



# MONTSAYE ACADEMY NEWS

March 2021

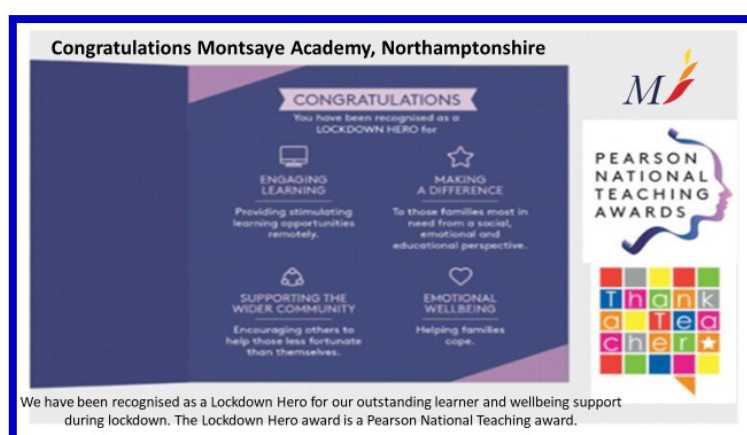


It has quite simply been wonderful to be back. An absolute joy to have our pupils filling the corridors and classrooms. It has been an interesting time for everyone during the past year and the challenges have made us stronger and more resilient. What has also been notable is that as a community, we have excelled during lockdown and ensured that learning was still taking place.

We were recognised as a lockdown hero by Pearson National Teaching Awards - we are very proud of this, as we are of all our pupils and staff who have been utterly incredible throughout.

At the time of writing, we have just concluded mass testing of all our pupils and again staff have come together and ensured that our community has remained safe. Teachers have resumed face-to-face teaching and are really enjoying being back with their classes in person, it is fantastic to get back to what we know and love doing.

Once again, thank you to everyone, whatever your role in the school and community. We are very much looking forward to 'The Next ERA' in the Montsaye Academy journey.



**Meena Gabbi - Principal**

## Meet our Staff Governors...



My name is Tim Shea and I am one of the staff governors at Montsaye Academy. I attend meetings to represent the teaching staff. I have been a member of staff for nearly four years and really enjoy working at Montsaye.

As well as teaching drama, I really enjoy going to the theatre (it won't be long now). I love sport and look forward to seeing excellence in action from our students. In the past year you may have seen my bookcase on Twitter and pictures of me reading several books.

**Tim Shea - Head of Drama**

My name is Adrian Oram and I am a staff governor at Montsaye Academy. As a data officer supporting the teaching staff, I get a really good picture of everything we are doing in school, especially in a year like this, to try to give the best possible experience for our pupils. As a parent of three teenagers, I also see the other side; what a huge task it has been for pupils and parents to cope with remote learning. It is so pleasing to see just how much everyone has engaged with this experience and how much resilience has been shown when things don't always work!

Being a governor is, for me, all about ensuring the best outcomes for our staff and pupils and I can see how dedicated our senior staff are in planning and adapting to ensure that happens. Whatever the next year holds for us, whether that is getting back into classroom learning, choosing option subjects or GCSE and A-level results for our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils, I am confident that our Montsaye team are doing everything they can to give our pupils the chances and the future they deserve.



**Adrian Oram - Data and Admin Officer**

## Wellbeing afternoon for staff and students

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February was Northamptonshire Mental Health Awareness Day. Mr Berridge and I led a whole school assembly which was attended by hundreds of households across the community; we began with the usual positive Montsaye message of ***Excellence, Resilience and Aspiration***.

We know that resilience doesn't mean keeping on no matter what. We recognise that resilience means accepting that sometimes we need to pause in order to rest and regroup. We know that we all need a shoulder to cry on or a friend to have a laugh with, to get us over the inevitable bumps in the road that life throws at us – and this has certainly been quite a bump in the road.



Mrs Brotherston organised a virtual bake-along session for pupils and staff to get involved with. Mrs Ellis continued crocheting the blanket she had begun making at the start of the first lockdown (now that's aspiration in action – she has nearly finished it now).



As we were unable to carry out our usual in-school activities, and in response to feedback from pupils about mental health, we launched a mental health afternoon. The plan was to create a space in the afternoon for pupils to do whatever would help their mental health. Staff were a big part of the activities as well.



Pupils shared their plans with us to (safely) cycle, run, walk, game, cook, chat, FaceTime, read, sleep and listen to music.

We are so proud of our incredible pupils and staff. This was a lovely way to recognise the day and the importance of our mental health, continuing the conversation around strategies for supporting and building up our resilience.

We get knocked down and we get up again. Sometimes we need to curl up with a good book or have a snooze  
**#Resilience #ERAWellbeing.**



The PE staff organised some fun football activities for many of the key worker children on the AstroTurf, as well as other sports activities in the sports hall. Miss Collins was in charge of a super board game event indoors where it was slightly less windy!

