



The Joseph Whitaker School *Newsletter*

- October 2023

Thank you all for your support with your child's education, and wider opportunities, this half-term. We have had seven very busy weeks with our Celebration of Success Evening, prospective intake evenings, Year 11 Information event and Year 7 Meet the Tutor event, alongside a multitude of trips and visits.

Thank you for supporting our first charity event of the academic year (Cake Sale for Macmillan) - photographs and further information are found within this newsletter.

Performing Arts have been incredibly busy with our inaugural SOAPBOX Challenge event and enlisting 10% of the student body to take part in the 2024 production of Frozen; rehearsals are already well underway and we very much look forward to seeing the final performances.

Our students continue to impress with their sporting achievements - well done to all participants, in all activities, both within and outside the school environment. We wish you the very best of luck with all of your various endeavours.

This newsletter has a new format and we hope this allows easier access on mobile devices, allowing us to reach a broader audience in a more effective manner. Additionally, newsletters will now be issued half-termly, rather than termly, meaning you will receive six, shorter, editions each year, rather than the usual three bumper editions.

Have a lovely half term (I do hope Storm Babet does not hang around for too long) and we look forward to all students returning to school on Monday 6th November 2023.

Upcoming Events



November

6th to 13th November GCSE Resits for Maths and English

8th November Year 10 & 11 Theatre Trip

8th November Sixth Form Open Evening

9th to 12th November Battlefields Trip

13th to 24th November Year 11 Mock Exams

22nd to 24th November Year 13 Field Trip

29th November Sports Presentation Evening

30th November Year 13 Parents evening (Virtual)

December

4th December	Choir Trip to Royal Concert Hall
5th December	Duke of Edinburgh Presentation Evening
6th December	Year 11 Interview Skills Day
13th & 15th December	Staff Panto
14th December	Year 11 Parents Evening (Virtual)
18th December	Tea and Talk Christmas Party
19th December	Christmas Concert
22nd December	End of Term

Trips and Visits



Year 9 Sparx Maths Rewards Trip to Alton Towers

Thursday July 6th 2023

100 Year 9 students went on the Alton Towers reward trip for completing their Sparx homework to the highest level.

Perseverance, hard-work and concentration when it comes to Sparx Maths homework. These are all key attributes that can lead to great opportunities and rewards. I've done every single one of my targets and

XP boosts, and that has granted me the wonderful opportunity to go on the Alton Towers trip as a result of my hard work. My time spent there was great, and I really enjoyed it. My message to all the younger years is to try and work your hardest, and also do a little bit extra in order to get great rewards.

Also my friend Mia Thompson only did the compulsory homework and she still got on the trip which goes to show, you don't have to do the targets and the XP boosts but you just have to do the set homework, and that can lead to great things.

Mia's message to the younger years is: "Always work hard, and even if you don't succeed, don't take it hard or personally; it just means you have room to improve yourself and your self-esteem."

Thank you for reading this, we hope you all succeed, and remember: you can always talk to us.

Noah Perkins & Mia Thompson 10N2

Lisbon 2023



Geography Trip to Lisbon, Portugal 2023

On the afternoon of the 21st of September, Geography students from Joseph Whitaker School departed on their A Level trip to Portugal! 27 excited geographers and Mr Souter, Ms Staley, Mrs Roberts and Mrs Hamilton embarked on a fascinating trip exploring Portugal's physical and human geography. After a journey to Manchester Airport and then flight to Lisbon we eventually arrived in the late hours of Friday evening.

Day two started off with a tour of our beautiful accommodation, the Quinta da Sao Pedro. The Quinta is a biogeography Field Study Centre established by a former professor of Cambridge University. On its 25 acre grounds are a variety of plant and animal species, as well as a working farm and a swimming pond (with frogs and tadpoles included!). In the afternoon we took the short trip to the nearby coastal resort of Cova do Vapor Costa da Caparica, to learn how the towns are protected from the huge waves from the Atlantic Ocean. Here, students undertook the measurements of beach profiles and assessed how effective the coastal management measures are. Students returned to the Quinta to enjoy the swimming pond – with live frogs for company before tucking into lovely pizzas.

Day three was Lisbon day! After a 30 minute coach journey, we arrived at the transport interchange set in the regenerated area of Parque Das Nacoes (Park of the Nations). Here the students undertook some human geography fieldwork, doing pedestrian and traffic surveys as well as environmental quality assessments and questionnaires. Our brave students asked dozens of the slightly bemused local Portuguese a variety of questions to discern the impact of the regeneration in this area. Then followed a short journey into Lisbon city centre, where the class performed more human geography research and then enjoyed some sightseeing on a mammoth walk through the historical heart of the Portuguese capital. We then headed for some quintessential Portuguese cuisine... burgers at the Hard Rock Café.

