



# Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

**ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE**

Newsletter - Issue 2 December 2020

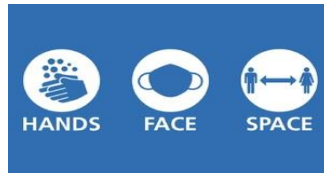
## Message from the Principal

This has certainly been an interesting half term, and in more ways than one. We are living in challenging times, but the way our school community has responded has been nothing short of superb! Whether working in school, at home due to self-isolation, in additional tutorial sessions after school, in homework clubs, in extra-curricular activities – the enthusiasm and commitment of Soar Valley students has shone through. Our staff have been amazing, taking on new challenges too - adapting to blended learning and delivering live lessons, and following up on gaps in learning to ensure students can achieve the very best. Well done to everyone, and thank you to all parents and carers for the support you have given us over the term.

At the end of this term we say good bye to some staff members and wish them all the very best in their next ventures: Ms Clark (English), Miss Hasseena (RE), Mr Maggs (Science) and Ms Sheikh (Teaching Assistant). At the beginning of next term, as well as some new members of staff, we also welcome a new catering company to Soar Valley. We are looking forward to some exciting new menus and more information will follow in an email to parents.

Wishing our readers a very safe and happy holiday, a merry Christmas, and all the very best for 2021, hopefully a more settled and 'normal' year ahead.

Just remember....



## Reading Rampage 2020



As in previous years, students at Soar Valley took part in the 'Whatever it Takes' Reading Rampage earlier this year. This initiative involves students from across the county reading a selection of books and voting on their favourites.

Despite the impact of the first lockdown, many of our students completed the challenge, some continuing to read independently during the school closure.

Unfortunately, the live author event had to be cancelled, but our students were able to take part in online Q&A sessions with two of the writers, Tom Mitchell and Onjali Q Rauf. Some students have been invited to take part in a celebration event during the last week of term. Special congratulations go to Aadrika 9.4, who won Soar Valley's participation prize, and has been awarded a certificate and a gift voucher.

## Helping our Neighbours



In December a group of students from the AIM Awards group and the BTEC Music students usually visit the VISTA New Wycliffe Home across the road from Soar Valley and entertain the residents with a few songs and Christmas treats. Obviously in these Covid times we are not able to go this year, the first time we will have missed in the last 25 years or more.

Instead of a visit, this year the AIM group have put together over forty gift bags for the residents with items mainly donated by staff, and have sent a greeting. They have also made some decorations to hang on the tree in the nursing home.

This year will be a very different Christmas for us all and we hope that this small gesture will go some way towards giving the elderly people at the home the best Christmas they can have.

## Geography Eco Warriors

Year 7 have been studying the 'Geography of Leicester' this term and, as part of that work, we have been looking at various sustainability strategies utilised by the city council to make Leicester a greener, more sustainable city.

Miss Wood's Year 7 classes were set the challenge of designing and creating a piece of work to encourage students at Soar Valley to follow our Eco-Schools Code of Conduct and be more environmentally aware citizens of change. Lots of entries were received and they were of an amazingly high standard: songs, short stories, comic strips, poems, 3D models, posters and more.



It was a very difficult job to decide on the winners from each class. Congratulations to Prianka (7.7), Aaron (7.11) and Tyler (7.12) on their winning entries. Prizes included a refillable water bottle - just think how many plastic bottles will be saved from landfill! Well done to all.

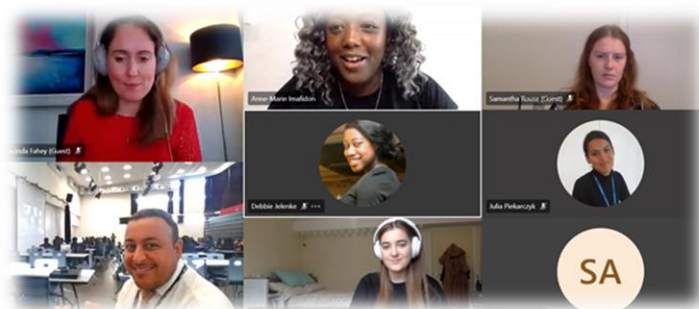
## IT/Computing News

### Bebras Competition

This autumn term at Soar Valley all of our Key Stage 3 students participated in an international competition that was organised by the University of Oxford. Our students were introduced to the notion of 'Computational Thinking' before completing a series of short problems that are often faced by those working as Computer Scientists.

