



# The Independent

Wolverhampton Grammar School Newsletter

Summer 2023



## 25 YEARS OF C2C

The 2023 Coast 2 Coast was run in aid of Place2Be. Over the last 25 years we have raised over £100,000 for charity.

## ALSO IN THIS EDITION:

Year 6 performance of Aladdin enthralled

French homestay experience for Lower Sixth

U11 Boys rank in nation's top independent football teams



# Head's Welcome

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As we return for a new academic year, it is my privilege to lead the School as Acting Head. WGS to me is a community like no other. Its success is built on relationships between all the stakeholders, the students, staff and parents. We strive to educate and inspire your children as individuals to enable each of them to reach their potential and go out into the world as confident adults, who can make a difference in all areas of their lives. The WGS community is one that I have been part of for 40 years, having started here in September 1983 in Year 7. It is a special place to be. This magazine highlights a very successful summer term on which we can look back fondly and celebrate many achievements.

As the academic year ended, we were able to celebrate a WGS institution: Coast 2 Coast. Reminiscing on 25 years of the challenge, we welcomed back representatives from all 25 teams and their families, to commemorate this amazing feat of running a 24-hour, non-stop 170-mile relay, across the country from St Bees to Robin's Hood Bay. I am proud to say that we have raised well over £100,000 for charity through Coast 2 Coast over the years.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary we also marked the incredible service of Mr John Johnson who has been involved in the event since the very beginning. He has seen it all - from reading maps with headtorches in the early hours to testing the roadworthiness of the school minibus on the steepest of inclines, from the fatigue of the students as darkness falls and hills loom, to the elation on their faces as they run down the final slipway and dip the School tie into the North Sea. To Year 10s thinking about entering the trials next term, I urge you to do so.

Once again, this year's Upper Sixth Formers did not have the benefit of sitting

their GCSEs and the Year 11s, despite a largely normal experience over the two years to GCSE, will have felt some COVID effects during the underpinning work done in Year 9. Nevertheless, both this year's public exam cohorts have taken their academic responsibilities seriously and we are proud of their diligence and positivity. I thank the teachers for guiding and supporting them and I am delighted to report that WGS has bucked the national trend by surpassing its pre-covid results with high numbers achieving the top grades. 46% of students were awarded the coveted A\* to A grades at A Level, up 12% on 2019 and 74% of students achieved A\* to B, compared with 72% last year. In GCSE too, our students shone with an increase of 15% in the awards of 9 - 7 grades (A\*/A equivalent) compared with pre-pandemic results. 83% of the cohort gained grades 9 - 6 (A\* - B) and well over one third of students came away with nine or more grade 7s and above.

As we go to print, I am delighted to update you on some recent developments over the summer. We have learnt that the Merchant Taylors Foundation will be supporting WGS with three exciting projects for the coming year. The Wellbeing Guest Speaker programme organised by Mrs Keeley will receive funding to enable us to deliver much needed wellbeing educational talks and to extend these to students at Smestow Academy as part of our Wellbeing Partnership; Miss Kailey's Careers programme of industry speakers, careers fairs and trips will be further enhanced for WGS students, alongside developing an outreach careers programme; last but by no means least, Mrs Rowley will be creating a Story Garden, named after our late Director of Marketing and Communications, Carrie Bennett. Students returning to School will

already be able to see the beginnings of a literary garden outside the Jenyns Library. Carrie's passion for gardening which she shared with students, will be the impetus for a new gardening-based book club. Children in Years 3 to Upper Sixth will be encouraged to select plants, seeds and other features linked to children's literature to be showcased in the garden which will also incorporate a QR code system linked to book excerpts read by our students. We also look forward to inviting local primary and secondary schools to visit the Bennett Story Garden for experiential workshops that bring reading for pleasure to life.

I hope you enjoy looking back on our summer highlights and we look forward to reporting back on our Autumn successes in due course.

*Nic Anderson*

Nic Anderson  
Acting Head





# Congratulations to our new Prefect Team!

Mr Frazer and Mr Anderson are pictured with our new Prefect team who received their ties earlier this term. We look forward to seeing them all flourish in their new leadership roles. Congratulations to:

**George Brown** – Head Boy

**Isabelle Mason** – Head Girl

**James Walker and Rebecca Kent** –  
Jenyns House Captains

**Favour Apata and Jaipal Uppal** –  
Moreton House Captains

**Dan Middlebrook and Keira Daiya** –  
Nechells House Captains

**Catherine Chung and Ryan Mehan** –  
Offley House Captains

**Devina Sharma and Millie Kelly** - Year 7  
Captains

George and Izzy joined WGS in Year 7 and Year 3, respectively, and from the beginning of their time in the Senior School both strived to step into the highly respected roles of Head Boy and Girl. George shared, "I remember in Year 7 we

had Sixth Form mentors and mine was the Head Boy, so it always seemed a goal to reach."



Izzy added, "The School has done so much for me, I wanted to be able to give back to the younger years". Three times a week, Izzy enjoys returning to the

Junior School where her WGS journey began, to work on Reception and assist with after-school responsibilities.

Throughout their time at WGS, both George and Izzy have demonstrated excellent commitment to numerous aspects of school life. George has been a dedicated football player and is currently a respected member of the First XI. Some may also recognise George from his



stellar acting performances in numerous school productions in the Hutton Theatre. Similarly, Izzy has been a valuable member of multiple sports teams; including First XI Netball Captain, and representing the School in hockey, and rounders. Having played the flute since she was in Year 4, Izzy is a regular visitor to the Music Department. She is currently a member of three ensemble groups and started learning the saxophone last September.

We asked both students what they value most about WGS. George said, "The respect and friendliness of everyone, no matter where you go there is always going to be someone you can rely on or talk to". Izzy added, "There are so many opportunities in terms of leadership, careers, academic and sport, and there is so much help and support available".

## Farewell Mr Frazer

Sixth Former, Falah, has been working on a portrait of Mr Frazer which will take its place alongside all the former WGS Heads' pictures in the Archive Room. The portrait recognises the links that Mr Frazer forged with L'École de Douar Shib, a primary school 15 miles outside Marrakech, where he led a group of 10 Lower Sixth students to teach English in February half-term.

It is believed that this is the first time that anyone has brought school students from overseas to teach and as a result the project attracted the interest of the Moroccan Education Minister and local press. We felt very privileged to be a part of the work that is being sponsored by Association Aghbalou to embed additional

educational programmes in the school. This life-changing opportunity made a truly memorable impression on all the students and staff involved.



We thank Mr Frazer for his three years of dedicated service to Wolverhampton Grammar School, during his tenure, he wisely steered the School through the rigours of the pandemic and the subsequent return to 'life as normal'. Pupil numbers have been at a record high and the Senior House system successfully re-embedded into school life. Last year saw the best A Level grades at the School for over 10 years in the public exams of 2022. We wish Alex all the best as he returns to be with his family in West London.



# | Coast 2 Coast

This year's Coast 2 Coast was extra special as it marked 25 years since the very first relay was run by WGS students back in 1999. The Coast 2 Coast Challenge (C2C) was introduced into the School's sporting culture by Michelle Craig, a New Zealander who came to teach English and PE at WGS from September 1998 until 2001. At her school in New Zealand they used to run an annual 24-hour sponsored relay run around a large lake. After a visit to St Bees Head and cycling across to Robin Hood's Bay by road, Michelle suggested this as a possible route for a 24-hour C2C relay using eight runners. Bernard Trafford, the Head at the time, agreed, and the first attempt was made by eight Year 11 students in the Autumn term of 1999. Our very own JJ (Mr John Johnson) was on that first trip as an elected driver. He has since accompanied every team on this annual challenge and it was a privilege to present him with a commemorative gift at our anniversary celebrations on 8th July when members of the Coast 2 Coast teams over the 25 years were invited back to WGS.

Since 1999, the C2C event has grown in stature thanks to so many staff stepping forward to help with training and along the course. The route followed has

evolved over time and there is less room for straying from the course thanks to the wonders of technology, a far cry from the headtorches and night map-reading of the early days.

