Welcome from the Headteacher
As we approach the end of Term 3, I find it hard to believe that we are already half way through the academic year. From my own perspective as a relative newcomer to the King Alfred’s community, the weeks have simply flown by and I have thoroughly enjoyed every single day. Many thanks indeed to you all – and to the students – for the ways in which you have made me so welcome in such a short space of time. I now feel very much at home!

And what a term it has been. Our outstanding students have excelled themselves in so many ways over the last six weeks in sporting successes, artistic performances and as superb ambassadors on activities, visits and trips both in the UK and abroad. Please read about all of their many achievements inside this edition of Academy Focus.

One very memorable event at the end of such a busy term was the 2019 King Alfred’s X Factor competition. Students from all years won through their heats to represent their Houses in the X-Factor final, and their performances were, quite simply, amazing. Many congratulations to all those students who took part and many special thanks also to our Head of House, Fiona Collett, who put in so many hours of additional work at the end of such a long term to make sure that the evening was such a great success. Read all about it inside!

We all wish our senior skiers a fabulous trip to the USA over the February break, after a dawn departure on Friday. May they all enjoy good snow, fun times and great friendship.

I would like to remind Year 11 parents that ‘February Focus’, another pack of information and guidance on homework and revision for Y11 students, the February Focus, will be published to you via parent mail and Show My Homework. The document provides students and parents with some valuable information and advice on how students can plan their revision, manage their homework and best prepare for the GCSE examinations ahead.

(Continued on page 2)
I also hope that parents will find the time over the February school holiday to complete the Parent Survey which was sent out this week. The Leadership Team is very keen to gather feedback from parents, students and staff on the changes we have made across the academy since September, as we prepare for our next Ofsted inspection. Your views are very important to us, and we look forward to receiving your responses before the survey closes at noon on Monday 25\textsuperscript{th} February.

Looking ahead to the new term, it is worth reflecting that this will be a very poignant six weeks for our community, in that this will be Simon Spiers’ last term in post as CEO of the Vale Academy Trust. Simon was, of course, a former Headteacher of King Alfred’s, with a long track record of loyalty, commitment and dedication to the thousands of students who have progressed through the academy in his time. Furthermore, Simon played such a significant role in transforming the original buildings on three separate sites to create the twenty first century facilities on just two sites which our students are fortunate enough to enjoy today. The vision for what King Alfred’s could become was his, and the transformation was driven by him.

In recognition of this significant achievement, we look forward to celebrating the formal opening of the new sports hall on West Site in March, and we are all very excited that the facility will be named the Spiers Sports Hall in Simon’s honour. There will be occasions to express our public thanks to Simon at the end of next term but, in the meantime, I would like to thank him for providing our Year7 and Year 8 students on West with one of the finest indoor PE facilities in the county. Thanks Simon!

Enjoy this edition of Academy Focus, and many thanks as always for your wonderful support of King Alfred’s Academy.

Rick Holroyd
Headteacher

Ski Trip 2020

The Ski Trip for 2020 has been launched!

Letters with more information, dates and costs have gone out via ParentPay e-mail and will be available from offices!

For the 2019 Ski Trip report see Page 9.
This term’s app advice is about ‘Yubo’ (sometimes called ‘Yellow’). This app is rated ‘PG’ on app stores, but the content and capabilities means that it should be restricted to an older user. ‘Yubo’ is a live-streaming video-messaging app. Users can join live video calls, text chat, share pictures and videos, play games and send music to anyone on the app, anywhere in the world—users do not need to have accepted or asked to be friends with the other user. ‘Yubo’ is fully public by default, one of the first permissions it asks is to share location and much of the content is provocative and inappropriate to users under 18 years old, however, it is displayed with fun emojis and is attractively fully-interactive and constantly updating. The app also links to other social networks and encourages users to share their handles for Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter. ‘Yubo’ is owned by ‘Facebook’ and so all information uploaded immediately becomes property of ‘Yubo’ and can be shared across networks. ‘Yubo’ has been brought to my attention by local internet safeguarding mentors.

