

Academy News

The Newsletter of George Dixon Academy

April 2014 Issue 5

SSAT

inquire
inspire
innovate
impact



SSAT Educational Outcomes Awards 2014

George Dixon Academy is one of the best in the country for student progress at GCSE

George Dixon Academy has received national recognition for the value it adds to students' achievements at GCSE.

A recent in-depth analysis of official Department for Education data on all state-funded schools in England by SSAT, the national schools' membership organisation for improvement and collaboration, identified George Dixon Academy success.

The school has qualified for an SSAT Educational Outcomes Award by being in the top 20% of schools nationally for progress made by pupils between their key stage 2 results at primary school and their GCSE results at age 16.

The school has been invited to receive their award at a regional celebration ceremony hosted by SSAT at Waverley School in Birmingham on 04 June.

Sue Williamson, Chief Executive of SSAT said:

'George Dixon Academy should be congratulated for their exceptional achievement. They have proved themselves to be leading the field in improving GCSE outcomes for their students. There is so much good practice that this school could share, and I hope many schools will join us at the celebration ceremony for the chance to network and share

strategies with award-winning schools.

'These results are testament to the commitment and hard work of the students, teachers and leadership team at George Dixon Academy, and show what can be achieved when skilled teachers have high expectations and ambition for every young person. I am proud that this school is a member of the SSAT network.'

Community Student Leaders Celebrate Achievements



After a highly successful educational trip to BBC Birmingham at The Mailbox, the 'Community' Student Leaders (Kawsar Nuur, Ramandeep Singh, Hadia Hussein and Ranjeet Bhogal) alongside Miss Jordan and Mr Finley are now on track to receiving prestigious certificates from the House of Commons.

The visit enabled students to have a tour of the BBC Studios and participate in the 'Time to Talk' campaign run by mental health charities Mind and Rethink. The aim was to end discrimination surrounding mental health issues by encouraging open conversations in young people. Following on from this trip, student leaders created a whole-

school PSHE session to encourage a school wide conversation on 'Time to Talk' day. Every form class in school discussed the issue, students were encouraged to go home and carry on the conversation and there were even advertisements on the canteen TVs! The students represented themselves as role models for the school and helped the project with over 1,000 conversations towards the projects target of one million.

After being a huge success, the 'Community Student Leaders' team are entering the 'Speaker's School Council Awards' run by Parliament's Education service. The scheme recognises the achievements of school councils, particularly where they made a difference to the school and local community. Students are currently on track to receive a prestigious certificate from the Speaker of the House of Commons and if shortlisted in April, our Community Student Leaders will attend award ceremony where they will be presented with a trophy from Speaker John Bercow.

GDA's got talent! Wednesday 30 April 6pm Academy Hall



The Enterprise Committee announces the first Inter-House talent competition at GDA. Auditions will decide on four acts per House to perform at the final. Families are welcome to attend the final, tickets will be available on the door £1 per adult; family ticket £4; children under 16 are free. All money raised will go to charity.

GDA Cupcake Challenge



Budding baking enthusiasts in KS3 have been developing their cookery skills after school to design and bake cupcakes. They learnt how to make a variety of flavoured cupcakes, from mint chocolate to apricot and almond. They have found out top tips to make the best soft and fondant icing.

G10 has been converted into a cupcake workshop after school every Thursday for the past few

weeks. These sessions culminate in a final competition for the best cupcake. They will be judged on original appearance and flavour.

At the time of going to press, students have baked, iced and decorated over 100 cupcakes for their friends and families. Watch this space for the winning cakes. If anyone would like more information about future GDA cooking challenges and recipes, visit G10 for details.

Games Club



Games Club was launched in September 2013. Students have the opportunity to play traditional games such as Chess, Draughts, Scrabble and Dominoes. The club still sees a good number of students attending. Students pit their wits against staff members (Mr Sira, Mr Brookes, Miss Dewell, Miss Rehman and Mr Patel). Mr Patel claims he is still undefeated at Draughts although he hasn't had the same luck with Chess thanks to certain students! If you want to join, come along to the LRC every Thursday after school. Keep an eye out for an inter house competition that may be coming to GDA next summer term!

