



Updates for the parents and community of The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form



## KEY DATES

## CyberFirst Celebration for Year 8 Girls

By Ms Rowe

On the weekend of 2nd March, our Year 8 girls team, winners of the East Midland region, travelled down to Oxford for the CyberFirst celebration event.

In the afternoon, the team had the opportunity to take part in some workshops delivered by Oxford University students; thinking about living forever, language development and VR. The team also had a tour of the “BatLab” – the Oxford Robotics Institute, where they saw robot demonstrations and tested mini self-driving cars.

Afterwards, it was back to the hotel for a quick change and then we were whisked away by coach to the Oxford Examination School for the gala dinner and celebration event.

- 15th April - School returns
- 6th May - Bank Holiday
- 8th May - Top Link Festival
- 9th May - GCSE exams start
- 14th May - Year 12 Parents Evening
- 15th May - Years 8-10 Athletics Tournament
- 27th to 31st May - Half Term



Felicity Oswald, interim director of the National Cyber Security Centre was the keynote speaker and presented the awards.

The team had an amazing weekend celebrating their achievements and being inspired to take their tech skills further. They were overwhelmed to receive their prizes: a laptop and accessories for each team member! (and a certificate and trophy for the school).

Well Done Maegan, Freya, Amelia and Freda!

We are hoping to enter more teams in the next competition in the autumn term.





# New Sixth Form Building

By Ms Capewell



We finally opened our new Sixth Form building to students on Monday 4th March. The two-storey building has 4 classrooms housing Psychology, Business, Economics and Computer Science. It has a large study room and common room, an English intervention room and meeting/office spaces. Feedback from the A level students is that they are loving the light, airy spaces and having space that is just theirs. They especially like the spinny chairs and the speedy computers in the study room and, apparently, it smells like Ikea! We held a lunchtime housewarming party with a fancy-dress theme of TV/film characters with ex-student Leo as DJ, which was lots of fun.

On other Sixth Form news, January 31st marked the UCAS deadline for all University applications. This year, 51 students in Year 13 have applied to study for a degree to start in September. Most of the students have received conditional offers from all 5 courses that they have applied for, which is amazing. Students are planning to study a wide range of degree subjects for example Psychology, Linguistics, Astrophysics, Fashion Design and Ancient History. We are especially proud that two of our students have offers to study Medicine, a course where competition for places is huge, less than 20% of applicants receive offers. One student will also be studying Physics next year at Emmanuel College at Cambridge. Whilst university isn't everyone's first choice, getting a degree brings enormous benefits. The Department for Education's latest report (June 2022) said that in the year 2021, graduates on average earned £10,000 per year more than those that didn't go to university. It also gives people the opportunity to develop important work and life related skills. According to one study, graduates in the UK have a greater sense of personal well-being and life satisfaction than those without a higher education qualification.

Students who have not applied for University next year are either planning to take a gap year or apply for a degree level apprenticeship. One of our students, Sam has already received an offer to study for a degree in Quantity Surveying whilst working with local company Collins Earthworks. Apprenticeships have come a long way in the last few years. A growing number of students are choosing that pathway because you get the best of both worlds, a higher level qualification with none of the tuition fees. Students on degree level apprenticeships are paid an average of £23,000. Not bad for a starting wage.

It has been a pleasure to support this year's Year 13 students on their Sixth Form journey. We wish them the very best for their exams starting after the Easter break.



# Careers Fair

By Ms Crawford

On Thursday 29th February, we hosted our bi-ennial Careers Fair. The Fair was open to all The South Wolds Academy & Sixth Form students and their families. With over 30 different providers ranging from universities, colleges, employers, apprenticeships and gap years, our students had a plethora of choice and enjoyed learning more about the options available to them.

Students were set a challenge to speak to at least 9 different providers and we were pleased that over 300 students completed this challenge. The completed cards were entered into a prize draw with an Amazon gift voucher for the winners!

We have been delighted with the feedback from students, their families and the providers at the event which showed it was a huge success!

Thank you to everyone in the community who took the time to share feedback with us and we look forward to the next Careers Fair in 2026!



# Careers Week

By Ms Rowe

To celebrate Careers Week (4th-9th March), some of our students had the opportunity to be part of 2 webinars. The first webinar was with Jessica Van Brummelen who graduated from MIT with a PhD in Computer Science, interned at Adobe, then joined Niantic as a Human-Computer Interaction Research Scientist. Niantic is the company behind one of the biggest augmented reality mobile games ever created, **Pokémon Go**. Students listened to Jessica talk about Human-Computer Interaction and what it's like to work in the video games industry.

The second webinar was with Ashley Edwards who is a Senior Research Scientist at Google DeepMind working on reinforcement learning. Ashley received a PhD in 2019 from Georgia Tech, spent time at Google Brain as an intern, and as a research scientist at Uber AI Labs. Students listened to Ashley talk about the choices she made when navigating her career path and all the incredible things she does in the field of AI and machine learning.

