



# THE MESSENGER



## Dear Parents & Carers

As we approach the end of this term, it is heartening to be able to reflect on the wide range of activities which are celebrated in this edition of The Messenger. We are very proud of the family approach which so many members of our school community are committed to. This is evident in the wide range of additional activities which are provided to students and will continue right up until the end of term. December has been a significant month for Walsall as a whole and the presence of the Knife Angel in the town centre reminds us of the pain and suffering which violence can have on individuals, families and the wider community. I pray that the Christmas period will provide an opportunity to focus on peace within our local area, nationally and in those areas of the world where conflict and unrest are so prevalent.

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:9.*

## UPCOMING DATES

- First day of term – 8th January
- Y11 Parents Evening – 11th January
- Y9 Parents Evening – 25th January
- Y9 Parents Options Event – 18th January
- Y8 Parents Evening – 8th February
- End of half term – 9th February

## SMITH'S MYTHS

A: All dogs have tails.

B: Goldfish only have a three-second memory.

C: Leonardo da Vinci was born in Italy and died in France.



## PRAYER CORNER

Heavenly father, we thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus. We praise you for his birth and the hope that he brings to our lives. As we celebrate his birth, help us to also remember your great love for us. Let this Christmas season be a reminder of all he has done. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# SCHOOL EVENTS

## Sixth Form Football Fixture

On Wednesday 8th November it was the Sixth Form's first game together. We played Gospel Oak Secondary School.

What a game it was, first half was met with a stale mate going in at 0-0 but with some thrilling moments throughout, Shariq made some incredible saves to keep the opposition out, Williams and Murtaza were a brick wall at the back making sure no one got through using their strength and pace.

Second half the lads came out with incredible energy and pushed the opposition back creating chance after chance with Raihan, Tristan, Kamal, Rizwan and Aryaan running the midfield and eventually leading to Aryaan taking on 3 opponents and winning a penalty. Tristan steps up as captain and slots it top right corner giving Blue Coat the lead 1-0.

We held on for so long but unfortunately in the last 10 minutes we conceded an own goal from a corner, taking the cup game into penalties.

With the drama of 12 penalties it felt like it was never going to end, unfortunately we came away empty handed and Gospel Oak took the win over us on penalties.

It wasn't the result we wanted but we couldn't be prouder of the boys on their first game together.

Well done to:

- Murtaza
- Omar
- Tyrone
- Luke
- Tarran
- Tristian
- Aryaan
- Williams
- Raihan
- Kamal
- Shariq
- Rizwan

## Y8 UoB Maths Day

A group of Year 8 students attended the University of Birmingham maths day on the 8th November. They took part in two workshops on modelling rabbit populations then maths and gaming. They also had talks in lecture theatres about the university, student life and what they can do with maths. They had a great day overall and were very impressed with the campus, particularly the clock tower Old Joe.





# Knitting Club

Miss Taylor and Mrs Cavell run a knitting club every Tuesday after school and wanted to share how proud they are of the students resilience that they have shown in learning to knit. Miss Taylor and Mrs Cavell are really impressed by how quickly the girls picked up the knitting stitch and their willingness to keep trying. They will all soon have scarves!

If any student or member of staff is interested in joining the knitting club, it's held in the LRC on Tuesdays 3-4pm.



## Basketball fixture 1

On Wednesday 22nd November we had a basketball game against Barr Beacon School. And what a game it was!!! First and Second quarter were a struggle, the boys looked lost, shy and were panicking against the crowd and pressure Beacon were putting on us. We finished the 2nd Quarter and the half 12 points down.

Mr Gray gave them the speech of a lifetime, telling the boys how hard they've worked and how energetic they are around school is the energy we need to get back into the game.

The boys walked away to start the second half and 3rd quarter with a chip on their shoulder, working harder than Beacon and putting them on the back foot getting us back into the game, we finished the 3rd quarter tied at 36-36.

The 4th Quarter starts and it's going back and forth, basket after basket for both teams. We lose the ball on what we thought was the last play of the game, with Beacon stealing the ball and scoring on the counter - the game is at 49-48 to Beacon with only 6 seconds left on the clock.

The boys looked desperate, they get the ball up the court as fast as they can, the ball goes to Davion who throws up a 3 pointer that felt like it was in the air for eternity, it hits the back board and goes in as the buzzers sounds !!!

Getting Blue Coat the win in the dying seconds, finishing 51-49 to Blue Coat Academy. The boys went crazy with joy and excitement, and it was a feeling I can't describe seeing how hard they worked to get that win and seeing how happy they all looked when that final shot went in.

Please give all the following pupils praise on their incredible win and effort....

