



Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE

Newsletter
Spring Term
March 2024

Message from the Principal

Welcome to our latest newsletter. It is amazing how, in such a very short half term, there can have been so much happening at Soar Valley! This newsletter gives just a small glimpse into the life of the school, which we hope you will find of interest.

Another way of finding out more about the school and, most importantly, about your child's progress in lessons, is through our Parents' Evenings. These are really important and useful opportunities for parents and carers to meet with teaching staff, find out about what is going well and also about steps each child can take to improve even further. There are also opportunities to meet with careers staff, speak with the Head of Year, Associate Head of Year and senior staff, purchase revision guides, find out more about how to use School Gateway, and even occasionally to sample the delights of the cake stall! Please do make a note of the date for your child's year group and we look forward to seeing you at the next opportunity.

I am delighted to report that, having received our allocations for next year's Year 7 cohort, Soar Valley will again be full. It is wonderful to know that so many parents wanted their child to come to our school – 822 applications for 312 places! It means a large number are disappointed each year, but we wish all Year 6 children well as they prepare to move to their new school.

We welcomed most of the new Year 7 in the last week of term for a taster afternoon, where they were taken on a tour by some of our super Year 8 Peer Buddies. They have all made a great first impression and we very much look forward to seeing them again in July for the Transition Day.

Ramadan Mubarak to those observing, and a Happy Easter to others.

Programme—Autumn Cohort

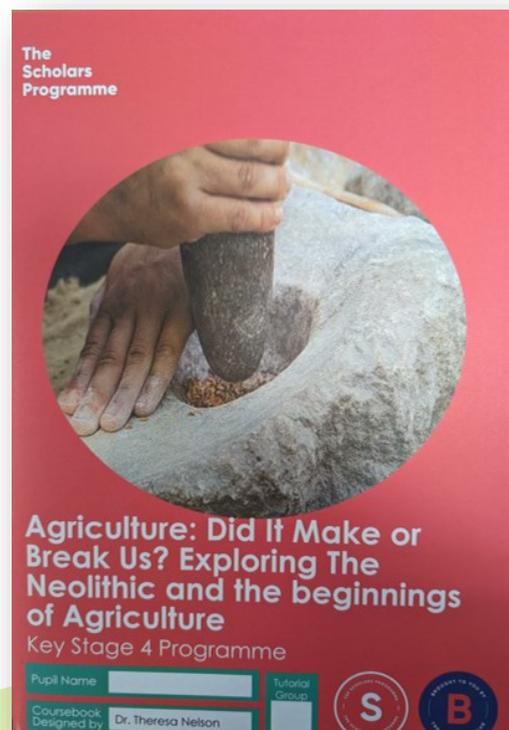
We are incredibly proud of the results achieved by the cohort of students who took part in the Scholars Programme, run by the Brilliant Club, in the Autumn term.

The Scholars Programme is a fantastic opportunity for students to learn how to be better academic readers and writers through a series of tutorials run by a PhD Tutor. That means that they are learning about a topic from a **world expert** on the subject!

The Autumn term cohort had the privilege of working with Dr Theresa Nelson, an American academic whose career has involved such highlights as attending COP 25 as an observer and speaking with world leaders in the area of climate change!

They studied the Neolithic Revolution with Theresa – the point where humans moved from hunter gatherers to agriculture – and produced some incredible final assignments. Students are challenged to work a Key Stage above their current age, and so our students were expected to perform as well as A Level students.

11 of the 14 students involved produced final assignments that merited marks that showed they were working at A Level standard. Maryam 10.5, Umaymah 10.12, Inaaya 10.4 and Asiya 10.9 all managed to achieve a 1st, the equivalent of a good A Level standard. Well done!



Unlock Oxford

On March 14th twelve of our Year 10 students boarded a coach and set off for Oxford University [St Edmund College] as the second cohort of students from Soar Valley College to be invited to take part in the Unlock Oxford Programme. Unlock Oxford is a 4-year programme, engaging with students and their parents from Year 10 right through to Year 13 either face to face or through the provision of online resources. The aim is to encourage students from urban comprehensives to see themselves as capable of attending this prestigious university.