**Emma Lopes - SMSC Co-ordinator**

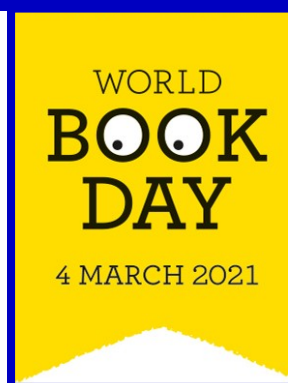


## World Book Day

On 4<sup>th</sup> March, pupils in Year 7 to Year 10 celebrated World Book Day with a range of activities designed to show the importance of reading.

As well as their regularly scheduled reading activities such as DEAR, pupils were treated to a reading of Anthony Horowitz's *The Hitchhiker*, with the story being read in five instalments across the day. The story was universally loved by pupils and staff alike, with the shocking twist (no spoilers here) taking many of them by surprise.

We tweeted throughout the day about this on @montsayereading and @montsayeEng; one of our retweets was even liked by Mr. Horowitz himself.



As well as this, KS3 pupils were given a chance to put their creative skills to the test in their independent lessons across the week, as they used left-over materials to craft reading-related projects. Our very sustainable project involved using the humble toilet roll tube to create a model that represented a character, theme or even a book cover for an influential book.

There were over fifty entries, and the competition was extremely tough to judge as the standard of entries was so high. Fortunately for me, the responsibility of judging the event fell to Mrs. Gabbi.

Here are the deserving winners of the competition for each year group and their wonderful winning entries:

**Year 7: Joshua F-B**  
**From the computer game:**  
**Minecraft**



**Year 8: Lola-Jane F**  
**From the book:**  
**Beauty and the Beast**



**Year 9: Roxie A**  
**From the book:**  
**Aliens Love Underpants**



# Year 7

I write this article as we come to the end of nearly 10 weeks of remote learning and teaching. What an experience it has been!

Year 7 all adapted incredibly well to the challenges that this learning experience threw at us: getting to grips with logging onto TEAMS, uploading their work and using their emails correctly.

I also had to learn some new ways of teaching, by delivering assemblies to a blank screen rather than seeing everyone's faces smiling back at me. Despite these challenges, pupils also reassured me that there were plenty of positives: staying in bed a little longer in the mornings and being able to get out to walk their dogs at lunch time are just a few.

If we look back over the weeks, I am proud that we managed to keep a good level of communication through year group assemblies, tutor sessions and catch-ups with the pastoral team. It was a real highlight to be able to celebrate all the lockdown and keyworker legends through our awards assemblies – I know that pupils and families appreciated them too.

Despite learning from home, Year 7's dedication to their lessons shone through in the amount of ERA points which have been achieved during this period (over 5,000). In the last week, we have also hit our next milestone of 20,000 ERA points.



Alongside ERA points, pupils did themselves proud in other ways, for example the #KeepActive challenge where they travelled the equivalent of 656.6km around the United Kingdom, with some amazing efforts from Charlie H., who managed to travel the furthest.

I also enjoyed the photos that pupils and teachers sent

me of everyone's exploits in the snow, baking achievements, DT projects and poems in English.

It's not just me who wants to share in the successes of everyone's home learning experiences, see below for some words of praise from other members of the Year 7 team:

**Miss Matthews:** *I was delightfully surprised every day at how the liveliness of our discussions were not deterred by computer screens. Pupils managed to bring online learning to life, just like they continue to do in classrooms and tutor time.*

**Mr Stanton:** *I was so impressed with the enthusiasm and resilience my form (7RS) showed throughout lockdown. They remained incredibly positive at all times and it was fun working with them during the on-line lessons and form time twice per week. They were real ERA heroes and I am very proud of them.*

**Miss Willis:** *My form continued to support and look out for each other online, such as reassuring each other about the COVID-19 testing experience during our form time; well done. I also want to do a shout out to group 7O, to mention how polite and friendly they were online, creating such a positive learning environment. Group 7A also participated with great enthusiasm and effort every lesson, consistently.*

**Mrs Edney:** *7NE approached this lockdown with a real sense of positivity and resilience. It was great to see a close group of pupils in school supporting each in the Year 7 pod too and I'm hoping they can help us all settle back into H4 together. Well done 7NE and I look forward to finishing your first year at Montsaye Academy back in our form room where we belong.*

Looking forward, we cannot wait to get back into the classrooms and teach everyone.

We have lighter, brighter and hopefully sunnier days to come. Well done, Year 7.

## KS3 Drama and Music News



Over the past few weeks, our KS3 pupils were working on a project which uses the musical 'We Will Rock You'.

Pupils analysed the script, taking on the role of the director and designing costumes.

I am pleased to be able to share with you, an example of a costume design for 'Galileo' who is one of the main characters in the production.

It was submitted by Anna W. Well done Anna on a fantastic piece of work.

