



Arts & Media School
ISLINGTON

Head's Half Termly Update Spring Term 1 - February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

This half term sees the start of the spring term and it has begun in earnest with Year 11 receiving their mock examinations results in much the same way as they will in the summer. It is an excellent opportunity for students to realise how well they are doing at this point in time and what they then need to do to attain even better grades. As usual, I was proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with my mock scholars as they attained an average Grade 6+ across their subjects.



Art At AMSI

The Art department has curated the reception space with students' work and in doing so have updated the previous display with excellent artwork that really celebrates the skills of our young people across year groups. You can see a 360 tour of the gallery and read about the artistic application used to create the work by activating this QR code. The next time you visit the school, please have a look at this area and be inspired!



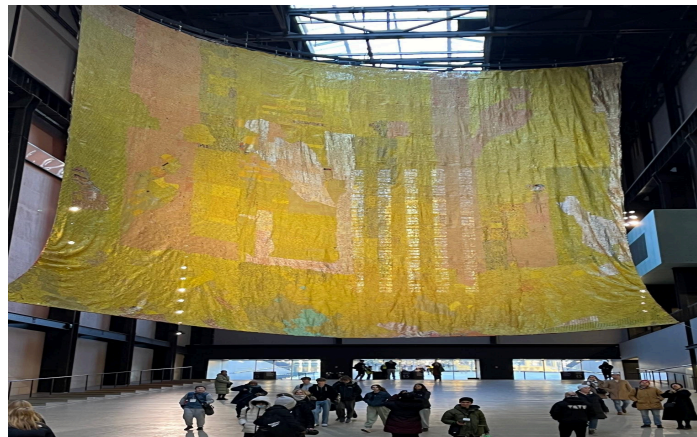
Tate Modern Visit

At the end of January, the Year 11 Art and Design students went to the Tate Modern, to experience first-hand a wide range of different artists' work. Aiming to kick start their Externally Set Assignment, based on the theme Power, students worked in small groups to explore and

exchange ideas about artworks that linked to their own initial ideas. Working in the gallery to select and create observational drawings helps students to notice and think about ideas in a way that is really different to screen based research - they all returned to school full of new starting points

Jasmin Bhanji, one of our AMSI resident Cubitt artists, joined the trip during the morning session to introduce the new installation of sculptural work in the gallery's Turbine Hall, created by the Ghanese artist El Anatsui. She gave a brief talk about the ways in which El Anatsui's work draws on British Colonial legacies, and helped students to think more deeply about the meanings that may lay behind the visual and tactile qualities of artworks.

Our students were a real credit to themselves - both in the way they approached the work they needed to complete, and the way they represented the school. They demonstrated exemplary behaviour, a confident and curious attitude to learning and were generous peer supporters throughout the day.



We are excited to announce that we will be offering and extending the Duke of Edinburgh Award for students in 2024 as a continuation of its inaugural and successful provision last year.

Some of our Year 9 students have already been introduced to the exciting opportunities presented by the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award through assemblies, online parent evenings, and an information presentation. As a result, we are delighted to share that 26 enthusiastic students have enrolled for the Bronze Award. To ensure everyone is well-informed, we have extended an invitation to both students and parents to join us for an online information evening where additional details will be provided. The Bronze Award expeditions are scheduled to take place in the scenic Epping Forest during June and July.

In a further development, we are also inviting students to enrol for the Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award at AMSI for the very first time. Currently, we have 9 students who have already taken this opportunity. The Silver Award expeditions are set to take place amidst the picturesque Chiltern Hills, offering an experience of a lifetime during June and July.

Students for the Bronze and Silver Awards will begin their training after the February half term.



Student Voice

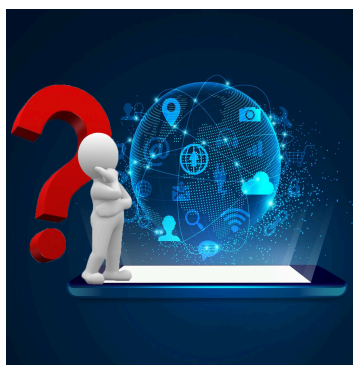
The School Council have had the opportunity to present during assemblies to their respective Year groups, whilst School Leaders also presented to the Year 11 cohort and all have prepared on the theme of the AMSI cornerstones (Respect, Aspirations, Reflection and Confidence). Much work and preparation has gone into ensuring that the School Council representatives are able to confidently convey important messages in line with the school values and ethos.

In addition, a panel of students who achieved the Gold Standard in Attitudes to Learning (this corresponds to 95% attendance and above and grades 1 and 2 across all subjects) have taken part in providing feedback regarding tutor time. They looked at how learning conversations are being utilised during registration and gave feedback to form tutors and Heads of Years to support consistency and high standards for all Year groups.

AMSI Big Questions

We have continued our school wide discussions this term, grappling with topics such as, **'Is the internet more bad than good?'** and **'Should footballers be paid more than nurses?'**

Opinion was starkly divided over the rights and wrongs of the internet, with over 70% of the votes declaring that, although it has its downsides, including the addictive nature of social media, on balance, the internet was a good thing.