Students were selected by St Edmund Hall based on their academic potential. After the excitement of the coach ride students arrived at St Edmund Hall to settle into their rooms and enjoy some lunch. And then the programme began in earnest, with a lot to squeeze into just 24 hours.

Students were treated to a city tour where they saw the world-famous Bodleian Library, the Natural History Museum, the Venice bridge and Oxford's ladies rowing team.



Then it was on to an Earth Sciences lecture where students got to hold a piece of a meteor that was 4.6 billion years old and solved the mystery as to why volcanoes erupt differently by carrying out several experiments. Undoubtedly, the student favourite was putting fizzy vitamin C and zinc tablets in old film canisters adding water and then seeing how high they could make them pop. Heneil from 10.2 was a geography superstar answering all of the questions.

The second day started with a session on student finance. Students asked lots of great questions about loans and grants and then their budgeting skills were put to the test. All of our students managed to finish the month with money left [which is no mean feat] which Shiv 10.10 announced he is going to spend on luxury breads as this is his favourite food. This may have been because he was so impressed with the different breads served at meal times!

It was then on to the Oxplore challenge where students had to practise their skills at developing an argument. They then had to debate this with another team from another school. SVC came out victorious in their debate on why owning a dog is good for a person's health.

The final session was on Making Good A Level Choices. Students took part in a quiz to identify possible areas of interest, and these were then linked to possible degrees, encouraging students to look at options they may not have considered previously. This was probably the session the students found the most useful and they all went away with additional A Levels and degree ideas to look into that they had not come across before.

The coach journey home was somewhat quieter than the one there, with lots of sleeping after a busy 24 hours of trying new things, challenging themselves and getting excited about future opportunities.



Watermead Park Geography Investigation

As part of their geography lessons, the Year 7 Plus Group visited Watermead Park on Monday 26th February to undertake a geographical enquiry.

The group were investigating plastic pollution in the park and used a tally chart to count the amount of plastic they saw. They discovered that the recent flooding had changed the amount of plastic found in different parts of the park. The students had a great time exploring the park and were very keen to try and arrange some time to go back and do some litter picking!



Attendance Matters

We are very proud to announce that once again we have been awarded with a national attendance award. This was presented for achieving an attendance figure which put us in **the top 10% of schools across the whole country**. We would like to thank all of our school community on helping us maintain our very high attendance figures.

Recently we emailed all parents about how tricky it can be in deciding whether to keep your child off school when they're unwell. To help you decide, we provided you with a guidance document produced by the government in conjunction with the NHS. For example, please send your child into school if they are suffering with sore throats, coughs, colds, conjunctivitis. We will do our very best to look after them. For further guidance please do see our website or contact your child's Associate Head of Year for advice.

If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school on the first day informing us that your child won't be in and providing the reason.

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

Both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 Anti-Bullying Ambassadors have been promoting wellbeing and support for students at Soar Valley College during the spring term. In January, our Year 8 ambassadors started up a friendship group during Thursday lunchtime for students who wanted to make friends and spend their break and lunchtimes within a community group. The Ambassadors host several Year 7 students during lunchtime in the Design Technology learning zone and provide them with a space to talk, play games and build their social skills. A huge thanks to Kavya and Merharaz in 8.7 for the hard work and enthusiasm they demonstrated in setting up this group.

The Key Stage 4 Ambassadors have created a slide for both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 weekly bulletins about the importance of thinking about the words we use. In particular, they are promoting positive respectful behaviours in school. Thanks to Krittika in 10.2 for producing the PowerPoint slide for all students.

Both groups in Key Stage 3 and 4 are working well towards achieving the Wellbeing Badge awarded by the Diana Trust. These activities follow a whole school assembly delivered in the Autumn term on the theme of Making a Noise for Anti-Bullying Week.

**S P R E A D R E S P E C T ,
N O T H A T E :
S A Y N O T O V E R B A L
A B U S E A N D B U L L Y I N G !**

Treat others the way you want to be treated.