There were some fantastic results with Muhammed (7.12), Riyanjeet (8.7) and Mischa (9.6) emerging as our highest performers. Well done to all who took part - you have made Soar Valley proud!

## STEM for girls



This term 66 Year 9 girls took part in a virtual event hosted by Stemettes, a social enterprise which encourages girls aged 5–22 to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

The event, held on Ada Lovelace Day, was hosted by Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon MBE and featured lightning talks by women who currently have successful careers in STEM, who faced challenges in male dominated fields, but overcame those challenges and thrived.

They encouraged our students to take risks and to be more confident, to see coding as a creative discipline and to reconsider what a career in STEM actually looks like.

## Extra-Curricular Update



This half term has seen the launch of the Year Seven extra-curricular program in PE.

Due to the current Covid situation, this has had to happen later in the year than normal, and on a slightly reduced scale.



However, despite this, the PE team have been able to offer boys' football, girls' football, dodgeball, dance, netball, basketball and ultimate Frisbee, with students being able to sign up for a three week mini block of each. 106 different students have chosen at least one activity, with 35 students choosing three or more. Levels of effort, behaviour and enjoyment have been high in every session, with the standard of performance steadily increasing in each activity. Well done to each and every one of those who have taken part.

Next term, we will be launching the Year Eight and Year Nine program, as well as continuing with the Year Seven provision. The benefits of attending extra-curricular activities are numerous and well-researched, and include an increase in academic performance, so continue to take every opportunity that is made available to you.

## Message from our Student Council

While COVID-19 put a dent in many of our plans, students at Soar Valley College have still been able to continue with many events, whilst always following government guidelines.

The first job was to recruit the Year 7 form representatives and welcome them as part of our Soar Valley Student Leadership Team. Further to this, two valued Year 7 College Council members have been recruited to represent the student voice at Soar Valley College.



Finally, in terms of recruitment, we conducted an election among the Year 11s to appoint the best candidates for the positions of Head Girl, Head Boy, Deputy Head Boy and Deputy Head Girl. A huge well done to all successful candidates!

Here at Soar Valley College, the community is a major focus. We have been working tirelessly with charities such as The Royal British Legion and Children in Need, hopefully raising funds that will make a significant difference to those in need. We managed to raise an amazing total of **£1407.68** on Wear What You Will Day, which we split equally between the two charities.

We would also like to give a special mention to Shun in Year 11, who did an amazing sponsored silence. Well done!

Our efforts do not end here! We have recently been working with Action Homeless in the 'Tin for Ten' campaign which aims to feed 10% of the homeless population over Christmas and into the New Year. So far, in the space of 6 days, we have received over 300 tins!

We thank you for your continued support,  
Your Student Council

## Pastoral Curriculum Update

Earlier this term Years 7-10 took part in a tutor period in which students focussed on the topic of mental wellbeing. During this time they developed an understanding that we all have mental health and wellbeing in the same way that we have physical health and wellbeing.



Just as we try to look after our physical health, we investigated some self-care activities that we can all utilise to support our mental health and wellbeing. Students were asked to try at least one strategy over the week ahead and this was then followed up by looking at how beneficial they had been.

Some of the strategies talked can be found on the link below, you might like to try some!