WGS is proud that over £100,000 has been raised for various charities over the last quarter of a century. That translates as an impressive 248 pairs of legs crossing a total of 4,280 miles. Thank you to our sponsors for their generous support and to all our WGS staff, families and friends that have taken part.



Congratulations to our 2023 Coast 2 Coast team who completed the 25th annual 170-mile relay challenge from St Bees to Robin Hood's Bay in an incredible 24 hours and 46 minutes.

Year 10 students Charlotte, Zena, Ashwin, Charlie, India, Reuben, Chris, Dylan, Tia

and Matthew all undertook an intense 16-week training programme to prepare themselves for the event, which saw them face some of the steepest inclines in the country including the infamous Hardknott Pass.



A special thank you to our extraordinary staff team: Mr French, Mrs Harris, Mrs Dyer, Mr Johnson, Dr Bradley, Mrs Powell, Mr Jones, Mr Martin, and Mr Anderson, and to the family members who supported the team from day one of training right to the finish line.

Thank you also to our wonderful sponsors: RMW Electrical Services Ltd, The Shingler Group, The Blakemore Foundation, Holroyd Howe, Premier Sports and the WGS Friends.



### Read on for a report by this year's team:

Coast 2 Coast 2023, it's been 25 years of success, excitement and a little bit of pain. However, this didn't stop us from having an amazing time and a wonderful experience. We set off on the morning of Friday 25th May, suddenly realising how little space we had to work with in the minibus. After ten minutes we were already bored of the minibus, and after twenty minutes we were asking how long until we got there!



Once we arrived at St Bees School, we didn't stop playing with the equipment until we had to leave for dinner. We arrived at the fish and chip shop where the waitress realised that serving ten kids and the staff was going to be a little tricky, especially with the water crisis they had on their hands. We walked around St Bees before playing catch on the beach and the boys threw stones out to sea to see how far they would go. We headed back to the sports hall and played basketball for another hour before getting a few hours rest ahead of the challenge. This was a challenge in itself, thanks to a certain someone's snoring!

Waking up at 5.00am, we ate breakfast half-awake before heading off to the start-line. The clock turned 7.00am and we were off, with India leading the way. It wasn't long before Reuben fell asleep for the first time of many, and half the Jaffa Cakes had already been eaten after the first three people had run. After a couple of hours, Zena, Charlie, Charlotte and Reuben went up Hardknott, giving the rest of us a bit of extra leg room. After a few hours had past, Charlotte had run up Wrynose, Dylan had climbed up Nateby,

and all we could think about was when the food was going to arrive. Mr Martin told us we only had 12 hours to go, which couldn't have been any less inspiring, and every hour the blue musical van driven by Mr Baker and Ms Guidotti would drive past with its maracas.

As we headed into the evening and overnight, the temperature cooled down, making the running a bit less sweaty. Everyone was dozing off, Mr Jones enjoyed a bit of karaoke overnight, and personal items were left all over the place. As we entered the final few hours and everyone was doing their last stint, the staff decided to take a photo of each of us, just when we couldn't have looked any worse! We ran down the final hill together and crossed the finish line, before having to walk back up and down the hill just to get some breakfast.

Later that evening, we all enjoyed a nice meal at the hotel, with Mr French commenting about us one by one. Overall it was an amazing experience that all of us will never forget and we would recommend C2C to anyone in the future.







# Jenyns Library

A busy term of author events run by the Jenyns Library concluded with the exciting news that WGS has been shortlisted for the Independent School of the Year Awards in the category of Outstanding Educational Partnerships. The finalists will be announced in September and we wish Mrs Rowley and Mr McAllister all the best for this well-deserved accolade.

Mrs Rowley has continued to run the BBC Young Reporter Club and we are very proud of Taran, Elinor, Harry, Luke, Harmeet, Jack and Shauna who all created a video report on a topic of their choice and entered this year's BBC Young Reporter competition. Congratulations to Luke who was selected as the West Midlands Regional winner. (See page 22). Year 9 students also attended the BBC Young Reporter Festival in Birmingham, where they took part in a range of workshops linked to careers in the media.



## Dan Freedman Inspires

Years 5 and 6 were joined by students from St Peter's for an extravaganza of football and reading with Dan Freedman, author of the wonderfully entertaining Jamie Johnson series of books. The series was so successful that in 2016 it was adapted by the BBC for television and became a BAFTA-nominated series.

Dan spoke to students about how his passion for football inspired his love of reading, his time working with the England Men's Football Team, and meeting inspirational figures, such as Queen Elizabeth II and Nelson Mandela. During the session, Dan also explored a range of topics such as perseverance and the importance of following your passion, which enabled him to attend two World Cups as England's in-house journalist. Serena in Year 6 was one of two lucky students who received a Premier League endorsed football for asking insightful questions. The morning continued with a visit to Beacon Hill Academy with Dan, to help inspire their students to read for pleasure.

## Discovery Day

Author and illustrator Thomas Taylor met Year 5 students from schools across Wolverhampton at our annual Discovery



Day in May. Thomas is the author of the wonderful series of *Eerie-on-Sea* mystery books and famously created the cover art for *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. He wowed the children not only by revealing the secrets to writing a compelling mystery but also by bringing along special treasures found on his local beach. These included the tear of a mermaid, the scales of a sea monster and a radioactive find that changed colour under UV light.

## Discover Reading Project

Our Discover Reading Project for this academic year concluded with sessions based around *Pirate Stew* by Neil Gaiman and Chris Riddell, and *Lizzie and Lucky: The Mystery of the Stolen Treasure* by Megan Rix. Led by our fantastic Sixth Formers, the children and their parents

from Merridale and Caldmore Primary Schools enjoyed digging for buried treasure, learning a pirate jig and creating their own parrot. They all received free copies of both books to take away and enjoy.

### King's Coronation Poetry Competition

In April, Book Club members in Years 5-9 entered the 'We Have One Chance' Poetry Competition, a competition organised by The Mayor of Wolverhampton for young people in Wolverhampton to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III through the medium of poetry. Sahana Aladakatti (Year 6), Ammar Saherwala (Year 8) and Thomas Evans (Year 9) all wrote fantastic poems highlighting King Charles' love of the environment, and they were chosen as finalists in their respective age categories. We are delighted that Sahana was selected as the overall winner in the age 7-11 category.



### Wolverhampton Children's Book Award

Members of the Year 5 and 6 Book Club took part in the Wolverhampton Children's Book Award 2022 Quiz in May competing against teams from Beacon Hill Academy, Caldmore Primary Academy, Merridale Primary School and Pool Hayes Academy in answering questions on this year's shortlisted titles. Many congratulations to Sahana Aladakatti, Evie Cheung, Evelyn Cothey, Iris Hicks-Jones, Oliver Morley, Amara Sanghera, Tina Shi and Hattie Thomas for being part of the winning team with a fantastic score of 52 out of 60.

At an exciting ceremony held at WGS in partnership with Authors Aloud UK on Tuesday 27th June, AF Steadman was

### House Book Relay Challenge

The House Book Relay Challenge saw teams of eight students complete a 400m lap of Moreton's Piece undertaking several book-themed activities. Congratulations to 7TDS and Offley who were this year's winners. They successfully mounted Harry Potter broomsticks and transported the Golden Snitch to their teammates, played Alice in Wonderland croquet, dribbled a football whilst transporting a fried-egg (Marcus Rashford's *Breakfast Club Adventures*) and completed the Lord of the Rings tower challenge!

unveiled as the winning author of this year's Wolverhampton Children's Book Award, for her fantasy adventure novel *Skandar and the Unicorn Thief*. Annabel was presented the award by the Mayor of Wolverhampton, Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre.

Annabel delivered a gripping presentation on the genesis of her book, before she challenged the audience to create, characterise and name their own unicorn, which may appear later in the book series. Skandar fans can keep their eyes peeled for a live-action adaptation of the book, currently being produced by Sony Pictures.