Our Year 8 pupils also worked on creating scripts from real life events for a combined drama and music project. I was amazed by some of the topics they chose including Chernobyl, The Gunpowder Plot and a WW2 female fighter pilot.

Here is a snippet from one of the scripts which was submitted by Freddie L. It is based upon the bombings in London on 7th July 2005:

### Script for 7/7 disaster

**Setting:**  
**7<sup>th</sup> July 2005**

**London Piccadilly Line, near Russell Square**

### **Characters:**

**Adam:** 24 year old male, 5ft 9, brown hair, blue eyes

**Megan:** 21 year old female, 5ft 5, blonde hair, hazel eyes

Adam walks onto the train at London King's Cross, St Pancras. He sits down with a newspaper and a sigh.

**Megan:** "Bad day?". She asked in Adam's direction.

**Adam:** "Not really, I just have a strange feeling about today". He replied.

**Megan:** "Really? It's just an ordinary day, same as any other". Adam smiles.

**Megan:** "I'm Megan by the way".

**Adam:** "Nice to meet you, I'm Adam".

The train jolts suddenly...the lights go out...

What a wonderfully dramatic start to Freddie's piece of work!

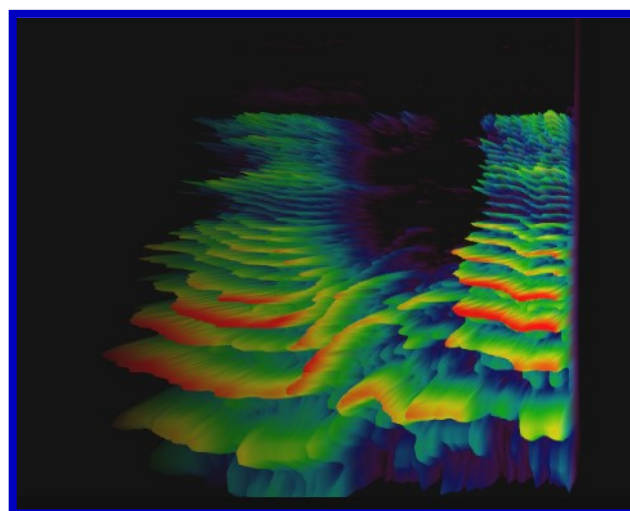
**Tim Shea - Head of Drama**

## Year 7 Music

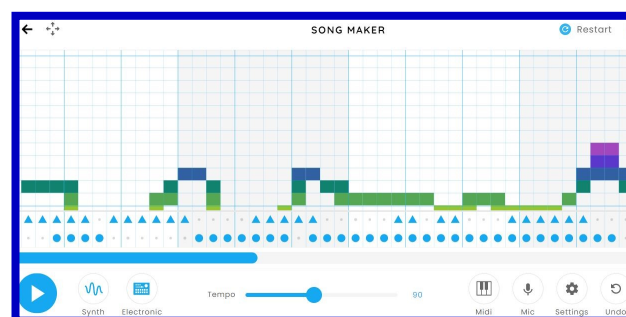
Some of our Year 7 cohort have produced some inspirational work after Mr Urwin's recent discovery of a brilliant online resource: [Chrome Music Lab](https://www.chrome-music-lab.com/).

Using this website, pupils in 7A and 7M explored ways in which sounds made by their own voices, can be shown on a spectrogram. A spectrogram is a picture of sound. It shows the frequencies which make up the sound, from low to high and how they change over time, from left to right.

They generated results like this:



Using the same software, other pupils programmed the sequencer to create their own melodies and beats, like this:



We have some very creative pupils.

Well done Year 7, keep up the fantastic work.

**Montsaye ACADEMY**  
Excellence Resilience Aspiration

**Natalie Gardner - Head of Music**



## Year 7 poets...

**O**ur Year 7 pupils studied a topic which is linked to human rights and some of their submissions have been on the subject of 'lockdown'.

We are delighted to be able to share with you, some wonderful examples in the form of poetry:

**Jamie M - 7APA:**

*Like a city in a war*

*We have been shut off to a world of possibilities*

*Like we are in house arrest*

*Like everything has turned into hell*

*Like the world changing by itself*

*Like we have been stuck on repeat for the past year*

*Like a broken record that turns no more*

*Like an explorer that can no longer explore*



**Halle W - 7APA:**

*This ginger creature was as soft as silk*

*After I had my cereal she would always drink the milk*

*She always slept by the window sill dreaming that she could fly like the birds*

*I loved playing in the garden with her and laughed as she chased me in the grass.*

*Those days were fun, but one day it stopped*

*I closed the glass door and just sat there on my phone all day...all alone.*

*All alone...she didn't come home*

*Everyone turned to their screens*

*Lockdown made everyone fall to their knees*

*No more green trees*

*Just orange or brown*

*We always had a frown upon our faces.*

*Away, away we hid from the virus*

*What happened to us? We asked*

*The virus, we said...the virus...the virus*

*Until there stood three little kittens*

*With their cute little mittens*

*As they ran through the crowd it lit up the gloomy sky*

*From grey to blue gloom was no such thing*

*We still wonder*

*Of how those three little kittens showed us their thunder*

*We wonder...*

*We wonder...*

**Claire Petchey - Year 7 Progress Leader**

## Year 7 scientists...

**Y**ear 7 pupils were to be found conducting experiments at home during the last lockdown period.

Isabella, completed a home science experiment entitled 'making a pH indicator from home'.