It has been brought to my attention that children in our local community are using ‘Yubo’ and are sharing videos and photos as well as being in contact with strangers worldwide. Please do have conversations with your children about the dangers of using these apps and talking to strangers both online and in person. It is important that should you have any safeguarding concerns you report them to the appropriate authorities without delay.
Accelerated Reader & Word Millionaires

We are delighted to announce that as of February 8th, our Year 7 and 8 students have read 192,617,943 words on 3927 books since September. For a book to 'count', students must pass a quiz to show good comprehension, so these results are impressive – and 95% of our Year 7 and 8 students are on the scoreboard, with an average of 364,117 words read. Year 8 are in the lead with 107,476,443 words read and Year 7 have 84,141,500.

Congratulations to the following Word Millionaires, who have all read 1,000,000 or more words since September:

**Year 7 Word Millionaires**
Harper, Bethan 3,367,916
Stay, Amelia 3,346,433
Vereker, Thomas 2,185,254
Macgillivray-Edwards, Sheona 1,858,909
Khan, Tanya 1,792,937
Giltnane, William 1,789,041
Molodynski, Poppy 1,630,761
Sadler, Lilly 1,589,019
Fowler, Rosamond 1,540,713
Hawkins, Elise 1,524,375
Webster, Benjamin 1,450,642
Hobson, Matthew 1,391,405
Khlebnikova, Sofia 1,357,678
Painter, Ellie 1,346,523
Lowe, Oliver 1,291,663
Winfield, Rex 1,240,470
Brown, Zoe 1,229,574
Morgan, Connor 1,189,658
Frost, Charles 1,081,815
Taschek, Jake 1,081,497
Rodbourn-Lewis, Finley 1,032,157
Hall, Daniel 1,023,309
Richings, Jemima 1,022,348

**Year 8 Word Millionaires**
Robertson, Amy 6,748,324
Sansum-Wall, Emma 4,843,441
Sansum-Wall, Fay 3,328,522
Owen, Jessica 2,905,495
Footner, Samuel 2,562,140
Dinsey, Amelia 2,107,424
Woodyer, Aaron 2,104,937
Hordern, Frank 2,024,514
Lindsay, Hope 2,005,173
Coulson-Phillips, Harvey 1,781,931
Kalutota, Tanisha 1,777,895
Brooker Batstone, Daisy 1,720,834
Cockburn, Rowan 1,646,273
Dunford, Jamie 1,567,645
England, Brendan 1,513,059
Harmsworth, Eve 1,367,486
de Veth, Alexandria 1,355,813
Hailey, Charlotte 1,353,806
Fray, Euan 1,312,816
Kent, Alec 1,294,658
Kelly, Rosa 1,228,665
McDonagh, Thomas 1,224,226
Hindson, Edward 1,222,668
Harvey, Zachary 1,163,031
Maude, Lily 1,101,204
Hordern, James 1,064,503
Thornton, Niya 1,032,939
Double Word Millionaire Celebration
Eight students read 2,000,000 or more words by January 27th, and these students were invited to a celebration with the Headteacher with snacks and conversation about reading and writing. Congratulations to all.
Other students who achieve double millionaire status will have a similar celebration next term.

Donations of good quality books
With so much reading going on at King Alfred’s, we have large turnover of books at both our West and Centre Site libraries. We are always looking for donations of books in good condition, so if you are having a clear out, please consider donating children’s and young people’s books to us. Bags or boxes of books can be left at the Centre Site or West Site Reception for the attention of Alice Visser. Thank you for thinking of us!

Alice Visser
Our new West Sportshall is now open!

The U13 Girls basketball team played great basketball at the Semi-final of the Oxfordshire competition.

The U13 B Team football team travelled to Plymouth for their 4th Round fixture.

A very cold but great rugby training session with eight girls. They definitely showed determination!
Primary Inclusive Dance Festival - the theme was the Circus using music from the Greatest Showman

The U13 Boys Basketball won the Oxfordshire basketball competition against Cheney, winning by just two points!

