EducationIMPACT Academy Trust

Queensbury School

Newsletter

March 2024

We believe all students have the ability to unleash their limitless potential.

WWW.QUEENSBURYSCH.COM

A message from the Executive Head teacher

Dear Parents / Carers,

Wishing all our families a Happy Easter and Happy Ramadan Mubarak.

This term has presented some challenges on the horizon for Birmingham as a city, with the significant section 114 cuts to services and the impact on non-statutory age SEND transport. I have been working with the 27 Special School Headteachers' and we have sent a joint letter of concern to John Coughlan, (SEND Commissioner), Sue Harrison (Director of Children Services) and Helen Ellis (Director of SEND). We await their response, although Helen Ellis is visiting the school after Easter. Thank you to all families that responded to the consultation and your support.

On a more positive note, spring has been in the air with students springing to action on our new five aside 5G MUGA / Football pitch. £750,000 investment into a fantastic facility promoting health, PE, Sport and physical wellbeing is a great improvement to the school. Martin (Mentor) has significantly had a very positive impact on the students and school in running activities at break and lunch and alongside Mr Swain (PE) they are both in their elements with this new facility.

Dates:

Term ends:
Friday: 22nd March 2024

Return to School:
Monday 8th April 2024

School closed for students:
Friday 3rd May 2022

Staff Training day:
Friday 3rd May 2024

Term ends:
Monday 22nd July 2024

The school has been awarded sliver status as a Trauma Informed Attachment Aware School, after two years of assessment and training with staff and students. We are the first special school in the city to reach the standard and now working towards the Gold standards.

Chris Wilson **Executive Head Teacher**

A message from the Executive Head teacher

Modeshift STARS National Award

After winning the Modeshift STARS Regional SEND School of the year 2023-2024 earlier this year. Three students, Mrs Richards and I travelled to London to represent the West Midlands

The three students (Travel Ambassadors) represented the school incredibly well and helped plan the journey and travel to and from London. They presented on stage to a huge audience national school audience on all the projects we have run in school like Bikeability and the Clean Air Zone project.

Well the judges must have been impressed because we WON the nationals! Queensbury School is the Modeshift STARS National SEND School of the year 2023-2024.

Chris Wilson Executive Head Teacher

A Message from the Executive Head Teacher

Personal Development: The number of clubs (Lunch and afterschool) and activities that the young people have requested has increased significantly now we have the appropriate space, facilities. It's been great to see the steady rise in uptake from the students and the incredible talents and skills they have. Mrs Weston has been instrumental with Mrs Brown promoting the broad spectrum of clubs each term so look out on our new digital signage for details or the fantastic art posters designed around school.
Mr Dennis & Mrs Bano have also restructured Student Council into two groups Queensbury and New Horizon councils and Our Special Angels is running holiday clubs in each main holiday terms.

There was a definite buzz around school on Thursday as Queensbury were celebrating World Book Day in style. Both students and staff participated wholeheartedly in the event way.

Quality of Education; Several themed Quality of Education days have run this term with huge impact on students learning and broadening the teaching approach at Queensbury. The recent STEM Day was incredibly successful, with students fully engaged. The school Martin Luther King Day witnessed some incredible writing talents over difficult subject matter, and this has been shown in our progress data this term. Equally the standards of teaching are continuing to improve even further. The Fly2help charity supported our New Horizon Students understanding of "Flying" and making the concept real, whilst linking to preparation to adulthood careers work. Mr Mitchel failed the security search!

Mrs Byrne and Miss Williams along with all the teachers have placed Reading front and centre stage with an incredible World book day. A children's author visited the school and talked about his characters in his most recent books captivating our learners.

Edison one of the school Therapy Dogs also lectured at the University of Wolverhampton this term to new teachers coming into the profession. He helped them understand how Therapy Dogs can support in schools and specifically additional needs. He was happy to be paid in dog treats and fuss.

We hope you all have a fantastic break and wish our examination students luck for the exam period when we return in April, along with a new refurbished Food Technology facility. Be safe and have fun.