She blended red cabbage with water to make her simple indicator and added it to various substances to determine whether they were an acid or an alkali.

.....

Libby carried out a home science practical entitled 'making a volcano'.



She mixed citric acid (lemon juice) and an alkali (bicarbonate of soda) to create a reactive lava effect.

Libby told us: *The main reaction happened in the kitchen whilst we stirred the liquids, however we tried to make the explosion even bigger by putting double amount of ingredients in it.*

**Alex Jordan - Teacher of Science**

## Year 8

Year 8 pupils coped admirably during the recent lockdown. Staff were extremely impressed with their levels of attendance and engagement in all of their lessons. The kindness and support shown by pupils for each other and our staff was outstanding, really showing the Montsaye ERA values at their best.

It has been wonderful to see everyone back in their usual lessons again, and to see the ERA values which pupils exhibited during lockdown being brought back into the school building.

I am sure that Year 8 have thoroughly enjoyed spending some extra time at home with their loved ones, but they have been really excited to return to face-to-face learning. Since their return to school, Year 8 have been absolutely fantastic.

Our Year 8 art group have produced some wonderful work based on the artist, Vincent van Gogh, who was a Dutch post-impressionist painter (the one who, famously cut off his left ear).

Pupils researched and explored his work and discovered his colourful and expressive style. One of the tasks set was to create a 3D pop-up chair.

We received some lovely examples:



by Millie B.



By Blake G.

Special mentions also go to:

### Design

**Hope G.** for her positive approach to learning, good work submitted, and good contributions to lessons.

**Jessica C.** for really trying hard to contribute and produce good work.

**John S.** for attending every DT lesson and being early into every online lesson.

**Poppy B.** for good quality work produced. Poppy has also returned to school with the same great work ethic.

### Art

**Matthew A., Louie G. and Charlie Y.**

### English

**Oscar F, and James G.** whose wonderful work you will see on the next page.

And generally across all of their subjects - **Jayden C.** and **Harley O.**

Since their return to school, Year 8 pupils have been fantastic, and I am very proud of each and every one of them for their resilience over the last few months.

**Jon Roberts - Year 8 Progress Leader**

## Year 8 pupils excel at English

I am very proud of our Year 8 pupils who have been working hard in their English lessons.

I am pleased to be able to share some magnificent examples of their skilled pieces of writing. Pupils were tasked with producing a piece of work about the sea and I am sure that you will agree, Oscar and James have certainly used their imagination.

By Oscar F.

*Through my ice white window, I could see the moon breaking through the barriers of the horizon. As it did this, the lapis blue ocean waved and crashed in fear. As the moon rose like a mighty god, it glanced at the ocean. The ghostly, godly moon was now dominant.*

*Now that the moon had appeared, the mist had shown itself. It was serving as a protective blanket of light, it fought the darkness using the moon as it's source of power. The sea was protected, but yet still wild.*

*The pitch-black sky gazed down at the ocean showing off its many stars. It was therapeutic and calming, but the ocean was wild and panicking. Together this made the perfect balance of sound... it was charming in a way.*

*All of the aspects of the night sky came together.*

*The image in front of me was a lion, charming but yet dangerous. As I shut my window, the sea waved goodbye as the waves came crushing down.*

By James G.

*The rusty hinges squeaked, the glass in the weathered window frames rattled, tap, tap, tap as the strong gusty wind blew inland. Through the window the angry waves crashed against the rocks as it had over and over again, day after day, year after year for millions of years. Furious waves punched the air like Anthony Joshua hits his opponent in the ring.*

*A dazzling full moon brilliantly beamed brightly in the midnight sky, illuminating the horizon. Piercing white light like cat's eyes reflected in the car's headlights. The moon shimmered up in the sky like a single light bulb in a darkened room.*

*Furiously, the sea continually bashed against the shore line, creating fluffy white foam on the tops of each wave like the head on a glass of beer.*



*The waves seemed to be alive with a mind of their own. Emotionally agitated.*

*Salty sea air has eroded the coastline, attacked all the rocks, crevices and houses in its path.*

Such wonderful pieces of work; Oscar and James you should be very proud.

Lilith Bateman - Teacher of English



## Year 9

It's been a busy few weeks for Year 9 pupils, as they prepare to make their GCSE option choices. While we may not have been able to have the degree of face-to-face contact we would ideally have, pupils have still benefited from a wide range of resources and support.