U14 Netball team - a brilliant home win
PE & Sport News Round-up continued

Bromsgrove swimming competition - the U18 boys won bronze

U12 Girls football - 3rd best 5-a-side team in the South Region

KATS - Charlie, Gabriella & Max Rhodes - Taekwondo
Charlie, Gabriella and Max have all been selected to represent England in this year’s EITF Taekwondo European Championships in Italy
January 2019 saw the inaugural joint KA and Larkmead (and largest ever) ski trip head to France. Ninety-seven students had a spectacular week of skiing, French and fresh air. Risoul was a wonderful resort to ski in, the hotel was perfectly located near the slopes and our students made extraordinary progress over the week. It was a real pleasure to work with a brilliant group of staff who ensured that every student had a great time. Below are a few reports from students.

On the Risoul Ski Trip 2019 we had the most amazing time ever even though it was a week it felt like a mere 3 days. I have loved every second of it (and many will agree). We have all made massive progress - beginner or pro! It may be called a Ski trip but in the evening we do all sorts of exciting activities like tobogganing and ice skating! I really enjoyed this trip and I really recommend it to any 11-15 year olds who are ready for an epic challenge.

**Juliane Spiers**

1st day: the instructors took us under their wing and made sure that everyone was happy talking and making us feel comfortable with skiing. At the end of the day the beginners came in with a smile on their face and an amazing set of stories.

All the evening activities were amazing and the equity ski staff made sure that everyone could participate. The food was always delicious and the staff made sure that the menu suited all the students and staff.

In my opinion, I thought this was my best school trip yet and we all made friends from Larkmead and I hope they join us for many ski trips to come.

**Sofia Khlebnikova (Yr 7)**

On the 2019 ski trip we did 6 days of skiing, 4 hours a day, 24 hours in total. We departed on 19th January, and we flew from Bristol to Chambery. We did different activities every day, some of these including a luge, ice skating and film night.

There were 109 people in total, 9 ski groups, 5 of which had never skied before. In the beginner groups, we learnt how to put our skis on, how to get up when you fall and how to snow plough. After lunch (jacket potato) many of the beginners moved up into the intermediate groups and we began skiing on blue and red slopes.

In the advanced groups, they went to the top of the mountain on the first couple of days. Afterward, they did many slaloms and a few jumps. Once everyone because more confident, the advanced group did a slalom race against the locals.

Now the intermediate groups were at the top of the mountain doing bumps and jumps. After skiing we had an hour of free time to go out to the town and then we can back to have a meeting about the day in which we would all tell stories about what happened and the best one would get a teddy to wear on their helmet the next day.

On Friday the intermediate and advanced groups went on a skiing day trip to Vas (another mountain) and had a picnic there.

On Saturday the teachers woke everyone up at 2.45 am to go on a coach journey to Chambery airport because our flight was at 10.05 am. After the plane, we had a 1 ½ hour coach journey back to King Alfred’s West Site to meet out parents and go home.

**Kayleigh O’Neil (Yr 8)**

Here are some more fond memories of the trip:

“This trip was amazing and the staff and the instructors were really comforting and helpful. I would love to go on this trip again since it was so fun.”  
**Maddie (Yr 10)**

“This trip was an amazing opportunity for me. This has been by far the best trip I’ve gone on. I’ve also met some new people and got a lot closer with my old friends. I really want to go on this trip again.”  
**Loren (Yr 10)**

“Harvey here! It was my first every time on a plane and it was really cool and the view out of the plane was amazing!”  
**Harvey (Yr 7)**

“Alex here! I had been on a plane before but I’ve never gone skiing. At the start I could barely walk but at the end I was going down jumps and blue slopes!”  
**Alex (Yr 7)**

“My favourite part was when I did my first red slope because I was nervous and I hadn’t skied before.”  
**Rex (Yr 7)**
Year 10 at the Ashmolean Spellbound Exhibition

On two bitterly cold days towards the end of December, two groups of Year 10 students visited the Ashmolean Spellbound Exhibition.

Through artefacts and documents, this exhibition explored the concepts of superstition, magic and witches through the ages. In particular, the perception of witches by and place within society, their prevalence across many different cultures, their persecution and its relationship to misogyny within a patriarchal society, and the preconditions that give rise to them.

It was a rich and intriguing exhibition that gave rise to many questions regarding the power of the supernatural within our own collective psyche, and precisely the sort of exhibition that stimulates an active mind to consider cause and effect, and the influences of society upon the individual.

