



The beginning of the academic year in September probably seems like a long time ago now. The longest term of the year usually feels like it encompasses the three seasons from summer to winter and this autumn was no exception.

The difference this year is that our school feels bigger and more vibrant. We have 176 students in Year 7, our largest year group for many years and very close to our published admissions number of 180. In contrast, we have 72 students in Year 11, which exemplifies how the school has grown over the last five years.

Year 7 students have made an excellent start to their secondary school life with us and come to school every day looking smart and ready for work. Head of Year 7 Mrs Goodchild, who knows every student in her year group by name, says: *'It's lovely to see the year group taking such a pride in themselves and their uniform. Keep up the good work Year 7.'*

In the October Newsletter, I mentioned the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP) and the multi-million-pound new build that we have been anticipating for some time. Last week, we had a meeting here at school with architects and the Deputy Head of Operations from the Department for Education. It was a very positive meeting and there will be further developments in this exciting project over the coming months.

Three of our support staff leave us at the end of term: Production Arts and ICT Technician Mr Featherstone; Cover Supervisor Miss Oliver and Food Technician Ms Penn. Our part-time Spanish teacher, Ms Fleitas, has also left us. We thank them all and wish them well for the future.

I know many parents have met our SENDCos Mrs Lakhani and Mrs Ockendon this term and been impressed with the work of our Inclusion and Achievement team. We have further strengthened the work in this key area by appointing one of our Learning Support Assistants, Mrs Woodward, to a new role of Achievement Mentor. Mrs Woodward is a highly experienced teacher and this new role will enable her to teach small groups of students and support them in gaining additional qualifications.

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We have also appointed an EAL (English as an Additional Language) Learning Support Assistant, Mrs Mendoza, who will join the Inclusion team in January and work with the students for whom English is a second language.

We were very pleased to appoint four new Parent Governors to the Governing Body this term. We have never had so much interest in becoming a Parent Governor and indeed had more applications than vacancies so had to hold an election.

On behalf of our Governing Body and all the staff, I would like to thank you for your support this term and wish you and your families a happy, relaxing and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mr Gaynor
Headteacher

Interact Santa Sleigh Event

Extra layers of clothing, festive costumes and plenty of Christmas spirit were the order of the day as the mercury dropped and Santa came to Grovehill.

With clear skies and the air temperature down to one degree centigrade conditions were perfect for Santa's arrival which was accompanied by an abundance of Christmas lights, Christmas music and the jolliest of Ho Ho Ho's.



In aid of the local Dacorum and Hertfordshire branches of Age UK and the International charity *Children on the Edge*, six members of staff - Mrs Cooke, Mr Burnaby, Mr O'Grady, Miss Fernando, Mrs Woodward and me - and the Sixth Form members of the Astley Cooper Interact Club, joined the Hemel Hempstead Rotary Club Santa Sleigh on its three mile journey around the streets of Grovehill.

The fundraisers dressed as an elf, a beardless Santa (so not to get confused with the real one), Christmas hats and jumpers were treated to a plethora of amazed and excited Grovehill toddlers who got to meet Santa before his trip back to the North Pole and the final preparations for his epic annual journey.

Mr Burnaby (dressed as Santa) said that it was '*A heart-warming experience and it felt great just wishing people a Merry Christmas*'. After raising a whopping £382.05 in just two and half hours, staff organiser Mrs Cooke said, '*The generosity of the local community is just amazing*'.

Still, it was the sight of young faces filled with wonder and the big smiles from teenagers and adults alike, that made it clear to me that with so much to distract us in this digital world the sight of Santa's sleigh can still spread a little bit of joy and a whole heap of happiness to the Grovehill community.

Mr Maunder
Media and English Teacher

The Dacorum Careers Fair

On Wednesday 23 October our Year 11 and Year 12 students were invited to the Dacorum Careers Fair. The school provided coaches for our students and staff to attend the fair at Shendish Manor in Apsley where 40 organisations exhibited. The fair was very busy with one other school also attending during our one-hour slot. The exhibitors represented some of the many organisations found in Hertfordshire and included Emico, Haines Watts Chartered

Accountants, Atlas Copco, Southern League Football Academy, SWR Ltd, Machins Solicitors LLP, Lloyds Bank, Martin Brower, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, GSK, Computacenter, Warner Bros., Watford Football Club, NHS and many more.

Year 11 student, Leanne Clark, said:

'I thought the Careers Fair was a useful event to investigate future options available to us. I also found out which degree would be needed for the careers I am interested in.'

Paul Turner, another Year 11 student, said:

'It was a good Careers Fair with a variety of companies. I'm really glad I went.'

The fair was very successful, albeit very busy. A big thank you to the organisers of the event, which include YC Herts, Ruth George HR Consulting, The Careers Enterprise Company, Connect Dacorum, Shendish Manor and Dacorum Borough Council.

Dr Ryde
Associate Assistant Headteacher



Holocaust Survivor Visit

On Thursday 5 November, we were visited by Holocaust survivor, Ernest Simon. This was organised to complement and support Year 9 students in particular, who have been studying the Holocaust this half-term.

Ernest, who is a very spritely 89 years old, very kindly came into school to share his experiences with Year 9, 10, 11 and Sixth Form students.

Ernest spoke for over an hour, sharing his story of life growing up in Eisenstadt, Austria. In the 1930s, Ernest lived with his parents and younger brother in the Judengasse, a self-imposed restricted area with a chain at each end to prevent vehicles passing through during the Sabbath and Jewish holidays.