### Jenny Pearson Breaks Records

On Monday 26th June, we welcomed Laugh Out Loud Award-winning author Jenny Pearson to the Junior School. Jenny's event marked the launch of her latest hilarious, heart-warming adventure, *The Boy Who Made Monsters*.

Years 4 and 6 were joined by Merridale Primary School students at Jenny's event, where they were challenged to complete a hilarious interactive quiz and a record-breaking sock challenge. Everyone left Jenny's event thoroughly inspired to read.



### Tamsin Winter Empowers Year 8

Multi-award-winning author Tamsin Winter visited WGS on Wednesday 21st June, to introduce her latest novel, *Bad Influence*, to Year 8 students from WGS, St Edmunds and Highfields School.

Tamsin shared the inspiration behind her award-winning book and her journey to becoming an author. Tamsin also discussed her passion for creating stories surrounding issues faced by many young people. These include bullying, body image, self-esteem, and the double-edged power of social media. Students left Tamsin's event feeling informed, empowered and inspired.

### Diagon Alley Experience

The Harry Potter Fan Club transformed the Jenyns Library into Diagon Alley to raise funds for CLAPA, a voluntary organisation specifically helping those with, and affected by, a cleft lip and palate. Members of the Harry Potter Fan Club elected this charity after Harry in Year 11 shared his personal experience of being born with a cleft lip and palate. Senior students were invited to join a potion class, enjoy an ice cream at Florean Fortescue's Ice Cream Parlour and sample a butterbeer-flavoured milkshake at the Three Broomsticks!



# William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

LOWER SCHOOL PRODUCTION



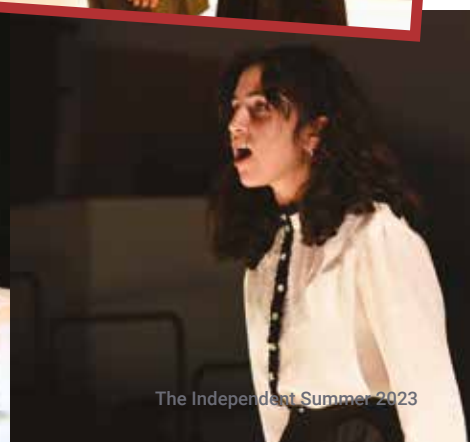
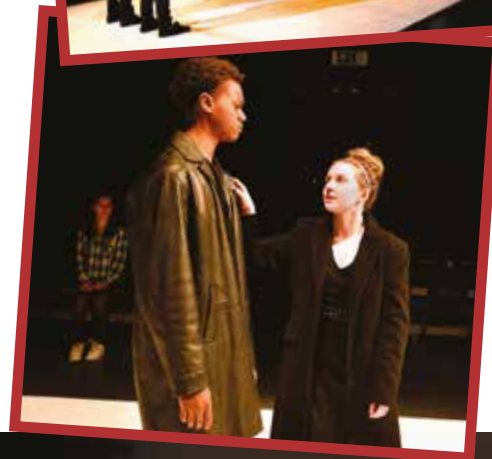
*By the pricking of my thumbs,  
something wicked this way comes.*



Our Lower School Production of *Macbeth* was performed by young actors in Years 7-10 just before half-term. Though an abridged version of the Shakespeare play, it successfully maintained the claustrophobic combination of thrilling drama and spine-tingling language that has made it such a popular tragedy.

At the beginning of the play we are introduced to three 'bouffons' who guide the audience through the action. The story begins as the celebrated war hero Macbeth meets three unknown figures "upon the heath". Their prophecies of greatness for Macbeth lead him and his wife along a path of destruction characterised by an unquenchable desire for power...

A packed house was brilliantly entertained as our students mastered the Shakespearean language to deliver confident performances. Congratulations to the entire cast who worked so hard in their rehearsals and executed a fantastic performance on show night. Thank you to our production team: Directors: Mark Payne and Ian Tyler, Set Design: Kevin Petford, Lighting Design: Josh Joyner, Costumes: Sara-Luise Smith and Mary Mullock and Graphic Design by Matt Overton.





## Le séjour en famille

Students in Years 9 - 11 have been enjoying a penpal programme with students at a new lycée called Saint François d'Assise in Savenay. The French department was also keen to help our Year 12 students to experience a homestay. Cassie, Emily and Rebecca in our Lower Sixth had the opportunity to stay for a week with their host families. They attended the Lycée, experienced the French education system, as well as exploring the incredible sights of Nantes, La Baule and the medieval city of Guérande.



"Standing before the sliding doors in Nantes airport we felt nervous at the prospect of meeting our temporary families: the people we would be spending the next week with, in France. However, it wasn't as intimidating as we first imagined! We all parted ways and went with our families to explore...

Throughout the week, we all had a great time discovering the Loire-Atlantique region of France. We went to numerous beaches, the shipyard of Saint-Nazaire, the infamous salt marshes (les marais de sel) and enjoyed lots of wonderful French cuisine including in a crêperie in Nantes.

One of the most interesting challenges of the week was spending time at the Lycée de Saint François d'Assise, with our correspondents. We helped out in



their English classes and appreciated the differences between English and French schools such as not wearing uniform, studying Spanish and Latin in Sixth Form and having an 'assiette de fromage' (a cheese board) at lunchtime!

Our experience was extremely useful to gain a first-hand insight into French culture and improve our speaking skills in a real-life context. We are still in contact with our correspondents and hope to welcome them to England in the near future!"

By Cassie, Lower Sixth

## French Trip

Since our last publication of *The Independent*, 39 students in Years 7 - 10 participated in a trip to France in the Easter holidays. Faheel in Year 9 shares his trip report:

"At last the crossing was over and we got to France and once again the mood lightened with people staring at the scenery outside. It was a wonderful experience to see such a country as France. Our teacher made an announcement that we would arrive at the Château at about 4pm and that there was an evening meal and games lined up for us, which was exciting to hear. We finally arrived in the beautiful village of Rue. We got taken on a little tour of the château and after dinner we went outside to do a scavenger hunt or Château Olympics.

Day 2 started with a morning rise at about 07.30 am. We were greeted with pain au chocolat or croissants and a choice of strawberry, vanilla or banana yoghurt.

After we had breakfast and cleared away, it was time to make mayonnaise. This was the highlight of the trip so far. We were shown by one of the specialists and then we had a go. I can say it was really funny and disgusting at the same time! We were given the challenge to make the mayo so thick that if we tipped the bowl over our heads, it wouldn't fall out.



Another culinary experience was our trip to a chocolate factory. The experience of watching chocolate being made was mouth-watering and made all of us hungry. Soon it was time for evening games including table football. It was good fun making new friends on our first two days.



The following day we headed out to Amiens and visited the beautiful cathedral, the largest in France, and explored the canal area which is known as the 'Venice of the north'. After a trip to the park to eat our lunch it was over to Amiens Zoo to meet the animals. That evening after dinner the château staff organised a campfire activity for us, after which we all got together to fill in our trip workbooks.

On the final morning we said au revoir to the château and made our way to a boulangerie on the way back to Calais. Here we were shown how French bread is made, and under the strict supervision of the boulanger, everyone got a chance to create a real croissant. There were some interesting shapes! It was a wonderful experience that I would definitely recommend."

Faheel, Year 9



## | Annual Summer Exhibition



On 1st July, we hosted our Annual Summer Exhibition in the Viner Gallery and Hutton Theatre. The exhibition showcased the incredible talent of our GCSE and A Level artists, as well as a Year 8 pebble installation. The 51st Annual Show was enjoyed by parents, families, friends, OWs and staff. In particular, the oil and pencil portraits were striking in their lifelike resemblance to the current students and staff who posed as models. We are sure that you will be able to identify a few!

Some of the pieces featured here were produced by our A Level students who had to independently investigate a theme from a choice of mental health, social deprivation and endings. Their final piece\* was completed over 15 hours.

Thanks go to Mr Petford, Mrs Harris, Mrs Guest and Mrs Vienas for the many hours of preparation in bringing this spectacular show together. It was also a lovely occasion to say thank you and a fond farewell to our much-loved Head of Art, Miss Bowater, who is leaving WGS after an incredibly successful nine years.