As a Year 10 group, our students had a specific interest because of their GCSE study of Shakespeare’s Macbeth. The significance of Hecate and the awful prophecies by the coven of witches is not something that is immediately apparent to a young 21st Century audience, and this exhibition contributed significantly to the students’ understanding of the issues involved, and the prevalence of belief and superstition.

“Can you imagine having all those things hidden under your floorboards and not knowing about them?” one student commented at the section of the exhibition that explored superstition and what ordinary people did to protect themselves from witchcraft. And yet, how many people nowadays touch wood for luck, or avoid walking under a ladder?

“But that is obviously a sheet of silk! How could people possibly have thought that that was ectoplasm?” another student marvelled in the section that explored the power of people’s beliefs in building up a collective illusion.

Altogether, the students agreed that the exhibition had been a great help in gaining an appreciation for how prevalent and real the belief in and fear of witches was during Shakespeare’s time, and the role of James I in promoting the fear.

Pam Stokell
Year 9 MFL/KAAEP Trip – Investigating Language

In January, a group of ten of us went to Queen’s College, Oxford for an afternoon exploring languages.

On this trip, we learnt about some building blocks of language, starting to explore new languages, working on improving our knowledge of our current GCSE language and why to take a language as a course of study.

To begin with, the building blocks of language. The structure of language is called linguistics. Language can be either speech or signed, and all human languages contain common elements that make them languages. Language is not just communication as animals can communicate but they don’t have a language. For example, a dog can communicate how it feels, but not what it ate yesterday. This makes language uniquely human. In some view, language is a form of telepathy because, whilst we cannot read minds, we encode thoughts into sound, and decode sounds into thought. This is a form of telepathy.

There are three major aspects to linguistics: word structure, sentence structure, and sound structure. Blends in language are the mixes of words into one, e.g. Brexit is the combination of “Britain” and “Exit”. Brexit is “Br” from Britain and all of the word “exit”, not “Bexit” because the single “B” is not enough to identify the word Britain. This is because of the “meaning rule” – blends refer to a combination of its constituent parts, e.g. the word “spork” has properties from both spoon and fork.

After this, we moved onto a workshop to quickly learn the basics of a new language. Half of us learnt Portuguese, and the other half Italian. I did Portuguese and the technique to learn the basics was through a song. We were tasked with trying to recognise key words.

Next we saw a silent movie and we had to add descriptions (subtitles) to scenes from the film.

Finally we learnt why it is so valuable to choose to learn a language at school. The reasons for this included better job chances, better chances to get into university, and better opportunities later in life.

Finn Hawkins, 9V3

“Brexit is the combination of “Britain” and “Exit””
Sixth-Form Students attend an A Level 18th Century Studies Day at the Vale and Downland Museum

On Monday 7th January a mix of students, speakers, and teachers attended the A Level Study Day on 18th Century at the Vale and Downland Museum. I’d been to a few events at the museum, such as debates and a Victorian Evening, and they’ve always been fun yet informative. The studies were in collaboration with the Universities of York and Leeds, the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities and with funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. I had been looking forward to this day, and not just because of the Rolo brownies promised to us in the buffet!

The day consisted of a keynotes speech by Dr Joanna de Groot, three different seminars, and a consensus at the end of the day. I think my favourite talk was the 18th Century literature seminar, as I plan to study the subject at University. One of these were led by Holly Day, York, and it involved discussing the use of diaries and other life-writing works in the study of history. The next seminar was about the evolution of the epistolary novel, which was led by Helena Senior, York, with a focus on gothic novels. It was not only fascinating information that I wouldn’t have learnt anywhere else, but also a huge insight to the style of a university seminar. I thoroughly enjoyed discussing ideas and asking questions into a group as there were a variety of people who all had different perspectives, which kept me on my toes and constantly thinking.

Overall, I think everyone involved had a great day of learning. I really hope that something similar will be arranged in the future as this one was very beneficial. I’d just like to say a huge thank you to Mel Rowntree at the Museum and everyone else involved with the organisation of it all.

Year 10 Scholars’ Programme with the Brilliant Club

Twelve Year 10 students have completed and excelled in a rigorous eight-week project whereby they met for weekly tutorials with a tutor from the Brilliant Club’s Scholar’s Programme. Their tutor, Dr Isobel Pinder, was an Oxford graduate in Classics with a doctorate in Archaeology, and the students explored the idea of patronage and propaganda in the Roman Empire, with a particular focus on Emperor Augustus.