The process started during lockdown with assembly and form time being used to encourage pupils to log onto the 'Start' website. This is a fantastic resource, enabling them to identify their strengths and interests and use these to start planning possible future career paths, helping them to make decisions about the most relevant subject choices for GCSE and beyond.

Meanwhile, staff were busy behind the scenes learning movie making skills as they created videos to showcase their subjects. This was to make up for the fact that we could not host our usual Options Evening event in school. These videos, eye catching flicker-booklet and a more detailed course information booklet are all available on the Montsaye website [Year 9 Options 2021 - Montsaye](#).

During National Careers Week, students were signposted to a range of presentations and a virtual careers fair, including a session from the Army promoting the range of opportunities they have to offer.

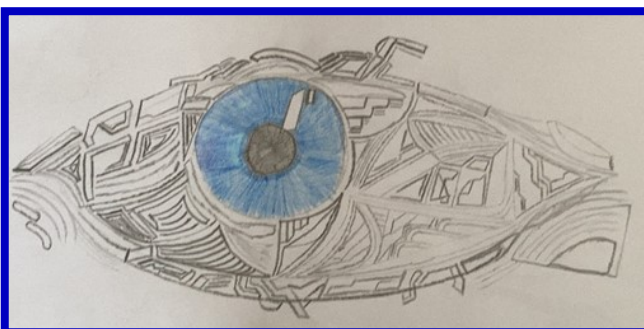
Along with the taster sessions which took place on our return to school, the very well attended online Parents Evening, and Options Evening, and guidance from subject and pastoral staff, our Year 9 pupils are in an excellent position to make their subject choices.

**Graffiti and Japanese anime by Maddison C.**



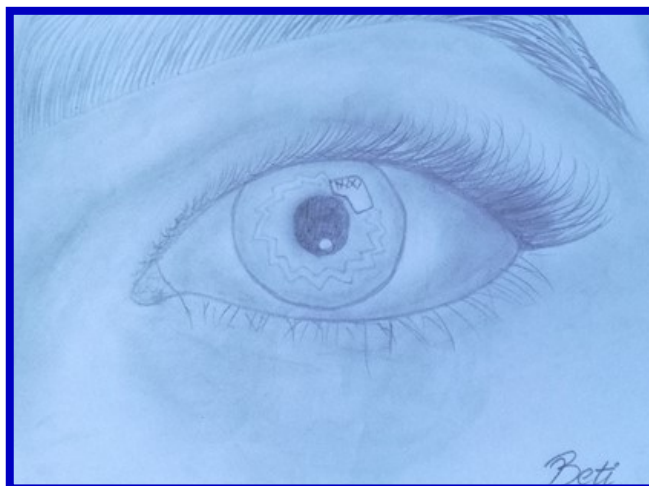
During lockdown, Year 9 came in for much praise from their teachers for their engagement in lessons, and it was lovely to hear comments from staff such as "Year 9 are the highlight of my week!" Many pupils chose to work on their artistic skills while they were stuck at home, as evidenced by the stunning graffiti and eye studies shown here in this article.

**Graffiti eye by Matthew D.**



A third of the year group were sent certificates, recognising a particularly high level of commitment to online lessons and assignments.

**Observational eye by Beata B.**



On our return to school, Year 9 impressed us by their resilience and efficiency in managing the lateral flow tests and by their renewed enthusiasm for learning.

It has been so lovely to watch everyone's enjoyment at seeing old friends and to hear the buzz back in the Year 9 pod.

**Jane Cooper - Year 9 Progress Leader**

## Year 10

Ten weeks of remote learning and ten weeks of incredible work and commitment from all of my Year 10 cohort.

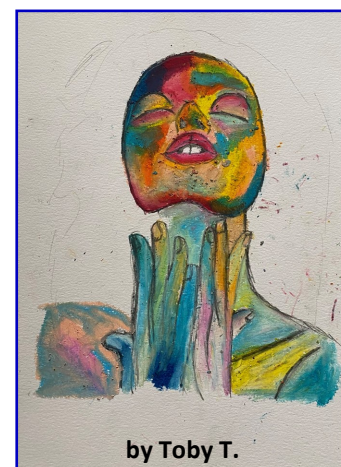
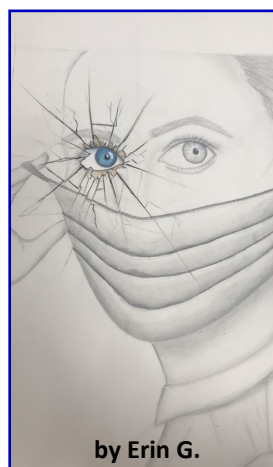
I am incredibly proud of the hard work, dedication and positivity which so many pupils showed during this time. Everyone adapted incredibly to the challenges of online learning. They continued to show our school's ERA values in each lesson and achieved an outstanding, 3885 ERA points as a year group during lockdown; this brings our new total to 12898.