Rosie Thacker\*



Amber Kahlon



Niall Morris\*





Rimini Mander



Jamie Killion



Sophie Newey



“

Chair of the Viner Society, Amber Kahlon, has this lovely tribute to share:

“Miss Bowater has shaped the Art Department hugely; her wisdom and expertise, alongside her passion for art has not only inspired her students but has also pushed them to expand their abilities. It will not be the same without her and she will be missed immensely.

Since being at WGS, Miss Bowater has introduced fun, exciting and engaging ideas, the most recent being the House competition for designing the mural which has enabled students to be creative and imaginative. It goes without saying that Miss Bowater has left a mark on this School and will not be forgotten for all her hard work and endless dedication to the art block and the WGS community. We wish Miss Bowater the very best on her next adventure at her new school!”

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Jamie Killion\*



# King's Coronation

Junior School children enjoyed a week of royal celebrations in the run up to the coronation of King Charles III....

Congratulations to Sahana in Year 6 who was the winning poet in the age 7-11 category of the 'We Have One Chance' Poetry Competition. This was organised by The Mayor of Wolverhampton for young people in Wolverhampton to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III through the medium of poetry. Sahana received a commemorative medal and a goody bag of prizes.



Below is Sahana's winning poem:

*We have one chance  
Don't let it slip away  
Just one chance  
Come on, let's save the day*

*There is a man named Charles  
He is the king  
He goes out of his way  
To let the birds sing*

*Oh what a good man  
Is our dear, dear king  
He cares for the bees, butterflies and more  
He needs us to open up the world's grassy door*

*We have one chance  
Don't let it slip away  
Just one chance  
Come on, let's save the day*

*The world is on the verge  
Of crumbling apart  
King Charles is a knight in shining armour  
Fighting climate change with all his heart*

*Drop one plastic bottle  
Kill one innocent turtle  
The thought of it all  
Is enough to make our stomachs curdle*

*We have one chance  
Don't let it slip away  
Just one chance  
Come on, let's save the day*



## Earth Day

On Friday 9th June, the Junior School celebrated their own Earth Day to raise awareness for our planet and the challenges it faces.

Year 1 investigated marine pollution and looked for solutions to this problem. Year 3 created their own board games which involved rewards for environmentally conscious behaviours and penalties for harmful behaviours.



## Junior School Charity Week

A big shoutout to our Junior School Council, led by Mrs Hare, for organising an epic Charity Week in the last week before half-term. Throughout the week, the children were dedicated to raising funds for three incredible causes: Birmingham Children's Hospital, Guide Dogs UK and WWF.

Each year group held a bake sale and the children participated in 'Guess the Number of Sweets in the Jar' and 'Guess the Staff Baby Photo' competitions. The week ended with a bang on the Friday as Junior School staff brought their A-game to a highly entertaining rounders match under the glorious sun, followed by bravely putting themselves in the firing line for the ever-popular 'soak the teacher' event!

We're thrilled to share that over £2,000 was raised, taking this year's fundraising total to nearly £3,500.





# | Aladdin

This year's Year 5 & 6 Show was written and composed by our very own Mr Peters, directed by Miss Austin, and choreographed collaboratively with Miss Manning.

Aladdin was the third and final Junior School production of the academic year. The children's acting and singing abilities were wonderfully showcased and members of the Dance Club further developed their prowess.

Miss Austin has been directing WGJS productions for the last 6 years and we were very sad to say goodbye to her at the end of term but thank her for her fantastic input into our School productions and wish her every success as she pursues her creativity in writing and illustrating.

Our thanks also go to Miss Bassett for her wonderful work on costume and to all those that helped with set and props. We take great joy in celebrating children's achievements of all kinds, from the sports field to the stage, and we are so proud of each child for their engagement with the whole process. A special mention to the stage crew who helped with the lighting decks and ensured that props were in place for each scenery change.

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A word from Miss Austin:

“After seven years working at my dream job, WGJS will soon be in my rear-view mirror. Whilst working with children will always be one of the best choices I have made, I can't teach children to follow their dreams if I don't follow my own! Over the next few years, I will be pursuing publication as an author and illustrator. I started working at WGJS at just 23, and the support I've received from staff, parents and even the children, has truly shaped who I've become. Here's hoping that the next time you hear my name, it'll be on the cover of the newest novel in Waterstones!”

”







# Sport at WGS

Junior Cricket has seen success with the U9 mixed and U11 boys and girls crowned City Champions at the beginning of June, after winning their respective WASPS tournaments at Fordhouses Cricket Club.



Meanwhile in the Seniors it has been a very busy season for cricket with over 50 games played. Congratulations to our U12 boys who reached the county finals and were runners up. There were standout contributions from Krish (22) and a crucial 20-run last wicket partnership between James and Jaiden.



Unfortunately, the weather intervened as the heavens opened, curtailing the match when Newcastle Under Lyme School were close to victory at 74-5 and needing just 12 more runs. With more runs in the first ten overs, the win went to NULS.

WGS hosted the U13 and U15 Girls' County Cricket Tournament for the first time. Our U13 girls achieved fourth place and we were delighted to see the U15 girls' team win the tournament. Our U13 boys won their indoor county competition in April and qualified for the regional stages.

It has been a very successful season for our rounders teams with all teams reaching the City finals.

Well done to our Year 6, 7 and 10 students who were crowned City Champions.

We are also looking forward to following the progress of Year 8 and 9 who have qualified for the City finals in September.

In Netball, our U11 girls were City runners-up and went on to represent Wolverhampton at the Black Country Games.

WGJS won the City Sports Hall Athletics for a second consecutive year and gained silver medals in the Black Country Games. In the City finals our Juniors won nine medals including gold for Harry Bunn in the 800m and for George Hay in the obstacle race. Years 7 through to Year 10, fielded an impressive 35 students who will be representing the School in the City Athletics finals next term.





Our U13 and U14 girls had an unforgettable day at the Molineux, with thanks to the Barclays and FA Girls' Football School Partnership. Recognising our Sports department's dedication to promoting girls' football at WGS, they were invited for an exclusive tour of the changing rooms and facilities, followed by an exhilarating training session. WGS also hosted over 100 girls playing in the Under 11 and Under 13 ISFA Girls' Tournament.

### From Wolverhampton to Wimbledon

In the run-up to Wimbledon, Mr Reddish organised a 'Play Your Way to Wimbledon' competition for our students in Years 7 – 9. The competition starts at the grassroots in clubs and schools and gives young players the opportunity to effectively play their way to Wimbledon, by progressing through the county finals to compete at the national finals at Wimbledon.

Congratulations to the winners of the WGS competition: Nashe and Romain in Year 8.



Congratulations to our U11 Boys' Football team who are the Wolverhampton City Champions following an incredibly tense final against St Anthony's Catholic Primary Academy on Tuesday 23rd May. This success came just three weeks after a successful performance at the ISFA National Finals at St George's Park, which put the team in the top eight independent schools' U11 football teams in the country.

The City final was a nail-biting game which saw an equal scoreline of 2-2 as the full-time whistle blew, meaning it was to be settled through extra-time. It was our WGS team who were victorious with thanks to an expertly-placed goal by Zaine-Cole. Well done to Jayden, Aarin, Owen, Harry, Arjan, George, Nolan, Ted, Harry, James and Zaine-Cole.

A proud Mr Griffiths said, "They are a magnificent group of young men, all incredibly talented individuals who

recognise that the team comes first. Yet again, they all stepped up when it mattered most and deserved to be crowned champions.

Huge thanks to the staff, families of all the children involved and to all their coaches (internal and external) who have put a huge amount of time supporting and developing this team.

It has been a privilege to support this team over the last couple of terms and as they move on to the Senior School."



### House Sport

In the Junior School the first Friday of term brought a sea of colour to Moreton's Piece as WGJS assembled for their annual House Cross Country race. Congratulations to Attwood who were this year's winners.

It was wonderful to see the Junior School House Swimming competition back for the first time since the pandemic. Dozens of events took place during an action-packed morning where every child represented their House in a width or length race. Victory this year went to Barnes.