Staff Raise Money for a Local Charity

During the month of December staff raised money for Birmingham St Mary's Hospice. The Hospice cares for over 1,000 people each year suffering from life-limiting illnesses such as Cancer, Motor Neurone Disease and Multiple Sclerosis. It gives sufferers the best possible quality of life for whatever time remains to them whilst

supporting families too. Instead of writing each other Christmas cards, staff donated money that would otherwise be spent buying cards. Mrs Mooney took Gulshan Bi, Rita Cardoso and Sonia Hamid to hand the cheque over and the girls took the opportunity to get experience of the care industry.



November

Many thanks to those who attended the November 'Wax off' on 5 December 2013, as well as those who supported team Dali's Angels with their generous donations throughout November. Mr Cassidy and Mr Ibbotson went through some serious pain! The waxing and threading brought about blood, sweat and tears but it was all for a good cause.

Team Dali's Angels raised a total of £534 for Movember. Dali's Angels would like to thank everyone for their generous donations.

A special thanks to Ms Bernard and Mr Hamilton who donated a healthy £100 each. Also the beauty experts (or surgeons or butchers given the amount of blood they caused!), Mrs Davies, Mrs Talwar and Miss Ilyas.



Literacy Update

World Book Day on 6 March kicked off a series of Literacy events, some of which took place in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC). There was a huge delivery of new books for all ages and reading levels that were scanned and labelled by hardworking LRC volunteers and put on the bookshelves to be borrowed!

The Scholastic Bookfair arrived in the LRC on 27 March for a whole week, students were able to visit the fair during the day and after school to buy any of the books on the three bookcases provided for us. There was a great selection to choose from, and books bought by students also bought free books for the school! Miss Dewell hopes to run the GDA Bookfair again in the future.

After Easter, GDA will be launching our annual Book

Awards, and the LRC holds several copies of all the nominees. Students can borrow the books which have been allocated their own trolley and can feed back on their favourite books. The winner of the Book Awards will be announced on Awards Evening in the Summer Term so come to the LRC and get reading over Easter!



Farewell to GDA Staff

At the end of the term, a number of staff are leaving George Dixon Academy. These include:

- Miss Ellis (Art)
- Mr Mahmud (Art)
- Ms Roberts (ICT)
- Miss Raszowska (EAL)
- Mrs Mooney (Science)
- Mr Bebbington (Maths)
- Miss Saint (Maths)
- Ms Mohr (Textiles)
- Ms Gurd (Drama)
- Mr Hancock (Maths)

We are very grateful for the contribution they have made to the Academy and wish them every success for the future.

Mrs Dhillon has left GDA to have her second child. Staff and students alike wish both her and Mr Dhillon the very best.



Help I'm stuck!

Dear Mrs Joyce,
I have always done very well in school but lately my levels aren't going up in some subjects. I'm stuck!
What can I do?

Worried, Year 8

Dear Worried Year 8, this is not an unusual situation; everybody makes progress at different rates. Don't panic. These levels are just markers of where you are in a subject at any given time and do not give a full description of your ability or, more importantly, your potential.

If you are concerned, the first thing to do is discuss the situation with your teacher. More often than not, being stuck just means you are making the same errors or not showing a particular skill over time. This means a solution might be very simple. Sometimes, it may be more problematic. You may need to make some bigger changes, for example, respond more effectively to teacher feedback, stop getting distracted in class or complete more home study.

It can be frustrating when you feel like you're not making progress but it's all part of learning. Just remember trying to sort it out is the most important thing.

Mrs Joyce

Year 11 GCSE History Revision Conference



On Monday 24 February 2014, 120 GCSE History Students visited the Crescent Theatre in Birmingham to take part in a revision conference.