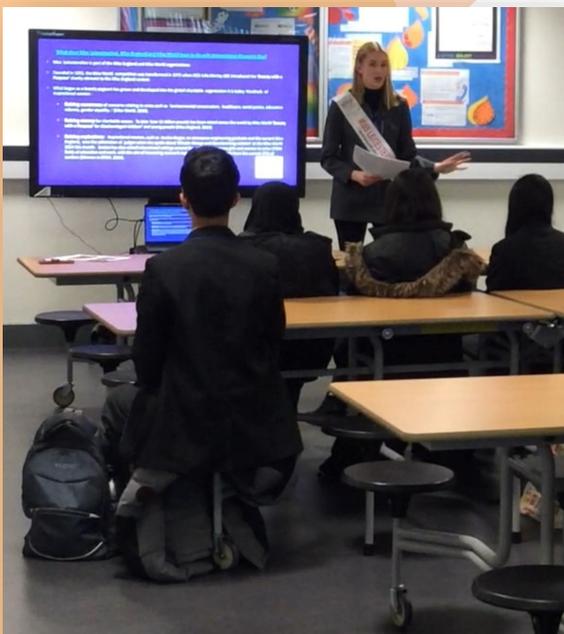
Respect creates a positive and supportive environment where everyone feels valued. It's crucial to use your words to spread kindness, and not hate. Every person deserves to feel safe and respected. Let's spread kindness and understanding.

Respect: the key to change - Let's make a difference together!



Some ways to show respect are:

- Listen well and be present in the conversation
- Be on time and honour your commitments
- Say sorry and apologize when you're wrong – take responsibility for your actions
- Serve others and offer to help when you can
- Show empathy for differences and look for common ground
- Be polite and use appropriate language and manners
- Consider others' thoughts and feelings and seek to understand them



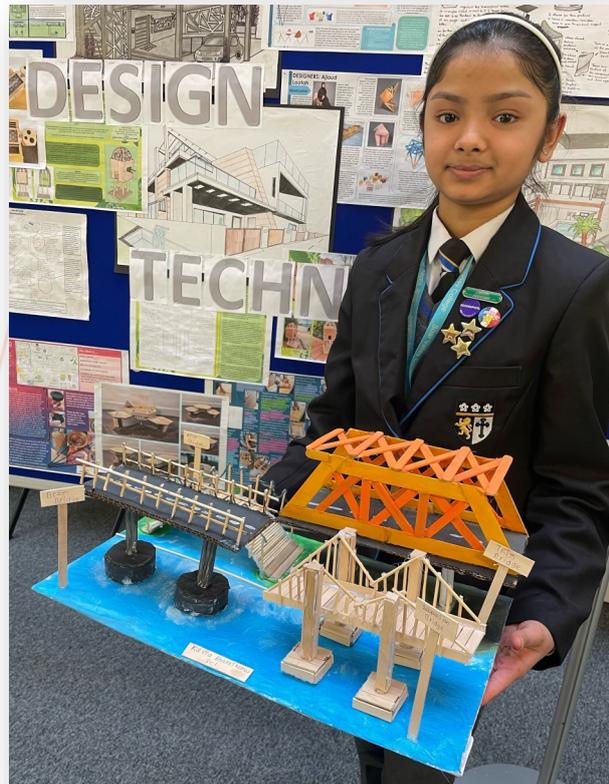
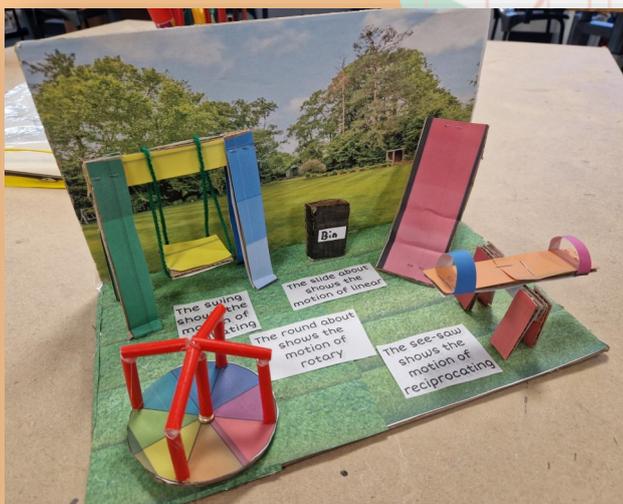
International Women's Day

The Year 10 Active Citizenship Project is in full swing. All 5 groups have been active in February and March, volunteering to support our local community. Some *Green* students have planted broad beans in our allotment, the *Environmental* group have litter picked in Watermead Park following the floods, the *International* group have been planning a news day and the *Hope* students have baked and sold cakes at parents' evenings to support a local charity supporting refugees.