Regards
Chris Wilson
Executive Head Teacher

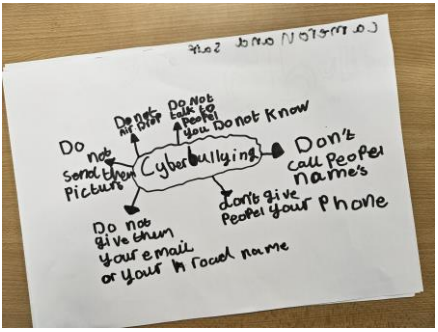
World Book day 2024

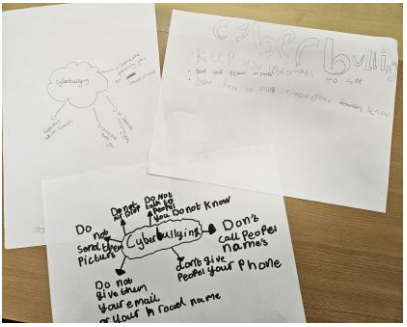
World Book Day 2024

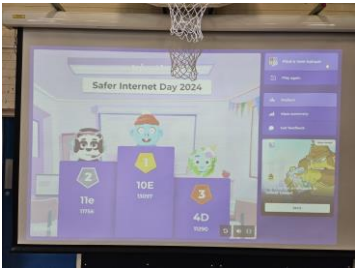
There was a definite buzz around school on Thursday as Queensbury were celebrating World Book Day in style. Both students and staff participated wholeheartedly in the event by dressing up as characters from books. The pupils initially joined in an assembly which informed the students on why reading is important and how they could have difficulty accessing the whole curriculum if they can't read and understand text. Equally they learned how not only is reading a life skill to keep safe in the future but it is an enjoyable pastime to escape the stresses of the day and also enrich and widen their knowledge. Throughout the day the pupils were engaged in fun, creative reading activities including book quizzes, writing lyrics to songs, being illustrators and designing front covers to name a few. However, the highlight of the day was when local children's author Alan Stott delivered a presentation about what was the inspiration for his stories and how to develop writing skills. Overall, the day was a huge success promoting a love of reading, inspiring illustrators and authors of the future in a fun and creative way.

Safer Internet Day 2024

Queensbury School in Erdington marked Safer Internet Day on the 6th of February. This global day of internet safety awareness is now in its 20th year.
The school had Safer Internet Day assemblies, complete with interactive quizzes where the form groups faced off against each other in a test of their internet safety knowledge- happily there were a huge number of correct answers.
Through the week students have talked about cyberbullying in particular and how to be a conscientious user of the internet community.
One Year 9 student pointed out that, “The internet is meant to be helpful, to make things better and easier.” It is this attitude that Queensbury aims to instil in its students.
The school was also supported by Birmingham East’s School Liaison Police Officer, who led sessions with individual classes highlighting the risks of internet use presented in the context the local area and schools. This followed on from a parent workshop on internet safety that took place at the school a week prior.
The main outcome desired is that all children know how to behave online, and that if they have any concerns at all, not to hesitate to simply ask a responsible adult







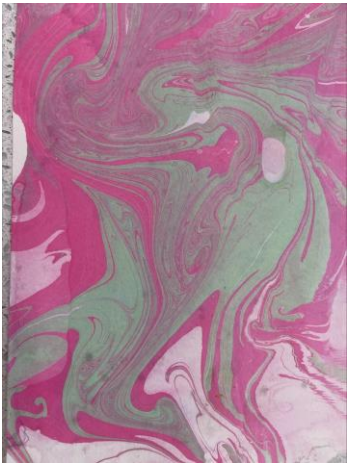
CDE Workshops

Craft Design & Enterprise (CDE) Workshop at Touchbase Pears

Year 11 CDE Options group attended the workshops at the Sence Touchbase Centre. They had a great experience in learning and creating their own Abstract art by using marble painting techniques, block printing and digital printing. All students had a brilliant time learning a new skill and they all behaved incredibly well.

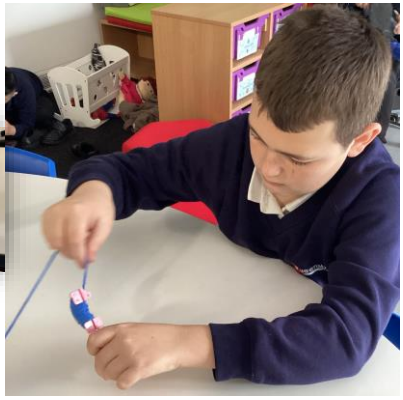
CDE Workshop led by an artist

CDE Workshop at Touchbase Pears



Crafts with 3D.2

3D.2 have been learning how to make pom poms. Mrs Sanders and Ms Cooke showed the students how to use the wool and a Pom pom machine to make a pom pom. The students chose the colour of the wool they wanted, next they had to wind the wool around the machine. Once they had finished winding the wool, Mrs Sanders and Ms Cooke cut and trimmed the pom poms. Some students made a teddy from their pom poms. It was great fun and the students had something they could take home

