



The  
Bulmershe  
School  
INSPIRING POTENTIAL,  
ACHIEVING TOGETHER

# Bull's Eye

The Bulmershe School Newsletter

March 2018

## STUDENTS SHINE IN LAW TRIAL CONTEST

**B**ulmershe students competed in a Mock Trial competition at Reading Crown Court earlier this month.

The competition aims to introduce the legal system to young people in an exciting way and is also designed to develop skills that will be of use to the students throughout their lives.

The students take on the various roles in a trial and try a case against another school with the assistance of real life magistrates, legal advisers, court staff and other legal professionals.

Our team (pictured right with members of staff) had been working incredibly hard since October in preparation, and it was time to put all that hard work to the test.

The students engaged in tasks ranging from the dramatic to the cerebral as they went about taking part in a court case centred on a hypothetical scenario involving a young person being accused of possessing a bladed article.

Our lawyers Maia Stringfellow, Charlotte Ibbotson, Emilia Clacy and William Gale argued exceptionally, putting pressure on witnesses and defendant alike, showing them to be highly competent critical thinkers. Hannah Hobbs, Alice Mitchell,

Millie Rowell, Alana Smith, Erin-Kate Foster and Gethin Slatter took on the roles of legal advisor, usher, witnesses and defendant respectively. All of these students demonstrated their dramatic prowess and an accomplished ability to

keep their head when placed under scrutiny and pressure.

Sasha Kharsyuk who expertly depicted the day's events undertook the court artist role. Finally, Timothy Szmidt, Ella Wolfel and Demelza Hill played the magistrates. This deeply challenging role, which required them to officiate impartially over the day's proceedings before passing judgment, was completed with grace, decorum and considerable insight.

The way in which this group represented the school can only be described as impeccable and we are delighted to

that their excellent performance resulted in second place in the competition.

This means we stand a good chance to progress to the regional heats in May. If so we are certain the students will continue to demonstrate the exceptional skills they have acquired so far.



### Helpers at Earley St Peter's disco

**O**ur Key Stage 4 Transition Leaders helped to run stalls at the Earley St. Peter's Primary School's disco early last month.

Our students led stalls that included face painting, hair dressing, temporary tattoos, nail painting and helping students have the confidence to dance to the DJ's music in the main hall.

Our students had the wonderful experience of working with younger children and meeting parents, as well as promoting The Bulmershe School as outstanding role models to the local community.

The students involved (pictured left) were Jess, Caitlin, Grace, Liviya, Sandhuni and Robyn.

Thank you to Anne Oke for the invitation and to the organisers at Earley St. Peter's Primary School for the warm welcome. We look forward to the next one in July!

Stay up-to-date with the school website: [www.thebulmersheschool.com](http://www.thebulmersheschool.com)

## Bulmershe hosts Year 5s 'Bake Off' competition

Last month students from our neighbouring primary schools came to Bulmershe to take part in the first-ever Year 5 Bake Off day.

Students from Highwood, Rivermead and South Lake primary schools had spent months planning, designing and practising their 'showstopper bake', ready to be judged by Councillor Keith Baker and Mrs Woodfin, the Bulmershe Headteacher.

They were ably supported by Year 9 Bulmershe students Ellie, Scarlett, Harvey, Alfie, Sandhuni, Caitlin, Jess and Livya, whose outstanding leadership skills were highly praised by students, staff and parents. They are pictured right with the certificates awarded for their efforts.

The day consisted of Year 5 students baking and creating their showstopper bake, and completing an icing skills challenge. Their designs were fabulous, as can be seen in the photograph above.

Congratulations to the students from Rivermead Primary School who were adjudged the Bake Off winners.

Our grateful thanks go to Winnersh Sainsbury's who kindly donated the ingredients; to the Mayor of Woodley, Councillor Jenny Cheng, for supporting the celebration presentations; to

Councillor Keith Baker and Mrs Woodfin for the judging. Huge thanks also to the teaching staff and parents from the Highwood, Rivermead and South Lake Primary Schools for helping to make the Bake Off a great occasion. We are already looking forward to the next one!



