Our primaries, secondaries and college have been busy!
The college celebrated the breadth of its community last week by holding a Diversity Day. The Student Council and other interested students produced display boards about their own cultures, including displays on British, Pakistani, Jamaican, Spanish, Somali and Kenyan cultures. There were also displays to represent the LGBT community and Paganism. Some students wore traditional dress and produced items of food particular to their culture. A member of teaching staff offered henna hand tattoos to students over the lunch break. Assistant Principal Louise Dale-Barron commented: “Equality and Diversity is a central value of the College and we celebrate the many things that we have in common as well as those that make us individuals. It was wonderful to see students embracing this celebration with such enthusiasm.”

ESU Schools Mace Debate
Students at the college challenged themselves in a debating competition last week. Students Amaan Ali and Kate Sinclair, supported by fellow student Saffron March and Student Development Intern James Wild, took part in the ESU Schools Mace Debate at Lyng Hall School in Coventry. They debated the topic, “This House would ban the sale and consumption of meat.” They were up against Bablake School and after a very close debate, were edged out by just a few points. It was a great experience for the students, who are looking forward to more competitions later in the year.

It followed hot on the heels of another debate back in October, when students attended a debating competition with teams of other sixth form students from across Solihull at the Council Chambers in Solihull. The team on that occasion consisted of Amaan Ali, Aiesha Ali, Thanzeela Chowdury and Neila Hoxha, who debated topics such as, “whether CCTV is a breach of privacy” and “whether Higher Education should be free”. The quartet of students debated very well and Amaan Ali was asked to be the Chair for the final.
Term One for the Trainees

It’s been a fantastic first term at South Birmingham SCITT with 45 trainees starting with us (26 Primary and 19 Secondary) this year. It’s been a lovely first term getting to know the trainees and watching them develop their teaching and learning. Their professional studies sessions have been useful; the trainees have been focusing on different elements of teaching such as behaviour, differentiation and lesson planning so far. The team spirit and professionalism from the trainees has been admirable and to top the term off it was lovely to get everyone together for a party as we prepare to send them onto their second placements for the Spring term.

To round off the first term we took the trainees on a Wellbeing/ Cultural Literacy trip to Cadbury World. Not only did we learn about the different trips and excursions Cadbury offers schools from Early years through to Key Stage 5, we also learnt the art of chocolate making and what makes a good Creme Egg! It was a well-earned day for the trainees who have worked exceptionally hard this term and they really appreciated a day out with a difference.

Family School Council Meets TeachFirst

The Pegasus Family School Council have been busy this term leading on school improvement. Following their elections, pupil councillors took part in a photography project to demonstrate what makes Castle Vale special to them. They have improved the lunchtime dining experience for their fellow pupils with classical music, and decided to move the salad cart so that more children can access healthier choices. In October, Russell Hobby met with the council to discuss his role as CEO of Teach First. He was impressed by how articulate, hard-working and engaged the Pegasus children were.

Enrichment Curriculum

As part of Pegasus’ weekly enrichment curriculum, the children take part in cooking, art work, forest school and growing hub activities. They recently planted trees donated from the Woodland Trust, are designing and growing their own vegetable patches and have used known artists to produce their own creative works. Pegasus have also designed Jack Dromey’s (their local MP) Christmas card this year!
Visit to Keble College, Oxford University

In November, 30 Year 11 Lyndon students visited Keble College (part of Oxford University) to listen to a talk around higher education opportunities and the importance of academic success. Students were treated to a tour of the campus by Oxford students, lunch onsite and a treasure hunt in the city, which all teams successfully completed! Students were encouraged to visit the explore website following their visit to further develop their higher order thinking skills (www.oxplore.org).

Coventry Building Society Workshops

All Year 10 students at Lyndon took part in a Money Matters workshop provided by Coventry Building Society. Twelve volunteers came into school on November 16th and each delivered information on the importance of budgeting, financial management and how to save up for important expenditure such as driving lessons. Students came away from the sessions feeling prepared on how to manage their own money.

Opening of The Oaklands library

After 9 months of planning, designing, creating and building, The Oaklands are very proud to say that their new library is now open! Every child in the school now has access to relevant and exciting books that they can borrow and take home. The school hopes that this will be the catalyst for their children to become readers for life!

Ofsted

The Oaklands and the Trust are very proud to say that the school was graded ‘Good’ by Ofsted after a two-day inspection in November. It was an exciting couple of days, and the children and staff were a huge credit to the school and the Trust. The inspectors were particularly pleased with the quality of the children’s work in their books and the opportunities the children now have in school.
**Trip to Aberdovey**

Pupils at Erdington Hall had the fantastic opportunity to go on an action packed trip to Aberdovey in Wales this term. Pupils spent time in the wilderness, hiked the hills of Wales and also experienced kayaking and obstacle course – just to name a few! Pupils excelled in facing fears and all challenges were taken head on!