For their final assignment, the students had to write a 2000-word essay to present their views with regards to the subject, using case study analysis to support their arguments and referencing their work accordingly. Dr Pinder was very impressed with the students’ progress and commented favourably on their engagement, determination and willingness to explore a university-style of learning. All students completed every assigned task on time, and used the detailed feedback to achieve clear improvements in subsequent tasks.

To complete the project, the twelve students visited Exeter College, Oxford to find out more about life at university and to celebrate the end of the project with a graduation ceremony.

Katie McDonagh 13R3

Pam Stokell
The King Alfred’s Sixth-form Debating Group meets regularly at the Wantage Vale and Downland Museum for after-school debating sessions. Over the past year, the group have held debating sessions on aspects of history, which also serve as fun revision sessions (e.g. This House believes that Queen Elizabeth I was right to order the execution of Mary Queen of Scots), but also ethics (e.g. This House believes that gambling should be banned) and some more entertaining topics, such as debating the best course of action in the event of a zombie apocalypse.

The students have been coached in the British Parliamentary style of debate, which ideally has two teams of four debaters, with each member of the team holding a specific role and standing to debate in a specific order. As each team member stands up to speak, the opposing team listens carefully to prepare their own counter-arguments, whilst looking for opportunities to distract the speaker with “Points of Information”.

Teams score points for clarity of argument, style, rebuttal, fluency, relevance, and for how deftly they deal with Points of Information. In January of this year, the school fielded three teams of Year 13 students to the prestigious National Oxford Schools’ Debating Regional Competition. The students were Jack Buckley, Lucy Evans, Henry McClintock, Lizzie Ratcliffe, Ed Record and Alex Thacker. Each team consisted of two debaters, who would then join a pair from another school to make up the team of four required by BP debating.

All three teams performed superbly well and held their own against some aggressive debating from other teams. There were 60 teams present at the Oxford Regional Heats, with six teams selected to go through to the finals. One of our teams, that of Lizzie Ratcliffe and Ed Record, got through and will have the honour of debating at the Oxford Union Building later in March.

Congratulations to Lizzie and Ed on such an amazing achievement! However, it must be said that the success of one team also reflects the very high calibre of the whole debating group, as these students have been debating against one another for some time now and have honed their skills together. So well done to them all, and a huge thank you to the Vale and Downland Museum who have done so much towards helping to prepare our students to compete at such a prestigious event.

Pam Stokell

“The King Alfred’s Sixth-form Debating Group meets regularly at the Wantage Vale and Downland Museum for after-school debating sessions”
King Alfred’s Sixth-form take over the local Museum for the weekend!

Over the weekend of 9th/10th February, a group of King Alfred’s sixth-form students descended upon the Vale and Donwland Museum and totally transformed it. For a few hours both nights, the museum became a vibrant hub of activity, organised and run by sixth-form students. The event had been widely advertised to our feeder primary schools and to the King Alfred’s Community at large, and many turned up on cold February nights to enjoy the evening and support our students in this quite ambitious undertaking.

Back in October, the students had chosen the theme of the Indian Subcontinent, seeking to celebrate the presence of communities from the Indian Subcontinent within Wantage and the surrounding villages.

The students arranged talks on both Remembrance of the Indian contribution to WW1 – a substantial contribution that is now practically forgotten by British history – and the contribution of Indian mathematics to our modern maths system; these talks were held in the museum’s auditorium. In the Mezzanine gallery there was a workshop for making shadow puppets, which have a rich tradition in many countries of the Indian subcontinent; down in the café area, there was a workshop for practising writing using Devanagari script (the script used for some of the Indian languages, such as Hindu, Sanskrit and Nepali); and in the Downland Kitchen there was a workshop for making some of the delicious Indian snacks known as Gol Gappa. Also on the theme of food, the popular Wantage restaurant, Sylheti Spice, had kindly brought in a selection of Indian snacks for visitors to sample – samosas, pakoras, bhajis and son on – and the museum kitchen had also prepared some delicious coconut sweets called barfi.