**Davion, Harrison, Troy, K'mari, Blake, Jacob, Sam, Eduardo.**

Thanks to **Kevi** who came along to support and coach the group being vocal and supportive throughout the game. And thanks to Mr Gray for coming along to support and giving them the much-needed energy at half time to spur the lads on.

## Basketball fixture 2

On Thursday 14th December we had a basketball fixture against Shire Oak Academy. The boys were buzzing from the last victory and were confident going into the game, maybe a little too confident!

We started slow and allowed Shire Oak to get their own way both defensively and going forward. The boys struggled for the first 2 quarters only scoring 8 points to Shire Oaks 12. They came into the huddle disheartened and confused to why we couldn't get it going.

I explained to the boys that we came into this game thinking it was going to be easy and we've ended up playing to their level - we needed to step it up and forget the first 2 quarters and work as a team not individuals.

They went into the 3rd quarter as a team, hyping each other up and getting that smile back on their faces. Taking back the lead to go 20-12 Blue Coat. 4th quarter starts and they don't let up, they keep the energy up and keep grafting on both sides of the court keeping Shire Oak off the scoreboard for the entire second half and allowing the game to finish 32-12 to Blue Coat getting us the win. The lads were nowhere near their best but managed to grit their teeth and grind out a tough win, I couldn't fault their effort and commitment to both the team and each other.

## Eve's Story Performance

In December we had a production delivered to us by Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre called Eve's Story. This was a thought-provoking story of a young person Eve and her story of being groomed into a lifestyle due to her vulnerability. The story explored the themes of being criminally exploited and just how easy it is to be lured into this lifestyle.

The challenging themes explored within this production were well received by the students and developed discussions around these topics. This project was kindly funded by One Palfrey Big Local and enabled around 450 students from years 8, 9 and 10 to benefit from seeing this production.



## Times Tables Rock Stars

Some of our students participated in the Times Tables Rock Stars England Rocks challenge from Nov 14th - Nov 16th. This was a thrilling free-to-enter, online times tables competition exclusive to schools in England. Well done to our top scoring BCA students: Prevail (MVP), Grace (2nd MVP) and Hania (3rd MVP).



# Prince's Trust

In November The Prince's Trust spent two days delivering 'The Enterprise Challenge' for Year 10 and were full of compliments for our students' engagement and creativity. This workshop was held over 2 days with half of the year taking part each day. The day pitted teams of 3-5 students against each other in setting up and running their own business. They looked at the ethics and sustainability of businesses. Throughout the day they worked on their communication and problem-solving skills as well as working as a team to make the most profit throughout the day.

We have an exciting wait now to see if any of the teams will progress in this challenge and represent Blue Coat in the next round.

## OAP Party

On Monday 11th December, Blue Coat CE Academy Sixth Form threw their annual Christmas party inviting a number of residents from local care homes and also the St Matthew's OWLs group. It was an exciting evening with lots of entertainment including Christmas carols sung by our choir, a dance performance by Mrs Haines' dance group, as well as solo performances by Nyasha in Y12 and Martin Hubbard.

All invitees left with a Christmas present donated by staff and pupils and a belly full of the delicious Christmas dinner made by our lovely catering staff. We look forward to hosting the event again next year. Merry Christmas to all and a Happy New Year!!!



# WORKSHOPS

## Y10 Dancing

On Monday 20th November we took a group of Year 10 dancers out to Walsall Arena to perform a routine they've been working on in their GCSE lessons.

They were initially quite overwhelmed at the amount of other groups and dancers that were there - ranging from primary to secondary school groups, inclusive and disability dance groups and even professional private dance schools, but they were able to rise to the occasion!

After a nervous dress rehearsal with a couple of little hiccups due to nerves, they moved to the main stage and gave an outstanding performance in front of an audience made up of probably 200 friends and family members of the performers! They danced with confidence, showing huge skill and talent, and conducted themselves professionally the entire time we were there.

The dancers are Anayah, Alessia, Olanike, Naima and Taylor, and a special shoutout to Fridaus who has supported them with their choreography and rehearsal of the piece over the last couple of months, and came to see them perform on the night.



## Lamp-Making Workshop

Our Year 9 students were tasked to create a prototype desk lamp using sustainable and recycled materials for their 3D Design and Graphic Design class. The lamp had to have at least 1 hinged joint in the legs and be suitable for a target market of teenagers. The “wrap” or lampshade design on the can was inspired by the illustrations of the artist Nick Dwyer. Here are some of the lamps the students created.