Looking back over these past ten weeks, we have achieved so much and there has been lots to celebrate. It has been lovely that so many of you shared work that you were proud of and our pod gallery (launched by Corey) became a great success. Our Inter-form competition has continued and the lockdown winners are Mr Ablett's form (10EAB) who achieved 808 ERA points in total. Congratulations also go to Harry who is the highest ERA point achiever over lockdown, receiving 132 ERA points.

We celebrated our 'lockdown legends' in our end of term rewards assembly. Eighty-eight pupils were chosen by their teachers as lockdown legends. Lilly-Mae and Chardai reached the 100 Excellence points milestone and will be receiving their Excellence Pins very soon.

I mentioned it in an assembly at the start of this half term, but Year 10 really are a remarkable year group. Pupils have shown so much resilience and adapted to the changes of remote learning with positivity.

Expressionism exemplar work by Year 10



Everything we have celebrated already this academic year shows this; I have no doubt that pupils will value and seize all of the new opportunities which are on offer to them in the future.

Mrs Walters-Morgan shares my feelings on what an amazing year group Year 10 are:

*"On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>, when we were running the first lateral flow tests for Year 10, I was reminded just how wonderful the pupils are. It made me so happy to see and hear everyone. I'm so looking forward to the future, when we are all back together supporting each other."*

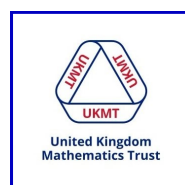
**Fran Malins - Year 10 Progress Leader**

## Year 10 pupils take part in UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge 2021

The results are in! At the beginning of February, some of our Year 10 pupils completed the Intermediate Maths Challenge organised by the UK Maths Trust. The challenges were designed to stimulate mathematical problem solving, encourage learners to think outside of the box, and apply mathematical skills learnt in lessons to sophisticated conundrums.

The pupils all met the challenges well, with six of them achieving a Bronze Certificate; Amalia F., Lauren M., Keira P., Preston P., Erin B. and Joseph R. (given to just 21% of the entrants) and two a Silver Certificate Jack J.

and Jake W (only 13-14% of entries achieve Silver). We are pleased to announce that one of our pupils, Shahan R., received a Gold Certificate and the highest score in the school (only the top 6-7% of pupils who enter the challenge receive a Gold Certificate, and only the top mathematicians are entered). Shahan has also qualified for the next round, called the 'Pink Kangaroo' which will be held in the near future.



Congratulations to all of the pupils who took part, an excellent effort was made by all.

**Matt Sipple - Second in Mathematics**

## Year 11



Excellence Resilience Aspiration

As we return to school, I acknowledge that my time with my wonderful year group is coming to an end, and I also realise how resilient they have been throughout their entire Montsaye journey, in particular the past two years. I am so proud to have called myself their progress leader for the past few years, but also am looking forward to supporting them in the final part of their GCSE journey at Montsaye Academy.

For me, looking back over this most recent lockdown, I was blown away by the excellence the pupils showed in everything they did. Attendance at online lessons was exemplary, the amount of effort put into their work was incredible, and most importantly, the support they offered each other throughout was astounding. In addition to their online learning, Year 11 were involved in assemblies, careers advisor sessions, application processes for post-16 opportunities, additional revision sessions, learning new skills, live careers events, cooking and photography; to name just a few. All pupils showed aspiration towards the next stages of their lives.

Looking forward, Year 11 pupils have so many exciting opportunities coming their way. Yes, the exam and grading process is different this year, but the Montsaye staff body will support pupils through this. In the last few months of their Year 11 journey, pupils can look forward to; post-16 offers, post-16 taster events, sixth form Q&A sessions, exploring what to do during the summer to help them develop more skills, alongside taking steps to the next stage in their educational journey. Whatever that may be, and wherever that may take them, Montsaye will support them in getting there.

It is not just me who was impressed with how Year 11 adapted to online learning, and a life in lockdown, and it is not just me who is incredibly proud of them. The other members of the Year 11 pod team wanted to share their thoughts too.

Mrs King says: *"I am so proud of how well Year 11 managed to adapt to online learning and how they took on board all of the changes and challenges that have cropped up. I was also really impressed with those pupils who were accessing key worker provision with smiles on*

*their faces. Lockdown 3.0 was HARD, but pupils were so resilient, they reached out for help when they needed it and supported each other when they could, so well done.*

*I'm really looking forward to having everyone back in school full-time and to them having the opportunity to shine like the stars they all are."*

Mr Baria says: *"I was really impressed with Year 11 pupils' high levels of engagement in online learning and attendance to live lessons on MS teams.*

*Looking back, I would never have imagined that we would be doing the final stretch of the GCSE courses through another lockdown, but Year 11 showed us that they are resilient by continuing with their studies remotely. I am pleased that Year 11 are back in school so that they can finish the year in a normal way and go out on a high!"*

I also wanted to share some responses that I received from some of our Year 11 pupils, about lockdown and how they have found it.

