



**WALSALL
ACADEMY**

SPRING NEWSLETTER

WHOLE SCHOOL



SPECIAL EVENTS

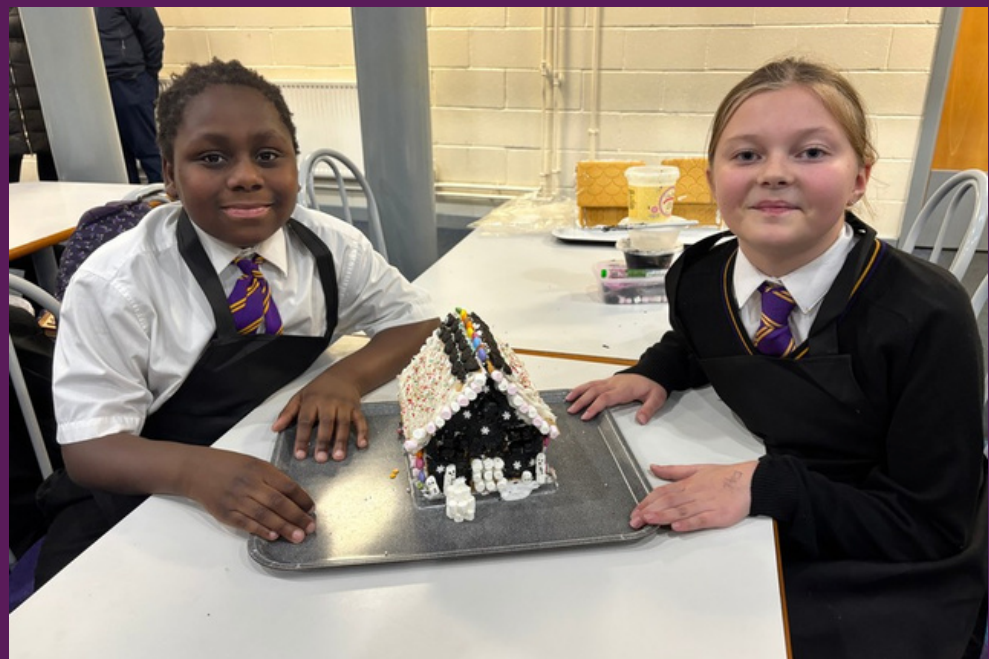
Christmas Market



At the end of term, our Year 12 BTEC students hosted our Christmas Market, bringing plenty of festive spirit to the day. This event was an important part of their coursework and gave students the opportunity to apply their learning in a real-life setting.

In the lead-up to the market, students worked extremely hard planning and managing every aspect of the event, including organisation, promotion, budgeting, teamwork, and ensuring everything ran smoothly on the day. The market was a great success and reflected the effort, creativity and professionalism shown by the students throughout the process.

We would like to say a huge congratulations to all the Year 12 BTEC students involved, and a big thank you to everyone who came along to support the event. Your support helped make the Christmas Market such a positive and memorable experience.



CURRICULUM FOCUS

Art – Year 7 Clay Tile Project: Creativity, Colour and Fun



This term, Year 7 students dove into an exciting clay tile project inspired by artistic heavyweights Georgia O' Keeffe, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and William Morris. The mission? Explore nature, pattern and colour whilst mastering ceramic skills and discover that getting muddy in the name of art is seriously good fun.

Students kicked off with research and sketching, examining O' Keeffe's bold florals, Mackintosh's elegant lines and Morris' intricate patterns. They experimented with leaves, flowers and geometric shapes, learning how artists transform nature into stylised designs.

Then came the main event; clay time. The classroom buzzed with energy as students rolled, moulded, carved and pressed textures into their tiles. Ideas flew across tables, encouragement was abundant and laughter mixed beautifully with creativity.

After firing, students carefully glazed their tiles. Some went bold with O'Keeffe-inspired brights, while others chose the softer palettes of Mackintosh and Morris. Watching those glazed beauties emerge from the kiln? Pure magic. Who knew getting your hands dirty could produce such clean results?