However, a highlight for us this term was on Friday 8th March when the *Thanks* group were joined in school by Miss Leicestershire to celebrate International Women's Day. Miss Leicestershire spoke avidly about her passion for inclusion and the opportunities she has had within her role. She raised awareness of equality and gave an insight into how she came to be Miss Leicestershire.

DT Bridges Project

One of this term's projects in design and technology has involved students learning about structures, forces and bridges. Students are set a homework task to research four types of bridges; truss, beam, arch and suspension. The task allows students to produce a fact file or to create a 3D structure. It is always a joy to see students going above and beyond in D&T when working on homework projects. Look at this exceptional 3D bridges structure from a Year 8 student!



DT Motions Project

In Year 8 Design and Technology lessons students have been learning about the four types of motion linked to their mechanical devices project. These are: reciprocating - moving back and forth; linear - moving in one direction; oscillating - swinging from a point; and rotary - moving 360 degrees around a fixed point.

These motions help explain the direction in which everything moves. Students are set a homework to check their knowledge and understanding in this area by creating a hand held, physical and interactive board in which the motions can be seen working.

The task was planned and worked through in lesson time in which every student was given four split pins and a sheet of corrugated cardboard to complete this challenge. The results created from this homework have been phenomenal, our best to date! The effort, understanding and pride in their work has been very clear to see. Students went above and beyond, creating 3D outcomes with an array of mixed mediums to accentuate their ideas. The examples created have been proudly displayed on the classroom walls and students have been rewarded for their efforts.

First Hockey Fixture

Students who have been attending hockey sessions with an external coach played their first ever fixture together against Leicester Grammar this term.

Raj was in goal and made a huge number of saves whilst very effectively instructing his defence to block shots. A great performance.

In fact, all of the students worked exceptionally well together and tried very hard throughout the match. Oscar narrowly missed a chance to score in the first half when one on one with the goal keeper.

What they lacked in experience, the Soar Valley team more than made up for in resilience and determination. They played a really difficult match and never gave up – well done!



Active Citizenship

Over the course of the school year students within each Year 8 form have been learning what it is to be an ACTIVE CITIZEN. Each form has been given the task of working together in teams to create a fund-raising idea for a chosen charity.

Each form has been split into five teams and given separate tasks to work on:

- One team has researched their chosen charity to explore what the charity's aims are and how it helps others.
- Another team has been looking at the fundraising idea they have chosen and how they would promote the fundraising to the school community.
- Two teams have been working together to create a resource and budget plan on what they would need for the fundraiser and how much things would cost, based on each team having a budget of £30.
- The remaining team in the class will be presenting the work to three members of staff in a 'Dragons Den' style presentation.

Each form will be presenting to the 'Dragons' over a two-week period leading up to and after the Easter holidays. They will be judged against a set of criteria and will be awarded marks. The 'Dragons' will be deciding on two winning forms who will then be given £30 to carry out their fundraising on a date set for the summer term.

The next newsletter will show pictures of some of the presentations and of course pictures of the winning forms chosen by the 'Dragons' to complete the fundraising challenge.

Eco Club Update

With it being such a short half term, the ECO Club have only had two meetings. However, they have been eager to work on completing this year's action plan activities.

Over the two meetings the students have completed the Artivism Project which will be displayed in school, showing the school community the damage that plastic can have on marine wildlife. The students have also been busy creating wildflower seed bombs that will be placed into the Ecology Garden. The intention is that as the year progresses, we will see some lovely colour in the garden and in turn some help with pollination.

Year 8 and Year 9 students from the group joined some Year 10 active citizens and litter picked around Watermead Park which completed an activity within the Marine topic of the ECO Action Plan.



The team have also completed a huge recycled pen count from the exhausted pens that forms at Soar Valley have been collecting. The team managed to count over 2800 pens which have now been collected for recycling from a local charity.