## Newnham College, Cambridge

11 Year 11 students accompanied by Miss Webley and Mr Homer visited Newnham College, Cambridge in our new minibus. The trip was designed to show the opportunities available to our aspiring students across Higher Education. The students were a perfect example of our school; considerate, curious and hard working. We look to continue to build on this and encourage more students to think about the opportunities available to them.





# NEWS

## Knife Angel comes to Walsall

The famous knife angel statue is in Walsall from 1st December, and will stand in Gallery Square until the 28th December.

"The Knife Angel, also known as the National Monument Against Violence & Aggression, is a 20ft tall sculpture created entirely from seized blades.

The Angel was specifically designed to create social change by helping to raise better awareness of how violent and aggressive behaviour effects our communities, by educating and encouraging youth to renounce violence as a means to solve problems, and by acting as a memorial for those lives lost to these unnecessary actions."

One of our students, Gamu was involved in the unveiling of the statue. This was an incredible opportunity for her to be part of a wider community partnership to raise awareness for knife crime.

## Christmas Cracker Concert

On Tuesday 28th November 15 students from our school choir took part in the first of 3 concerts at Walsall Arena and Arts Centre to begin the Christmas celebrations. They formed part of a choir of around 160 students from 5 different schools within Walsall.

Together they performed 16 seasonal songs all from memory with no lyric sheets or music in sight! Accompanied by a live band along with spotlights and big screens it was a truly great event in front of an audience of around 200. Part of the audience included Mr Smith and Mrs Devlin who the students were delighted to see before the concert began.

Congratulations and well done to the following students who began learning the music for the event way back in September and were great ambassadors for our school: Year 7 Aizah, Comfort, Faith, Fathima, Isabelle, Isaiah, Roland, Tami and Zaynab. Year 8 Amie, Esther and Kysmema. Year 9 Demi. Year 10 Zineb. Year 13 Blessing.





## Student Council

Student Council meetings have taken place with our elected Form Reps across Years 7-12 voicing their peers' thoughts on school improvement priorities.

Our Year 13 Student Senior Leaders did a wonderful job drawing out and collating their contributions and feeding these directly to Senior Leaders in school.

## Takeover Day

We held our 2023-24 Takeover Day! 184 applications came in from students wanting the chance to "takeover" a member of staff in their role for the day. 60 job offers were created and the successful applicants gained valuable insight into the world of work behind the scenes here at Blue Coat.

Thank you to Tasnia in Y10 for helping to design this newsletter as part of her Takeover Day assignment.

## Sixth Form Futures

We hosted a wide range of providers for our Sixth Form Futures event. Our students were able to explore college offers, Apprenticeships, University offers and more.

## Y9 Futures

Year 9 welcomed a range of guests who presented to them on Future options! From Apprenticeships to workplace skills to Universities and Colleges, they left with lots to consider!



# Progress Award Winners

Our Progress Award Winners were recently announced and we couldn't be more proud of the students and what they have achieved so far this year. Below is a list of all the students that have won a progress award.

## 3D Design

Divine 7REM  
Safa 7HJW  
Mya 8TG  
George 8TG  
Jessica 9KJP  
Elizabeth 9RAA  
Garima 11SKA  
Karol 11SCB

## Applied Science

Britney 12MCR  
Inayah 12MCR  
Zohya 13HWR  
Maik 13RWS

## Art

Alishba 7MSP  
Hardy 7APB  
Zain 8SBH  
Ryszard 8SBH  
Laibah 9KPA  
Tambir 9RAA  
Aisela 10JRL  
Evie 10ARO  
Alishba 7MSP  
Hardy 7APB  
Zain 8SBH  
Ryszard 8SBH  
Laibah 9KPA  
Tambir 9RAA  
Aisela 10JRL  
Evie 10ARO  
Alisha 11SCB  
Maymoonah 11SCB  
Haanaz 12MCR

## Automotive

Joshua 10ARO  
Harley 10ARO

## Biology

Divine 10CPG  
Matilda 10FFB  
Tina 11AEH  
Aayan 11SSK  
Taiwo 12MCR  
Kehinde 12MCR  
Zakaria 13SKA  
Lara 13HWR

## Chemistry

Noreen 10FFB  
Ikhlass 10CDH  
Elijah 11SSK  
Lily 11SCB  
Taiwo 12MCR

## ESOL

Noreen 10FFB  
Ikhlass 10CDH  
Elijah 11SSK  
Lily 11SCB  
Taiwo 12MCR  
Adiya 12ZHU  
Zakaria 13JKA  
Ibraheem 13JKA

## Combined Science

Kieron 10CDH  
Aleena 10CDH  
Olivia 11SCB  
Naqeeb 11SSK

## Drama

Benisse 7HJW  
JJ 7NIA  
Shayla 8VIK  
Alayna 8TG  
K'Mari 9AG  
Elizabeth 9RAA  
Christabel 11SKA  
Ibrahim 11SSK

