



# Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

**ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE**

Newsletter

Autumn Term

December 2023

## Message from the Principal

So much has been happening at school and this newsletter contains just a flavour of the many and varied activities, which we hope you will enjoy reading.

At the end of this term we say goodbye to Mrs Simpkin, one of our MFL teachers, who leaves us to pursue a different career path, although still in education, and we wish her all the very best and thank her for her hard work.

This is also a good time to say thank you to all parents and carers for your incredible support. The successes at Soar Valley are always a result of combined efforts, with families and school staff encouraging and supporting children together, and we thank you for your positive input and contributions. Feedback obtained at the Year 7 and Year 9 Parents' Evenings this term was overwhelmingly positive:

- 99% of Year 9 parents agreed the school has high expectations for students
- 95% of Year 9 parents agreed that their child is doing well at school

Particularly pleasing is that:

- 97% of Year 7 parents felt that the Year 6 visits helped their child's transition to secondary school, and
- 99% of Year 7 parents agreed that their child has settled well at school.

Moving on, our new term starts on **Monday January 8<sup>th</sup> 2024**, and we are already looking forward to welcoming students back in the New Year, on time and in full uniform of course!

At the end of a very busy and long term we wish a very happy holiday period to all our readers - parents, carers, students, families and others. Merry Christmas to those celebrating, and to everyone we wish a very happy and successful 2024.

## Winter Concert 2023

This year's Winter Concert was held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December. As there always are, there were some amazing performances. From the neon drummers lighting up the Main Hall, to a beautiful and moving performance of *Burn* from the musical *Hamilton* by Ella in Year 11, the evening was a great success!



# Library News

If you would like support with encouraging your child to read for pleasure then please contact our librarian, Ms Codling

**Reading Rampage** is an amazing opportunity to take part in a reading challenge especially designed for secondary students in Years 7 and 8, which is aimed at boosting the profile of reading by creating a buzz around reading across the school.

The project runs from January 2024 to June 2024 and aims to inspire and motivate students to be active and enthusiastic readers who read by choice, for pleasure.

Along the way, we will be introducing students to 10 great books and their amazing authors. Online sessions in school with this year's shortlisted authors will help students to engage with the books and their authors on a different level.

The book judged to be most borrowed/read and the book judged to be the most highly rated by participating students will be announced at a special online awards event in June 2024.

Year 7 students were very excited to receive their Book Trust **Bookbuzz** book this month.

Bookbuzz is a reading programme from Book Trust that aims to help schools inspire a love of reading in students aged 11 to 13. Participating schools give their students the opportunity to choose their own book to take home and keep from a list of 17 titles. They are all carefully selected by a panel of experts to ensure quality, suitability and to encourage reading for pleasure.

# READING RAMPAGE



We have gone all out on the winter theme in the library this half term. There have been specially selected books on display, as well as a range of House competitions that have seen students making snowflakes, snowmen and Christmas baubles.





# Your PASSPORT to SUCCESS

At Soar Valley we are clear that **EFFORT IS EVERYTHING**. Participation in extra curricular opportunities and House competitions is a great way to stretch yourself and make the extra effort needed to push beyond what you thought was possible.

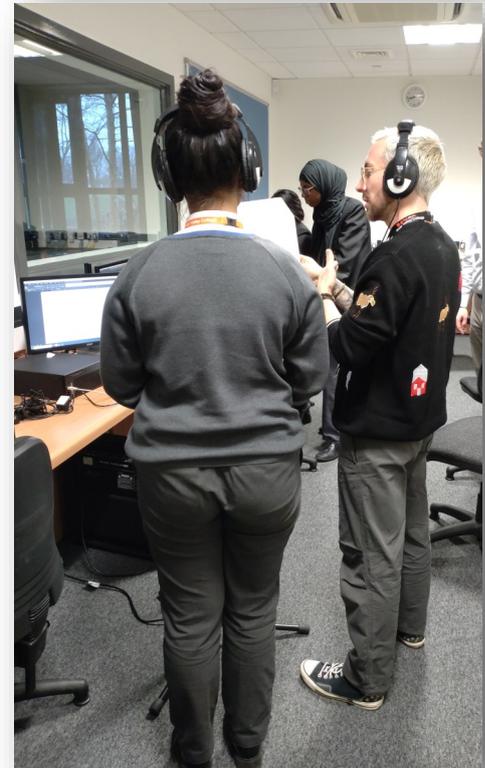
## Speak Up Programme

Since September, a number of committed, keen drama students have been working on the Speak Up project in conjunction with both the Curve Theatre in Leicester and The National Theatre in London.

Speak Up is a national project which is designed to give young people a voice to talk about things that matter to them.

On Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, the Speak Up students travelled to the Curve after school to take part in their Speak Up workshop with our Speak Up representative, Ben Johnson. The students were then able to have a back stage tour of the Curve, eat take away pizza, play drama games and then watch the Christmas production of *Evita*. Students were even treated to a show programme and an ice cream at the interval. The show was wonderful and students and staff thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience of their time at Curve.

Speak Up will continue throughout this academic year - this week students were recording a song - and we look forward to seeing their work develop as their weekly sessions continue.



## The Student View

*“Our time at the Curve was absolutely amazing! We had a tour of the theatre which was incredibly interesting, and learned many new facts. We also watched the musical “Evita” and it was flawless. We saw really skilful use of lighting and the actors all had brilliant voices! The hardworking ensemble were all amazing as well - you could really tell how passionate they were with what they were doing.”*

**Kiran and Bhavya 7.6**



## Sports Leaders



Our Year 10 sports studies students have this term been involved in the running of two multiskills festivals for local primary pupils. On 22<sup>nd</sup> November we were joined by 72 primary school pupils, from Key Stage 2, who spent the afternoon in the netball centre taking part in a range of competitive activities and doing their best to earn points for their school.

During the event they worked their way around a circuit of 8 different stations, each of which was delivered independently by three of our Year 10 sport studies students. Each school also had three sport studies students acting as their team leaders for the afternoon, helping to ensure that all the primary school pupils had a positive, exciting and challenging experience.

The Year 10s were fantastic throughout the Key Stage 2 afternoon and were a real credit to Soar Valley. They then repeated this the following week when we hosted 72 pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 from Mellor, Rushey Mead, Sandfiled Close and Taylor Road primary schools.

## Some highlights from PE

You will have seen on our social media how many opportunities there have been this term to represent the school in sport. PE is always a strong contributor to our extra curricular programme, and provides fantastic opportunities for students to show their teamwork and leadership skills.



Year 10 Boys Basketball



Year 7 Girls Netball



Key Stage 4 Girls Basketball  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place in the East Leicester  
Championships



Year 7 Boys Football  
Semi Finalists in the  
Leicester City Cup





## Year 10 Volunteers

All of Year 10 students have chosen an active citizenship area on which to work this year from the five themes of Environment, Hope, Thanks, Green and International.

Our first 'Environment' volunteers picked litter at Watermead Park this half term. A great start to our new participation project!

Huge thanks must go to Miss Kenning who came up with the idea, launched it with students, did the organisation required to get it off the ground, and took the students to do the litter picking!



## Soar Valley Bake Off

This term also saw the annual Soar Valley Bake Off take place. This is a highly anticipated event in the calendar for SLT, who are lucky to be invited to judge the entries.

There were some amazing cup cakes to try, and then try again just to be sure! Congratulations to our winners: Astha and Pratha [Abbey] for KS3 and Vedika and Zara [Victoria] for KS4.



## Young Geographer of the Year Certificate Winners



The geography team once again took part in the *Young Geographer of the Year* competition, which is organised by the Royal Geographical Society.

The students taking part produced some excellent responses to the theme of 'A Blueprint for the Future' and our deserved certificate winners are shown here. Well done!

## Disability Sports Champions



A group of Soar Valley students took part in both the city and county disability athletics events this half term.

They were crowned city champions in November, and were then invited to represent Leicester at the county championships in December.

Taking part in a wide range of inclusive events such as the standing long jump and target throwing they battled hard and came away with the silver medal.

We are incredibly proud of their achievements, and one of our team was crowned 'Athlete of the Day', which is no mean feat!

## SAW Club



Over the last term students attending SAW Club in design and technology have had the chance to try their hand at some new skills. This includes pewter casting, an excellent example of which can be seen here.

Students have grown in confidence over the term, developing a commitment to refining their skills in areas such as woodwork, and widening the range of skills at their disposal when it comes to designing and making.

They have also demonstrated the key attributes of determination and resilience as it hasn't gone well first time, every time!

## Year 9 History Poetry Competition

This term Year 9 were challenged to write a poem about World War One in the lead up to Remembrance Day as they have been learning about World War One in their history lessons.

This is a new House competition, and the history team were bowled over by the number of students who submitted an entry.

There were some fantastic entries from across the houses, and the judges from history and English were highly impressed with the standard of the poems produced.