Students enjoyed listening to the webinars and were overjoyed when some of the questions they submitted were answered live!



# Reading Updates

By Miss Mitchell

## World Book Day: 7th March 2024

To celebrate reading and to promote reading for choice at The South Wolds Academy & Sixth Form, we turned World Book Day into a week-long event!

Students had the opportunity to enter a Character Creation Competition to win £5.00 book vouchers which saw lots of students getting involved. The imagination and creativity of the students was so impressive that it made choosing the winners very difficult! Well done to those who won and thank you to everyone who entered the competition.

Miss Mitchell ran creative writing workshops in the library during lunchtime which involved character creation, setting design and plot planning. The workshops proved to be a great success and it was excellent to see so many imaginative and aspiring creations throughout the week.

The World Book Day Quiz was also a huge success; students gathered in the library on World Book Day to take part in a book and author quiz run by our English Department. Prizes went to the top 3 teams who won a brand new book each.

Finally, some of our teachers dressed up as famous book characters on World Book Day. We had an amazing turn out for costumes and it gave the children a good laugh seeing the wardrobe from The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe teaching Geography! The students were invited to participate in a scavenger hunt, where their mission was to locate all the characters around the school. This was so popular with the students and gave the day a great atmosphere.

## Scholastic Book Fair 2024

Last month the library hosted the Scholastic Book Fair, offering 200 titles from a range of genres. It was great to see so many students visiting the fair and getting inspired to read and explore a range of different literature. The fair was buzzing all week, and resulted in our school earning almost £200 worth of books to add to our library collection. Thank you to all the students who supported the fair – we could not have done it without you!





# The Carnegies Awards 2024

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By Mrs Arnold



The Carnegie Book Club is back! Every year we run a really popular book club that shadows the Carnegie Award. Students read the books on the shortlist over the next couple of months and then decide on their winner before the official award ceremony on the 20th June.

The club will run every Friday lunch from the 22nd March and will be hosted in the library. It is open to all year groups so we hope to see lots of you there!

<https://yotocarnegies.co.uk/writing-shortlist-2024/>

## National Centre for Computing Education Certification

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By Ms Rowe



We are thrilled to have completed the I Belong programme and to achieve a certificate from the National Centre for Computing Education recognising our school's commitment to improving gender balance in computer science. @wearecomputing #IBelongCS

## Turn on the Subtitles

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By Ms Haywood

As Hollywood star, Jack Black, so eloquently explains in his video, having subtitles can have a positive effect on children learning how to read books.

Have a look at the following webpage which gives more details about the effects subtitles can have and how you can “turn on the subtitles”.

<https://www.turnonthesubtitles.org/parents/>



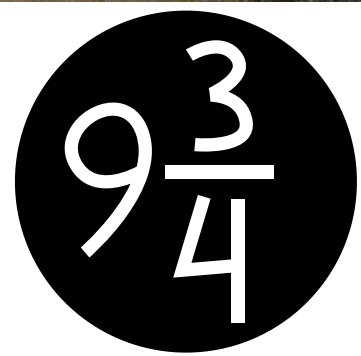
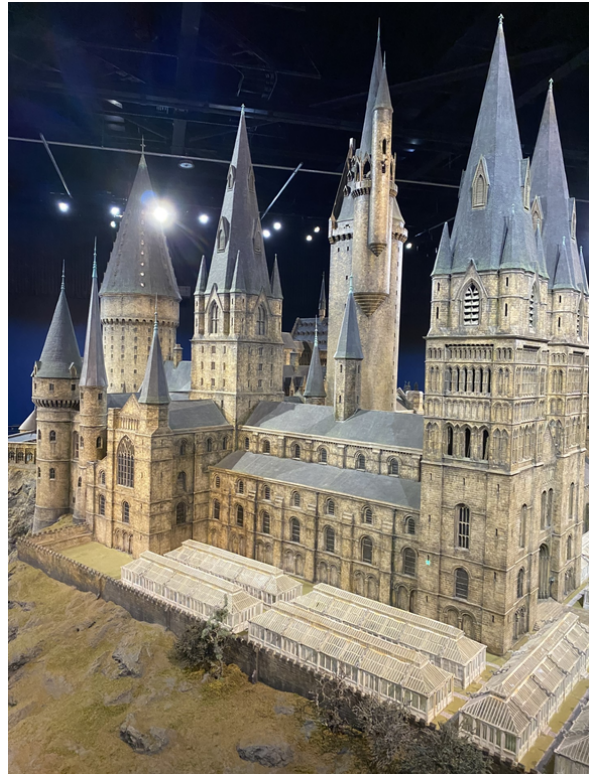


# Visit to Harry Potter World

By Ms Wightman

On Friday February 2nd, 47 excited Year 7 students experienced the magic of Harry Potter World. We were terrorised by giant spiders, rode on broomsticks, saw the Hogwarts Express and tried out our spell casting prowess! See our own birthday girl Evie W opening the tour.