In the Senior School, we kicked off the term with House Basketball. Over numerous lunchtimes, each year group took to the courts to compete in their own highly competitive tournaments. Congratulations to Offley who were the overall victors.

Sports Day brought our House Sporting events to a climax and it was a wonderful day of events on Moreton's Piece. Read more on pages 16-17.





# | Sports Days

Our Junior Sports Day was once again a fantastic event for the whole WGJS community. From our youngest in Reception through to our Year 6 who were competing for the last time for their Junior School Houses, there was a great display of sporting ability and team spirit. Our infants enjoyed traditional sports day favourites such as the egg and spoon and sack race, as well as a beanbag relay, obstacle race and long jump.



Meanwhile Years 3 upwards competed in field events including the javelin, overhead throw, high jump, discus and cricket ball throw. Starting down in the Valley the event moved up to Moreton's Piece as the day came to a climax. The scores from the final track and field events were added to the running total before the winning House was announced. Congratulations to Attwood who retained the Sports Day Trophy for the second year running.







The Senior Sports Day took place following the Year 7 House Reveal allowing all members of the Senior School to compete for their House. Moreton's Piece was awash with colour – house flags, house mascots and lots of face paint! The sun shone down as Jenyns, Moreton, Nechells and Offley battled it out for first place. The day was made especially entertaining with commentary from Mr Clancy and Nechells House Captain, Dan, who were stationed up in the Pavilion. We forgive them for being slightly biased towards a certain House!

A record 31 athletes took place in the pentathlon event which is made up of the 100m and 900m, plus a choice of three throwing or jumping events. Congratulations to Sam Ezeazu and Kyla Robinson who were the top boy and girl.

The Victor Ludorum and Victrix Ludorum were awarded to the overall champions in Years 7 - 10 and we congratulate:

Year 7 - **Noah Walsh and Jamie Reyner-Corbett**

Year 8 - **David Olayinka and Frankie Yeoman**

Year 9 - **Shiloh Sawyers-Brown and Elianna Botchway**

Year 10 - **Charlie Baker and Magdalene Addo**

As the final scores were announced a huge cheer went up as **Offley House** claimed victory.





## WGS cleans up at awards!

Mr Griffiths came away with a haul of trophies at the recent WASPS Prize Evening.

The Wolverhampton Association for Sport in Primary Schools (WASPS) exists to promote physical activity and competitive sport within the City's primary schools. A range of competitions across many sports are organised during the year. In addition to competitions taking place during the school day, activities are also organised after school and at weekends. WGJS received awards for winning:

U11 City Football Championship

U11 City Cricket Championship

U11 City Girls' Cricket Championship

U9 City Cricket Championship

U11 City Rounders Championship

U11 City Hockey Championship

We were also runners up in the U11 City Netball Championship and Harry Bunn received an individual award for Sportsmanship. Congratulations to our junior athletes!



Meanwhile Mrs Powell and students from the Senior School attended the Wolverhampton Sports Presentation Evening hosted by the ConnectEd Partnership at the end of term. WGS is one of 100 member schools of the ConnectEd Partnership which aims to educate and inspire children to lead happy and healthy lifestyles.



WGS was presented with 7 trophies that celebrated wins for our Year 10 girls and Year 7 boys in cross country, Year 7 boys in Sportshall athletics, Year 7, 8 and 10 netball and Year 10 rounders.

## Stepping out for Young Minds

Throughout May, a team of staff participated in the Young Minds UK campaign to walk 10k steps each every day. The idea of this challenge was to encourage everyone to get #outintheopen both physically and emotionally.

During lunchtimes, students were also invited to take part in Wellbeing walks, dance workouts and other outdoor activities, to have fun, get moving and raise awareness. Well done to all the staff involved – a total of almost 2.5 million steps was completed altogether.



## Walker Memorial Mile

On the last Friday of term, students and staff gathered on a sunny Moreton's Piece to run the 30th annual Walker Memorial Mile, created in memory of OW Chris Walker, who tragically died in 1983. Thank you to everyone who participated and well done to this year's winners: Mr Martin (for the 2nd year running!), Ruben (Year 8) and Charlotte and Zena (Year 10).







# | Old Wulfrunians

At WGS we are extremely fortunate to have an active and thriving alumni community of Old Wulfrunians. Our relationships with OWs are managed through the Development Office and similar to *The Independent* we produce a magazine called *The Wulfrunian* annually. Copies are available from main reception and on our School website and are definitely worth a read!

OWs are a regular feature in current school life, making visits back to work with current students and even to help us recruit prospective ones! This year we were joined by 15 OWs from the Class of 2021 and 2022 for our Sixth Form Open Evening and students in Year 10 plus visiting families were able to get a first-hand insight into the WGS Sixth Form experience, the subjects they studied, plus finding out more about the transition to university.

Miss Kailey was delighted to welcome back Tanyaradzwa Kasinganeti (OW



2017) and Rumina Önaç (OW 2000) to our Year 8 Aspire lessons to promote the theme of 'a greener future'.

Tanyaradzwa spoke to students about her work as an Analyst in the Energy Transition and Commodities team at Lloyds Banking Group. Tanyaradzwa's undergraduate degree was in Global Sustainable Development, and she was able to share her higher education and career journey so far, highlighting the paths into green careers and how her degree would equip someone wishing to work in this field.

Rumina is a GP and Climate and Sustainability Lead in North Yorkshire and is helping the NHS to reach its target of NET Zero by 2040. She led a very thought-provoking session discussing how the healthcare sector can be more environmentally sustainable.

OWs from the Class of 2022 returned as judges for Year 8's Science Fair. Big School was filled with imaginative and fascinating science projects from "Which food do dogs prefer?" to "The perfect guide to jump high" and students from Year 3 and Year 7 visited the show to see Year 8's creative research. Thank you to Cian Gopal, Ella Bancroft, Morgan Lathbury-Cox and Tom Pearson, who were our expert judges.

Other interaction between the current school community and former pupils included the 25th reunion of Coast 2 Coast teams and the annual Cricket Festival which saw our First XI play former cricket captains.

We currently have 16 members of staff who are former pupils and we are so proud of the bonds with our extended School community. There could not be a prouder OW than our Deputy Head, Nic Anderson, (OW 1990), whose 40-year association with the School will culminate in his role as Acting Head from September.



Mr Anderson returned to his alma mater in 1997 as a Maths Teacher and Teacher in charge of boys' hockey. In 2005 he was appointed Head of Lower School in charge of Years 6, 7 and 8, followed by his role as Deputy Head (Academic) in 2009.

Nic has nurtured relationships with students, staff and OWs and is proud and protective of the School in equal measure. He looks forward to welcoming new and returning families to WGS for the 2023-2024 academic year.





## Junior residential

**During the first week of May we waved off some very excited children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 as they set off on their residential adventures.**

### Laches Wood (Years 2 and 3)

Upon arrival at the centre, Year 3 were shown around their dormitories where they helped each other to make their own beds before enjoying lunch in the sunshine. The afternoon was a whirlwind of bushcraft activities, followed by a yummy and thoroughly deserved dinner. The children earned their evening hot chocolate by expertly solving a spy mystery!



On Day 2, Year 3 were joined by Year 2 for their first residential experience. The children enjoyed a day full of activities including climbing, caving and archery. The teachers were incredibly impressed with how the children embraced new challenges and pushed their boundaries. At the end of the day everyone enjoyed a customary hot chocolate before heading to bed.



On the final day Year 3 set off to do orienteering and a blindfold trail around the forest whilst Year 2 played hide and seek and went on a mystical hunt for fairies and pixies! A few hours later it was time for some very tired but contented children to return to WGS.





## Blackwell Court (Years 4 and 5)

Year 4 took a detour to Avoncroft Museum on their way to Blackwell Court. They enjoyed making their own bricks, exploring the amazing Tudor buildings, and experimenting with wattle and daub.