**Year 6 Human heart projects**

Year 6 at Erdington Hall have been working on creating 3D models of the human heart. They have used clay to do this and identified the following from the model: Aorta, Pulmonary Artery and Vein, the Mitral and Aortic Valve, the Ventricles, Atriums, and Superior and Inferior Vena Cava. This was a great hands on experience for the pupils.

**Cockshut Hill School**

Cockshut Hill have started their academic year by launching a new system called SOAR which is focused on increasing our standards and expectations for all students. SOAR stands for being Smart, Organised, Ambitious and Respectful. If a student is “SOARING” every day they will succeed. Part of this new system has been an increase in their expectations, insisting that all students wear black, formal, leather shoes. They have also insisted that students do not wear hooded tops, tracksuit tops or sweatshirt material jumpers and that all students bring a school bag to carry their provided equipment, planners and knowledge organisers. This is so students look and work professionally and ensure they are in the right frame of mind to achieve the very best grades.

With increased expectations, Cockshut Hill are also focused on increasing positivity by ensuring that students doing the right thing are rewarded. As such every child is issued green or red stamps throughout the day if they are meeting the SOAR standards. This has transformed the ethos of the school. Last year the positive to negative ratio was 1:3. This year the current ratio is 24:1. For every one negative comment in a lesson, there are 24 positive green stamps given out. The exciting part of SOAR is due in the last week of term, every green stamp equals a credit that students will be able to use to purchase, free of charge, rewards from a website called Learn to Earn (www.l2e.co.uk), such as new speakers or Harry Potter merchandise. These are just two examples; the rewards are vast. Cockshut Hill are looking forward to giving out these well-deserved prizes to students next week, just before Christmas.

**UNICEF RRSA Gold Award**

Cockshut Hill School were recognised by UNICEF as being a Silver Rights Respecting School in 2017. Accreditors visited the school again in June this year to assess our work around the Rights Respecting criteria by touring the school and meeting with staff and student groups. After submitting their report to a National Accreditation and Standards Committee they are now confirmed as being a Gold Rights Respecting School!

There are only two secondary schools across the whole of the Midlands and less than 20 nationwide to have received this accolade so far. The report highlighted amongst other things; strong staff and student leadership in the school, students having a voice and being able to drive change, an ethos of inclusivity, emphasising respect, equality & fairness and the use of children’s rights as a foundation for securing the best possible outcomes.

The accreditation is valid for three years and the school are looking forward to continuing to undertake Rights Respecting work as well as supporting other schools in the Trust on their Rights Respecting journeys.
Earth and beyond for Year 5

Year 5 at Yarnfield have blasted off into Space with their Earth and Beyond topic! They have been learning about the solar system and the eight planets that orbit the Sun (sorry Pluto)! The science-fiction thriller ‘Earth Fall’ has not only gripped them but has proved to be a great inspiration for their own science-fiction narratives which are keeping Yarnfield teachers on the edge of their seats.

The pupils were also fortunate to have had a special visit from Mark Walton from ‘Hands On Science’. Pupils created a model of a black hole and constellation finders so that they could spot ‘The Plough’ constellation in the night sky.

Year 3 Egyptian studies

Year 3 at Yarnfield had a fabulous day out at the Birmingham Museum and Gallery this term. They have been learning all about Ancient Egyptian Civilisation. They saw a real mummy in a sarcophagus, slabs covered in hieroglyphs, ancient statues and amulets. During a workshop the pupils learnt all about Ancient Egyptian art and had a go at painting on papyrus. As a result, some wonderful artwork has been produced back at school.

Public Speaking at Ninestiles

Two teams of Year 11 Ninestiles students travelled to Whitely Academy in Coventry to participate in the first round of the ESU’s National Public Speaking competition. On the teams were Sabra Khalfan, Iman Ali, Kiran Ali-Butt, Ethan Reid, Jess Donnelly and Morium Begum. Both teams did amazingly well and gave electrifying speeches. The teams secured 2nd and 3rd place, bested only by Solihull school. One team will now progress to the regional final which will take place at Solihull School in February.

Year 11’s Motivational Assembly

Friday 5th October saw Ninestiles Yr11 students participate in a motivational assembly lead by Junior from Fix Up. The aim of the session was to equip students with the right mindset and tools to excel in their exams. It was a fantastic hour; students listened to his life story, which was interjected with ‘growth mindset’ statements like ‘my effort and attitude determine my abilities’, ‘challenges are disguised opportunities’, ‘I can learn to do anything I want’. By the end of the session the atmosphere in the hall was incredibly positive, with students feeling inspired to raise their aspirations and attainment in their PPE’s and understanding that SUCCESS IS NOT BY MAGIC, IT’S BY WORK. The assembly was followed by a workshop for 36 selected students to reinforce the ‘growth mindset’ with practical activities including ‘when you apply yourself, you’ll surprise yourself’ and writing a letter to fear and laziness. A successful session encouraging students to achieve their very best!