## Bulmershe students commended in STEM challenge



Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) were on the agenda when a team of Year 8 students took the Institute of Engineering & Technology's Faraday Challenge, last month at Leighton Park School.

The challenge was to design an attraction for the new plot at Thorpe Park. The team from Bulmershe decided to go for a tree house restaurant, with a revolving menu in the middle of the tables. While they didn't have the winning design, they were commended on having the best paperwork out of the teams on the day. The students found the day a lot of fun, and have gained knowledge about what careers in STEM can offer

## Snowy welcome for teachers from China

The school welcomed eight teachers from China last month, who are currently studying at the University of Reading's International Study and Language Institute.

We host teachers twice a year, which gives our Year 7 students the unique opportunity to learn about life for children in China. This time the students were taught about the Chinese spring festival and how to make traditional paper lanterns; about Chinese dance, Tai Chi and the Great Wall of China. They were also given lessons in Mandarin.

During their four day visit the teachers also observed our teachers at work and school life in general, giving them a valuable insight into teaching in Britain, which is very different from practice in China. Unfortunately their last day on Thursday was disrupted by the snow, but this gave them their first opportunity to build a snowman - something they won't experience at home as, coming from Southern China they never have snow! Thanks to our visitors and the ISLI at the University - we look forward to our next batch of visitors in October.



*Left: Mr Linnell with one of our visitors. Above: the Chinese teachers took full advantage of the snow!*

# MATHS CHALLENGE SUCCESS FOR BULMERSHE STUDENTS

Bulmershe students performed brilliantly in the national Maths Challenge recently.

The Challenge was organised by the UK Mathematics Trust (UKMT), set up to advance education in maths through competitions and other activities. Its three-level Maths Challenge covers the secondary school age range and has attracted over 600,000 entries from over 4,000 schools and colleges.

The Maths Challenge question papers, which are taken in school, contain 25 multiple-choice questions and gold, silver and bronze certificates are awarded to successful participants. This year's Bulmershe entrants are pictured right as they complete the paper.

The school entered 29 students, mostly from Years 10 and 11. Two won gold, 11 won silver and won 16 bronze certificates.

As five extra entries had become available, the Year 8 Top Set were offered these places. Author and broadcaster Simon Singh (pictured right speaking to Bulmershe students recently) is encouraging and sponsoring the group. In an email to the other schools involved in the project he commented, 'Mrs Whipple, who teaches Year 8s at The Bulmershe School, entered five of her students for the Intermediate Maths challenge i.e. a year early!! The result was that two of them got silvers, and three got bronzes, which is brilliant.'

Miss Whipple adds, 'I am delighted that they did so incredibly well! I am confident that others in the group, if they had been given the opportunity would have achieved just as well. As a group, they have worked hard and have taken the challenge of developing their maths at an accelerated rate.'

The most successful participants at each level are invited to enter the world-wide 'Kangaroo' contest — so called because its organisation was inspired by the Australian Maths Trust. Each year over six million school pupils aged 5-18 from more than 50 countries take part. Successful students are invited to sit either the Grey or Pink Kangaroo papers, depending on school year. Bulmershe student Alice Burnish has qualified for the Pink Kangaroo: congratulations Alice and well done to everyone involved in the Challenge.



## Snow can't stop World Book Day celebrations



World Book Day, set for 1 March, had to be postponed because of the snow closure. In Bulmershe it was held instead on 8 March - International Women's Day.

This gave English classes the opportunity to consider women's achievements throughout literary history. Staff were elaborately dressed as their favourite book characters, Departments decorated their doors in honour of a favourite novel and a book and cake sale was held in the library where students bought over 100 books between them! The school also decided (for years 7 to 9) to 'Drop Everything And Read' for 30 minutes of the school day. It was a fantastic day to celebrate and promote just how important a good book can be.

Aspiring author Graham Holliday came to speak to one of our Year 7 classes earlier this month about his novel: a work in progress titled 'The Boy from the Golden Sky'.

Students were given the first few chapters to read beforehand, and had an opportunity to be editors! Holliday wanted to know their thoughts about his settings, characters and plot development – and they really delivered.