Meanwhile, Year 5 had arrived at Blackwell Court and were getting stuck into activities including archery, team building, crate-stacking and orienteering. As dinner time approached, Year 4 joined their fellow adventurers, and everyone settled down for a well-deserved rest after an exhilarating first day.



On Day 2, the children showed great courage and determination as they tried new activities including zip-lining, indoor climbing and crate-stacking. Mr Peters surprised everyone with a visit, and he bravely took on the pole climb from which he managed to demonstrate a very graceful dismount! As the day drew to a close, all the children gathered around the campfire to toast marshmallows and enjoy a sing-along.



Day 3: After a delicious breakfast, Year 4 waved goodbye to Blackwell Court and set off to Selly Manor where they had an interesting day learning about the Tudors and engaged in lots of fun and interactive activities.

Year 5 enjoyed their final activities in the rain at Blackwell Court before a very soggy journey back home. The bus home was decidedly quieter with lots of the children falling asleep after an extremely busy few days.





## App-solutely Incredible!

Congratulations to Year 11 student, Alfie, who has been named as winner in the 2023 Swift Student Challenge, organised by Apple Inc.

The annual programming competition invites students from across the world, up to and including university level, to create an interactive app playground using Apple's Swift Playgrounds app. Alfie was one of 350 winners from thousands of entries from 41 different countries and regions worldwide. As a result, amongst other prizes, Alfie has been given the opportunity to sit an exam to become an officially certified iOS developer, and he presented his app to Apple CEO, Tim Cook.

Alfie's app focused on cyber-security, featuring a "How secure is your password?"

calculator, a secure password generator and an information section to learn how to be cyber-safe.

Alfie began teaching himself how to code two years ago, and started to develop his own apps at the beginning of 2022. Alfie shared with us, "I was inspired to enter the challenge as it offered me a chance to test my programming skills against others, and gave me an idea of how much progress I have made."

Remarkably, this is the second time Alfie has won the Swift Student Challenge, having also won last year with a logo-creator app.

Alfie has shown great promise in the coding world and we look forward to seeing what he challenges himself to next.



## Luke scores in annual BBC Young Reporter Competition



WGS featured for the second consecutive year in the BBC Young Reporter Competition's list of regional winners. The proud accolade this year goes to Luke in Year 11 and was announced during the BBC One Show.

Luke chose to explore the issue of concussion in football; a problem he became aware of after watching Wolves player, Raúl Jiménez, suffer a fractured skull after he rose for a header during a match against Arsenal in November 2020. Luke, who has been a Wolves season ticket holder since 2019, wanted to understand what the impact could be on one of his footballing heroes.

Luke, who played football from the age of five, only hanging up his boots last year to begin refereeing, is incredibly passionate about the sport and has hopes for a future career in sports commentating or sports

journalism. He enjoyed participating in the BBC Young Reporter event hosted by WGS in March where he had the opportunity to work with BBC WM Sport Commentator, Mike Taylor and demonstrated his natural flair for sports journalism.

All the winners of the BBC Young Reporter Competition will have their reports professionally produced and broadcast across the BBC network. We look forward to seeing Luke on our TV screens soon!



## Chiltern Arts Poetry

Congratulations to Lower Sixth student, Jasmin, who has been named as a runner-up in the Under 18 category of the 2023 Chiltern Arts Poetry Competition.

The annual competition invites writers of all ages to submit a poem exploring a specific theme; this year's being love, loss and the passage of time. Jasmin's poem focused on the latter, exploring the ominous concept of the end of the world, which ultimately impressed the esteemed panel.



Jasmin, who is fairly new to the poetry scene told us that it is her study of poetry in her A Level English Literature lessons that inspires her to write her own poems. Jasmin has a particular interest in poems that are plentiful in imagery and metaphors, and she enjoys incorporating figurative language into her own work.

This year's panel comprised of Susan Cooper, author of the acclaimed series *The Dark is Rising*, and Chiltern Arts Founder and Creative Director, Naomi Taylor. Well done Jasmin, we are very proud of you.





# Senior School House Reveal

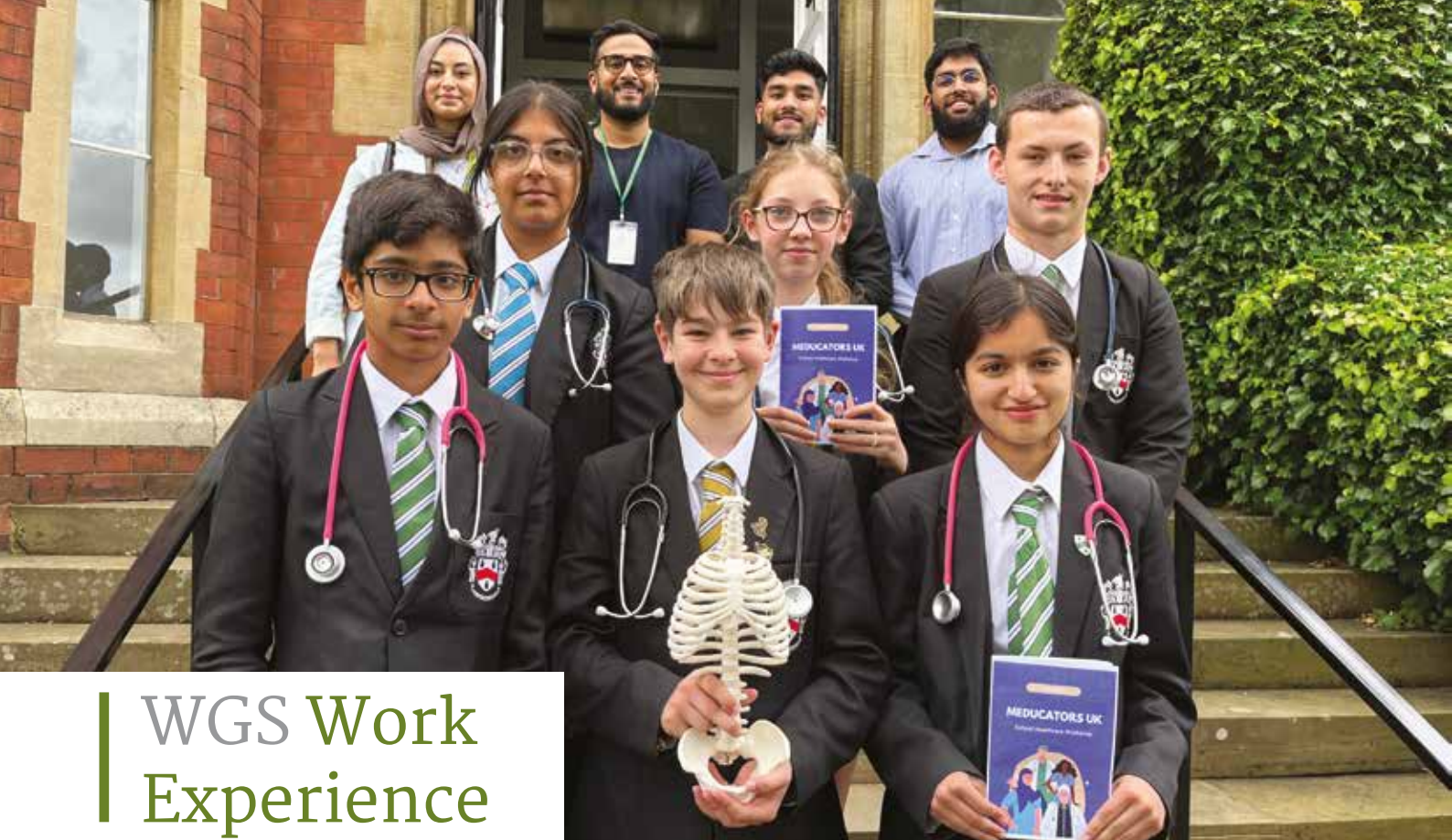
Year 7 students were introduced to the Senior House System and 'sorted' into their Houses towards the end of term. Ahead of the House Reveal there was much speculation amongst Year 7 students, and our newly elected House Captains took to video to extol the best characteristics and strengths of their respective Houses.