Day four was coastal geography day at the beach. We firstly headed to the vast beach of Praia de Bela Vista to do a sand dune transect, and undertook observations of longshore drift, vegetation coverage and species diversity. The students foraged through the dune vegetation to assess whether the psammosere succession does in fact reach the climatic climax...

Next up was a visit to the beautiful beach in Arrabida National Park. Here the students assessed the human impact of tourism on this remote beach, which is consistently voted as one of the Top 10 beaches to visit in Europe, before enjoying a well-deserved spot of sunbathing and beach sports. Students returned to undertake work at the quinta before the traditional Portuguese dish of Cod Bachalau.

Day five was a visit to the former fishing village of Sesimbra which has emerged as a popular tourist destination for Portuguese and international visitors alike. The students investigated the success of rebranding the area, and the impacts of tourism on Sesimbra's sense of place. Students finished off with a sumptuous barbecue made by our fantastic hosts; Benjamin, Insa and Tjarko.

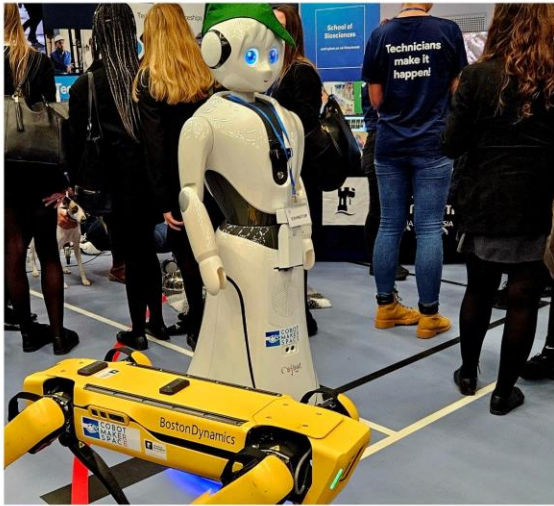
Day six was our day to depart as the students waved goodbye to the Quinta staff for the final time. A short trip to the airport and we were back on the plane for our journey home. We returned home weary but in high spirits after a trip that all will look back on with the fondest of memories. Adeus!

Mr Souter





TechxFest 2023



On Thursday 28th September our Year 10 students visited the TechxFest careers event in Derby.

Students spent their time meeting with employers from a range of careers in science, technology and the creative arts. They asked questions and got involved with activities and challenges set at each stall.

A great day with lots of merchandise to take home too!

Mrs L Evans - Challenge Club

London

On the morning of Friday 6th October 30 students and 4 staff met at Newark Northgate station to embark upon our third "Cultural Trip to London" of the calendar year.

Although the start was drizzly, the rest of the weekend was like an August bank holiday, beautiful sunshine and lots of tourists enjoying the sights and sounds. After 90 minutes on the train we arrived at King's Cross Station and there started our adventures.

After a quick stop at the hotel to drop off our luggage, we headed off to the Natural History Museum to explore the different zones and get up close to some fascinating dinosaur skeletons and meteorites from outer space. We had an early dinner as we were due at the theatre for 7pm and we all enjoyed a meal at the Hard Rock Café in Piccadilly Circus. A burger surrounded by memorabilia from some of the world's greatest music stars is quite something.

We then went for a superb showing of the acclaimed musical Wicked. Everyone enjoyed the West End spectacle and were enthralled by the lights and music.

We returned to the hotel, a tired group wondering what excitement the next two days would behold.

Saturday morning arrived, and after a continental breakfast we all headed (using the London underground for the first time this visit) to the banks of the Thames where the London Dungeons was our first appointment. A superb, if slightly scary, hour or so later we had learnt about some of the history of London and definitely been made to jump and scream! What we needed next was a rest, so the London Eye awaited and we had a peaceful 35 minutes looking at the beautiful skyline of London, picking out the famous buildings.

The afternoon was our first long walk (the need for comfy shoes had been impressed upon the students) and we toured Westminster, Bird Cage Walk, Buckingham Palace, The Mall, Trafalgar Square ending in Covent Gardens for some well-earned retail therapy. Leicester Square was next for M&M World and the Lego store. Energy levels were topped up with an all you can eat pizza and salad buffet at Pizza Hut and we then headed up Regent Street to Hamleys, then Oxford Street and Park Lane finally arriving back at the hotel around 9pm, following the 10 miles walked and lots of fascinating experiences.

Sunday morning arrived bright and sunny and we met our Thames River Cruise at Westminster Pier at 10am. A delightful trip along one of the most famous rivers in the world saw us arrive at the Tower of London where we had a couple of hours to explore the history, see the Crown Jewels and meet the Ravens.

Our train back was mid-afternoon, so after collecting our bags we headed back to King's Cross for the train, tired but fulfilled.