Business – Audit Guest Speaker



We were delighted to welcome Jordan Leek from WR Partners, an accountancy firm based in Shrewsbury, as a guest speaker for our KS5 students.

Jordan specialises in external audit and provided an engaging insight into his day-to-day role, explaining what an audit involves and why it is such an important part of the profession. He also outlined the exam schedule and training pathway required to become a Chartered Accountant, giving students a valuable overview of career opportunities within accountancy.

T Level Health – Day to Day

T Level Health students have been actively supporting recent open days at the Academy, showcasing their growing knowledge and practical skills. As part of their involvement, they led engaging demonstrations on Basic Life Support (BLS), teaching visitors how to perform essential life-saving techniques such as CPR and the recovery position.

The students displayed confidence, professionalism, and excellent communication as they guided participants through each step, helping them understand the importance of quick and effective action in emergency situations. Their contribution not only highlighted the high standard of the T Level Health programme but also inspired future learners to consider careers in healthcare.



TRIPS AND VISITS

Business – Dessert Shop



Year 11 students recently visited a local dessert shop where they explored the ins and outs of running a food business. They learned about the shop's marketing strategies, customer service, and food hygiene practices, including how the business maintains high safety standards. The students also had the chance to taste-test popular treats and even created their own custom waffles, experimenting with different toppings. The trip provided a fun and educational look into the food industry, giving students valuable insights into business operations and food production.



MFL – Year 10 Cologne Trip



Our Year 10 Cologne Christmas Markets trip was a brilliant way to bring German language, culture and tradition to life and was an experience the students are still talking about!

From the moment we arrived, the festive atmosphere of the markets set the tone. Twinkling lights, Christmas music, and the smell of roasted almonds and Bratwurst filled the streets. Students loved putting their German into practice, confidently ordering drinks and snacks and interacting with stallholders, which was a real step up from practising in the classroom. Hearing real German all around them helped build both confidence and curiosity.

Sightseeing in Cologne gave students a real sense of place and history. The sheer scale of Cologne Cathedral left everyone speechless, and learning about its importance to the city and to German culture made it a real highlight of the trip. Students embraced public transport to travel around the city and interact with locals.

A visit to the Chocolate Museum was, unsurprisingly, a firm favourite. Students learned about the history of chocolate production, saw it being made in front of them and, of course, enjoyed a few samples along the way. It was the perfect mix of culture, learning and excitement.

At the German Sports Museum, students explored how sport plays a key role in national identity, with interactive exhibits that appealed to everyone, especially the football fans as they played a match on the rooftop astroturf. Reading signs and displays in German made the experience even more authentic.

One of the most exciting days was spent at Phantasialand, where the students showed fantastic resilience and teamwork, whether braving rollercoasters or supporting friends who were a little nervous. It was wonderful to see them enjoying themselves while strengthening friendships and independence. We ended the visit by letting our hair down at the legendary 'Disco' with DJ Milky on the decks!



English – Oracy Day



Students took Sandwell Academy by storm on Thursday 21 February. Select students had the delight of coming together with other schools from the MAT at Sandwell Academy for an Oracy Day. Unsure what to truly expect, our students headed in with confidence, passion and courage. Everyone prepared heartfelt speeches which demonstrated their skills to captivate an audience using not only their oracy skills, but their transactional writing skills too. Every student involved, including those from other schools, flourished and really shone when speaking about their passions. Our students really conveyed that here at Walsall Academy; everyone has a voice!



HLPS – Auschwitz



Two Year 13 students were very fortunate to be selected to participate in the prestigious Lessons from Auschwitz programme, an experience designed to deepen understanding of the Holocaust and its enduring lessons. The programme began in Birmingham, where the students attended a conference featuring a series of workshops and reflective activities. A particularly powerful moment was hearing directly from Holocaust survivor Janine Webber.

Following the conference, the students had the incredible opportunity to travel to Poland. Despite an early start, they undertook a full and thought-provoking day, beginning with Auschwitz I, where they explored the exhibits and learned about the living conditions, forced labour, and persecution endured by prisoners. They then moved on to Auschwitz II–Birkenau, the largest of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps. The day ended with a memorial ceremony, during which they paid their respects to the victims – a very moving experience.