It was a great experience for our students to get a taste of real-life editing and publishing discussions. Here's hoping Bulmershe will get a mention if the book becomes a classic!



## SPORTS NEWS



**More cross country success for Renee:** congratulations to Year 10 student Renee (pictured left) who finished in the top eight for Berkshire in the Inter Counties Cross Country race held at Newbury Showground recently. This means Renee will now go on to represent Berkshire at the English Schools Competition on 17 March in Leeds. The standard of runners was very high, particularly from Berkshire Schools, with the county winning the team trophy. Well done on a fantastic achievement Renee - and good luck at Leeds.

**Year 9 Sports Leaders are Smashing:** the Year 9 GCSE PE Sport Leaders successfully ran the Primary SMASH Badminton Competition at Woodford Park Leisure Centre in March. Students worked in pairs to run a specific station to the seven different primary schools.



The stations included Switch, Target Zone, Criss Cross Rally, Net Rally, Triple Hit Rally and Catch the Bird. Students were responsible for demonstrating, running and scoring their station and did a fantastic job, receiving very positive feedback from primary school staff and SGO Mrs Lappin. Well done to all 15 students involved.

## From the Headteacher, Amamda Woodfin

First, I would like to thank parents and carers for their understanding and support during our recent snow days: it is never an easy decision to close the school and disrupt students' education.

We learned recently that all places are filled for our Year 7 intake in September, with a waiting list of 59. This is great news, and all credit must go to our hard working staff and students, and our Transition Leader Ms Harris and her team of transition ambassadors. We have high hopes already for next year as our busy Open Mornings have created lots of positive feedback.

We are in the midst of mock exams, a very stressful time for students and parents alike. With adolescent mental health very much in the news at the moment we are extremely lucky to be working with Reading University and Place2Be, who are providing advice and support for students in Years 11 to 13 should they feel they need it.

We learned the sad news recently of the passing of a former pupil. Nikhil Bharadawa joined us from Highwood Primary, and attended our Sixth Form until 2014. He was a quiet, hard-working and thoughtful student. He has been described by staff as gentle and kind, determined to succeed and well-liked by his peers. Our condolences go to his family for their great loss.

Sadly, we also learned of the death of two former staff members. Mr Dave Curry worked at the school from 1988 to 2006 as a Geography teacher and Head of Outdoor Education. Many past students will have fond memories of his outdoor education programme at Ufton Court and Dinton Pastures; canoeing on the Thames; the popular Year 8 camp; and the 1993 expedition to Iceland. He remained good friends with past and present members of staff, who were shocked and saddened to hear of his passing.

Mrs Debbie Grimmond joined The Bulmershe School in 2004 and was Director of Humanities, before she left in 2009 to continue her work at Reading University.

She returned to the school periodically, teaching Psychology and Religious Studies.

Mrs Grimmond was well liked by both staff and students, had a ready laugh and an infectious sense of humour. She will be greatly missed by all who worked alongside her.

Our thoughts are with all three families at this difficult time.



## Some of our successful events so far this year

**We** ran a very successful evening for parents on 'How to help with revision and exam stress'. Simon Brett from Reading University, Year 11 Head Miss Gray, and Head of Sixth Form Mr Lord presented ideas on how parents can support their children through the exams, and develop study skills and revision techniques. **You can view the presentation for this event on the school website:**

[WWW.thebulmersheschool.com](http://WWW.thebulmersheschool.com)

**Arc Counselling Service ran two very well received workshops** to support parents with children showing signs of anxiety, panic or stress. **You can see the presentation given for this event on the school website.**

**We** are extremely proud to have hosted a **AQA\* GCSE conference** for around 380 students and 30 teachers from 16 local secondary schools.

The event, which we hope to host annually, was a great success. Our Year 11 and 10 students enjoyed an interactive day on the (9-1) AQA GCSE PE specification, with the senior examiners who wrote it. This event was of great benefit not only to students but also to the professional development of teachers from Bulmershe and other local schools.

*\*AQA (Assessment & Qualifications Alliance) sets and marks the papers for around half of all GCSEs and A-levels taken every year.*