



Ark St Alban's praised in TES cover story

تقرير الSET يثني على مدرسة ارك سنت البنس الاكاديمية

ARK STALBAN's WAXAA LAGU AMAANAY BOGGA SARE EE JOORNAALKA LA YIRAAHDO TES

In the wake of the Trojan Horse incident, Birmingham was typecast as an educational trouble spot. But one important fact was overlooked: the city's schools are outperforming all others - even those in London. - Joseph Lee reports



Birmingham:
the untold story of the city swept up in scandal

Ark St. Alban's Academy was recently featured in a TES cover feature:

'Birmingham's shining bright'. The story reveals how schools in Birmingham, once thought of as underachieving, have recently seen an impressive increase in results. The TES notes that at Ark St Alban's "80 percent of students qualify for the pupil premium, yet 69 percent achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and maths - well above the national average of 52.8 percent."

Overall, the city of Birmingham boasts GCSE results that are 8.8 points above the rest of the country, when taking into account economic disadvantage. The TES journalist spoke to Ark St. Alban's Principal Mark Gregory, who they noted had personally visited the family of every new student entering the school. History and IT teacher Fionnuala O'Connor was also featured. She discussed the recent success story of Ark St. Alban's Academy students being accepted into Russell Group universities. "I get goose pimples just talking about it," said Ms O'Connor.

Principal's message

The first term of the academic year is nearly finished. Our dedicated students have been working very hard to make great progress, with Year 11 completing their mock GCSE exams as I write. Meanwhile our gifted staff have continued to support them in the mission to get to university, succeed there and lead a fulfilling life that makes them happy and empowers them to give back to the community. None of this would be possible without the great support we enjoy from our parents and the wider community, for which all of us are very grateful.

In this issue you will see that we have recently been featured in the Times Educational Supplement. I told the journalist who visited us about our inclusive religious ethos and about the shared aspirations this community has for its students. Particularly, I was keen to tell him that when a child comes to St. Alban's Academy we treat them as we would our own children. That is why I am pleased that our examination results are so strong and that we have a well ordered school environment that allows all children to learn well.

Christmas is an important time of year in the Christian calendar. It is a special time when families come together and feel great love for and from one another. It is also a time of peace and, coming at the end of the year, of reflection. At this time we often hear the greeting 'peace on earth and good will to all'. These words sum up the spirit of the season, one of generosity, kindness and hope. Therefore, let me finish by wishing every member of our community a happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.



Past Sixth Form students come home for Christmas



This summer our sixth form students achieved their first ever A Level results. As a consequence all of them were offered places at university. It is now that time of year for them to come back home to spend time with their families and they have begun to tell us about their experiences of their first term at university.

Looking back, the sixth form celebrated great successes in their first ever results. 92% of all exams were passed and an impressive 32% of students achieved 3 or more A*-B grades in A level or equivalent. BTEC students achieved great success and all students were offered places at university, many of them at elite Russell Group Universities such as Birmingham and Warwick. Several went to Coventry which has just been named as the 'TES university of the year'.

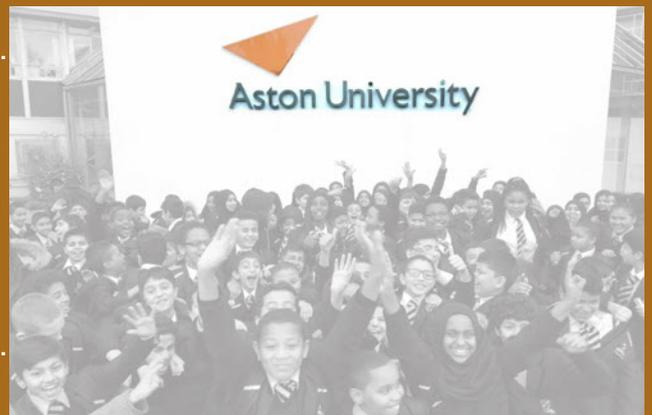
Have a look at the website for more information about our successes, including the £100,000 worth of university bursaries that our students won. Application forms to join our sixth form can also be found there. Email us for more information and questions or if you know a Y11 student who is not at the academy but would like to have a look round our amazing facilities and meet our wonderful students and staff.

My visit to university - Abade Halimy

On Tuesday 17 of November, we visited Aston University. As I have never visited a university before. I felt great joy as I was in a very cheerful mood.

The others were also excited, but when I first saw the university I was just astonished. Furthermore inside the university it felt that the whole area was full of education.