"Yes, there are lots of ways the internet is dangerous and down right unhealthy, but there are also huge communities and a sense of belonging that you can find, not to mention thousands of pieces of information and countless other good things." Year 11 student

"Though I do agree it could be damaging towards people's social abilities and perception of life, the internet is the easiest way to learn new topics and learn about new trends and cultures in other countries as well as your own. Simply put, it is the world's encyclopaedia for information." Year 11 student

With regards to the question of football vs nurses pay, over 65% of voters felt strongly that nurses, and medical workers in general, deserved to be paid more than footballers

"I find even proposing such a question to be ludicrous and insulting to the studying and work that nurses and all other medical workers put into getting their jobs. The amount they invest into their job, before even becoming employed is incredible. They study for years, putting themselves through a mental and physical wringer to get their jobs. Not to mention how much more important their job is." Year 10 student



One provides medical care, the other is simple entertainment." Year 10 student

We continue to be impressed by the impassioned and reasoned contributions of our young people to these debates, and encourage them all to have their say, and cast their votes every fortnight.

AMSI Library

During this half-term AMSI Library took part in the commemorations for Holocaust Memorial. This yearly event is organised in Islington by the council and Arsenal Football Group. We took a group of Year 9 and 10's out to a series of workshops at the Emirates Stadium and then to a Civic Event at Islington Assembly Hall.



This half term also saw the launch of the Reading Road Map. This is a national initiative for encouraging children to read for pleasure but also to expand their reading material. There is a set list of books they choose from, and when they read the book they can move onto another on the list that is similar and so forth.

We have aimed the Road Map at our Year 8 students to further develop their passion for reading after a positive start when they were Year 7. There will be rewards for the amount of books read, with students completing 10 books being invited to attend an event at the Emirates Stadium in July! If any Year 8 student would like to sign up for the Reading Road Map, please see Mr. Bagshaw in the library - there are still 14 spaces available.

Primary School Maths Sessions

The AMSI maths department have started a maths enrichment programme for Key Stage 2 students over the last few weeks to give them a 'taste' of what's to come in their secondary school education. The aim is to expose the students to a higher level of learning and thinking so that they could develop skills to use both now and in the future.

Ambler, Stroud Green and Pooles Park primaries have grasped the opportunity to engage with these planned sessions with their Year 4 - 6 students of all abilities. We started off with hosting two sessions

this half-term where Pooles Park and Stroud Green visited the school. The students explored the introductions of algebra and the feedback has been really positive from all stakeholders.

Year 9 Options

This term, we have begun the Year 9 options process. On 7th February, the year group had an extended options assembly in which Subject Leads spoke about their respective GCSE subjects, giving students an opportunity to ask questions about their prospective GCSE choices. Next term, every student in the year group will have a mentoring session with a member of the Extended Leadership Team to discuss their subject choices. This will be complemented by the Options Evening on 6th March, and Year 9 Parents' Evening on the 26th March.

Mobile Phones

As you may be aware, the government is considering legislation to ban mobile phone usage in schools. At AMSI, we operate a 'See it, hear it, lose it' policy towards the use of mobile phones in school - we understand that you may want your child to have one so you can keep in contact with them, but on a balance, phones in school do more harm than good, and this has been drawn in to sharp focus with the recent events in the news.

We would strongly urge you to regularly check your child's phone as you pay the bill. Phones are unregulated hence you will be surprised at the inappropriate content children can access through social media channels. We are also often told by parents and students that issues emerge between students over conversations on social media and often parents have no idea about them until it is too late.

It is also advisable for children to hand over their mobile phone when they go to bed - studies suggest that many students stay up into the early morning texting or scrolling social media. Children that take a break from their devices are better rested, less irritable and generally happier.

When the government guidance on phones is fully agreed, we will review our policy, but I am sure that you will agree, it is important for us all to work together to ensure devices are used responsibly and that young people take regular breaks from mindless scrolling!

Reminders:

- 19th February - School re-opens for the second half of the Spring term.
- The school door opens at 8.30am every morning. Be on time!
- Students are required to bring their chromebooks fully charged to school every day.

Key Dates:

- 1st - 8th March 2024 - Year 11 March Mocks (Core subjects only)
- 5th March 2024 - Year 9 DTP and MenACWY vaccine
- 6th March 2024 - Year 9 Options Evening 5.00pm - 6.30pm
- 14th March 2024 - All students finish lessons at 1.20pm but detentions will be held
- 26th March 2024 - Year 9 Parents Evening 4.30pm - 6pm
- 21st March - Year 10 Work Experience Preparation Day
- 25th - 28th March 2024 - Year 10 Work Experience
- 28th March 2024 (half day) - End of Spring Term

Have a safe and enjoyable half term break till your return on Monday 19th February 2024 when school reopens as usual

Kind regards

Susan Service
Head teacher