Throughout the rest of the school academic year the students will be completing work in the allotment and working on the Meal Barrow competition again which is something that many Leicester schools take part in. Having entered last year, and had the chance to see some of the entries, we have a few extra ideas up our sleeve!

Speak Up!

In the Drama department, The Speak Up Project continues. Speak Up continues to be an invaluable extracurricular opportunity for the students involved.

Working in conjunction with The National Theatre and Curve Theatre, the aim of Speak Up is to give young people a voice about issues which matter to them. Speak Up is in its second year and we are so pleased to be able to continue this project throughout this academic year.

Students work weekly with a visiting artist, Ben Johnson, who helps students to navigate through their ideas and thoughts and turn them into practice. Following the success of our visit to Curve Theatre, students have written and recorded a song and have just finished script writing with local playwright Jayne Williams.

Moving forward, the Speak Up students are looking forward to working with a local film maker, Kieran Vyas, who will be filming and editing the film created by our wonderful Speak Up students.



Speak Up continues to run every Wednesday from 3pm – 4pm in G9. Should you have any questions about this project, please do email choulton@soarvalley.aspirelp.uk

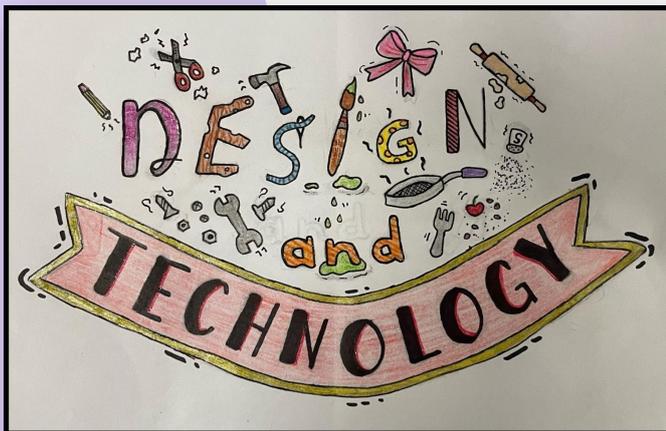


The House System @SVC

House News

The Soar Valley House system continues to provide fantastic opportunities for students to feel a part of a wider community outside the classroom, to create new identities, and to boost their confidence by challenging themselves to try new and exciting things.

Last half term saw a lot of new and thrilling competitions both for the House system and for charity events such as Red Nose Day and Comic Relief. We also had Watermead running form time activities focused on International Women's Day. Forms were given packs with activities in them and had to complete them together as one team to earn as many points as they could for their house. Some of the activities that took place include trivia on influential women, drawing portraits of women such as Malala and Taylor Swift and a Guess Who game.



Red Nose Day / Comic Relief

On Friday 15th March students took part in a sponsored silence where they had to go through the whole day without talking! In return, they had staff members donate money to them which was donated to Save the Children, which raises money for millions of children in need of support, shelter, food, medical care and education.

Additionally, each House carried out competitions during break and lunch times where students had to donate money to participate. Each House had a good number of students show up and it was a successful day for a good cause. Some of the activities included, seated volleyball, puzzles and Lego building.

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House Competition
International Women's Day Quiz

- 1st 1st place form – 10.11
- 2nd 2nd place form – 10.6
- 3rd 3rd place joint forms – 8.3 and 9.5

Slogan Winner – "Empowered women changing lives, Breaking barriers reaching highs, with strength and grace they rise, shattering limits touching skies."

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DT Logo Competition

A House Competition in design & technology was set recently to design a logo which can be printed and used on the front of the sketchbooks for all KS3 students. The logo needed to encompass all aspects of D&T and food and be unique to the subject with images and colour. Students could use hand drawn techniques or submit a computer generated entry.

There were some fantastic entries, and well done to Jaine 9.1 [Abbey] who claimed 1st place on this occasion. Congratulations and thank you to all who submitted entries; there were some brilliant and creative ones to choose from!





The House System @SVC



Geography Competition

The challenge in this term's geography competition was to capture a sense of place in an image that characterises the relationship between people and their environment. Students were tasked to design, draw or photograph anywhere in Leicester that captures its glory. This could be any urban landscape that they have strong connections to or that they feel represents the city in which they live.