In the Skeleton Gallery, some of the students led object-handling sessions that included small renditions of Indian deities used for household shrines, Indian fabrics, and an Indian meditation bowl that is used to create an unearthly and haunting sound. Round the corner, in the museum’s market place, another group of students were holding weaving demonstrations using traditional Indian looms and talking about the history of weaving and how it related to our own cloth-milling industry. In the barn, students were running an activity that encouraged visitors to consider the etymology of many words that we have adopted from the Indian languages – this was done through an interactive matching game that kept many of our visitors totally absorbed.

Everything then came to a halt for the drama piece “Lion” – a real story of a little Indian boy who became lost and was adopted by an Australian family, and his journey back as a young adult to find his natural family. It was adapted for King Alfred’s by the incomparable Actress and Youth Theatre Director Nicola Moran. Nicola and the cast had put it together during Friday, fine-tuned it during Saturday afternoon, and then performed it on the two nights to a stunned audience. It was powerful, and incredibly moving.

The evening then drew to a close with musical performances from Darcy O’Leary (KA’s 2019 X-Factor Winner!) and Conor Clarke, both of whom were amazing. The Museum was filled with wonderful sound and light, to the delight of all present. Of course, the students could not have done this without the support of the Museum’s Learning Access Officer, Mel Rowntree, who brought in advisors, sourced the materials for the object-handling and demonstration sessions, and was generally on hand to advise and support throughout the process. Once again, the partnership between school and museum had produced a quality event! And a huge well done to all the students who were involved in bringing about this spectacular weekend.

Pam Stokell

KING ALFRED’S ACADEMY
Year 7s have been personalising their Blockhead projects in Design technology.

Year 11 Art and Graphics students who are starting to brainstorm for the Exam questions. A fantastic atmosphere in the art studio.

Congratulations to all Year 13 Art students who are working on their individual projects.
Textile Year 7 students have been completing their monster projects.

As ‘In The Heights’ is the last show we will be involved in at King Alfred’s, the rehearsal process has been bittersweet. But great progress is being made in rehearsals and the newly built set has injected even more enthusiasm into the cast. We have loved being a part of the institution that is the King Alfred’s Show and hope that you’ll come and see ‘In The Heights’ in March.

*Lizzie Ratcliffe and Harry Goodman Year 13*
History trip to the Vale and Downland Museum

On 5th December 2018, a group of King Alfred’s students went to the Vale and Downland museum in Wantage for an interesting talk on the Nazis and how they idolised and used Spartan culture and ways of life. When we arrived we were welcomed by Mel who briefly explained what we were going to cover in the session and we were introduced to Sam who led the talk.

To start with he told us how the Nazis copied a few life aspects from the Spartans such as how they wanted men and women to act and how Hitler wanted his soldiers to be warrior-like. The students were put into small groups for each aspect of life. For each little group we were given items from Nazi and Spartan life such as an arrow head from a Spartan warrior and an oil knife to scrape oil from a female’s skin. We also got given a sheet with pictures and sources on depicting life back in the Spartan era compared to the Nazis.

For example, the Nazis copied the Spartans idea for the roles of women and men. For both Sparta and Nazi Germany, women were meant to do the house work and bring up the children. On the other hand, men were supposed to be warrior-like and give anything for their country/land. They both also used propaganda to express how men should be strong and protect their families and their people. This was very interesting as we got to see the links between the two different societies although they were many years apart. It was also really good to be able to see and touch the Spartan artefacts as we could get a good understanding first hand.

Finally, Sam explained to us all how and why the Nazis idolised some of the Spartans culture and really broadened our perspective on the Nazis and why Hitler may have had some of his opinions on how he wanted Nazi German life to be like. As the Spartans were briefly so successful and powerful, idolising some of their culture wasn’t entirely surprising to have happened at some point is latter history.

Overall it was a very good and intriguing trip which enlightened us to something none of us had ever realised and heard of before so therefore we learnt a lot and really enjoyed it. We would all like to say thank you to the staff at the museum for a cracking trip!