After the German Anschluss of Austria in March 1938, Ernest and his family moved to Vienna, where they settled in a small flat in the Jewish Quarter. As soon as they had moved, his father began making desperate attempts to help the family leave the country, applying for visas to England, the USA and Palestine.

On 9 November 1938, Ernest witnessed Kristallnacht. This was three nights of violence towards Jewish people. Jewish homes, synagogues and businesses were targeted and destroyed during this time with 91 Jews being killed. Ernest explained that he could see the prayer books and Torah scrolls from the synagogue on his road being deliberately burned.

Knowing that this was now a very dangerous time to be a Jewish person, Ernest's parents made the brave decision to send him to Britain via the Kindertransport initiative, which was implemented by the British government. Ernest left Vienna on 11 January 1939. He travelled through Germany and the Netherlands to the Hook of Holland where he was put on a ship to Harwich, England. Ernest's younger brother remained in Austria with his parents.

Ernest was taken in by a Jewish family in Leeds. At this point he was only nine years old. Luckily, Ernest's parents and brother were able to escape Austria by accessing permits to work as domestic servants.

After his family arrived in the UK, Ernest's parents worked and lived just outside of Leeds and his brother lived with foster parents nearby. This meant the family was able to spend time together.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Ernest was evacuated and sent to Lincolnshire, where he lived with a foster family in a small village. No German was spoken in the village, and Ernest very quickly learnt English. After four months of living in Lincolnshire, his parents came to visit. Ernest's mother, who had not learnt much English, was so upset that he no longer spoke German that she insisted he return to Leeds to be close to his family.



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Soon after arriving back in Leeds, Ernest's father was arrested and interned for 12 months on the Isle of Man as an 'Enemy Alien'. On his release in 1942, the family moved into a small house, and for the first time since leaving Austria were able to live together as a family.

Both Ernest and his brother went on to complete their education in the UK and both attended Leeds University. Ernest studied Economics and his brother studied Medicine.

Ernest went on to fall in love and marry. Both him and his wife are looking forward to celebrating their 65th wedding anniversary this Christmas. They had a son, who sadly passed away a few years ago.

Following his talk, Ernest was inundated with thoughtful and intelligent questions from students. He commented that he was very impressed with their eagerness to want to know more. His most vital message to students was about the importance of tackling racism in our society today. He commented that we must all work together to do this in order to prevent atrocities like the Holocaust from happening again. After he took questions, many students stayed behind to talk to Ernest personally, take photos with him and shake his hand.

We are very grateful to Ernest for coming into school to share his story with our students, and to the Holocaust Educational Trust who provide this service to schools. We hope that our students will continue to share what they have learnt about the Holocaust with others and put Ernest's messages into practice as they live their lives.

Miss Welsh
Associate Assistant Headteacher

New ACS History Club

This term the Humanities department was delighted to introduce the new History Club. Each Thursday after school students have explored some of history's mysteries, examined unusual stories from our past, and learned how to research soldiers in the First World War. The students decided it was Captain Smith's fault the Titanic sank. The Club felt he should have been strong enough to refuse instructions to speed through the ice fields they were warned about. They found out about how a tiny British village fought against American segregation during the Second World War.

The sessions have all been very busy, with as many as 24 students attending, hopefully not because of the promise of snacks. Although snacks are always available... The focus is always on fun or interesting topics that are not normally taught in the classroom, and at the end of each session, everyone votes on the next week's event. The skills the students use at History Club are invaluable for becoming not only historians, but also improve their social skills, and can help in many other roles in life.

Coming up – the life and death of Princess Diana, who was Jack the Ripper, and what was life really like for pirates?

Mr Bowsher
History Teacher





Battlefield Trip

On a bright and cold late morning, amongst the silent ranks of identical limestone headstones, a group of mourners approached the grave of Battery Sergeant-Major G. Cowper of the Royal Artillery. They gathered round and waited quietly, before a child stepped forward and placed a wreath of poppies on the ground.

Astley Cooper students paid their respects for this year's Remembrance Day by visiting the First World War battlefields of Belgium and France. At the end of October, 47 students and five staff made the short journey to Ypres, Belgium, and began an emotional four-day tour of some of the most significant sights of the Western Front.

The students were from Years 9, 10 and 11. The aim of the trip was to keep the memory alive of all of those who fell victim to the war between 1914 and 1918. Throughout the half-term leading up to the trip Year 9 studied the war in detail and the GCSE students began their studies of medicine on the Western Front – worth 10% of their final History exams.

The trip involved a variety of activities. The students trudged through the mud-filled trenches and tunnels at Hill 62, giving the students just a small taste of the experience their ancestors endured. They explored the Somme battlefields, visiting the scarred, cratered moonscape at Newfoundland Park, where 680 of the 850 men in the Newfoundland Regiment were killed or wounded in just 30 minutes on 1 July 1916.

They stood under the sixteen imposing arches of the Thiepval Memorial, inscribed with the names of 72,000 men who have no known grave. Next to the memorial are the graves of 300 unknown warriors, where the families of the missing could stand at a grave and hope that, just maybe, this was their father, brother or husband.

Abby Hailey, a Year 9 student on the trip, was 'surprised and upset by the amount of graves, and soldiers 'known unto God'. Abby continued, 'It just rolls off the tongue when saying 'This many soldiers died in the war' but actually seeing it in front of you, hearing personal stories, putting faces to the names on graves, makes you really think about what happened in the war. At Tyne Cot, seeing just a fraction of those who died in the war in front of your eyes, is breath-taking.'