This was a wonderful weekend and mirrored the previous two that took place in May. The students were delightful and a huge thanks to all the staff that have given up their time to accompany these trips - they couldn't run without them. We have at least two more scheduled for 2024!



Light Night Leeds



Last week a group of students who support the Drama department with the technical aspects of productions went to visit Light Night Leeds, the UK's largest annual arts and light festival where spaces are transformed by spectacular artworks. This provided students with an insight into the capabilities of modern theatrical techniques, and invited students to think creatively and explore new possibilities.



Next came a listening activity where students were given instructions in their target language requesting them to make a short video.

The first task of the afternoon was to put together a presentation in French or Spanish about a potential new Olympic sport. Students found the thought of this daunting, but all did brilliantly.

The final task of the day was to create a board game about the Olympics in French or Spanish.

Unfortunately, JWS teams didn't win this time, but all students involved worked well as teams and enjoyed the day. Team Tunisia were also congratulated on their language skills by the event organisers.



European Day of Languages

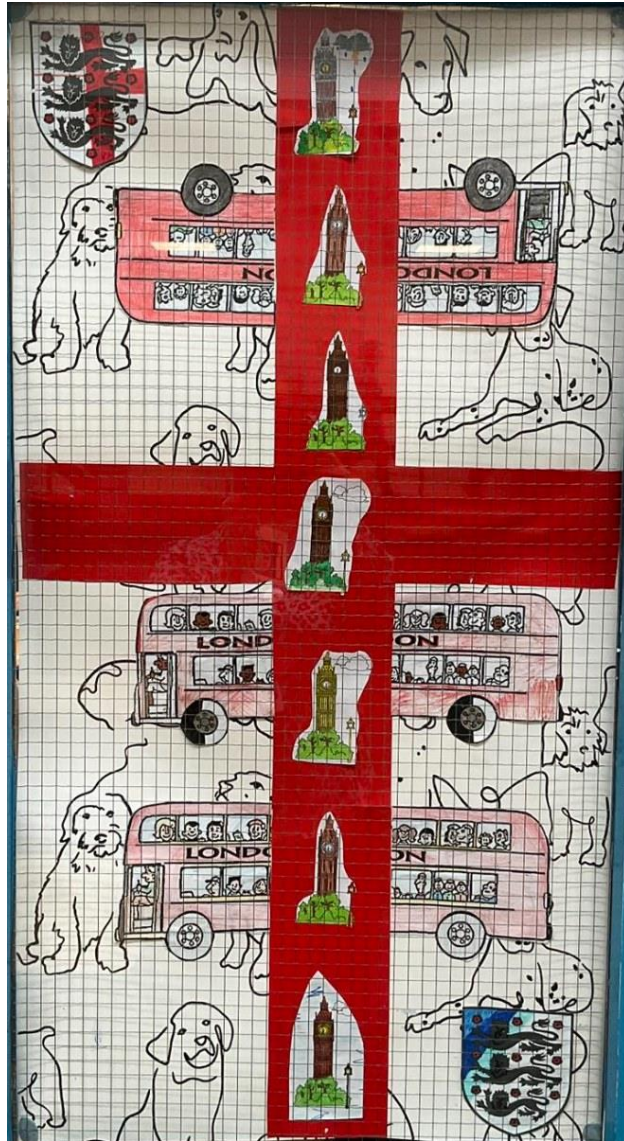
The 26th September 2023 was European Day of Languages. As part of our celebrations tutor groups decorated their classroom doors for the MFL Interhouse competition.

Thank you to all tutors who took part in the MFL Interhouse door decorating competition, there were some excellent entries.

The winner of the competition this year is the LINC with their door decorated in the theme of Greece









Drama Soap Box Challenge



Year 8 and 9 have been working on a speech in Drama on a subject they feel passionate about. They have been working on confidence and improving their presentation skills, finding their voices on paper and then out loud as they share their speech with their Drama class.

Each group will have two or three winners who will then present in the Hall. Year 8 will present to Year 7 and Year 9 will present to Year 8 in front of a few friendly judges, who will decide first, second and third for each year group.

This is the first year we have tried this competition at the school and students have pushed themselves to have a go at public speaking, which is a real challenge for some!

Macmillan Cake Sale



On Friday the 29th of September, we held our annual Macmillan cake (not coffee!) morning. This is a particularly important event for us as it is held in memory of a past student and also a member of staff. Mrs Jones and Mrs Thorpe did their usual fantastic job of organising the morning. We sold hundreds of delicious cakes, both store-bought and baked at home. The creations of some of the students were as tasty as they were beautiful. Thank you again to everyone who baked and donated cakes and biscuits. The total amount we raised was £480.90. Fantastic achievement!



Student Achievements

Serenity Joynt

What a terrific season it was for Serenity this year in Athletics. We are so excited for 2024 to see what she can do.