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/12101/final-selfcaresummer-secondary.pdf>

## Green Flag Award



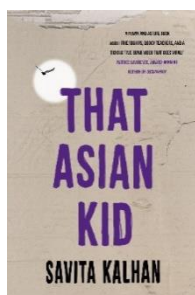
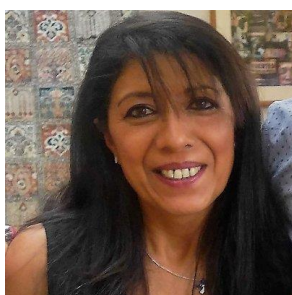
This year at Soar Valley we have completed the renewal of our Green Flag eco award. This award is designed to recognise the achievements of schools as they develop and deliver initiatives to reduce the environmental impact of the school and increase the awareness of environmental issues.

Over the two year period of the award the Eco Team have focussed on five specific areas in which the school can improve. This has included the launch of our Park and Stride scheme to reduce air pollution, and the Year 7 litter picks to educate on waste and reduce litter around the school site.

We are incredibly proud to have been awarded the Green Flag for the second time, especially considering the difficult circumstances of this year. The Eco Team are already coming up with new ideas for continued improvements, hopefully leading towards our third Green Flag.

## Updates from the Library

### 9 for 9 Challenge



*Author Savita Kalhan, and her book which our students have been reading recently.*

A small group of year 9 students have been taking part in the '9 for 9' book challenge taking place in schools across Leicestershire. The students read a selection of up-to-date and challenging fiction books and discuss them together.

This year our students have already read Holly Jackson's *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* and Savita Kalhan's *That Asian Kid*. We were even treated to a special online talk from Savita recently, and some of

our students got to ask her questions about her writing career! The group are looking forward to continuing with the challenge and reading seven more interesting and exciting books over the rest of the year.

### Reading online this Christmas

This term saw the introduction of a brand new ebook system at Soar Valley! Students can now read a great selection of library books online. The system works on any computer, tablet, or phone connected to the internet, and you can even download a free app to make it even easier. Hundreds of books have already been read online this term, and we can't wait to see what the students read next.

Ebooks are also great if your child needs something to read over the holidays. Simply go to [soarvalley.eplatform.co](http://soarvalley.eplatform.co) where students can log in using their school email address.

### Coming Soon – Morning Opening

We know that students have been keen to use the library more during their social times, so from January we will be opening the library in the mornings from 8am until the start of registration. Different year groups will be able to visit the library on different days:

Monday	Year 7
Tuesday	Year 8
Wednesday	Year 9
Thursday	Year 10
Friday	Year 11





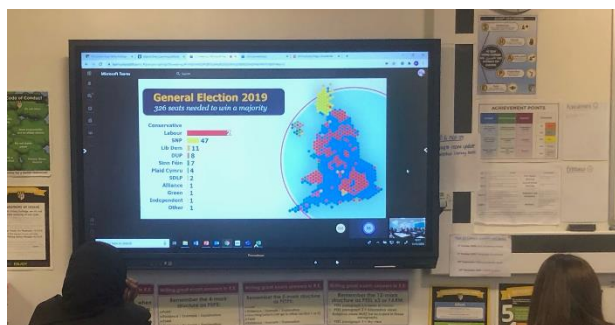
The library is a really good place to work, read, and draw quietly. Students will be able to use the computers for homework, and also browse the shelves for books under supervision. There will be a limit on numbers so everyone using the library is safe. We look forward to seeing students using the library for homework and study after the holidays.

### **And finally...**

We've had a lot of fun in the library this term with our various competitions. Students have been taking part in story writing challenges, designing bookmarks, and writing book reviews. Well done to everyone who has taken part, and keep an eye out for lots of challenges coming your way next term.

We're also continuing to read a selection of six books chosen by our student library assistants for our 'Best of the Best' Book Award. Which one will be your favourite? Voting concludes in February so keep reading and reviewing!

## **GCSE Citizenship – Parliament Workshop**



Year 11 GCSE Citizenship students had the opportunity to participate in a live workshop with the UK Parliament this half term. This was an interactive online session with staff from the UK Parliament covering key GCSE content about Politics and Participation, including how the UK Parliament works, how laws are made and the role of MPs.

It was an excellent opportunity to participate in a private session live in the classroom and offered great discussion opportunities. The students really appreciated the chance to have specialist input in this new format, and to discuss topical issues such as Covid lockdown rules and Marcus Rashford's campaign for free school meals.