One aim of the trip was to remember all victims of the First World War. They visited the giant Tyne Cot Commonwealth War Grave in bright sunshine, with its 12,000 pristine white headstones, where Fenn Shulver was able to leave a cross for his relative named as one of the missing on panels around the edge.

The students then made the short trip to Langemark German Cemetery. The atmosphere was completely different; even the weather changed as the clouds closed in as the students arrived. Here the 10,000 graves are dark grey stones, flat on the ground, with two bodies buried under each. The cemetery has high walls so the gravestones are hidden from outside view. In the centre is a patch of grass, about the size of a tennis court, which contains 25,000 unknown German soldiers, with thousands of names engraved on stones around the edges. For some the contrast was too much. A number of students had mixed feelings – some upset at an apparent lack of respect, others even angry.

Perspective is everything, and from today's distance we can feel understanding and compassion for the young of all nations being forced to fight by political leaders safe at home. However, at the time, all Germans were seen as the invaders of Belgium, who suffered death and forced labour at the hands of their occupiers. We later visited other cemeteries where there are more recent German graves; a sad sign that bodies are still discovered regularly in farmer's fields. Now German soldiers are buried alongside British and Commonwealth soldiers, with an upright gravestone made of a different stone, and sculpted in a way to differentiate them. A final reminder that they are all victims.

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Battlefields Trip

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The students' final night was spent in the town of Ypres where they attended the Last Post Ceremony. This ceremony has been held every night since 1927 at 8.00pm where buglers from the local Fire Brigade play the Last Post under the arches of the Menin Gate – a memorial over the main road out of town dedicated to 52,000 Commonwealth soldiers killed in the surrounding area with no known grave. The students gathered and listened to the haunting bugles reverberate beneath the towering arches. After the ceremony Meghann Mitchell and Sam Ansell, who both had relatives who fought in the war, laid a Remembrance cross signed by students from the school.



On the way home, with the sun shining, but the temperature down, we had two final stops. At Essex Farm Cemetery Tegan Butt and Leah Carnell-Hatfield, with distant German relatives, laid crosses with personal messages on one British and one German unknown soldier's graves. The dignity and respect they showed in such a simple act was an incredibly emotional moment for both staff and students.

Our final stop was Lijssenthoek Cemetery, and an important family pilgrimage for Destiny Carnell. Her Great, Great Uncle George Cowper, of Kempston, Bedfordshire, was brought to the hospital that was on this site in the First World War. He was in the 122nd Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, and had been serving in France since March 1915. He died of wounds on 4 August 1917, and was buried in the hospital cemetery that became Lijssenthoek Commonwealth War Grave. With her friends around her, Destiny placed a poppy wreath on his grave and Naomi McGrory read the poem '*The Soldier*' by Rupert Brooke.

For many, this final act of personal remembrance was the most emotional part of the entire trip. All of the students and staff present were locked in a quiet couple of minutes of reflection. This incredible, unforgettable and special moment brought home to all the students of The Astley Cooper School the raw emotional tragedy that the First World War was for all of its victims.

Mr Bowsher
History Teacher



War Horse Trip

On Thursday 14 November, we took a group of KS3 and KS4 students to see the theatrical production of *War Horse* at the new Troubadour Theatre in Wembley. *War Horse* is adapted from Michael Morpurgo's best-selling novel of the same name and tells the story of a young boy called Albert and his beloved horse, Joey. At the outbreak of World War One, Joey is sold to the cavalry and shipped to France. He's soon caught up in enemy fire, and fate takes him on an extraordinary journey, serving on both sides before finding himself alone in no man's land. Albert, who remained on his parents' Devon farm, cannot forget Joey. Though still not old enough to enlist he embarks on a treacherous mission to find him and bring him home.

The show was spectacular. The way in which this was put together was amazing and we were in awe of how the actors and set designers were able to make you believe that 'Joey' was a real horse. The students seemed to really love this and there were even a few who shed tears towards the end!

Overall, this was a really enjoyable day and the students were a pleasure to take on the trip. They were enthusiastic, enquiring and always well-behaved. Thank you to Mr Bowsher, Miss Gilmour, Mrs Protheroe and Mrs Cansick for their support on the trip.

Miss A Welsh
Associate Assistant Headteacher



Photos provided courtesy of www.warhorseonstage.com

Brilliant Club Scholars' Programme

This year we are continuing to run The Brilliant Club. This programme aims to raise the aspirations of students who have the potential to go to university in the future by giving them an insight into what university is like and the chance to experience university-style teaching with a PhD tutor. 12 students from Year 10 have been selected to take part this term. They are:

Ellie Backhouse, Prisca Frimpong, Amber MacDonald, Sarah Galasi, Aimee Colls, Rosie Wallace-Connors, Josh Pembele, Presley Goodridge, Alfie Brandom, Callum Gibson, Gabe Njuguna and Abdi Osman.

On Tuesday 5 November, the students visited Exeter College, University of Oxford for their launch trip. They took part in sessions which covered the skills needed to go to university, they learnt about the benefits university education can provide for their futures and they had their first tutorial with their PhD tutor, Katie Faulkner. They also had a campus tour and opportunities to talk to current university students about what university is like.

Since then, the students have been taking part in sessions once a week in school. Their PhD tutor has come into school to deliver university-style tutorials to the students. They have been looking at the topic, *'From Stunners to Suffragettes: Representing Gender in 19th Century British Art'*, which is the topic of Katie's PhD. Each session has required students to carry out some preparation work and the emphasis has been on students discussing their opinions and what they have found out. By the end of term, students will have drafted assignments and had one-to-one sessions with Katie to enable them to improve their work. They will submit a final draft in January and this will be marked using university grading criteria from a 1st to a 3rd class degree standard.