## English

Nailah 7NIA  
Mustafa 7NIA  
Beau 8SPK  
Hajra 8TLL  
Browlin 9KPA  
Jori 9JRW  
Divine 10CPG  
Ameila 10CPG  
Hamza 11AEH  
Elijah 11SSK  
Grace 12ZHU  
Nimrah 12ZHU  
Lily 13HWR  
Alina 13RWS

## French

Ahmed EAL2  
Veronika EAL  
Faridah 11SKA  
Zarif 12MCR

## French

Zachary 7MSP  
Hardy 7APB  
Kamari 8DET  
Olivia 8VIK  
Abira 9RAA  
Alisha 9RAA  
Treasure 9JRW  
Mariam 10CPG  
Aleena 10CDH  
Sam 11SCB  
Eniola 11SKA

## Geography

Tamana 7APB  
David 7MSP  
Shakayla 8SPK  
Zunaira 8DET  
Ibrahim 9RSV  
Faiza 9RSV  
Matilda 10FFB  
Joshua 10ARO  
Aayan 11SSK  
Amna 11SSK  
Oscar 12MCR  
Rohan 12MCR  
Slahudeen 13RWS  
Haris 13RWS

## Health & Social Care

Amirah 12MCR  
Rosie 12ZHU

## History

Turaab 10LAG  
Aleena 10CDH  
Kadija 11SJG  
Laiba 11HCT

## Hospitality & Catering

Tiana 7HJW  
Mya 7HJW  
Ellie 8TG  
Louay 8SPK  
Divya 9RAA  
Samo EAL2  
Magda 10CDH  
Leo 10JRL  
Usman ML  
Zarif ML



# Progress Award Winners

## Maths

Mohammed-Akbar 7REM  
Amber 7APB  
Evie-May 8SPK  
Olivia 8VIK  
Laibah 9KPA  
Easa 9RSV  
Aadil 10ARO  
Divine 10CPG  
Husna 11SKA  
Jack 11AEH  
Muskaan 12LPR  
Oscar 12MCR  
Essa 13JKA  
Victor 13RWS

## Media Studies

Olivia 11SCB  
Angelica 11AEH  
Antoni 12MCR  
Zheng 12MCR  
Dean 13RWS  
Thomas 13RWS

## Music

Abeeha 7NIA  
Inaayah 7NIA  
Sienna 8TG  
Nathan 8SBH  
Browlin 9KPA  
Elizabeth 9RAA

## PE

Quinn 7APB  
La-Shayla 7HJW  
Zak 8SPK  
Evie-May 8SPK  
Faizan 9JRW  
Alisha 9RAA  
Isabella 10FFB  
Kemo 10ARO  
Laiba 11HCT  
Davion 11AEH  
Murtaza 12LPR

## PE

Vicky 12LPR  
Raihan 13RWS  
Tristan 13RWS

## Physics

Joshua 10ARO  
Kian 10ARO  
Darisha 11HCT  
Maymoonah 11SCB  
Oscar 12MCR  
Rohan 12MCR  
Victor 13RWS  
Lara 13HWR

## RE

Mya 7HJW  
Quinn 7APB  
Awais 8TG  
Nikita 8DET  
Treasure 9RW  
Flint 9KPA  
Sahil 10LAG  
Neo 10FFB  
Elijah 11SSK  
Chloe-Rose 11SCB  
Nimrah 12ZHU  
Owais 12ZHU  
Abu 13HWR  
Jacob 13RWS

## Science

Mya 7HJW  
Gohar 7HJW  
Poshya 8TG  
Minnie-Mae 8SBH  
Aiden 9JRW  
Browlin 9KPA

## Sociology

Hafsa 12LPR  
Nadia 12ZHU  
Scarlette 13JKA  
Janette 13RWS

## Highest Attainer

Browlin 9KPA  
Divine 10CPG  
Aayan 11SSK  
Taiwo 12MCR  
Janette 13RWS

## Best Conduct

Rebeca 7LKC  
Divya 9RAA  
Matilda 10FFB  
Aayan 11SSK  
Owais 12ZHU  
Evie 12ZHU  
Neha 12ZHU  
Taiwo 12MCR  
Kehinde 12MCR  
Aadam 12ZHU  
Tarran 12ZHU  
Lily 13HWR  
Alina 13RWS  
Janette 13RWS

## Progress Leader Award

Hardy 7APB  
Simeon 8TLL  
Browlin 9KPA  
Greater 10CPG  
Kadija 11SJG  
Aadam 12ZHU  
Angelo 13JKA



# SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO DEAL WITH UPSETTING CONTENT

## A Guide for Parents and Carers

Raising children in the digital age seems to be getting tougher, with the world currently experiencing so many uncertainties. From climate change to military conflicts around the globe, right now children across the globe can scarcely go online without being exposed to unsettling stories, images and ideas. Reassuring a concerned child can be difficult, especially when bad news feels omnipresent. We've put together some advice to help you in discussing upsetting events with young ones.