## **Creative Arts - Where Creativity Meets Excellence and Success**

### **Art**

Year 7 have been learning all about tone and putting this to practice, creating tonal bug drawings. They have also enjoyed their second Pop Art lesson for their Art history unit, this time looking at the medium of collage.

Year 8 have been learning all about Ricky Gervais' Flanimals and have been painting some of his examples, as well as creating their own.

Year 9 have been learning about lots of different watercolour techniques and have created natural forms paintings, some of which are shown below.



*"Really impressed with the commitment to producing high quality work in Art across KS3." (Miss Carter)*

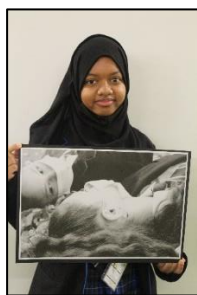
Year 10 Photography students have been learning how to use the digital cameras to explore slow and fast shutter speeds and they have been using Photoshop to edit and enhance their photographs.

Year 10 Fine Art students have been learning about Bob Ross and his use of acrylic paint to make landscapes. They have all created their own landscape paintings.

Year 10 Graphics students have been learning how to use Photoshop to create digital collages and have just started to design album artwork for a band or musician of their choice.

*"It's been a pleasure to see so many smiley faces back in the class. All students have shown a love for learning and resilience for what is now our new norm." (Miss Kaur)*  
*Students in Art have been so creative this half term and have taken lots of pride in their work. Their enthusiasm with painting, drawing, designing, photography, editing, experimenting and History of Art lessons has been phenomenal." (Mrs Wilde)*

Year 11 Photography, Fine Art and Graphics students have been continuing with their personal projects where they are learning about artists, experimenting in different styles and creating drawings and taking creating photographs.



Aisha Y11



Elisapreet Y11



Tanisha Y11



Karandeep Y11



Humayra Y11



Kiyella Y11



Mili Y10

## Drama

### **Spy School is Open for Year 7**

Year 7 students have been learning all about how famous actors and presenters create roles for the camera and stage, including the theory of naturalistic acting and the methods used by some of the favourite stars of screen and stage.

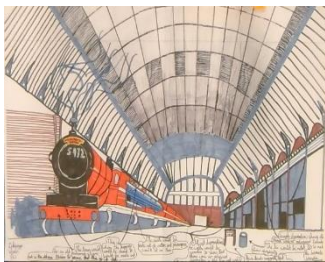
So far this term we have been on undercover missions, practised tailing people without being caught and taken on secret identities, as well as performing scripts from Mission Impossible. Students have worked on becoming a spy, as well as creating their own secret spy gadgets and have let their creativity run wild, with a taser pen, spy bans and laser mobile phones.



It has been a great half term so far and a huge well done goes out to the students who continued their spy studies from home!

Great job agents!

### **Year 8 – Lights, Camera, Action**



Year 8 drama students have been learning how to develop acting skills for camera. During this unit they have looked at scripts and adaptations from novels, as well as creating action and sets for green screen acting. Students have been filming themselves and creating their own green screen movies using the skills they have learnt. Some of the work was the standard of Year 10 students!

### **Year 9 – Creativity, Problem Solving and Fun!**

Year 9 students have been developing memory and the confidence to deliver speeches on their own to whole classes. They took part in larger group rehearsals and learnt all about the skills of group work and the resilience needed to 'get it right' with sometimes quite challenging and demanding directors. There was a strong focus on how to memorise and deliver a speech and how to do it while showing confidence and audience awareness. Lots of students were surprised at how they could stand alone after just a short session working on this presenting skill.

Following on from this, the group began to explore the world of production and experimented with lighting and design for productions.

### **Year 10 – Heading for National Broadcast**

Year 10 students have been given an amazing opportunity to get involved with a national broadcasting campaign to promote the National Census 2021. This is to be shared around the whole of the United Kingdom, and students have recorded short snippets of video about what makes their community great. We wait to see whether our videos make the final cut.