All students who pass will be invited to a Graduation Ceremony at Reading University in February and they will have a chance to also explore this campus and get further insight into university life.

The students have been fantastic so far and Katie has commented on how hard-working they have been, with many making thoughtful and intelligent contributions to tutorials.

The programme will run with Year 7 and 8 students in the Spring Term.

Miss A Welsh
Associate Assistant Headteacher





Project Play Band Event

On Friday 6 December, The Astley Cooper School hosted the first Project Play Band event of the year. Along with students from Maple Grove and Holtsmere End, they had the opportunity to showcase what they have been learning this term. Students performed their pieces individually and then one full piece as a whole cohort. In total, 40 students were involved and it was a great way for the students to meet students from different schools in the surrounding area. Students really enjoyed the music performance and will have another opportunity towards the end of the year to showcase their talents.



The Astley Cooper School would like to thank the Ashridge Decorative and Fine Arts Society with their support towards the Music Department this term.

Mr O'Grady
Music Teacher

Winter Festival

On Wednesday 11 December students from Year 7 to 13 performed a variety of Dance, Drama and Music pieces to an audience in the Drama Studio. All performers astounded us with their talents and commitment to the Performing Arts department. It was a pleasure to see so many students coming together as a team to kick start the festive season. Tickets were sold out and the studio was full of proud relatives, friends and teachers. The students have all worked hard over the last term to create and rehearse their pieces as part of an ongoing extra curricular programme. We look forward to many more performances in the future. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you at the next one.



Mrs Harley, Miss Dowell and Mr O'Grady
Dance, Drama & Music Teachers

STEAM Club

Year 9 results

On 12 December the final of the squashed tomato challenge took place. The Year 9s were eager and ready to go with their pulley systems and baskets that they had worked hard on designing and building. The tomatoes had to make their way down from a height of 1.42m and across 3m. Students were allowed two runs, under timed conditions and had to send and unload as many cherry tomatoes at the bottom as they could.

All students have worked hard in their teams throughout this term putting their ideas together. Each group used the same pulley system idea but it was the baskets for each group that were important. There were unfortunately some casualties along the way where some tomatoes fell out and were deducted.

The winners of the 2019 squashed tomato challenge are Ellie Duffin, Maimuna Murisho, Catherine Namugga and Abby Hailey who managed to successfully lower a total of 114 tomatoes. Although they didn't get the most tomatoes down, they were the most cost effective group meaning that for each tomato that reached the bottom it had cost the least to build their pulley system to do it. All students in the club received either a winners or participation certificate and many of them will become the STEAM Ambassadors and help support me with the Year 7 and 8 STEAM club starting in the new year.

STEAM Club

Open to Year 7 and 8

Wednesdays 3.15pm – 4.15pm

Room 34 with Miss White

Supported by the Year 9 STEAM Ambassadors.

All are welcome

Mrs White
Science Teacher



Experiments to try at home

Make your own lava lamp

You will need

- A clean 1 litre clear bottle
- 3/4 cup of water
- Vegetable Oil
- Fizzing tablets (such as Alka Seltzer)
- Food Colouring

What to do

1. Pour the water into the bottle
 2. Use a measuring cup or funnel to slowly pour the vegetable oil into the bottle until it's almost full. You may have to wait a few minutes for the oil and water to separate
 3. Add 10 drops of food colouring to the bottle (we like red, but any colour will look great.) The drops will pass through the oil and then mix with the water below
 4. Break a seltzer tablet in half and drop the half tablet into the bottle. Watch it sink to the bottom and let the blobby greatness begin
- To keep the effect going, just add another tablet piece. For a true lava lamp effect, shine a flashlight through the bottom of the bottle



Make your own volcano

You will need

- A volcano – Talk to an art teacher about how to make a volcano out of paper mache or plaster. You can also use clay or if you're in a hurry to make your volcano, use a mound of mud from outside.
- A small container eg a baby food jar, or similar size container
- Red and yellow food colouring (optional)
- baking powder
- Vinegar
- Washing up liquid

What to do

1. Go outside or prepare for some clean-up inside
2. Put the container into the volcano at the top
3. Add two spoonfuls of baking powder
4. Add about a spoonful of washing up liquid
5. Add about five drops each of the red and yellow food colouring



Now for the eruption!:

Add about 30ml of the vinegar into the container and watch your volcano come alive.

Year 8 have been studying homelessness in relation to the novella *Stone Cold*. Below are some Year 8 articles, poems and stories about what it is like to be homeless.

Ellis Blake and Alfie Redken Year 8

Homelessness is a rising matter and needs more attention over the festive holidays. We need to do as much as we can in order to give the homeless people a Christmas holiday and give them a break from the loneliness and the hunger. It's not just adults that are homeless, it's the children too who have to suffer through all of these conditions throughout the holidays and the cold. Signs and placards litter the streets of London homeless left unnoticed and disregarded. Alone, cold and suffering while we enjoy happier times in our homes, warmed by a carefully lit fire, unwrapping presents on Christmas morning. Nearly 120,000 to 130,000 children wake up every year on Christmas morning, in Great Britain, without a stable home to call their own. Studies have shown that the councils in Great Britain alone have spent up to £3.5bn on temporary housing in the last five years. Asking the wanderers from the streets, they told us 'Do not judge by appearances; a rich heart may be under a poor coat'. This shows us how we act towards the homeless and how we should learn their inner personality before judging them by the fact that they are homeless.