Sukhcharan 10.7 [Abbey] was the winner of the competition with his exploration of urban geometry using Leading Lines learned through his Photography GCSE course.



Oscar 10.11 [Victoria] claimed second place expressing his connection with this photo brilliantly, as well as using reflections of rain and water to add ambience. He said, "Born and raised in Leicester, Leicester City Centre is a place I hold a strong connection to. One of my biggest passions is buses: photographing them, learning the bus routes, and talking to the people who work for them. I have a fascination with the large graffiti murals throughout the city centre as they create an atmosphere unique to this environment."



Tejal 9.6 [Watermead] earned 3rd place.

"For this entry I decided to compare the same place on Belgrave Road 119 years apart. This provides a sense of place for me because it connects me to my culture and religion. I decided to compare how the road has changed in terms of urbanisation and diversity."

Upcycling Competition

Creative students assembled to take part in making paper flower pots. The challenge was to use their old paper planes from a previous competition and upcycle them into flower pots. Lots of great entries were received and it was brilliant to see so many students find the joy in upcycling, reminding them to be environmentally conscious. Mrs Richardson had the tough decision to crown a winner and Abbey came in first, followed by Victoria with Watermead in third.



Sunflowers

Last term the entries for the Paper Aeroplane competition soared, but this term we have a much more sedate competition on the go: the Sunflower Growing Challenge. Victoria and Castle's entries have got off to a great start and taken an early lead, but will this be a case of the hare and the tortoise?

Library News

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

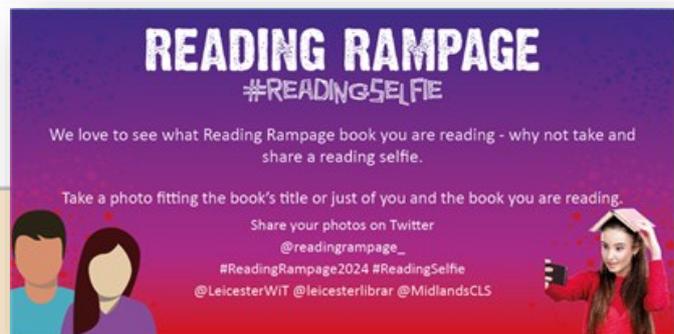


READING RAMPAGE

Year 7 and 8 students are taking part in the Reading Rampage Reading Challenge 2024, where students read as many of the ten suggested titles as they can by the end of May.

One lucky student will win a £10.00 book token and be crowned the Soar Valley Reading Rampage Champion at the virtual celebration event in June.

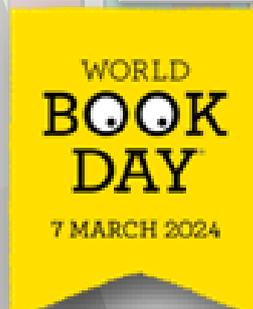
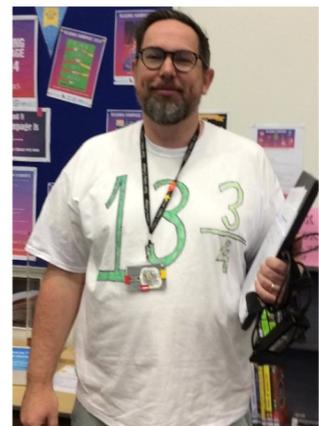
As students read and rate the books, they receive individual awards and participation points for their house. Our current leaderboard has Bradgate and Watermead in joint first place with 12 points each, and Castle House in second place with 11 points.



There are lots of ways for students to earn points and prizes. The challenges set for students over the Easter break were to **tweet a review, create a reading selfie, or create a 'Book in a Jar' based on one of this year's Reading Rampage Books.**

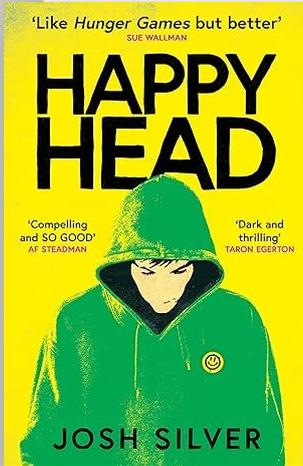
World Book Day

Soar Valley College students celebrated **World Book Day** with a wide array of fun WBD inspired activities including match the book character t-shirts worn by staff, guess the book from the objects, the Desert Island Books door poster competition, a 'Who Did It?' event, author events (including from our very own published author Mrs Randfield) and much, much more!