This amazing programme has had a huge impact on both students, helping them understand the importance of empathy, think deeply about the past, and remember the lessons of history.



HLPS – Parliament Trip



HLPS students travelled to London in January for an enriching and educational visit. The day began with a short tour of central London's key landmarks, giving students a sense of the city's history and significance, followed by a visit to the National Portrait Gallery. There, they explored portraits of influential historical figures and considered how individuals have shaped British society and culture.

Students then toured the Houses of Parliament, observing live debates in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Witnessing the workings of Parliament firsthand brought their classroom learning to life, providing insight into how laws are debated, challenged and passed, and highlighting the importance of democratic processes.

The visit ended with an interactive workshop, during which students had the opportunity to meet and question local MP Valerie Vaz. The session explored the role of Parliament, the responsibilities of MPs and the crucial role of citizens in holding government to account through participation, decision-making and voting.

The trip was thoroughly enjoyed by students and proved both inspiring and highly engaging, strengthening their understanding of British democracy and public life.





Students from Year 7 to 10 recently attended an informative and engaging assembly delivered by the Parliament Education Service, focusing on how the UK's democratic system works and the ways in which citizens can participate in political life. The session covered the roles of the House of Commons and House of Lords, how laws are debated and passed and the responsibilities of elected representatives. Students also learnt about the different ways people can get involved, from voting and campaigning to contacting MPs.

The assembly also emphasised the importance of democracy as a key British Value, helping students understand their rights and responsibilities, the power of their voices, and the ways they can contribute to positive change in society.



Outward Bound – Year 8 EDS course



12 Year 8 students undertook a residential course at Outward Bound in January. The weather was favourable and it allowed the group to undertake the challenge of a three day and two night expedition building the leadership, teamwork and resilience. The students commented on how these skills will help them in their daily life at the Academy.

Outward Bound – Alton Towers 5km run with the Year 11 Crews



The Year 11 students who are a part of the EL inspired course undertook the challenge of a 5km run at Alton Towers on a chilly Sunday morning in November. The crews worked together using all of their resilience development and then spent time on the rides in the Park. It was a great day bringing together all of the crews from Thomas Telford School and Walsall Academy.

Outward Bound – Year 9 EDS course



In November a hardy group of 12 Year 9 boys attended a 5 day course at Outward Bound. It was a week that had all types of weather from torrential rain to sunshine and even some snow. The focus of the week was resilience and teamwork with students spending four nights out in tents in the mountains completing challenges along the way. The group supported each other well and completed a scramble onto the summit of Helvelyn on their final day. The course was also marked by Mr Clarke completing his 150th course at Outward Bound with a small celebration high in the mountains.



Outward Bound – Sixth Form Leadership Course



46 Year 12 students undertook the leadership course at Outward Bound Aberdovey in January. The course was based on developing leaders using the Belbin model of leadership traits. The students undertook leadership challenges in the mountains and also on the water. At the end of the course each student received one to one feedback with their coach and as a group presented to our guest speaker Mr Ed Brewis from The Mercers' Company.



Outward Bound – Year 7



The Ullswater Outward Bound Centre was taken over by Walsall Academy students in late January for the Year 7 course. The key focus was Resilience, Respect and Responsibility. Students undertook challenges to collect R tokens using the key values in Ghylls, on the water and on the High Fells. A great deal of Haribo was awarded in prizes to students who had an amazing week of adventure and skill development.



Ski Trip to Voss



Walsall Academy students once again headed to Norway to ski in Voss. The weather was cold with minus 27 wind chill at times. The students embraced the conditions and cheered when the snow started to fall and they could enjoy the fresh powder snow. Nights were active with bonfires and snow angel competitions on the frozen lake, bowling and night skiing fuelled by lots of pizza to aid recovery!



Science – University of Wolverhampton Trip



Walsall Academy's Year 13 Chemists took their talents to the University of Wolverhampton on Thursday 15 January, where they synthesised aspirin in state-of-the-art laboratories that would make any scientist envious.