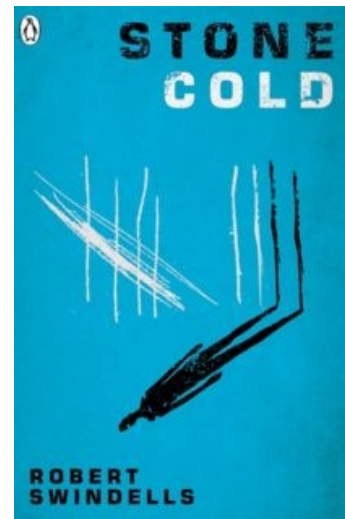
Homelessness poem – Ellis Blake Year 8

I am alone,
Nobody knows
Sitting in a gutter
No life, no clothes
They pass like I'm a ghost
Nowhere to be seen
I live in shadows
My home, they have been
Scraps pieces barely any food
My life's a mess
And I'm practically nude

It's every night- every day,
I'm sitting here in pure dismay.
All I want is a bit of recognition,
Even though I'm no beautician.

I'm kind on the inside- what can't you see,
Oh I see- no one cares about me.
From day to day there is no escape,
All I can see is this bleak landscape.
I get called gross and disgusting,
I ask for help-what do I get? Nothing.
The streets- cold and scary,
My Christmas on the streets- anything but merry.

I have nothing to do in a day,
All I can do is hope and pray.
Sometimes- I find it difficult to walk,
While people mock me as they pass on the sidewalk.
In a day- I can make the most of one pound fifty,
I'd be lucky to get anymore as most think I'm tipsy.



I'm calling for help can't you hear,
No one can- for no one comes near.
Nothing I can do, I'm stuck on the ground,
All I can say- don't sleep too sound.
I might have a brother, a sister- a family,
who knows,
I doubt they'd want to see me in these
rags I call clothes.
The only way I can go is down,
The palms of my hands- a dirty brown.
It's just me, myself and I- probably until I
die,
I remember that cold night- when my
mother said, 'Goodbye.'

*Year 7 have been studying the book **Private Peaceful**. It is set in World War One, and details the life of Thomas (Tommo) Peaceful and his family; Charlie, Big Joe, Mother and Molly.*

A story from *Private Peaceful*, told through the eyes of Big Joe. This event occurs after one of Big Joe's favourite pets is killed. – Hyed Haq, Year 7

Should I do it? This was the first question that came to mind. Quivering with anxiety, I struggled to make this decision, I had two options: leave my mother who would become a pessimistic and

dismal person or run away and go up to Heaven, to father, to Bertha, to freedom.

With a heavy heart and a mindset that was trying to be optimistic, I left the house eager to see what Heaven looked like. As I was strolling along the esplanade, I realised I was approaching the church. I was becoming intense, my heart started beating out of my chest.

The moon sailed across the sky like a flying pirate ship as it turned night. Pausing for a moment I became aware of my surroundings. The warmth of the air wrapped around me like a scarf. A sudden shiver of excitement shot through my body; I advanced towards the church, tiptoed up the never-ending staircase.

I was at the top, suddenly I realised that there were no rainbows, happiness and no worries, all that was on top of the church was me having feelings of regret and guilt because I left my whole family solicitous and anxious. My worries bottled up inside me. Darkness consumed my thoughts.

The coolness of the air wrapped around me like ice surrounding a caveman, that snapped me out of my thoughts and brought me back to Earth. Suddenly I was on my last legs and my eyes were drowsy and fatigued. As quick as a flash I collapsed on the floor dozing off into the mysterious land of dreams.

I woke up expecting to see the familiar walls in my old abode but instead I gasped as I saw the cold stone walls of the church. To my surprise, I saw Tommo and absentmindedly softly muttered under my breath. "Hi Tommo, I'm hungry." Even though I tried my best instead of saying hungry I said 'ungwee'. I was expecting Tommo to be angry but to my surprise he put the biggest, most jovial smile on his face, ran towards me, and gave me a big hug. The moment was too good to last; I was right.

Even though I was right, this was one of my most exciting adventures yet, but I have learnt my lesson and I will never do it again.



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Have you ever been homeless? – Jack Sambucci Year 8

With my nails engulfed with dark, inky dirt, I headed for the ceremonious streets of London as it was full of 'stuck up, posh idiots' who might donate the smallest of money to those in need (me); because I did need it, more than I've ever needed anything before. To put it simply, I am desperate, so desperate that I am willing to give a limb for a fragment of hope.

Have you ever been homeless? Well if you have, do you remember the hope slowly slipping away or is that just me? I truly hope it isn't just me, because all desire for getting money, food, drink, everything that every innocent human being deserves has disappeared, just like my pride and dignity. I just want to be part of society, part of what everyone needs to be a member of, but unluckily for me, I am not part of what I want to be part of and that is the problem; if you have been homeless, do you recall despairingly needing a roof over your head and a segment of warmth? Do you recall the agonising toothaches, stomach cramps from hunger, fleas, lice, headaches and distressingly wanting company, someone to keep you ticking, just like I wish the clock would do so much quicker. Despite the fact that I left my own house on my own terms, I still miss that place, that horrible excuse for a building, I really do miss it.

Yesterday, an 'ol' geezer' confronted me and asked me for all my money and all my food. At first I denied having either, but the man was so broke, I felt sorry for him even though he was rude and patronising. He had hair growing all over the place, fingernails like a werewolves' and his skin was simply horrible; he was spotty and scabby. Now I regret my decision. I'm even more broke now and more in need for just a sip of a drink or a bite of food. I knew I just needed something to keep me sane, someone to keep me sane.