*"During lockdown, I enjoyed the independent nature of the lessons as well as the adapted learning style...I think it is good for organisation."*

*"I liked being able to spend time with my family."*

*"I loved the time to myself which honestly has helped me when thinking about school and post-16 plans, as well as general mental health."*

*"With the return to school, I am most excited to see my friends, as well as honestly getting back into the classroom."*

*"Post Year 11, I am looking forward to having a new adventure in sixth form."*

*"Post Year 11, for me the prospect of becoming independent and taking both my education and functional human skills further is exciting. I can't wait for the opportunities that sixth form, as well as a job, might bring."*

Remember, although we may not be in the same boat, we are all in the same storm, and we will support each other in getting to where we need to be.

**Hannah Pickering - Year 11 Progress Leader**



# Art in the Sixth Form

## Year 12

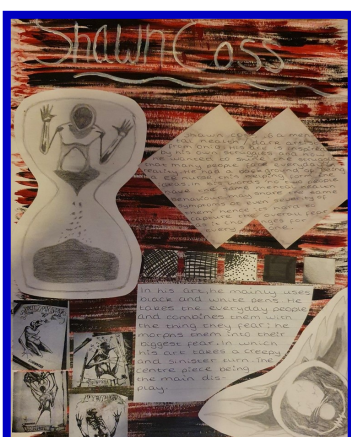
### Jared G:



Jared is exploring the theme of stories in his A-level art project.

This page developed from an interest in the fairy tale of Little Red Riding Hood.

### Georgie S:



Georgie decided to focus her A-level art studies on the subject of 'fears'.

She researched artists who consider this theme in their work and has been inspired to produce her own photoshoot.

### Hugo B:

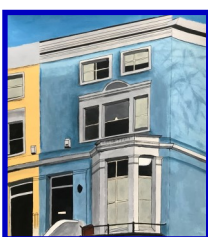


Hugo demonstrates excellent draughtsmanship with his illustrations, he is skilled in creating very atmospheric scenes with simple, mature expressive lines and marks.

Well done Year 12; you have all worked so hard on your A-level art projects.

Julia Roberts - Teacher of Art

## Year 13



### Izzy T:

Izzy has a strong interest in architecture and is exploring her own local architecture through her project. Izzy enjoys sketching and shading with accuracy.

She has patience and skill to capture a sense of perspective and detail in her work.

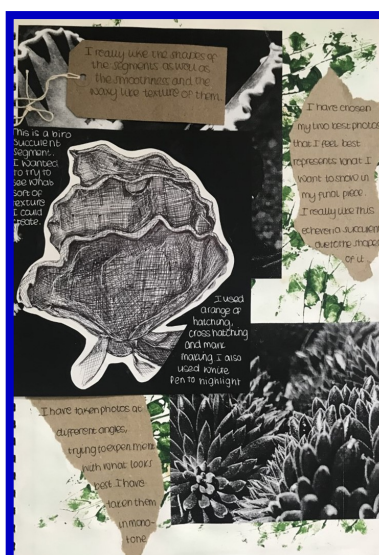


### Alfie C:

Alfie has explored insects in extreme detail through his work.

Having captured his own examples of native insects, he enjoys working in a linear form to develop a series of tessellated patterns. Alfie has worked with mesmerising

accuracy and should be very proud of his work.



### Holly B:

Holly continues to develop her project based on natural forms.

She is inspired by the natural shapes and patterns she finds in nature and confidently expresses this through her drawings.

Holly successfully draws our attention to textures and forms

that would usually be missed through her close up observational work.

We are so incredibly proud of the work which all of our pupils have completed.

Julia Roberts - Teacher of Art

## Medical School Success for Year 13 pupil, Natalia

Here in the sixth form, we are still celebrating the success of Natalia, who has been offered a place at medical school in September 2021. She has had to work incredibly hard to get to this stage, and we could not be happier for her. I spoke to Natalia to find out more about the process she has been through so far to get to this point...

### What made you decide to apply to medical school?

I always knew I wanted a job in healthcare, as I liked the idea of combining scientific knowledge with caring for people. I investigated lots of different roles, such as dietician and physiotherapist, but they are very specific roles, and nothing really stood out for me. This led me to think more about medicine; it is academically challenging, and you continue learning throughout your whole career, which I love the idea of. There are so many different career options within medicine, all involving looking after people. For example, I could do medicine and become a GP, or do medicine and become an anaesthetist. It leaves my options wide open after my degree.

### Which medical schools did you apply to?

I applied to Nottingham, Lincoln, Leicester and Keele. As we couldn't visit, I focused more on the course structure. Nottingham and Lincoln were my favourite two, because they do something called a BMedSci, which is a mini-degree in a different subject in your third year. I thought this would be very interesting and it can also give you points when applying to work as a junior doctor. Leicester and Nottingham offer full body dissection which is quite rare...I thought that would be a good opportunity! All the schools I chose have integrated courses, meaning you learn the scientific knowledge alongside clinical placements.