The only downside was the exorbitant food and gift shop prices! A fantastic time was had by all. Expliarmus!



## Cyber Explorers Cup

By Ms Rowe

On Friday 8th March a team of 4 Year 8 Students took part in the Cyber Explorers Cup, which was an online event. <https://www.cyberexplorers.co.uk/knowledge-hub/cup-2024>

Students had to use their cyber skills to defend Cyber City from attack, which tested their team work, critical thinking and cyber skills to the limit as they only had an hour to complete the challenge.

After an intense hour, the team managed to score 375 points and came 45th overall, in the UK wide competition.

Well Done to Maegan C, Esme W, Mitchell J, Jerome B!

Also a big well done to Oliver M who was going to take part, but was away on the day of the competition; taking part in an international go-karting event!





# IET Faraday STEM Challenge Day

## By Mrs Knight

On Wednesday 13th March, twelve of our Year 8 students took part in The Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) Faraday STEM Challenge Day that we hosted here at The South Wolds Academy & Sixth Form. These are cross curriculum STEM activity days designed for Year 8 students in England and Wales. Teams from The West Bridgford School, Limehurst Academy and Castle Donington College also came to compete in the fantastic event.

The students were given an engineering problem to solve and had to use their team work, perseverance and critical thinking skills to build a prototype that solved the problem. They then had to present their design to the judging panel and also the rest of the teams on the day. I am incredibly proud of all of the students that took part they were a credit to themselves and to the school.

Here are a few snippets of student feedback from the day:

“We enjoyed making the model” – Archie and Toby

“I enjoyed the design process when deciding what to make” – Ellie

“My favourite part of the day was presenting what we had made” – Keira

“We enjoyed creating and building the prototype” – Yasmine and Daniel

“My favourite part of the day was choosing what to design to create and presenting it” – Isabelle





# Isaac Computer Science

By Ms Rowe

Our GCSE Computer Science students took part in the Isaac Computer Science Winter Warner competition, where they had to answer some tricky computing questions. Some students won prizes; a water bottle, a notebook and a poster.



Well done to Spencer, Edith, Matthew, Elliot, Harry, Albert, Josh, Mishti, Matthew, Alex, Bilal, Oliver, Warren and Barney.

## Lessons for Auschwitz Project

By Ms Capewell

On the 13th March, we were lucky enough to travel to Poland to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau. This was part of the Lessons for Auschwitz Project that we participated in. The aims of this project are to broaden young people's knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust and highlight what happens when racism and prejudice becomes acceptable. The course also explores the universal lessons of the Holocaust and its relevance today.

During the course, we attended a couple of seminars in which we learnt about the pre-war lives of the Holocaust victims. We particularly focused on making sure we remembered them not solely as victims of a genocide but also acknowledged that they were human beings. We even had the pleasure of talking to a Holocaust survivor and hearing her story. The four of us who took part in the project are very grateful that we got to participate in this course and we believe that we are better people for it.

## A Parent's Guide to Cyberbullying

By Mrs Brooks

In the adjoining poster is a QR Code that takes you to Parent Guides on keeping children safe online.

Please have a read through the guides which provide useful tips you can use at home to ensure your child(ren) stay safe on the internet.

**A Parent's Guide to Cyberbullying**

HA HA HA!! HA HA HA!! HA HA HA!! HA HA HA!!

Many young people who are victims of cyberbullying suffer in silence.

They feel they can't turn to parents or a trusted adult for support as they fear they may get in trouble or have their devices taken away from them. It can carry on all day, all evening and all weekend for the world to see, causing a lot of emotional stress to the victim and their family.

It can very quickly lead to the victim feeling trapped, scared and vulnerable to grooming and blackmail.

Online safety is when young people know who they can tell if they feel upset by something that has happened online.

The poster includes a QR code and a small illustration of a child sitting at a desk looking distressed.



# Ethics & Philosophy Film Recommendations

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**By Mr Baines**

## **The Iron Claw 2023 (15)**

The true story of the inseparable Von Erich brothers, who made history in the intensely competitive world of professional wrestling in the early 1980's. A story that becomes filled with emotions. Not your typical sports movie.

### **Philosophy and Ethics reference:**

The film centres around the emotions of brotherhood, family and what it means to exist. Links to existentialism and truly discovering what our passions are, this film asks you about appreciating what you have, regardless of it suits your purpose.

Links to GCSE where we study the afterlife as well as relationships and families. On top of this are KS3 discussions on existentialism and what true meaning is.