My life is in bad shape; the only thing that is remotely related to home is my watch which my mum bought me, but knowing these streets, that's gonna get robbed soon as well.

The weather today is awful. The iridescent purple lightning flickered in my eyes, it was painful to watch. When you are homeless, the last thing you want is rain slashing down against the solemn streets and whipping your sleeping bag. The thunder was ear piercing and I hated it to death. Every time I get remotely close to dozing off, the thunder will burst my eardrums once more.

The experience is so strange, peculiar in fact. It is as if I am invisible. No one talks to me. No one accepts me. No one replies to what I say. Just a mere nod is all I get- all I deserve to according to the prejudice decisions of the patronising public. People don't understand that just a bit of recognition can make a man's day- can make a man's week. It's crazy that society don't realise that us 'homeless drunks' just need a bit of acknowledgement to make us feel that little bit better, and that little bit can go a long way in the life of one of us.

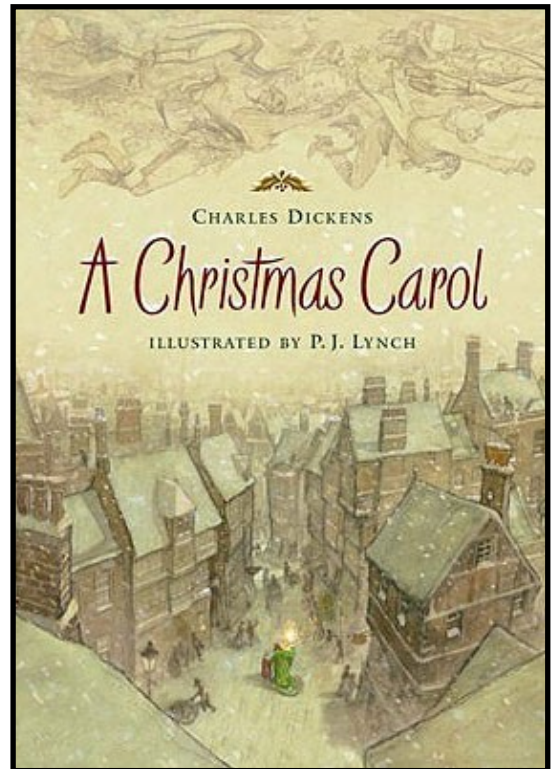
Albeit the fact that all of the days being homeless are identical, for some reason, we all want morning to arise, we all want dawn to come, we all want the morning dew to moisturise the sweet, green grass. Nevertheless, we mostly crave a filling breakfast, as it will keep us from getting immense stomach pains for at least a couple hours. We all just want to be home.



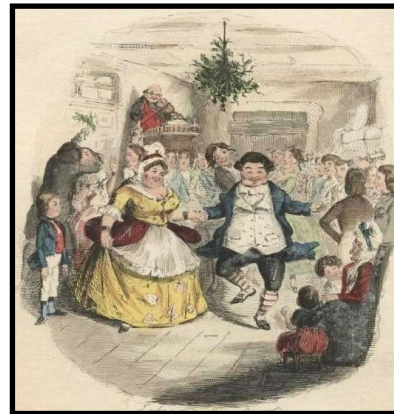
Due to a curriculum change, both Year 9 and Year 10 have been studying *A Christmas Carol*.

How is Fred presented in the opening of *A Christmas Carol*?

Fred is presented as a kind, strong-willed character. This is shown when he says, 'Though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good.' This shows that it doesn't matter if you're rich or poor in money, it's whether you're rich in happiness or not. There are multiple ways to be rich and Fred is rich in happiness and kindness. This is also shown when he says, 'Because I fell in love.' This shows, that unlike Scrooge, Fred enjoys having someone to share everything with. Although he is poor, he wants to share what he does have with people around him. The effect of this is to show the contrasting characters between the rich and the poor. Dickens wrote this to show that poor people are still good people. This makes the reader feel sympathetic towards Fred, as Scrooge is trying so hard to break his spirit even though Fred has been nothing but kind to his uncle.



Paige Cooper, Year 9



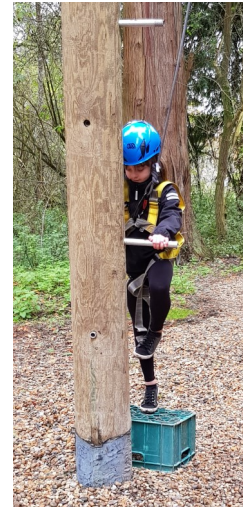
How does Dickens present a moral view of Christmas through Fezziwig?

Dickens presents a moral view of Christmas through Fezziwig because he is rich and can afford to throw a big party or to have a massive meal. However, Fezziwig shows that you can share what you have to show kindness towards others. This is shown when Scrooge says, 'The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.' A reader feels like Scrooge should have learnt that when you have money you should enjoy it whenever you can, but also that you should treat everyone the same no matter what they earn or what class they belong to.

Amelia Edwards, Year 9

**Ms Myers
English Teacher**

Green Park-Year 7



Year 7's Green Park Trip

On Friday 25 October 2019, Year 7 went to Green Park in Berkhamsted. This trip involved all of us being adventurous and courageous. We had to face many challenging tasks. Our group did orienteering, Jacobs ladder and Nightline.

First we did orienteering, we were given a map with a series of numbers on it and we had to read the map and find the right number on each post then return it back to the instructor. The instructor would give us another number and we would repeat this until she blew a horn.