*"A real buzz of energy and excitement across all drama groups in G9. Lots of creativity, enthusiasm and focus. Well done all." (Miss Houlton)*



## Year 11



While all students were working hard for their mock exams this year, the Performing Arts students were completing their final internal assessment module. The module is worth 30% of their final grade and involved students studying and performing a scene from a professional piece of work, including from *The Crucible*, *Be My Baby*, *Too Much Punch for Judy*, *Missing Dan Nolan* and *Love Song*. Standards were exceptionally high.

Two students, following the design rather than performance route through the course, created a freestanding set and a digital projection.

## Drama Club @ SVC

Drama club has restarted for students in Years 7-10, at lunchtimes in the Drama Studio.

The groups earn participation points and this counts towards their participation passports.

## Music

### Key Stage 3



Congratulations to the Year 7s for their great work throughout the Keyboard unit this term. Students have been learning how to read music, through a variety of pop, rock and classical songs.

Meanwhile Year 8 students were introduced to the world of the orchestra, through playing *Viva La Vida* as a whole class performance, where the class are playing multiple parts at once.

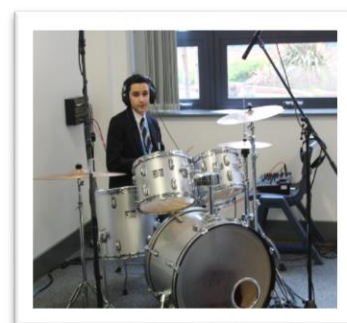
Well done to all the Year 9s who have been performing and composing music from movies, and developing their knowledge of leitmotifs, themes, and action themes. Great work throughout, including composing a soundtrack to the new James Bond Movie.

*"What a term! We have experienced the world of film through the study of iconic soundtracks, learnt all about orchestral instruments from piccolo to tuba, and practised and performed a wide range of pieces from Beethoven to Coldplay."* (Ms Grainger)

### Key Stage 4 – BTEC Music

BTEC Music students have been working towards putting on a music show. The students have been amazing through all the virtual and physical rehearsals.

Year 11 students have been working very hard this half term developing their albums in the recording studio. Students have been learning how to set up a studio, record live bands, and produce songs. We all look forward to hearing the final mixes after Christmas. Well done to all.



*"A massive thank you to all the students for your hard work throughout the last term in Creative Arts."* (Mr Miskelly – Head of Creative Arts)

## A Brilliant New National Online Safety App

For those of you who follow us on Twitter you will know that we regularly send out the latest advice about how to keep your child safe online via the brilliant National Online Safety (NOS) organisation.

This month they have launched a free app that contains a whole myriad of advice for parents. The best feature about NOS is that their advice is domain specific. For example, rather than generic advice about gaming online they share the exact details about certain games such as Fortnite or Among Us.

They even provide you with step-by-step instructions to ensure all permissions and settings within apps are up-to-date to keep your child as safe as possible.

We would thoroughly recommend that you visit your app store, search for 'National Online Safety' and download the free app today. It even comes with a top ten list of how to get the best out of the app.



## Dates for your diary



### Parents' Evenings

<b>Year 11</b>	<b>January 21<sup>st</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>March 4<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>March 25<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Year 7</b>	<b>May 6<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>

### Term dates

<b>Spring Term begins</b>	<b>Tuesday January 5<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Spring Half Term break</b>	<b>February 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Spring Term ends</b>	<b>Friday March 26<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Summer Term begins</b>	<b>Monday April 12<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Summer Half Term break</b>	<b>May 31<sup>st</sup> – June 4<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>
<b>Summer Term ends</b>	<b>Friday July 9<sup>th</sup> 2021</b>

### Other events this term

<b>Y11 Progress Check 2</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>
<b>Y7/8/9/10 Progress Check 2</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>
<b>Y11 Mock Results</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>
<b>Performing Arts Evening</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>
<b>Y11 Targeted Mocks</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>
<b>Y9 Options Evening</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>
<b>Y9 Options Interviews</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021</b>