

St Alban's Academy



NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 1 2014

St Alban's Academy celebrates outstanding GCSE and A Level results

St- Albans waxaa uu u dabaaldagaayaa Natijadii wanaagsanad ee uu ka helay GCSE iyo ALevel.

تحتفل مدرسة سنت البنس الاكاديمية بنتائج رائعة جداً في ال (جي سي إس إي) وال (أي لفلز)



St Alban's Academy students are celebrating receiving their GCSE certificates. The results are a credit to the efforts of staff, students and parents over the last year.

65% of students achieved at least 5A*-C grades including English and mathematics, a rise of 9 percentage points since 2013 (56%) and of 34 percentage points since the academy opened (2009, 31%).

83% of students achieved grade A* - C in English, a rise of 23 percentage points on the previous year (2012, 53%; 2013 62%).

80% achieved A* - C in Mathematics, maintaining the standards that saw the academy rated the top performing school in the country for progress in this subject in 2013. (2012, 83%; 2013 81%).

33% of students attained the EBacc standard, a rise of 14 percentage points on the previous year (2012 0%; 2013 19%). There were notable successes in the academy's engineering specialism (100% pass rate in GCSE double award engineering; 83% pass rate in GCSE product design) and in IT (96% of students passed their GCSE at grade C or above.)

Students and staff at St Alban's Academy are celebrating our first set of AS Level results with 86% of students achieving the pass rate of A*-E. 52% of grades were at C or above, with 31% at A*-B. This is the first set of results since the academy opened its new Sixth Form in September 2013. Of the students who took 3 or more AS subjects, 78% achieved A*-E grades. Many students did very well - Sufyan Mohammed achieved 3 As and 1 C and on receiving his results said that he was "overwhelmed".



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

GCSE - I congratulate all the students on their hard work and their results. These results, achieved through rigorous GCSE qualifications rather than easier vocational qualifications, are a vindication of our belief in the academic potential to excel of every child, whatever their starting point. It is testament to the ethos of our academy community that every staff member and every student at St. Alban's Academy believes we can achieve even more in the coming years. With our new building, dedicated and caring staff and a shared commitment to delivering outstanding education in partnership with the community we serve, we are confident that we will continue to progress. I'd like to thank our staff for their unshakeable belief in our students' potential, our students for their diligence and our parents for their support.

A Level - Sixth form students also deserve hearty congratulations on their hard work and their results in an impressive first year of advanced level study. These results are very encouraging and as our sixth form continues to develop I know that we will achieve even more in the coming years. We look forward to the time when all our students will be progressing to university and the career of their choice.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

December

Award Ceremony - 11/12/2014

Reward Trip - 17/12/2014

School closes - 18/12/2014 -
Christmas break.

January

School reopens - 5/1/2015

(students return 6/1/2015)

Sixth Form Mock Exams Start -
6/1/2015

Year 11 Mock Exams Start -
12/1/2015

Year 8 Parents Evening -
20/1/2015

Year 8 Parents Meeting -
22/1/2015

Year 7 Parents Evening -
23/1/2015

Year 9 Parents Evening -
29/1/2014

CLOSURES

5/1/2015 - Staff training

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LORD MAYOR VISIT

We were delighted to welcome the new Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Shah on Thursday 25th September. After touring the building with Principal David Gould, Councillor Shah gave a brief talk to sixth formers and students in years 10 and 11 followed by a question and answer session. Nisar, Head Boy and Salihah, Head Girl presented the Lord Mayor with a book written by Professor Peter Marsh (Vice Chair of the LGB) about the history of St Alban's Academy.

Councillor Shah, who was born locally and studied engineering at University was very impressed with the building and particularly the facilities it offers its students. He hopes to return to the academy accompanied by international guests visiting Birmingham in the future.



HOW TO GET TO THE BAR



Two aspiring lawyers, from upper sixth, attended a seminar at Aston University recently where they met barristers from a variety of legal backgrounds.

They learned about the wide range of careers in law and had an opportunity to work on mock cases.

A junior barrister talked to students about her long journey to the bar and the many difficulties she had faced, including being rejected the first time she applied.

Students Nisar and Anika said,

'I now have more insight into the different sections of the law and feel motivated to work hard to achieve my

dream of becoming a lawyer.'

'The whole day was informative and interesting but what struck me most was the determination of the junior barrister we met - she totally inspired me!'

Whilst Anika is applying for a law degree, Nisar wants to read history at university before he does a law conversion course.

SIXTH FORMERS IN THE CAPITAL

Five of our current Year 13s spent a week in London in August working with our sponsor ARK at their offices in Holborn. Students worked alongside ARK employees on a variety of projects, a useful insight into the world of work. They stayed in university accommodation and had to budget carefully for food and entertainment during their stay.

Some of the group visited Bloomberg, a global financial software and media company, to pitch the ARK STARZ mentoring programme to their staff. Our persuasive students signed up 16 Bloomberg employees to help mentor other ARK students in London academies.

Students also visited the new ARK Elvin Academy in Wembley where they had the opportunity to see first-hand what goes into building a new school, of particular interest to the budding engineer in the group.



