at the Solihull Times in her home town. She passed her journalism exams and switched to television journalism. Ms Virdee told us about her background and where she grew up. She told us that unlike a lot of other children, she knew what she wanted to do at age 8. Suzanne was selling copies of her own newspapers to family members by the age of ten. At her secondary school, she decided to take action and make her lifelong dream come true. It took her six months to finally get a job after her A-Levels and she went through many rejections but kept moving forward and always looked on the bright side of things. Suzanne Virdee told us about her background and where she grew up. She told us that unlike a lot of other children, she knew what she wanted to do at age 8. Suzanne was selling copies of her own newspapers to family members by the age of ten. At her secondary school, she decided to take action and make her lifelong dream come true. It took her six months to finally get a job after her A-Levels and she went through many rejections but kept moving forward and always looked on the bright side of things.

Academy Journalists had great fun when we gave Ms Virdee our tour around the Academy. It was a great privilege. She told us how she wrote a book called 'A Teenage Girl’s Guide To Being Fabulous'. When asked why she wrote this book, and she said that working as a journalist could be tough at times, such as when she had to hear sad stories and abusive content. When I met Suzanne Virdee, I felt shocked because I didn’t think that I would ever get to meet a news/TV journalist. After the tour, we spoke in Mr. Hamilton’s office. We asked her some questions about what it is like to be a journalist and were told that “It is great but you need to work very hard for this kind of opportunity.”

Pathways to Law

It is difficult to decide what you wish to do in the future, it is a decision you live with and will either be set in stone or will change through the years. Pathways to Law is a two year programme which will allow me to understand whether I wish to pursue a degree in Law; I have been debating over what I want to do at university for a while and I am sure I will come to a final decision while on the Pathways scheme.

On 19th November I went to the Pathways to Law launch at Warwick University. I took three adults with me, the only one with so many family members (embarrassing!). It was an eventful day as I got to speak to new people my age who either plan to study in the field of law or are unsure just like myself. I was extremely nervous to speak to these people I met for the first time and will associate with for the next two years; but every individual I did speak with were friendly and I realised they are in the same position as me.

There was plenty of information about the programme and what we would be doing over the year. Families were presented with facts about UCAS and student finance which was very helpful. The students were told about what it takes to become a Solicitor or Barrister, what qualifications are required and what training allows you to become successfully qualified. Maria, the leader of the programme, is a qualified solicitor, so I know I am in safe hands when it comes to the information provided to me.

Anisha Patel, Year 12 Law Student

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.

Students’ 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.

Students’ moral development involves acquiring 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.

Students’ social development involves acquiring an understanding of 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’ cultural development involves acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences.

Thought for the Term: Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

Nelson Mandela
Craft Club

Craft Club began just after October half term and has been popular with students in all years! So far, we have made (lots of) pompoms and are now learning to knit, hopefully we’ll get some festive items finished in time for Christmas!

Craft Club is every Tuesday morning from 8am in the LRC, see Ms Nicklin for more information.

Professor Carl Chinn talks to Year 9 Students

More able students in year 9 have been participating in a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and run by Midlands Actor Theatre. David Allen from Midlands Actor Theatre has led 6 hours of workshops with 44 year 9 students this half term. The focus of the workshops has been ‘the Birmingham Street Robins’. Professor Carl Chin has been invited in to talk to the students about this aspect of Birmingham’s history. GDA students will also have the opportunity to work with Newman University staff next half term to further develop their skills of investigating local history.

Skills Show

On Saturday 19th November 2016, some year 10 and 11 students along with Mr Jerome and Miss Wallace went to the Skills Show in the NEC.

It was a great experience and there were loads of companies like the BBC, Jaguar Land Rover, Volkswagen Apprentices, Walsall College, UCB College and South and City College etc.

It was so fun and we got loads of freebies like headphones, pens, VR sets and lots more.

So to get there we had to go to New Street Station and meet up at platform 6 and then we caught the Birmingham International to get to Birmingham Airport and then to the NEC. There was also Comic-Con in the NEC and Motorcycle Live 2016.

There was also fun activities like making your own T-Shirt, controlling a Robot, doing obstacle courses and much more!

So overall it was a trip for us to explore our careers and apply for sixth form and colleges and also go and experience the world!

Thank you for reading my amazing article and you can suggest an article for me anytime. I will be in the LRC at break and lunch so come and see me!

City Serve

City Kitchen, led by Executive Development Chef Wayne Edge, visited GDA to promote healthy eating and the importance of breakfast. The City Kitchen have led assemblies with year 7 and year 8. Students had the opportunity to create a new fruit smoothie flavour in the assemblies. All students received a free smoothie or wholemeal muffin at the end of the assembly.