### 1 FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD KNOWS

There are many ways that children are exposed to upsetting content in the media, both online and offline. Before swamping your child with information, find out what they know already. Show them you're interested in what they have to say, practice active listening and try to gauge how much your child has been impacted by what they've seen.

### 2 RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

Starting a conversation about upsetting content probably isn't the best idea when your child is studying for an exam or about to go to bed. Choose a time when they're relaxed and open to talking, to make sure you have their full attention. Remember, these conversations can become emotional, so choose somewhere your child feels safe and comfortable.

### 3 KEEP IT AGE APPROPRIATE

With younger children, try and keep the conversation more general and avoid leading questions and complex detail. You can go slightly deeper into the specifics with young teenagers but keep monitoring their emotional response. With older teens, you can be more open about the realities and consequences of what's happening – but again, do stay aware of their emotional state.

### 4 EMPHASISE HOPE

Upsetting content can make anyone feel angry, scared, sad or overwhelmed. Try to find stories of hope, generosity and strength related to the content you're discussing. Children often feel reassured when they know they can do something to help, so encourage your child's sense of control through activities which make them feel they're positively impacting the events they're concerned about.

### 5 MONITOR REACTIONS

All children react differently, of course, and young people might not directly say that they're scared, angry, anxious, confused or uncomfortable. Emotional reactions are natural when discussing upsetting topics, so take note of your child's body language and reactions. Allow them to express their feelings in a non-judgmental space and try to stay mindful of how they might be feeling.

### 6 CONSIDER YOUR OWN EMOTIONS

It's not only young people who find upsetting news difficult to process: adults also have to deal with strong emotions in moments of stress. Children develop coping strategies by mirroring those around them, so staying on top of how you appear to be regulating your emotion on the outside is important for supporting your child through worrying times.

### 7 SET LIMITS

Managing screen-time and content can be difficult even in normal circumstances, but especially in unusual or stressful periods (at the start of the pandemic, for example). It's virtually impossible to keep children away from upsetting content completely, but it's important to try to limit exposure by using parental controls, talking about the dangers of harmful content and enforcing screen-time limits.

### 8 TAKE THINGS SLOWLY

Try not to overwhelm your child with information all at once: instead, take the discussion one step at a time. You could make the first conversation a simple introduction to a potentially upsetting subject and then wait until your child is ready to talk again. Opening the door to the conversation and demonstrating that your child can talk to you about this type of issue is a vital first step.

### 9 ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS

Online, troubling images, posts, videos and stories are shared across multiple platforms, many of which your child might access. Even if the content is actually inappropriate, encourage your child to discuss what they saw instead of being angry at them for seeing it. Children are still learning that not everything online is accurate – you want to be their ultimate source of information, not their device.

### 10 FIND A BALANCE

There's often a tremendous compulsion to stay right up to date with events. Our phones frequently send us push notifications urging us to read the latest article or view the most recent video on social media. It's essential to remind your child that it's healthy to take regular breaks, and to focus on positive events instead of 'doomscrolling' and risking becoming overwhelmed by bad news.

### 11 BUILD RESILIENCE

News has never been more accessible. While our instinct may be to shield children from upsetting stories, it's important that they're equipped with the tools to manage this content when they are exposed to it. Talk about upsetting content more generally with your child and emphasise that they can always tell you or a trusted adult if something they see makes them feel uneasy.

### 12 IDENTIFY HELP

It's hugely important that children know where to find support if they encounter upsetting content online. Encourage them to open up to an adult that they trust, and make sure they're aware of who their trusted adults are. It is essential that children understand that they're not alone, and that help is available if and when they need it.

### Meet Our Expert

Cayley Jorgensen is the director of FaceUp South Africa, which is a reporting system that is currently being used by schools and companies to fight bullying around the world. FaceUp helps give a voice to bystanders by encouraging them to speak up and get the help they not only want but need.



Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/uk/newsround/6047806> | <https://www.childnet.com/blog/supporting-your-child-with-upsetting-content/> | <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war>



# FOLLOW US!

## Social Media

Follow us on social media to get school updates, information on local events, careers information, revision tips, updates on newsletters and much more!



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