Sam Ratcliffe

History Revision Debate

Recently I and several other A Level History students went to a history debate at the museum. The topic was regarding the Mid-Tudor crisis which relates to our a level course, and was debated by six year 13 history students( including Lizzie Ratcliffe and Ed Record who recently went through to the finals for the Oxford Schools’ Debate Competition). They were debating the question ‘Was the Mid-Tudor Crisis caused by weak leadership?’ It was very interesting, especially as it was in a parliamentary style with the audience participating with questions. Overall it was very useful for learning more about the topic from older students!

Charlotte Moran
A Taste of Spanish Culture
Year 13 Spanish students organised their own end of term fiesta at a tapas restaurant in Faringdon. As Molly Rigby explains, “Learning Spanish, or any language for that matter, is so important today as is embracing the culture of the language. It’s so rewarding to be able to communicate with such a large percentage of the world when the chance comes - why should we always rely on English?!

Through our tapas trip we could relate what we have learned about the origins of the highly popular ‘small plates’ and their contribution to Spanish society whilst the background whispers of flamenco music weaved through our conversations - you wouldn’t have known we were in Faringdon!”

Why Study a Foreign Language?

On Wednesday 16th January, Natasha Ryan from Oxford University spoke to a fantastic group of Year 10 linguists about where languages can take them. Here is what some of our Year 10 students said after the talk:

“I enjoyed the talk because it gave me an insight into where languages can take you. I didn’t know there were so many different options!”

“I didn’t know how many skills languages have already given me without me knowing!”

“Languages complement so many other subjects and help you form your opinions about lots of different things.”

“Learning a language sets you apart from others, teaches you transferrable skills and massively improves your confidence.”

“North Africa for French and South America for Spanish need to communicate with us.”
MFL continued

**Rouen Trip**

In November a group of students went for a week to Rouen. We stayed with French families who lived near the French language school which we attended in the mornings. Staying with the families allowed us to fully immerse ourselves in the languages as well as understand everyday life and culture. The cooking of the families was highlight for many of us. During the trip we did many things to explore the history of the town we stayed in. We visited the museum of Jean d’Arc which gave us a detailed view into her life and its tragic end. The sixth form group also visited a memorial museum mainly about World War 2 and the battle of Normandy. We learnt a lot about what happened and it gave us an emotional insight into the experiences of people during the war, this was very useful as it is one of the A level topics for French. We were all very sad to leave and say goodbye to our families, but it was a great experience to have had.

*Vicki Spits, Year 13*

"I had a really good time on the French trip in Rouen, it was very helpful for me to learn and practise French while becoming more confident too. The school were welcoming and my host was so nice and encouraging, I plan on returning in summer to stay with her again. The town itself was great and there were lots of things to see and do, but also it showed us what a typical French town is like. I will be going on the French trip next year!"  

*Mitchell, Year 12*
The world is your oyster when you study a language!

We recently received the following email from Mary, our French language assistant who volunteered at King Alfred’s from September to December. Her work with us was arranged via the French government as part of the final year of her degree programme in English, Spanish and Russian. We were really grateful to Mary for all her hard work with our French and Spanish students. We hope her reflections on her time here might inspire some of our students to step outside of their comfort zones and experience other cultures if they get the opportunity to do so!

“For my studies, my university asked me to go abroad and find an internship where I could improve my English. I had to do everything on my own, get used to another culture, teach my own language and make new friends who don’t necessarily speak French! It was such a challenge! But at the same time I do not regret it at all because I learnt so many things by doing this adventure. When you go abroad, you think differently and you will see that you can find lovely people everywhere. But the cherry on the cake is when you see that people can understand you and that you can understand them fluently at the end of your trip! You know that you have achieved your main goal.

Never forget that we have a beautiful world to discover, with a lot of different people but when you have learnt how to speak with them in their main language, the one of their heart, you can then grow and expand your knowledge.

I really enjoyed being in England and working at King Alfred’s Academy. Even if at the beginning it was hard for me to get used to the British accent or the food, I know now how lucky I was because I know that it will be useful for my future career.

I wanted to thank the MFL department, their lovely students and King Alfred’s Academy for all the support they gave me. I totally recommend this kind of experience if you ever get the chance! “

Best wishes to all

Mary Mulkowski

Oxford University Collaboration Sixth Form Literary Masterclass

“On Tuesday 8th January three of our Spanish A Level classes visited Oxford University for a Study Day on the novel ‘Réquiem por un campesino español’. We were able to experience a university-style seminar with just the three of us on the Spanish text that we are studying set during the Spanish Civil War. It was really useful to have input from a Spanish professor and I learnt new things I can also use in English Literature.”