The next activity we did was Jacobs's ladder, this is a ladder over 15 meters high made of logs. We were in a harness and got given a piece of rope each to help us climb the tall ladder. At the bottom where people holding a long rope so the people climbing the ladder would not fall.

Finally, we were taken with an instructor to do an activity called Nightline. This activity involved us wearing a blindfold to complete a series of courses, such as trying to weave in and out of cones to get to the end. Another was holding onto a rope to try and get through the obstacle courses.

This trip made us become more adventurous and trust each other more.

Libby, Kiera and Poppy
Year 7

Duke of Edinburgh



The Duke of Edinburgh Programme is an outstanding initiative aimed at 14 to 24 year olds. It offers young people the opportunity to take part in a highly-regarded, challenging and fulfilling scheme which will not only benefit the awardees but their communities too.

The programme requires determination, commitment and staying power. It gives students the opportunity to learn more about themselves. They will develop teamwork skills, improve self-motivation and leadership skills, all of which are valued by future employers and further education establishments.

The Astley Cooper School are proud to have enrolled, 29 Year 10 students on to the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award this academic year. I meet them fortnightly and they have made excellent progress in starting their weekly volunteering, skills and physical choices. They will finalise their award with a practice expedition in April next year with their final expedition in June to complete their award.

Mrs Buzzle
Duke of Edinburgh Co-ordinator

SEND

The SEND Department would like to thank all of the parents/carers who attended the SEND Progress Review Meetings this term.

We are very grateful for your ongoing support and have found your feedback invaluable.

The SEND Team look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you, in order for your child to achieve the best outcomes.

With very best wishes for 2020

Mrs Lakhani and Mrs Ockendon
SENDCos

thank
you!

Headteacher's Commendations



November 2019

Holly Keady 7HMY

Millie Keogh 8RP

Destiny Carnell 9CH

Alfie Brandom 10CHa

Liam Farrell 11Inc

Morgan Chantler 12JHo

Shakrist Masuphan-Boodle 13JHo



December 2019

Elizabeth Wright 7SE

Diana Ticaú 8SLD

Summer McIlvaney 9LWH

Leah Carnell-Hatfield 10KW

David Sarkodie 11AOG

Connor Greenaway 12JHO

Natasha Humphrey 13JHO

Community Service Awards:

Tabatha White 9CH & Maddie Tait 9CH

Food Studies

Young Chef Competition

Our Year 10 Hospitality and Catering students recently entered the Young Chef competition. Pippa Line was invited by the local Rotary Club members to attend the Young Chef competition held at Kings Langley School. Pippa cooked a main course dish of cod and vegetable stir-fry followed by mini strawberry cheesecakes for dessert. We were unable to take a photograph of her food as it was all eaten by the judges! Although Pippa did not win she did very well to have her entry chosen for the competition and we wish her well with her Hospitality and Catering course.



Miss G Hodges
Food Studies Teacher

All parents and students are asked to support our expectations relating to attendance and punctuality:

Attendance

Please observe the following procedures with regard to absence from school:

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness, please telephone the school before 8.25am, selecting the attendance option. An answer phone is available out of office hours on which to leave details; please leave your name, your child's name, tutor group and reason for absence repeating your child's name at the end of the message. This process needs to be repeated on each day of absence as it is a legal requirement you inform the school of any absences.

If you fail to inform the school of your child's absence, a 'Truancy Call' message will be sent to your mobile/home number asking you to make contact with the school immediately. This can be done by replying to the text message or contacting our absence line on 01442 394141.

If we do not receive a call or message from you explaining your child's absence, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Please give plenty of notice for any planned absence. We would appreciate all dental and non-urgent medical appointments being made out of school hours. If you have an appointment within the school day, please ask the receptionist to provide you with a dated appointment card for our records.

Requests for leave of absence for holiday purposes must be put in writing to the Headteacher. This follows The Department for Education regulations which have been in place since 2013.

Punctuality

We understand that adverse circumstances will occasionally prevent students from arriving on time at school, but ask that all parents help their children to adhere to the school rules regarding punctuality: Students should arrive at school on time and be in their form rooms by 8.25am.

Students arriving late after 8.45am should sign in at the Attendance Office and explain their lateness and inform their Form Tutor at the next registration.

The morning register closes at 9.00am and afternoon register closes at 2.15pm. By law, we have to mark students arriving after this without an acceptable reason as unauthorised absence.

Students who are persistently late or absent from school will be brought to the attention of their Form Tutor, Head of Year and Catherine Fairnell, (LAO) Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Fixed Penalty Notice

The Astley Cooper School operates The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulation 2007.

If a student has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, including leave of absence where permission has been denied, the Headteacher can apply for the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. A fine of £60.00 (per parent) is issued if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if paid within 28 days.

If your child has ongoing poor attendance and they have unauthorised absences of 15 or more sessions across the current and/or previous term, this will also initiate a request to Herts County Council for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

Attendance

This term, I have presented an assembly to each year group and within this, we incorporated our values of Aspiration, Determination and Integrity. The assemblies were based on how J.K. Rowling showed determination to succeed in becoming one of the most successful writers of all time. From not being accepted into her first choice university, to writing her first novel, to having her novels rejected from over 10 publishers to finally publishing all the Harry Potter novels as well as co-producing the films.

J.K. Rowling has said previously that her determination to succeed and the ability to not give up is one of the reasons for her success.

During the assemblies, we also discussed the link between determination and attendance and how it takes determination to have 100% attendance at school. For those of you who have 100% attendance this term, I would like to congratulate you. The school aims for all students to have above 96% attendance so well done to those of you who have met this target this term.