"Hitler on Trial" opened with an exam busting workshop in which students were shown the thinking behind the GCSE History Examination and advised how to

make the most of their knowledge and skills. Students looked at the different style of exam questions and marked sample answers. This was followed by a mock trial where it was imagined Adolf Hitler was captured alive by British Special Forces in 1942 and brought on trial charged with starting the Second

World War. Students voted to decide whether Hitler was guilty.

The day helped students develop their understanding of the use of evidence, promoted their understanding of causation and developed their ability to analyse historical arguments. Students commented on the usefulness of the examination tips and also how the trial had brought to life events they had studied in the classroom.

First World War Battlefields Tour

In March, Miss Blake accompanied two students, Gurjit Korotana and Satvir Heer, to the World War One Battlefields in the Ypres Salient in Belgium and the Sommes Region in France. We were joined by several other schools and visited a number of cemeteries and War memorials. The tour focused on the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). CWGC

commemorates the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars. The CWGC is committed to maintaining these sites 'in perpetuity' -forever.

The visit consisted of several sites, including Ypres, Neuve Chapelle and the Somme Region. The whole

programme was integral to our deeper understanding of what it was like to be a young person fighting and dying for a cause, and yet many of those that died were no older than our students in the Sixth Form. The three of us were in no doubt that this had been an educational visit like no other and will remain with us for the rest of our lives.



Crowd Out! World Premiere

On Sunday 8 June 2014 fifty KS3 students will be performing in two performances of the World Premiere of David Laing's "Crowd Out!" at Millenium Point. Commissioned for the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, altogether one thousand voices will perform (who may not be musically trained). Rehearsals are held every Tuesday after school and all pupils need to attend on a regular basis. More rehearsals will be required, including weekends, towards the performance. Tickets are free and can be ordered from Ms McCarroll. Come along to this unique event!

Young Voices 2015

The Music department is recruiting singers from across the Academy for this national singing event at the LG Arena in January 2015. This isn't singing in a choir, individuals learn a number of songs and dance moves with the opportunity to perform with stars of the rock and pop world. Further details are on the GDA website.

Academy String Players to perform at Symphony Hall

Another performance opportunity has arisen for our students. They have only been learning the violin for six months and have been invited to perform as part of the Birmingham Music Service partnership. They will perform two pieces at Symphony Hall on Wednesday 4 June at 2pm. Tickets are free, further information will be on the website.

Instrumental Lessons: Places Available for the Summer Term

Places are available for singing, drums, piano and harmonium with limited places for guitar. Please see Ms Mc Carroll for consent forms and letters. Students learning instruments must bring their instrument on a weekly basis with their music and practice diary. All instruments lent by Birmingham Music service are to be returned to school as soon as possible for checking and maintenance.

Absurd



GDA students impressed their audience again with our annual pantomime, 'Absurd'. It contained witches, chimpanzees and fairies, so no wonder we recruited a bigger make-up team than ever before! Professional make-up artist, Rachel Weaver, showed students how to apply authentic pantomime theatre make-up.

With a skilled band and makeup artist, actors were transformed into mystical beings. With the songs we sang and our bizarre appearances, this production made me feel a part of something, I really felt like a professional actor. It allowed us to experience the beauty, amusement and creativity of performing arts with an insight into choosing GCSE drama. The production gave

students the chance to open up, become more confident and showcase their talent.

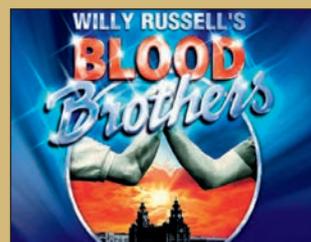
Each make-up artist was responsible for at least one character. They did an excellent job, some parents didn't even recognise their own children! The actors defined their characters: some with odd green, ugly faces whilst others with soft fairy like spirited faces.

The countdown drew closer and the set became dreamlike, fantasy, and absurd! The production ended with the classic, 'Walking in a Winter Wonderland', which although not perfect or exact, was a real achievement.