Dr Daniela Omlor, from the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, fed back that she was really impressed by how much our students knew about the novel – well done Will, Vicki and Nathan!
On 7th February our charity reps, house and sports captains (with the help of the Head of Houses) hosted the annual singing competition: X-Factor. It was a brilliant night aimed at showcasing student’s talents and raising money for King Alfred’s three charities: Charlie Waller Trust, Caring Cancer and KYGN (Kilimanjaro Young Girls in Need), and with great success! We managed to raise an outstanding £124.55 from our cake sale at the interval.

Representing Whitehorse were Ethan Riddle, Lucy Evans and Ella Rixon. For Ridgeway: Libby Holding, Caitlin Hendry and Darcey O’Leary. And for Vale: Fran Webster, Samara Hooper and Susannah Paget. The evening was hosted by our amazing compere Amber Collins and judged by Molly Rigby, Leo Thrower and Heidi Barnes.

Congratulations to Darcey O’Leary (1st), Caitlin Hendry (2nd) and Fran Webster (3rd) on their wonderful performances.

Maddie Wright Year 11
What’s On

Exploring Careers in the NHS

Monday, 4th March 2019
3.00 – 6.00 pm at the Warneford Hospital, Oxford, OX3 7JX

Are you aged between 16 and 24 and looking for a rewarding and challenging career?
If the answer is yes then join us at our careers fair to discover the different opportunities that are available to you within Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Develop your career with us
The NHS offers a huge range of exciting and challenging opportunities for people who are passionate about making a difference.

With so many different careers on offer, there is a job for you no matter what your interests, skills or qualifications. Come along and find out about the different career paths and employment opportunities that are available to you.

Meet our teams
Many frontline staff from our services will be available on the day to talk to you about the varied careers available including:

⇒ Mental Health Nursing
⇒ Medics
⇒ Learning Disability Nursing
⇒ Occupational Therapy
⇒ Adult Nursing
⇒ Dental
⇒ Podiatry
⇒ Dietetics
⇒ Pharmacy
⇒ Business Administration
⇒ Apprenticeships

For more information on the careers fair or to register your interest please email careers@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
An exciting trip to Tanzania in 2020 has just been launched, open to students currently in Years 11 and 12. There are two options for this trip:

(a) to include the Mount Meru Climb £3050
(b) To join the team after the climb for the remainder of the trip £2550.

This is on ParentPay to enable you to pay a deposit (£200) if your son/daughter wishes to go. For a letter with more information please email: janeshmith@kaacademy.org
DoE Update

CONGRATULATIONS to our three 6th formers who have successfully been selected as D of E Ambassadors and Leaders. They are Ema Ferjentsikova, Lauren Coleman and Alex James. Expect to see them in assemblies, tutor time, planning sessions and expeditions helping younger students with their D of E.

We had an ‘unusual’ catch up Bronze Walk earlier in the month. The students had an absolutely amazing time! Mr Thompson got really stuck in!

I know students are all busy doing their fantastic range of exciting and fun activities. Can I remind everyone of a couple of issues that have occurred over the past few weeks:

Firstly – activities should be an hour per week, in order to demonstrate a regular and sustained commitment. D of E will not accept activities which are carried out for 1 day per month. If this is the case the time needs to be ‘filled in’ with another related activity. Contact Mrs Spiers if you need some advice on this and then written up appropriately.

Secondly – remember the Skill section cannot be a physical sport. (check the website for what is allowed)

Thirdly – when students get to the point of asking their assessors to write their report – if it is done on the assessor booklet - make sure ALL of the top sections are completed before it is photo’d and uploaded.

If you have any further questions you can access lots more detail on www.dofe.org website or email jspiers@kaacademy.org.

The final payment of the year for D of E should be made on ParentPay by the end of March. If you have any payment queries – please check on ParentPay or then contact Jane Smith on janesmith@kaacademy.org

Mrs Spiers
Duke of Edinburgh Manager