The scholars were so nice and friendly we asked them a lot of questions - so many that I could not keep count. In addition when I learned more I felt like I really wanted to go university.



More award winners for Ark St Alban's



Last year 40 students from years 9 and 12 took part in an undergraduate mentoring scheme organised by the Aim Higher Programme.

Mentors from Aston University provided face-to-face and on-line support and encouragement to students as they encounter educational, personal and career-related challenges.

They work with our young people to support individual learning and development needs and are positive role models helping develop and increase confidence, motivation, persistence and self-esteem. They help raise awareness of Higher Education and future study opportunities; while also improving organisational and study skills.

Hundreds of students across the city took part in the scheme and awards were up for grabs. Once again our students were successful, Dontay Smith being awarded overall Key Stage 3 mentee of the year and Entesar Salah runner up. There were also awards for sixth formers Mariam Adil who was nominated for mentee of the year and Samira Ali who was runner up.

Masuma mid term graduation in University of Birmingham Medicine Course

We are very proud of Year 13 student Masuma Ali who was accepted onto the highly competitive UoB routes into medicine programme last year.

She worked very hard on the programme alongside her studies and other extra-curricular activities such as volunteering, pursuing the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award and doing lots to help the school community.

Masuma was presented with her certificate by the Head of the Medical School who praised students for their tenacity and reliability - two great qualities for any career in medicine.

Masuma will be applying to the university to study bio-medical science after which she hopes to fast track onto a medicine degree.

Girls go STEM



Early in the new term Year 9 girls were invited to visit the University of Birmingham for a careers event designed to give them an insight into careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

They met young female engineers from a range of industries and took part in two fascinating workshops. They worked with undergraduate and PhD students in the Computer Science Department, programming small robots, then with chemical engineers they designed an experiment to test the brittleness of chocolate.

Widening our young women's horizons and overcoming stereotyping is hugely important to our students, if we are to ensure they consider a

wide and diverse range of career/degree options.

Students enjoyed a tour around this great university and got to eat leftover chocolate - so an all-round enjoyable event.

Forward thinkers moving ahead

The six high achieving Year 9 students who were accepted onto this aspirational programme, with the University of Birmingham last year are continuing with the programme.

The programme is designed to enhance their chances of accessing Russell Group and Oxbridge universities.

They attended a subject taster day recently where they explored the importance of GCSEs on the ladder to academic success.

They attended a lecture given by a PhD Medical Sciences student, where they considered blood flow and resistance and had an introduction to learning Chinese.

The keynote speaker, a senior lecturer in medical sciences, gave a fascinating lecture about human survival and talked to students about finding out what they are passionate about and not being afraid to try different things even if they don't always succeed.

Students have been invited back for a university social activity in the spring, so watch this space for further reports!



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Recommended read



Author Matt Haig's brilliance is to have a middle class family of vampires living in a pretty picture postcard village outside of Manchester. They struggle to keep their true natures suppressed to the extent that Peter and Helen have never revealed who and what they really are to their two teenage children Clara and Rowan, let alone their friends and neighbours. Only when Clara is attacked at a party one night by a school bully and she brings the fangs out to play do things begin to spiral out of control, as the charismatic but deeply unhinged vampire brother-in-law Will is brought in to sort out the mess, leading to further complications.

Thought there wasn't anything further to be mined from the vampire novel? Think again. Haig has given the undead a completely new mortician's makeover, extracting great fun in reinventing the mythology. Occasionally laugh out loud funny and featuring some great bloodletting and action set pieces, this should appeal to anyone who doesn't like vampire novels! Does contain strong language, so year 12 and above only.

Dates for your diary

21/12/2015 to 1/1/2016 -
Christmas Holiday

4/1/2016 to 5/1/2016 -
Academy Inset Days

Applications for Sixth Form places are now being accepted for 2016/2017, see website for application forms.

Message to Parents

Just a gentle reminder to parents, that all uniform should be purchased from Clive Marks stores in either Small Heath or Kings Heath.

Clive Marks - Small Heath
Unit 1-2 Anderton Road
Small Heath
B11 1TG
Birmingham

Maths puzzle

A magic rectangular belt always shrinks its length to $1/2$ and width to $1/3$ whenever its owner wishes something.

After three such wishes, its surface was 4 cm^2 .

What was the original length, if the original width was 9 cm ?



Chaplain's message

Beneath the Christmas tree of civilization, with its many branches of races, may we lay imperishable presents of goodwill, spiritual service, and unconditional love for all. These are the gifts that Christ wants to receive.

Paramahansa Yogananda
(d. 1952)

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