If you would like to take part in the next performance on stage or backstage, please see Miss Lund or Miss Wallace.



Blood Brothers



There were so many parts of the visit, not mentioned here but

all parts of the programme were integral to our deeper understanding of what it must have been like to be a young man or women fighting and dying for a cause, and yet many of those that died were no older than our students in the Sixth Form. Myself, Gurjit and Satvir were in no doubt that this had been an educational visit like no other, the memory of which will remain with us for the rest of our lives.

Sports Relief 2014

George Dixon Academy raise £681.90 for Sports Relief on 21 March 2014, with Durham raising the most money! Thanks to everyone who donated. Well done to the Sports team from the Student Leaders for arranging such a great day!

The results from the Cross Country Run were as follows:

Total House Scores		
Position	House	Score
1st	Windsor	1871
2nd	York	1944
3rd	Durham	2015
4th	Warwick	2042
5th	Lancaster	2061

Best Boys House		
Position	House	Score
1st	Windsor	731
2nd	York	737
3rd	Warwick	753
4th	Lancaster	852
5th	Durham	1112

Fastest Boy Overall		
Alex Tesform	YR9	WK

Fastest Girl Overall		
Simran Sandhu	YR7	WR

Best Girls House		
Position	House	Score
1st	Durham	667
2nd	Lancaster	909
3rd	Windsor	963
4th	York	1030
5th	Warwick	1069

Fastest Girl by Year Group		
Year	Name	House
7	Simran Sandhu	WR
8	Hawa Touray	DM
9	Sabiella Gebru	WK
10	Mariama Johm	LR
11	Nieka Marr	WK
12 & 13	Katreece Brancker	WR

Fastest Girl by Year Group		
Year	Name	House
7	Simran Sandhu	WR
8	Hawa Touray	DM
9	Sabiella Gebru	WK
10	Mariama Johm	LR
11	Nieka Marr	WK
12 & 13	Katreece Brancker	WR



Spring Term 2014 Sports Results

27 March
King Edwards VI Handsworth 3 – 4
GDA (Year 7 and 8 girls)

25 March
Smith's Wood Sports College 4 – 3
GDA (Year 8 boys – All
Birmingham Cup Semi Final)

23 March 2014
St John Wall 2 - 7 GDA
(Year 7 and 8 girls)

18 March 2014
Heartlands 1 - 4 GDA (Year 7 and 8
girls)

Week commencing
14 March 2014
John Willmott School 3 - 5 GDA
(Year 7 and 8 girls)

King Edwards Sheldon Heath 0 - 5
GDA (Year 8 boys)

9 February 2014
GDA (Year 7 and 8 girls) 4 – 3
Aston Manor Academy

10 January 2014 (Girls)
GDA 4 - 3 Aston Manor Academy

Basketball
w/c 24 March 2013 (Girls Year 9)
GDA 18 - 0 Broadway

28 January 2014 (Girls)
GDA (Year 7) 16 - 1 Aston
Manor Academy
GDA (Year 8/9) 8 - 20 Aston
Manor Academy

Inter-House Tug of War

Year 7
1st - Windsor
2nd - Durham
3rd - Warwick
4th - York
5th - Lancaster

Year 8
1st - York
2nd - Durham
3rd - Lancaster
4th - Warwick
5th - Windsor

Year 10
1st - York
2nd - Windsor
3rd - Lancaster
4th - Warwick
5th - Durham



Badminton All England Championships 2014

A group of students from George Dixon Academy went to the Badminton All England Championships (the oldest Badminton competition) at the National Indoor Arena on 6 March 2014. They watched men's, women's, single and double matches and had the chance to take autographs and photographs with world famous players. Pupils who attended were grateful for the opportunity.

Academy News

George Dixon Academy

Portland Road, Birmingham B16 9GD. Phone: 0121 566 6565.
Fax: 0121 566 6566. Email: contact@georgedixonacademy.com
www.georgedixonacademy.com

If you have any comments about this Newsletter or would like to contribute to future editions please contact the Academy.