On Friday 30th June, Moreton Captains, Jaipal and Favour, paraded into Big School holding the House Cup as reigning champions. Mr Birch then called the students one by one to retrieve an envelope from the Cup with their fate sealed inside.

There were chants, whoops and the occasional knee-slide as each student found out their House and received their House tie. With colourful bunting, excited cheers and plenty of House spirit, much fun was had by all. Year 7 were then ready to take on their first House competition at Sports Day the following week.







## WGS Work Experience

**Miss Kailey, Head of Careers, launched a new Work Experience Programme for Lower Sixth students this term. We were proud to be able to support our students with the business network that Miss Kailey has established over the last year. Students were able to secure a variety of placements with local and regional businesses in the fields of medicine, veterinary, dentistry, law, finance, charity, architecture, and marketing. Zacky and Emily share their experiences below:**

### Monday

I arrived slightly early and was told by security to hand my ID in at reception and to sign in. Reception gave me a pass which I could use to gain access to the different floors of the building (there were 13 of them!).

After a tour we got put into pairs and were tasked with preparing a short presentation on what we already knew about HMRC (varied levels of response). Next, we were lucky enough to have a very high-ranking government official speak to us about his work in Policy.

13:00. A member of the Department of Work and Pensions talked to us about

the work that they do in giving taxpayers' money back to the community.

### Tuesday

09:00 start. I had a talk about debt management and tax. This was very interactive and lasted about an hour. I probably learnt the most in this session – from income tax to PAYE to the difference between self-assessment and self-employment (how they pay their taxes). After this, we had a brief talk with someone in the Disability Network Department who emphasised the care that HMRC has for all its employees.

Next, we had a team from the National Minimum Wage speak to us. I learnt all about how some employers can cheat their employees by not paying them the right amount of money, and I also learnt about what it's like to work as a Compliance Officer at HMRC.

After lunch there was talk by the Mental Health Department and the steps they take to ensure that all of their employees can find someone to speak to if they have any problems. There are organised walks for people to relieve stress and weekly/monthly meetings for conversation.



### Wednesday:

09:00 We learnt about the role of an HMRC accountant in tackling fraud with accounts and money laundering and the routes into this pathway. Next we had a talk from recent graduates which was really valuable.

The diversity of HMRC's workforce is admirable. They spoke to us about using the law to tackle any appeals made by businesses or individuals against tax (VAT) - known as litigation. After this we



had a talk about cyber security and all the different roles within this department and also entry routes. The options were very diverse from physical security to specialist technicians.

After lunch we had a talk about the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The officer explained how he ended up with the role he currently has with his own personal story which was quite inspiring. We learnt about the process of a conviction and all the subsections in the CPS. The main message that I learnt is that the CPS will look after its employees and support them with whatever path they want to take (as long as they have enthusiasm). Finally we had some young graduates speak to us about the Valuation Office Agency and the work of surveyors. It was interesting because I didn't know that you could be a quantity surveyor in the civil service and the session was quite interactive as we were allowed to use specialist equipment to take measurements of the room that we were in.

#### Thursday:

I learnt all about alcohol fraud and the methods criminals use to sell tax-free alcohol in the UK making high profits. Additionally, I learnt the measures that HMRC have put in place to tackle these fraudsters. It was clear that you need to be super sharp for this role as the methods are really complex.

After this, a lovely man was talking about his experience as a tax specialist. He was accepted onto one of the most competitive and sought after graduate programmes in the civil service called TSP (Tax Specialist Programme). This is where an individual would specialise in one area of tax and – following training – would be in a position to advise senior civil servants on tax cases. He also talked us through the STAR method and listened to one of my examples.

In the afternoon our groups gave a presentation on what we had learnt during the week, along with any suggestions for improvements to the

work experience programme. Finally, we spoke to the apprentice team and they told us about the vacancies currently open and where to find them.

#### By Zacky (Work experience at HMRC)



As I am looking to pursue a career in psychology, I wanted to find a place that would offer relevant experience and luckily with the help of Miss Kailey, I was able to gain a placement at Anville Court Nursing Home.

For the first half of my day I observed a carer giving one-on-one care to their set patients. I was able to watch how the carer interacted with them and helped them with meals. I was able to ask the carer questions about her role and why she was interested in doing what she did, and I could see that she had a passion for her job and liked caring and chatting to the residents. Their daily routine can vary depending on the health and well-being of the patient, so sometimes the routine may take longer when a patient isn't well or is feeling emotional.

For the second half of my day, I was taken round to meet some of the patients and then do some enrichment activities with those who were in the lounge. When meeting the patients, I learnt that some patients who were non-verbal still had the ability to listen to what was being said, so communicating with them was still very important. In the lounge, I played Kerplunk

and dominoes with two ladies, and I felt that they appreciated having this time to play games and interact with one another, in addition to having family visits.

From chatting to a patient, I was told that they can tell who is and who isn't passionate about their job. This information I think is important, especially in a career where you are constantly interacting and caring for someone, as this can help both the patient and their families to have a more positive experience.

Ultimately, I think work experience is valuable to do as it can help you to gain an insight into what could be a possible future career for you. Equally important, it may help you to realise this particular job isn't for you, but you can explore other options in the field.

#### By Emily (Work experience at Anville Court Nursing Home)

## Healthcare Careers Workshop

A group of doctors were invited to work with students in Years 9 and 10 wishing to explore a career in medicine and healthcare. The workshop covered medical ethics, the different roles within the healthcare sector and life as a doctor. We were delighted to welcome six students from Smestow Academy to join us for the day.







## Music at WGS

Our youngest musicians have continued to wow audiences with their incredible musical skills. On Tuesday 13th June, the KS2 Teatime Concert played host to over 25 of our young musicians. From *Happy Birthday* to *A Nightingale Sang In Berkley Square*, confident and exuberant performances were greatly received by the supportive audience of parents and staff. The following week KS1 children once again thrilled us with their confidence and enthusiasm in their concert. Year 1 performed a medley of songs, all in German, whilst Year 2 impressed with their fabulous emerging recorder skills. Peppered throughout the concert were fantastic solo performances ranging from well-loved nursery rhymes to the music of the great Robert Schumann.

Many children have worked hard to pass graded instrumental exams this term, ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 6 on instruments including the piano, flute, drum kit, ukulele, violin and guitar. Additionally, over 30 children have received a recorder medal which represents achievement at a variety of levels from bronze to platinum, demonstrating their fantastic progress, determination and dedication to the

development of their music skills. We are so proud of all of our young musicians and all they have achieved this year!



Summer term has been a busy time for our senior musicians preparing for the ABRSM and Trinity Rock School exams, ranging from Prep tests up to Grade 8. As we go to print, we are still awaiting a number of results, but early congratulations go to Nellie Nabati and Natalie Saunders who achieved a Distinction in Grade 8 Singing, Leah Gopal who was awarded a Merit in Grade 8 Music Theatre and Jenny Chan who was awarded a Merit in Grade 8 piano.

Our *Night at the Movies* concert included Big Band sets, Rock Club, and a number of Bollywood, solo and ensemble performances all linked to music from a diverse variety of films. It was lovely to enjoy WGS music in a more informal style as Big School transported us to the Big Screen!

18 Year 7 students received free instrumental lessons on a new instrument including cello, clarinet, oboe, trombone and euphonium. This was part of our Endangered Instruments Programme and our musicians were able to give their first public performance as part of Training Band at our Summer Concert.

Mrs Cuthbert would like to congratulate our GCSE and A Level Musicians on their excellent compositions and dedication to their studies. We wish everyone well for results day.







Congratulations to Davina (Year 8) for emerging as the victor of this year's competition. Next up was the Senior Cup, which showcased the remarkable talent of four finalists from our Senior School. We are delighted to announce Emily (Lower Sixth) as the deserving winner of this year's Senior Cup.

In June, we witnessed the return of the annual Judge Malcolm Ward Piano Competition. First up was the Junior Cup, featuring eight exceptionally gifted pianists from our Lower School.