A free breakfast service is currently available to all students. Fare Share will be supporting the academy in providing a range of free food from 8.15 each morning in the canteen.

Year 10 Civil Service Programme with HRMC

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Class of 2016

Craft Club students learning how to knit!

GDA Class of 2016 at their prom! All the best in the future!
Debate Mate launch

On the 31st October, the GDA Debate Mate team went to the launch of Debate Mate 2016/17. Over 230 schools are involved in Debate Mate. The ceremony started out with two teams trying to lead their fellow peers to victory, debating whether or not superheroes should be locked up in prison.

The proposition (defending team) started out with a really strong point that the world is a wreck because all superheroes care about is getting one up on their rivals/nemesis and not the safety of the citizens around them. The three speakers had good points but then the opposing team came back stronger and nearly won the whole debate.

After this, the floor debates started. Everybody was eager to express their views and I could tell that the people were nervous because they were speaking to at least 150 people. I was picked to speak my mind and chose who to side with (obviously, I would keep superheroes out of jail!), so I said: “If we jail superheros we will have betrayed their trust and stabbed them in the back. Also they will divert their path from protecting the Earth to striving to destroy every last human being because they will have felt like we have completely sold them out”

We then took a vote and unfortunately the proposing team won and I, along with those who agreed with me, were absolutely gutted! Personally, I had a great time and it was really good fun. If you wish to join Debate Mate, please notify Miss Blakeman in W17. The club is on Tuesdays from 3:30pm. Thank you for reading my article and remember to ask to join debate mate.

Adam Mohammed, Year 8 Journalist

Musical Youth singer speaks to Year 11 Music students

In November, the Year 11 BTEC group had a visit from Dennis Seaton, the main singer from the famous 80’s band, ‘Musical Youth’. The students had an opportunity to hear about his stories of fame and how he went from a Birmingham school boy to an international star with their famous song, ‘Pass the Dutchie’. Dennis spoke to students about the passion he has for music and how he still performs regularly with another original member of Musical Youth and the importance of practice and determination. He answered many questions from our students and even gave us a rendition of a Stevie Wonder classic!

Ms Awone

Kash The Flash

In November, a kickboxing legend named Kash the Flash came to our Academy to talk about his life in a series of assemblies to inspire us. He talked about his career and the racism that happened. Kash talked about never giving up and how he had a lot of support, helping achieve his dream. He also came on the year 7 parents evening, which was on November 10th. Kash Gill was born in 1966 and brought up in Handsworth. Gill had a tough upbringing, but discovered kickboxing at the age of 14 when he saw a demo at Handsworth Park and went for a trial session. Kash ‘the Flash’ Gill is a retired British professional kickboxing and former four time world champion. He became a world champion at the age of 21 and retired in 2002. In 1991, he won the World Kickboxing Association light middleweight and super welterweight full contact titles. He was the International Sport Association Freestyle champion in 1993.

Kash has opened a gym for everyone to learn kick boxing and martial arts, he also teaches self defence. Sessions cost just £1 and the gym is at 136 Icknield Port Road, B16 0BJ.

Aman Paul, Year 8 Journalist

Football Results

On Monday 17th October 2016, Cyrille Regis & John Williams visited the academy. They are both footballers and played for England, West Bromwich Albion and Coventry City. Also, John Williams is an ex student of George Dixon (he was in the year below Mr Mann!).

They came to GDA to tell us about how they became footballers and how they achieved their life goals. Cyrille Regis is also a charity worker and is an ambassador for Christians in Sport and Water Aid UK as well as being remembered as a true football legend.

They talked about how life as a black sportsman was hard back when they played football, and how so much racial abuse was around. They used to get letters sent to their homes threatening them and divert their path from protecting the Earth to striving to destroy every last human being because they will have felt like we have completely sold them out. The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Team held another successful Year 7 Form Tutor Evening on November 10th 2016.

Following this, the FACE team have organised workshops that will take place throughout the academic year as we believe the partnership between families and the academy is key in ensuring all children achieve their full potential. These workshops have been designed so that you can support your child further with their learning at home.

The next workshop will take place on 17th January 2017 from 16:30pm and the lead workshop will be Science with P.E. Accelerated Reading and Life without Levels also holding workshops. This will help equip families with the knowledge of how their child can make significant progress in these areas. If you would like to join us, please see bit.ly/GDADFACE or email FACE@georgedixonacademy.com.

Cyrielle Regis and John Williams with Mr Hamilton sometimes even death threats.

It was very emotional for me, because people could have tried to kill them just for playing football! Luckily, those kinds of things don't happen so much in sport these days, and people being racist or threatening to others at football matches is rare, which is good!

Daniel Hussain,
Year 10 Student Journalist