I would like to remind you that you are expected to attend school and if you are unable to, you need to provide either medical evidence or a letter from home if this is your first absence. If you have any concerns about attendance, please contact me or Mrs Allen, our Attendance Administrator, at the school.

Mr Lally
Assistant Headteacher

Year 8

As a new member of staff and Head of Year 8, I want to thank all parents for the warm welcome and support that you have given me.

Year 8 students: it has been a fantastic start to the school term. As a cohort we have had the best attendance of all the other year groups. This is something that I am very proud of. So thank you to you all, we have also had great success with our netball, football and cross country running.

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Miss M Roberts
Head of Year 8

8 is great



Lunchtime

Home for Lunch Pass

If your child has a Home for Lunch Pass, please can we remind you they must present their pass every day when leaving the school site for lunch. Without their pass, they will not be permitted to leave the school to go home.

Please be aware, students are not permitted to be at the local shops, if found there, lunch passes will be revoked. In this situation, you will need to provide them with a packed lunch or ensure they have sufficient funds on their ParentPay account.

This pass is for the student to return to their home address for lunch and they must return to school by 2.00pm.

Mrs Allen
Attendance Administrator & Pastoral Support



Student Safety

Student safety

Please do not park on the yellow lines outside the school gates or stop on the zigzag areas. Please arrange to drop off or meet your child at a safe point further along St Agnells Lane.

Thank you

Mrs Catterall
Business & Personnel Manager



Bad weather

Parent Sign up Reminder

If you would like to sign up to receive emergency messages relating to school closures, please see the instructions below.

<https://member.everbridge.net/index/892807736725489#>

This link will direct you to the “**Sign Up**” page where you should click on the “**sign up**” button located at the top right hand side of the page on the black strip and from there follow the instructions. It should take no more than five minutes to register and you can edit your information should it change at any time.

Please remember that each contact within the system can have two devices added for each communication type. If you wish to add more than one - this means that in addition to adding your own mobile number and email address, you can include the mobile number and email address of a partner or a grandparent in your registration process. They too would then receive any messages in relation to the school's closure. Alternatively, interested parties could register themselves separately.

If a parent/carer has children at more than one school they can register for those schools too in a single registration process by selecting all schools they have children at. Once signed up they will receive messages relating to the status of their child's school.

Please remember if you no longer want to receive messages sent by your school, you are responsible for removing the registration details from the system. You will need to log in and delete your record.

In the event of school closure due to bad weather, please check the school website. You will receive a message from the school.

BBC
THREE COUNTIES RADIO

MILTON KEYNES
NEWPORT PAGNELL
BALDOCK
HITCHIN
SANDY
LEIGH
BURNHAM
HAMPDEN
BIGGLES
ST ALBANS
LUTON
WORTHING
GARDEN CITY
ESBURY
HARPENDEN
MILTON KEYNES





The Astley Cooper School is a member of the Alban Federation partnership that works in the area teacher training. Each year the Federation trains a large number of adults (55 trainees are currently following the programme in 2019/20), either straight from University or as career changers, and places them in a host school for the year to enable them to complete their training and gain Qualified Teacher Status. All applications are submitted through UCAS (the University Admission System) and the application window is now open for courses starting in September 2020. Courses are available in both Primary and Secondary programmes, with salaries or bursaries available for suitably qualified candidates in many subjects.

If you are interested in becoming a teacher and would like general advice or specific guidance as to how to apply, please contact Mr Daddow (Senior Assistant Headteacher) via e-mail at b.daddow@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk, or contact the Alban Federation team [direct](#) via email



LINK Family Services

Supporting Communities in LINK Schools



ABOUT OUR SERVICE:

LINK Family Services offers a term time only service to parents and their children attending schools within the partnership. School Family Support Workers can assist parents to resolve their concerns by working in partnership with them and/or by finding the support they need, and help them to get in touch with organisations with the specialist skills and knowledge to help.

One to One Family

Support

Completing needs assessments from the families' perspective. Creating an action plan of SMART actions for the family to work to. In home working with Families. Supporting community appointments.

Group Work

Facilitating parental workshop presentations. Offering parental subject specific coffee mornings with the school. Covering a range of parenting specific subjects. Pupil group support programmes.

Drop In Surgery

Support

Working with the school to provide a one stop shop for advice, guidance and support. Fortnightly surgeries at each school. Regular communication with schools and families.

What our Families say:

"Being listened to and put in touch with different courses that I can attend"

"Very helpful friendly service. Most helpful: home visits"

"Best variety and options I've received from anywhere. Found it extremely helpful."

"Kind honest and practical advice. Truly lifesaving. Thank you."

Saved our family and guided me on the right road, thank you."

Parents' evening: "LINK FSW was an excellent help. Understanding and compassionate but offering practical support"



SEND Support Worker

Specialist support for higher need SEND families. SEND Screening to support diagnosis assessment.



School Family Worker

A personal and confidential service that addresses any needs or concerns raised by the family.



Pupil Support Worker

Specialist support for pupils to address an identified concern highlighted by the school or family. Using One to one and group work time specific programmes.

LINK Partnership Schools:

Adeyfield

Astley Cooper

Broadfield

DESC KS 3 & 4

Haywood Grove

Hobletts Manor Infants

Hobletts Manor Juniors

Holtsmere End Infants

Holtsmere End Juniors

Jupiter CFS

Markyate Village School



LINK Family Services

c/o Hobbs Hill Wood School, Peascroft Rd,
Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP3 8ER
Phone: 07538 232 084