## **Kung Fu Panda 4 2024 (PG)**

Kung Fu Panda brings back our much loved-Po, the kung fu fighting panda. In the fourth instalment, Po must train a new warrior when he's chosen to become the spiritual leader of the Valley of Peace. However, when a powerful shape-shifting sorceress looks to cause trouble, he suddenly realizes he's going to need some help. As always, expect plenty of deep quotes that apply to any situation. 'The past is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift - that is why it is called the present.'

### **Philosophy and Ethics reference:**

Kung Fu Panda has been a philosophical hit if you take it for its spiritual routes with concepts of reincarnation, the spiritual realm and Buddhism to name a few. It isn't just a light hearted film about a fighting panda but about what individual purpose really is and how inspiration can come from anywhere, anytime and, perhaps, even from past lives.

Links to KS3 where we look at reincarnation, Buddhism and Hinduism. Further links within A-Level where cause and effect is studied as well as the conscience where a spiritual or psychological aspect is debated.

## **Argylle 2024 (12A)**

Argylle tells the complex, slightly confusing, story of a reclusive author, Elly Conway, who writes espionage novels about a secret agent named Argylle. In the stories, he goes on a mission to unravel a global spy syndicate. However, when the plots of her books start to mirror the covert actions of a real-life spy organization, the line between fiction and reality begin to blur. I had to pay attention to this one and, honestly, I'm still not sure but that's how I felt after Inception and that was incredible! (The spinner is still spinning).

### **Philosophy and Ethics reference:**

The movie principally looks at the parallels of time and what is real. It is quite silly and all the twists tie nicely into questioning what really is truth?

Links to KS3 where we have a topic on the nature of truth.







## An interview with Emily Shenton - Solicitor Apprentice

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**What year did you leave the South Wolds  
Academy & Sixth Form?**

I left in 2022

**Please briefly describe your typical week.**

My typical week as a solicitor apprentice is structured yet varied. Mondays are dedicated to independent study for my university work. At 8:00, I will start my preparation work for my lecture which will usually involve reading legal principles and case law, conducting legal research and taking notes. From 1:30 to 3:30, I attend lectures, covering material studied earlier and practicing exam-style questions pertinent to both academia and real-world solicitor scenarios. The afternoon is spent consolidating learning, reviewing notes, and preparing for upcoming exams or coursework submissions.

The rest of the week (Tuesday through Friday) is spent at our offices. Here, I draft legal documents like share purchase agreements and supply of goods agreements, attend client meetings with my supervisor, correspond with clients via email or phone calls, organise client files, and conduct legal research on specific areas such as charity law or competition law.



## What did you do today?

Today, I travelled to our Telford office for our monthly team working day. It's an opportunity for our corporate team to gather, review our current workloads, discuss any legal or regulatory changes, and evaluate what strategies are effective and what needs improvement.

We had a team meeting at 10:00. The main agenda items were the recent changes to compliance regulations and our future plans, particularly in light of one of our team members retiring. During the meeting, it was my responsibility to keep an attendance note, ensuring we had accurate records of our discussions. After the meeting, I circulated the notes to everyone, ensuring everyone was on the same page regarding the outcomes and action points discussed.

During lunchtime, I joined the three other solicitor apprentices from my firm as we went into town to grab a meal. Sharing enrolment in the same course and starting our apprenticeship journey together has created a strong friendship between us and we often meet outside of work.

After lunch, I amended four Intellectual Property Assignment Agreements and prepared a set of documentation to change the name of a company for my colleague.



## What work/assignments/ tasks need completing this week?

Whilst they are not due in this week, I have three coursework assignments this term which I need to work on. Each submission involves evidencing different skills that a solicitor needs, such as legal drafting, legal research, managing multiple tasks at once, oral communication, etc. To prove I have acquired and developed these skills, I'll use examples from my workplace experience and any feedback I have received on such tasks.

## What are the challenges in your course/job role?

- 1) Relocating and moving away from home
- 2) Balancing work, study and life!
- 3) Workload
- 4) Exams and assessments

## How did you get this job/onto this course? (previous jobs, qualifications needed)

For this role, I needed a minimum of ABB at A Levels in academic subjects (e.g. English, Maths, etc) with sufficient previous experience. My experience when applying consisted of a range of virtual seminars, in-person experience at a firm, two previous part-time jobs in customer-orientated backgrounds and a range of extra-curricular activities (such as volunteering, leading eco club, leading dance troupe, etc).

## What advice do you have for students either generally or to do with following your example?

Keep applying and keep trying! I applied for 12 apprenticeships in total and got rejected by the first 11 I applied for.

Please look at the following link which includes my photo and mentions SWA: <https://www.fbcmb.co.uk/lawyers/emily-shenton/>