For an athlete that was 2nd year U17 (last year U17) and competed against the best and with taking on a new event for the first time was amazing.

Serenity will be moving to the U20 age group in 2024.

Serenity's ranking overall in Discus this season:

1st in East Midlands

3rd in England

4th in the UK.

She also received a Silver Medal at ESSA (English Schools), from which she was selected to represent England at International Schools where she also received a Silver Medal.

What a great experience it was to compete against the best in the UK.

And as always, she smashed it!!

Serenity finished her season on a high note:

Gold Medallist County Championship

Gold Medallist Midlands Championship

Gold Medallist County Schools Championship

Gold Medallist Mason Trophy

Silver Medallist English Schools (ESSA)

Silver Medallist International Schools (SIAB)

4th Place at Nationals

As if the performances this season were not enough, Serenity also been selected as one of the top throwing athletes to join the Youth Talent Programme of England Athletics for the next two years. This will develop Serenity in her throwing and will contribute to her performance in the next season for 2024.





Jessica Street

In September, Jessica Street (Year 13) took part in the IDTA Freestyle Scholarships in Birmingham. She was one of only 136 dancers chosen from over 5000 nationally to take part in this competition.

The standard was incredibly high and although she didn't place in the top 6, it was a fantastic experience and an honour to have been selected to compete.

Well done Jessica!





School Performance 2024



"Can I just say something crazy?"

Frozen rehearsals are underway! Well done to the 147 students who auditioned to be in the cast for our whole-school production of Frozen (taking place in February). Students are now learning lines and choreography, musicians are preparing to 'let it go' and the art department are making snowmen, reindeer and oh so much snow! Save the date – performances will be on the evenings of the 6th-9th February 2024.

The music industry visit KS4 and KS5 students

In September, we were lucky enough to be visited by WaterBear – a college based in London and Sheffield – who brought industry performers, producers and singer-songwriters to share their experience in a workshop with our KS4 and KS5 music students. The conversations held by our students have given them ideas for the future, and knowledge to tackle the 'Music Industry' exam in our Level 3 BTEC Music.

Get involved! KS3 students needed!

The music department is back with a bang. There are still vacancies for members in the following groups (ahead of trips and concerts at Christmas!)

- Choir – Wednesday lunch time in room 96.
- Samba Drumming – Thursday break time in the Duke Ellington Room (Music department)
- Rock School – for beginner to expert guitarists/singers/drummers/keyboardists who want to play some covers or write their own songs – Thursday 3:05pm-4:00pm in room 97.



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to help an informed conversation about online safety with their children; should they need it. We realise this guide focuses on one of many topics which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, facts and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TIKTOK

TikTok is a free social media platform that lets users create, share and watch short videos ranging anywhere from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The app gained notoriety for its viral dance trends and celebrity cameos and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. Now available in 76 languages, it has more than a billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and is most popular with the under-18 age group. In fact, a 2022 Ofcom report found TikTok to be the most-used social media platform for posting content, particularly among young people aged 12 to 17.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "following" feed only displays videos from users selected by the user, the "For You" feed is a stream of clips based on their previous activity and content. Most videos are a child's "For You" feed and are often very entertaining and creative, but it is also possible to find something inappropriate. Children will often be able to find things of interest or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of videos means they must be monitored and vetted.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

TikTok can be addictive, especially for young people, as it is designed to be. The app's algorithm is designed to keep users watching videos, and it is a distraction from other activities. The platform recently introduced default usage time limits of 60 minutes for users 13 and over, and 40 minutes for users under-18s, but it is possible to bypass this with a few simple steps.

TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the "TikTok Now" feature lets users post a daily video or photo to the exact same time as their friends. Users receive a synchronous notification at a random time of day, giving them time to make a video or post a photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content with a large audience.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account with their child's and control their settings remotely. Parents can then, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (limiting the content they see), set the account to private (so only approved users can see their content) and restrict the account to private (so only approved users can see their content).

MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-18s will have their TikTok accounts set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private – meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.

LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can enter the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We recommend that you disable this feature as it's quite easy for a young person – without realising what they're doing – to spend a significant amount of money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features of the app.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any personal information – and that they receive they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become more active media users.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the potential signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of Tech Radar, The Insider, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

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SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and about interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to time is great. Helps children to change on job request ask twice campaign. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, partly clearly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or how 'it's very sad that have had died' or 'I feel sad that have had died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the child is not ready or not wanting an opportunity to dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they share their vulnerability and share their worries.

8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'mad', 'crazy' or other such words is a derogatory way to name someone your child is talking about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will seek it out together and look help together.

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman, Anna is passionate about preventing at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



Sources of Information and Support

Your GP
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/children-anxiety-depression/>
<https://www.actiononchildren.org.uk/news-and-ideas/guiding-tips-2016/november/>
<https://www.thames.org.uk/mental-health/>

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