## Summer Concert

In the penultimate week of term we enjoyed a fabulous Summer Picnic Concert on Moreton's Piece whilst basking in the sunshine. This was a joint performance by Junior and Senior school musicians. There were superb performances by the Junior Recorder Ensemble, Junior Strings and Orchestra. They were joined by Senior Strings, Training Band, the Year 7 Music Theatre Group and our Dhol Group which is led by Lower Sixth Music Scholar, Dharam Sangha. A number of solo and duets completed a wonderful evening of music.







## | Activities Week

Alongside the customary Year 7 residential, Go Ape trip, STEM and problem-solving activities, Activities Week 2023 included an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Day and a Wellbeing Day.

EDI Day – a day centred around equity, diversity and inclusion was enjoyed by students in Years 9 and 10. Throughout the day, students took part in a range of activities that spanned across many aspects of cultural life, including sport, languages, art and religion.



The day started with a languages session, where students were tested with tongue twisters from countries around the world. They then moved on to the art studios, where they explored their heritage through artistic expression, designing images that they felt represented their identity. Some students even had the chance to personalise t-shirts with their art. Everyone found this activity to be incredibly

insightful, as it allowed them to see different aspects of each other's culture.

Later in the morning, students attended an informative talk about the virtues and practices of Sikhism, given by guest speaker, Mr Gakhal. Here, they learnt about what it means to be a Sikh and participated in a turban-tying session. Students then engaged in some sporting activities, including boules and Kabaddi and Haka dances, which they choreographed and performed.

The day ended with a fascinating talk, where students and teachers alike learned about the effects of Partition between India and Pakistan. They were all captivated by guest speaker Pepe Hart, from the Partition Education Group. Finally, students dressed into their own cultural clothes to enjoy snacks, music and dancing and proudly celebrated our diverse WGS community.

Another of the week's activities was Wellbeing Day. This day focused on benefitting the mental health of our students through experiences that allowed them to unwind at the end of the school year.



Students had the opportunity to immerse themselves in nature with a wildlife walk through the school grounds. To further connect with wildlife, the Year 9s were visited by The Animal Man who brought with him a selection of animals for the students to interact with. Some of these included a fox, skunk, bearded dragon, snake and – the firm favourite – a tarantula!

After absorbing the world around them, the students then looked inwards with some more mindful activities. They engaged in a yoga session which encouraged the students to strengthen both their minds as well as their bodies. The calming theme continued with games and puzzles, followed by mindful art. This allowed them to get in touch with their creative side, destressing through mindful colouring.

This was a much-needed day of relaxation at the end of a busy term. We would like to congratulate all students on their hard work this year. We hope these mindful activities extend into the summer holidays as well!

By Devina and Hannah, Lower Sixth Work Experience students





### Diversity Mural

We were excited to welcome local Street Artist, Neil Willis, to help us produce a WGS mural celebrating equity, diversity and inclusion in our School. It was also wonderful to welcome back OWs: Emily Hunt (OW 2018), Ross Deeley (OW 2020), Harjorth Sanghera and Elena Martellini (OWs 2021).



Earlier in the term a competition was launched by Miss Bowater to design a piece of art that represented EDI at WGS. The top five designs were chosen with the overall winner being Falah Sohail. Neil worked with some of our WGS artists to plan the mural, creating stencils and selecting paints. The final piece was revealed and certainly brings lots of colour and celebration to the campus!



### Year 7 Residential

Always a highlight to end their first year in the senior school, Year 7 enjoyed a residential trip to Oakerwood. An amazing three days of fun was spent paintballing, rafting, pistol shooting, and tackling various climbing, zip-wire and forest challenges. Teamwork skills were tested and it was fantastic to see plenty of smiles all round even though we don't think there was much sleep happening in the glamping pods due to all the excitement!







## Prizegiving and Speech Day

It was a pleasure to welcome Alex Vergopoulos (OW 1990) as our Guest of Honour at Prizegiving this year. Alex studied at WGS from 1984 to 1990, although his links to the School go right back to his grandfather, Major Jervis, who was a pupil in the early 1920s and went on to be a founder member of the Old Wulfrunians Association. Alex and his peer group had the distinction of being in the first cohort nationally to take GCSEs rather than O Levels in 1988. Notwithstanding, he had been persuaded by Mrs Chris Preston to sit O Level Maths a year early in 1987, sparking off a dual enthusiasm for Maths and Modern Languages which lasted for the rest of his school career, and beyond. Mrs Preston who was present on the night, was one of the many WGS teachers that Alex remembers for their profound effect on his education. Indeed Alex's speech

was heart-warming for all to hear as he spoke about the affection he holds for our wonderful School and the foundation it has given him for life.



Alex read Maths at King's College, London, followed by postgraduate study in Actuarial Science at City University. Though he could have been tempted by a career in the City, his love of hands-on business brought him back to the Midlands to work in his family's manufacturing company. Whilst serving an apprenticeship at his father's right hand, Alex diversified his own interests into property, developing a broad business acumen that saw him assume control of the family firm after five years. He has gone on to acquire a portfolio of other businesses over the years and to invest in a number of early-stage ventures. Recently Alex has joined a number of OWs in giving back to the

School in the form of support for the WGS bursarial fund. His generosity has funded extra-curricular trips for students attending WGS who would otherwise not have been able to participate. We thank Alex for presenting the prizes and speaking at Prizegiving and for his continued support of the School.



In the final week of term our youngest children had the delight of coming over to Big School for their end of year celebrations. There was great excitement as Reception were sorted into their Junior Houses at the end of Infants' Speech Day, finding out whether they would be joining Attwood, Barnes, Campbell or Derry as they move up to Year 1. At the Junior School Speech Day there were mixed emotions as Year 6 shared their WGJS experiences for the last time. They performed a song from their recent production of *Aladdin* and contemplated their own 'whole new world' as they prepare to move up to seniors.







# Farewell and Good Luck to the Class of 2023

We can't believe it is now time to say farewell to another Upper Sixth cohort! The last year has really flown by and the Class of 2023 have focused admirably on their exams, despite being the second consecutive Upper Sixth year taking A Levels that did not have the benefit of sitting public exams at GCSE.

The customary trip to Warped Sports, Cosford, took place as energies were expended in a battle of paintball before returning to the more leisurely affair of the Upper Sixth Leavers' Lunch, to which parents were also invited.

Our Leavers received their hoodies and year books and enjoyed reminiscing with staff and parents over a delicious lunch in Big School, courtesy of School caterers Holroyd Howe.

Before it was time to say a final goodbye there was of course, the much anticipated Upper Sixth Leavers' Ball held at South Staffordshire Golf Club where many more memories were made.

We wish the Class of 2023 all the best of luck with their post-Sixth Form adventures and look forward to seeing them at future events run by the Development Office. The Old Wulfrunian community continues to grow and prosper and spreads across many countries worldwide. We were reminded just how strong our WGS ties are by Guest Speaker, Alex Vergopoulos at Prizegiving, and we hope that this year's leavers will feel the same way and enjoy returning to School for many years to come to attend OW events organised by Mrs Harris and Mrs Roberts.



## Don't forget to join our official alumni group

Upper Sixth students are invited to join our online OW community: [oldwulfrunians.wgs.org.uk](https://oldwulfrunians.wgs.org.uk) and to follow us on Twitter @WGSOW, Facebook **Old Wulfrunians of WGS** and LinkedIn under **Wolverhampton Grammar School**.







# The Independent

Wolverhampton Grammar School Newsletter

Summer 2023

If you would like to hear more about anything featured in this edition of The Independent please contact the School email: [marketing@wgs-sch.net](mailto:marketing@wgs-sch.net)

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 Wolverhampton Grammar School

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## Key Dates for Autumn Term 2023

**Monday 4th September**

Term begins for all students

**Saturday 7th October**

Whole School Open Day

**Friday 20th October**

Founder's Day – no afternoon school

**Monday 23rd October to**

**Friday 3rd November**

Half term

**Friday 15th December**

End of term (School ends at 12.30pm and  
School transport departs at 12.45pm)