### Talk us through the process you have had to go through to get your place...

The first step was to complete an exam called the UCAT, which tests skills such as problem solving. You sit the exam in the summer between Year 12 and Year 13, in the same place as you might sit driving theory tests. You get your score immediately after taking the test, so you know straight away if it is worth applying to medical school, as you can look at the previous years' cut off scores.

I then wrote my personal statement, and from then on it is similar to the process as for other university courses. The only thing different is that I had an earlier deadline than other courses, so I had to be prepared with my personal statement and application a lot earlier than some of my friends.

Once I had submitted my application, I had to wait for any interview invites. I got mine in December and January for Nottingham, Lincoln, and Leicester. Most medical schools

are moving away from traditional interviews and now do MMIs (multiple mini-interviews) where you move around stations. It is a lot more activity-based, such as breaking sad news in a role play, or watching a consultation and saying what you think was good and bad about it, alongside traditional interview questions too. All of my interviews took place online and, once I'd done them, I just had to wait for replies like with any other course.

### What advice would you offer to other students who may be considering medical school?

- **UCAT advice;** start early and treat it as another A-level to study for. Buy a book with lots of advice and practice questions in. You can spend hundreds of pounds on online courses, but I didn't do them, and I did fine. There is a free resource called PassMedicine and the UCAT website has more practice questions too.
- **Interview and personal statement advice;** if you don't have lots of work experience in hospitals (I didn't) people say you won't even get interviews, but you will. I would say look at what you do and see how you can apply that to being a doctor. For example, I work in a restaurant where there's no medicine in sight, but it is a fast-paced environment. I must work in a team and treat all the customers equally even if it's right at the end of my shift and I'm tired! Use any hobbies or work that you do and think about what qualities you have gained and why they would be relevant to being a doctor.
- **Picking a course;** all courses vary slightly so I would say just decide how far you are willing to travel away from home and then look at the courses and see what you think would complement your learning style.

### So, what happens now?

I have currently received two offers, and I am just waiting to hear back from Leicester before I make my first and second choice. I've been looking at other aspects of the universities now, such as accommodation, to help me decide where I would like to go. I will also be focusing on the assessments I have coming up at school. Hopefully, I will get the grades I need, and be off in September.

Natalia, huge congratulations from everyone at Montsaye Academy. We are all incredibly proud of you!



**Laura McNish**  
Sixth Form Centre Manager



## Year 13 chemists investigate the world of forensics

Our Year 13 chemistry pupils were recently set a task to describe how instrumental techniques are able to identify banned substances from blood or urine samples.



Pupils prepared a short article to explain how gas chromatography-mass spectrometry is used to detect and identify different compounds in a mixture, for example drugs testing of athletes. Their explanations of the process were really informative

and aimed at a wide audience of readers.

Instrumental techniques are often a difficult concept in A-level chemistry, but our pupils showed an in-depth understanding of how to identify substances, based on their attraction to different chemicals and their absorption of radiation within their atoms and bonds, along with masses of fragments from the molecules. A highlight for me was the real life examples they chose to explain how the processes work. Hopefully, if more people can understand the processes of forensic science, then it will put off potential drug dealers and murderers in the future.

We would like to share with you, examples from two of our pupils:

**Emma C - Year 13:** *One real life example comes from the use of GC-MS in identification of drugs being smuggled. A letter addressed to a prisoner was found to contain drugs. One method the police used to identify these drugs was through soaking the letter in methanol for solvent extraction, which was then injected in a gas chromatogram for detection. Mass spectrometry was used afterwards. The results were tested against the national institute for standards and technology and was found to be a newly identified cannabinoid.*

**Ellie B - Year 13:** *Chromatography was used in the Harold Shipman case who was a prolific serial killer of over 200 of his patients. He administered high levels of morphine to his patients which ultimately killed them. His victims were often identified as having been killed by him, long after death due to the lethal amounts of 6-monoacetyl morphine in their exhumed bodies, when samples were put through gas chromatography.*

**FORENSICS**

Lucy Cooper Teacher of Science

## YouTube Success



In June 2020, we launched our new YouTube channel and in a few short months we have just reached 10,000 views.

Initially, the aim was to help our new Year 7 pupils transitioning from primary school. The channel soon became a key resource in communicating important news and messages and keeping our school community connected.

We are adding new content all the time. There are currently lots of videos outlining the content of our GCSE courses. These are aimed at our Year 9 cohort but are a useful insight for all KS3 pupils who are thinking about their next steps. We also shared a video about the COVID-19 testing process, which proved really useful for reassuring students preparing to come in for their first tests; the video was viewed over 200 times in the first day.

If you would like to subscribe, search for Montsaye Academy on YouTube or follow this link:

[Montsaye Academy YouTube Channel](#)

Emma Lopes - SMSC Co-ordinator

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