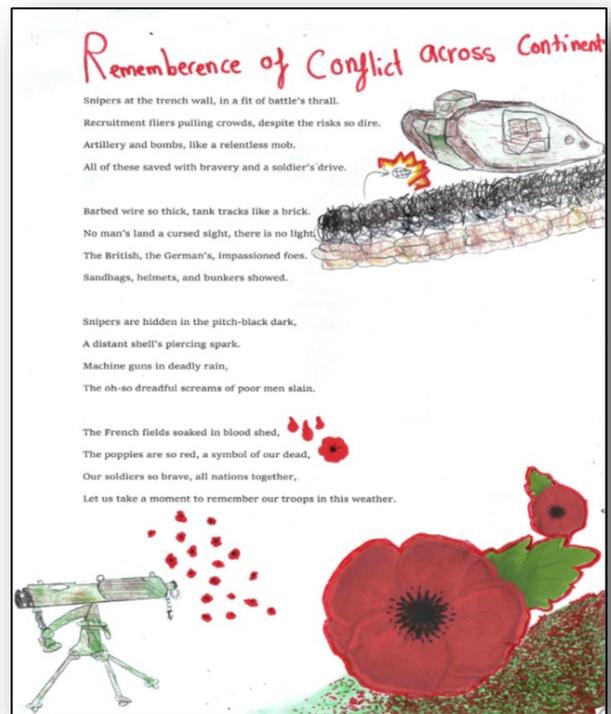
The winning entry from Tejal Tanki (9.6) is reproduced here:

*Snipers at the trench wall, in a fit of battle's thrall.  
Recruitment fliers pulling crowds, despite the risks so dire.  
Artillery and bombs, like a relentless mob.  
All of these saved with bravery and a soldier's drive.*

*Barbed wire so thick, tank tracks like a brick.  
No Man's Land a cursed sight, there is no light.  
The British, the German's, impassioned foes.  
Sandbags, helmets, and bunkers showed.*

*Snipers are hidden in the pitch black dark,  
A distant shell's piercing spark.  
Machine guns in deadly rain,  
The oh-so dreadful screams of poor men slain.*

*The French fields soaked in blood shed,  
The poppies are so red, a symbol of our dead,  
Our soldiers so brave, all nations together,  
Let us take a moment to remember our troops in this weather.*



## Post 16 Applications

Following the success of our Post 16 Evening in October, Year 11 students have been working hard on their PS@16 application forms. Students have been receiving regular careers input from form tutors and the careers team at Soar Valley College and have been encouraged to attend Post 16 provider open days to ensure that chosen settings are the right place for them.

## Eco Committee 23/24

After last year's successful bid for the Green Flag award [achieved with a distinction] the 23/24 committee has got off to a strong start building on this work.



The committee has several new members, who are all excited to get underway with this year's projects. They started the year busily working on the 23/24 action plan and reorganising the Eco Committee display board in school, which lets the Soar Valley community know what's going on.

For 23/24 the committee have chosen the topics of Biodiversity, School Grounds and Marine as their key areas of focus. Some might wonder why the topic of Marine is on the agenda for this year when we live nowhere near the sea! Well, protecting and conserving water-based ecosystems falls into this topic. Therefore, the committee plan to improve the water-based ecosystems close to the school by cleaning local streams and pathways along the River Soar from rubbish/plastic waste.

The big plan for the topics of Biodiversity and School Grounds is to make improvements to the wellbeing garden enabling the space to be used more as an outdoor learning area and to provide a greater opportunity for diverse species to thrive.

The team will also continue to be involved in other activities started last year. For example they will continue working with Terracycle to recycle various items to gain school funds. They will also re-enter the annual Leicester School's Mealbarrow competition and become involved in other small projects that come their way!

## Online Safety

If you follow us on X [formerly Twitter] then you will have seen that we posted this week a useful poster for parents about how to set up any new devices your children might get from Santa in order that they are more easily able to stay safe online.

There are tips about how to set up a Playstation before it is even unboxed, how to use the parental controls on other games consoles, how to ensure their phone, tablet or laptop is safe to use, and what to do to make sure their TV does not allow access to content you wouldn't want them to see.

With students increasingly having access to technology, and using that technology away from their parents, making sure you get the set up right is increasingly important.



## Dates for Your Diary

Parents' Evenings	
Year 11	18 <sup>th</sup> January
Year 8	29 <sup>th</sup> February
Year 10	21 <sup>st</sup> March
Year 7	2 <sup>nd</sup> May

Term Dates	
Spring Term begins	8 <sup>th</sup> January
Spring Half Term Break	19 <sup>th</sup> —23 <sup>rd</sup> February
Spring Term ends	22 <sup>nd</sup> March
Summer Term begins	8 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>Bank Holiday</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> May
Summer Half Term Break	27 <sup>th</sup> —31 <sup>st</sup> May
Summer Term ends	12 <sup>th</sup> July

Other Events Next Term	
Year 11 Reports Home	16 <sup>th</sup> January
Year 11 Mock Exam Results	16 <sup>th</sup> January
Year 7-10 Reports Home	9 <sup>th</sup> February
Year 9 Options Evening	15 <sup>th</sup> February
Year 9 Options Deadline	8 <sup>th</sup> March
Year 11 Reports Home	18 <sup>th</sup> March