This wasn't just ticking a box for their A Level Chemistry course, our students spent the day immersed in a professional laboratory environment, wielding specialist equipment you won't find in the average school cupboard. They transformed salicylic acid into aspirin, the humble painkiller that has been treating headaches since 1899.

Our students rose to the challenge, impressing the university lecturers with their competence and methodical approach. Students additionally got to use an infrared spectrometer to analyse their final product, watching classroom concepts spring to life before their eyes. Suddenly, those abstract theories made perfect sense.

Our chemists showed exceptional maturity, worked brilliantly as a team and were an absolute credit to the Academy. Most importantly? They had a fantastic time doing real science in the real world!

Now that's what we call a successful experiment.



Skills for Life



Over the past few months, Skills for Life has been exceptionally busy and productive. Our outdoor learning program has provided pupils with valuable opportunities to develop a wide range of essential life skills.

Through activities such as den building, learners have been strengthening their communication skills by sharing ideas, listening actively, and working collaboratively towards a common goal. These practical tasks have also supported the development of effective teamwork, encouraging pupils to problem-solve together, allocate roles and demonstrate mutual support and respect.

Year 10 and Year 11 students have been giving back to the community by taking part in a series of organised litter picks along the local canals. Demonstrating real commitment and civic pride, they have worked together to help improve the local environment for everyone to enjoy.

In particular, Year 11 made an outstanding contribution last week, collecting an impressive 12 full bags of litter and helping to make the local area noticeably cleaner and more welcoming. Their efforts reflect a strong sense of responsibility and community spirit, and we are incredibly proud of their positive impact.



T Level Health – Black Country Living Museum



T Level Health and Education students recently visited the Black Country Living Museum to explore the history of Health and Education in our local area and how these have evolved over time. During the visit, students took part in a school lesson from the past, explored the underground mines, investigated how infections spread in historical settings and visited an old chemist to learn about the treatments and remedies available at the time.

The trip provided valuable insights that will enrich their classroom learning. Our students were a credit to the school, and the feedback from them was overwhelmingly positive. We look forward to applying this knowledge in future lessons. T Level Health students also have upcoming visits to the George Marshall Medical Museum and RAF Cosford to explore how infection control and healthcare practices within the NHS have evolved over time.



UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge – Year 11 Success



On Wednesday 28th January, 56 Year 11 students took part in the annual UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge.

The IMC is a national problem-solving competition run by the UK Mathematics Trust. It is a 60-minute, 25-question multiple-choice challenge designed to encourage mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency in problem-solving. The questions are accessible at the start but become increasingly challenging.

Our students performed brilliantly this year, achieving:

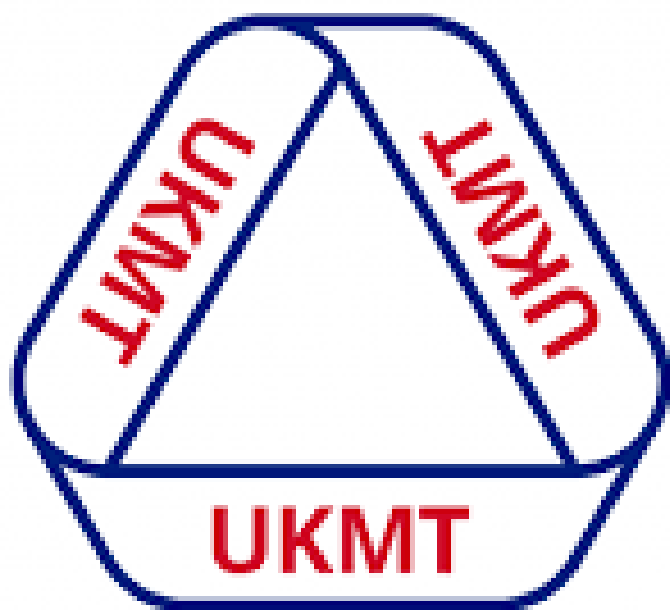
2 Gold certificates

10 Silver certificates

17 Bronze certificates

With the remaining students received certificates of participation

A special congratulations to our two Gold award winners, Heidi Hall and Thomas Evans, who have both qualified for the Pink Kangaroo round on 19th March. This follow-on round is by invitation only and is offered to high-scoring IMC entrants. Approximately 7,000 UK students qualify each year – roughly the top 4% of participants nationally – so qualifying is a significant achievement.