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Author Visit

In March Soar Valley College had the privilege to welcome Josh Silver, author of *Happy Head*. He spoke to our Key Stage 4 students about mental health, identity, how we should interpret the world around us, how to be a good writer, and the importance of stories. It was a great event and the student reaction can be summed up with one student's response: "He was great!"



Scholastic Book Club Magazine

'Children who read are more likely to be happier, healthier, and experience better mental wellbeing and self-esteem' (Booktrust.org, 2024).

Soar Valley College Library has over 10,000 books and our e-platform site has over 1,500 titles. However, some students like to have their own copies of books at home.

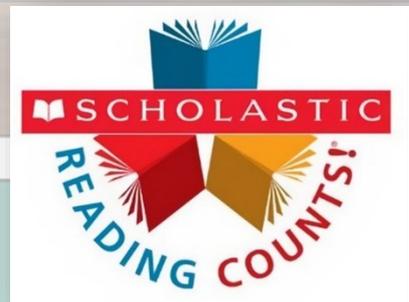
Purchasing books through **Scholastic Book Club Magazine**, from the convenience of your home, not only provides students with extra reading materials but, when you purchase books via the Scholastic Magazine, the SVC library receive a donation of books. It is a win-win for SVC students whose range of reading materials is expanded both at home and at school.

Why reading is so important:

The effect of reading for pleasure is not just improved English grades. There are a range of benefits gained from reading. For example:

- the effect of reading for pleasure on progress in vocabulary, mathematics, and spelling at age 16 is four times that of other contributing factors;
- children aged 11-14 who read in their own time and take part in enriching activities at home are more likely to achieve three or more A-levels, compared to those not engaged in these activities;
- children who begin reading for pleasure early in life tend to perform better at cognitive tests and have better mental health when they enter adolescence.

Information on how to order books via the SVC Scholastic Book Club to follow next term.



Careers News

On the penultimate week of last half term we held our fourth Career Intervention Workshop, which had a focus on Labour Market Information. Year 10 students will explore this further in their upcoming World of Work week.

Soar Valley College is always excited to see our Year 11 students going off for their college interviews which are now happening across the city. We wish Year 11 the best of luck with this next stage of their education.

The Careers page on our college website is updated regularly with key dates and information but should you have any questions or would like to be part of the development of our careers programme, please do email careers@soarvalley.aspirelp.uk.

National Careers Week

We have recently celebrated National Careers Week 2024. All students received an assembly designed to help them think further about their career journey and life beyond Soar Valley College.

We were so pleased to welcome back ex-student Dhara Patel who now works for The National Space Centre as a "Space Expert". Dhara spoke with Key Stage 3 students about her journey since leaving Soar Valley College and about her career journey driven by a passion for physics. Students had the chance to ask questions of Dhara to ensure this was a meaningful experience for them all.

Year 10's assembly was delivered by Jade Walsh from Gateway College who was able to provide an invaluable insight into life at Post-16 college.

In addition, all subject teachers have been delivering a career focussed 'In and On' task at the start of lessons aiming to link their subjects to the world of work. Students have gained a lot from having the chance to reflect upon the transferrable skills which they are utilising across our broad curriculum.

WOW Week

Our annual World of Work week takes place from Monday 8th – Thursday 11th July 2024 for the whole of Year 10. All paperwork for the event will be going home with students so that families can discuss the choices available.



Dates for your Diary

22nd March	Spring Term ends
8th April	School Reopens
16th—17th April	GCSE Photography Exam
22nd—29th April	Year 10 End of Year Exams
25th—26th May	GCSE Graphics / Art Exams
1st May	Year 7 Reports Home
2nd May	Year 7 Parents' Evening
6th May	Bank Holiday
9th May	GCSE Exams Start