MESSAGE TO PARENTS - UNIFORM SALES

Dear Parents and Guardians,

After half term, uniform sales will be open at 8.15-8.30 and 4.00 - 4.15 on Monday's and Wednesday's.

Thank you,

St Alban's Academy Finance Team

UMAR SHARIF GOES TO BOSTON

The Phillips Exeter Summer School is a 5-week-long academic course in July and August, in New Hampshire, USA. This year, ARK Schools sent five highly motivated year 11 students from across the ARK network to participate in the prestigious summer school. Phillips Exeter is renowned for using the Harkness method of teaching, which is based on a seminar approach and places students at the centre of the learning process. Seminars are conducted around an oval table where students are encouraged to discuss their ideas with the rest of the group, to facilitate collaborative learning.



Umar Sharif, who has joined St Alban's Sixth form this year was one of the five students who won the place, after a rigorous application process.

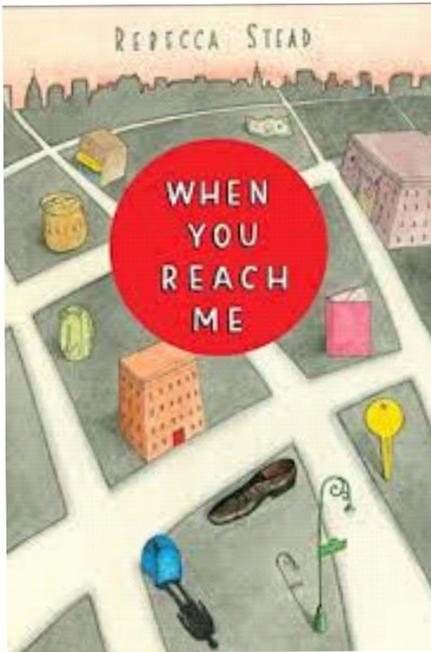
This is what Umar had to say about this incredible experience:

"Spending the summer at Phillips Exeter Academy was truly the best experience of my life and I thank St Alban's and ARK for giving me such an amazing opportunity.

The first few days were really hectic as I tried to settle in, sort out my timetable and get used to the huge campus while my body adjusted to the different time zone. First impressions were definitely that it was all quite overwhelming but in a good way.

All in all it was an experience of a lifetime enjoyed by all 800 people who attended and I would definitely recommend it to current Year 11s. I look forward to talking to them about the application process and my experiences." We are very proud of Umar, not everyone could go half way round the world to spend time with people they have never met for five weeks and clearly he benefited hugely from the experience.

RECOMMENDED READ



Rebecca Stead's 'When you Reach Me' is a remarkable book, which mingles science fiction and mystery together without ever belonging to either of those genres. Indeed, for what looks at first sight like a campus novel, it has a lot of very clever tricks up its sleeve and each short chapter advances the story along like a

master magician. It's set in New York in the late 70's but it doesn't have the usual heavy handed signifiers that might give this away, although the opening chapter gives quite a hefty clue. As much a good read for adults as well as the young adult audience for which it is intended, it has been likened to a junior version of 'The Time Traveller's Wife.' The dialogue between the heroine Miranda and her teenage friends is deadpan and ironic and reminiscent of the children in the 'Peanuts/Charlie Brown cartoon strips.

This is a short, easy to read piece of fiction, that is funny, moving and sad with some very profound things to say about the nature of friendship, and utterly, utterly brilliant to boot!

SEN IS CHANGING

For more than twenty years the SEN Code of Practice has helped children with special educational needs to make the most of their education. During that time, schools have developed their skills, and the outcomes for children with SEN have improved. As a result, the law has changed. The focus is now not on what is wrong, but on how well the child is progressing, and what can be done within the whole school to ensure that they continue that progress. As you know, at St Alban's, we already assess each individual's progress six times per year and tailor the provision to help each child to achieve challenging targets.

Under the new law, there are no Statements. Instead there will be an "Education, Health and Care Plan" which looks at all a child's needs and which can last until the young person is twenty five. Children and young people who already have Statements will gradually be transferred over to the new EHC Plans, starting in our case with Year 11. All parents will receive a letter from the Government explaining the changes.

One important change is that information must be more easily available for parents. Birmingham City Council has set up a website, mycareinbirmingham.org, which has a great deal of information about services for both children and adults.

SCIENTIST OF THE MONTH

Muhammad Abdus Salam was a theoretical Physicist who during the course of his lifetime made profound breakthroughs in the field of Particle Physics. He was born and spent much of his childhood in Pakistan. He was identified as being a gifted student and at the age of 14 scored the highest marks ever recorded for the entrance examination to his local University.



Salam would eventually win an award for a scholarship to Cambridge University in 1946, where he completed a Double First Class Honours degree in Physics and Mathematics. He was a student of many Nobel Prize winners including Dirac and Feynman. He famously solved within a few months, a mathematical problem that his teachers had been trying to solve for years.

Salam received the Nobel Prize for his work on explaining how the fundamental forces within the universe interact within all particles. Salam's work formed the basis for the recent discovery of the Higgs boson also known as the 'God particle'.