**United Kingdom
Mathematics Trust**

WHOLE SCHOOL EVENTS

Food Bank



Walsall Academy has once again demonstrated its incredible generosity, collecting an outstanding 2,715 items for Bloxwich and Blakenall Food Bank – 10 more than last year.

This achievement is especially impressive given the rising cost of goods. Many of this year's donations included higher-value essentials such as toiletries, baby food and sanitary products, which are in high demand and greatly appreciated.

A huge well done to Miss Hearsey's PT, who collected an exceptional 143 items, followed closely by Mr Wood's PT (138 items) and Mr Bell's PT (136 items).

Special recognition also goes to the staff and students who worked at record speed to sort and date the donations, ensuring they can be distributed quickly to families in need. This outstanding effort highlights the generous and charitable spirit of Walsall Academy, showing what can be achieved when our school community comes together to make a real difference. We even had Richie the school elf helping out!



SESSION 3

Manga Club



The first annual Walsall Academy Manga Club Triathlon roared to life in spectacular fashion on Tuesday 10 February, bringing together creativity, competition and fun in an unforgettable after-school event.

Students faced three exciting challenges: a high-speed Mario Kart showdown, a fast-paced Manga Quiz, and a detailed drawing competition that truly showed that truly artistic talent. Throughout the event, participants demonstrated resilience, sharp-thinking, and impressive problem-solving skills. Our judges were particularly struck by the confident line work, careful shading and imaginative concepts presented in the artwork; making the final decision no easy task.

The energy in the room was electric from start to finish, but what stood out most was the supportive atmosphere. Older members embodied the welcoming spirit of Manga Club, encouraging and celebrating one another's efforts.

After careful consideration, the trophy was awarded to Faith Lee Archer in Year 9! A fantastic achievement. All competitors earned well-deserved house points for their participation and commitment.

Special thanks to Miss Bray-Cotton and Mr. Albutt for their support in making the event such a success. Until next year!



STEM Club



STEM Club has had a fantastic and busy term packed with hands-on investigation and innovation. Students have explored sustainable materials by making their own bioplastic from potato starch, learning about biodegradable alternatives to traditional plastics. We have been considering which products we could replace in school with bioplastics, for example rulers or pencil pots.

Students have also investigated cell division by examining onion root tip cells under the microscope, identifying the different stages of mitosis.

Our budding engineers designed catapults, which they launched in the corridor by the labs and they've built water-powered capacitors to measure potential difference, developing their understanding of electricity through practical experimentation. Students also explored the uses of satellites, discovering how they support communication, weather forecasting, GPS, and environmental monitoring.

For environmental science, the club investigated water filtration systems and experimented with evaporation techniques to understand purification processes. Teams also took on an Egg Drop Challenge, applying their knowledge of forces and materials to protect an egg from a high drop — with some very impressive survival rates!

Well done to all our STEM Club members for their curiosity, teamwork, and brilliant problem-solving skills!



German Culture Club



In German Culture Club, Key Stage 3 pupils have been exploring Karneval/Fasching, one of the most colourful and exciting traditions in the German-speaking world. Students learned what Karneval is, why it is celebrated and when it takes place, discovering how it marks the joyful period before Lent.

We explored how Karneval is celebrated across Germany, including the role of carnival associations, vibrant costumes, parades, themed floats and the much-loved German doughnuts known as Krapfen. Pupils also learned about key traditions such as Altweiberfastnacht (Women's Carnival Day), regional carnival chants (Narrenrufe) like Alaaf and Helau, and the election of the Carnival Prince and Princess.

We looked at major celebrations, particularly in Cologne, as well as the famous Vienna Opera Ball in Austria. To bring learning to life, pupils took part in creative and cultural activities including mask-making, singing German Karneval songs and joining in with the traditional Polonaise dance.

A fantastic mix of language, culture and fun!