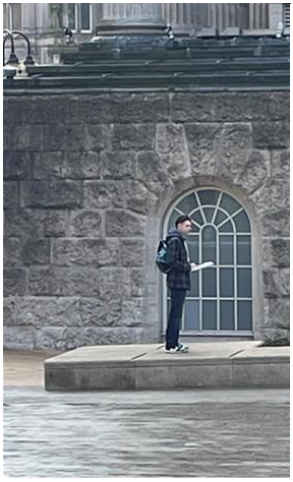


11N Geography Trip

Part of GCSE Geography 11N took part in a fieldtrip to Birmingham City Centre.

They went to see 'If Birmingham has improved?'

They did a pedestrian and traffic count, completed questionnaires and an environmental check.



9N visited Nechells Wellbeing Hub

On Friday 23rd February, 9N students took part in a "Move Now* festival alongside a number of other school students to gain experience in a range of different sports and activities. These sports included

- Judo/Taekwondo
- Archery/shooting
- VI Football
- 3 v 3 basketball
- Break dancing
- Boccia

All students were inspired to take part in 1 or more of the activities once back in school and special congratulations must go to Junior, Lewis, Con, Jaiden and Padraig who won individual awards for showing great leadership, respect, teamwork and encouragement towards their peers as well as other school students.

Venture News

Some of 10V, 10N and 9V took part in a team building activity at Ackers.

They had to work as a team to solve problems.

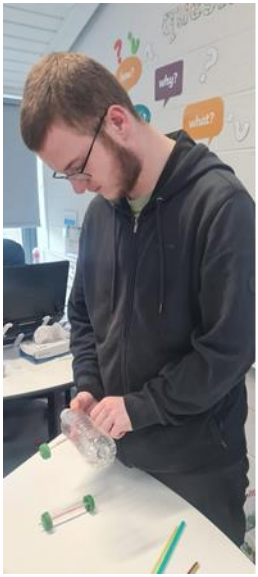
Venture News

Part of Step up to English and Community Access 10V took a trip to
Co-Operative travel shop in Erdington, they looked at the different currency rate and different h

Part of Independent Living Skills 'Rights and Responsibilities' 10V went over to New Horizon. Ms Leggett organised a Firepit and 10V toasted marshmallows (vegan) and making smores.

STEM Day

As part of British Science Week, Queensbury main site and New Horizons site had a STEM day. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and these are all areas where there are skill shortages in the UK. These events encourage students to think about jobs and careers linked to STEM. At Queensbury, Keyode Lewis came in to do some (very) low temperature demonstrations. Using liquid Nitrogen, Keyode did experiments using flowers, meringues, fruit and other objects. The finale was an experiment to see what happened if you mixed a very hot liquid with a very, very cold liquid with some explosive results. The students were intrigued and fascinated by the demonstration and hopefully one or two will be inspired to follow a science pathway.

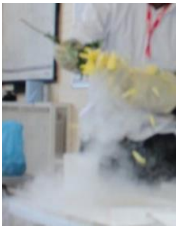


Our students had a blast with STEM. They teamed up to make cars from recycled stuff, like cardboard and plastic bottles, learning about engineering and being eco-friendly. They also did cool experiments with liquid nitrogen, seeing how it freezes plants and fruits really fast without hurting them. These activities taught them a lot about science and got them excited to learn more. Overall, British Science Week was a fun time where students got to explore STEM and discover new things.

STEM Day

One highlight was a STEM-focused day where students created self-powered cars using recycled materials. They worked together to design and build cars from items like cardboard and plastic bottles, learning about engineering and sustainability along the way. In addition to the car-building challenge, students also participated in captivating experiments with liquid nitrogen. They observed how liquid nitrogen could freeze plants and fruits instantly, preserving them without damage. These experiments demonstrated the practical applications of extreme cold in scientific research.

Through these hands-on activities, students gained valuable insights into STEM subjects. They learned about engineering principles while building their cars and discovered the transformative power of extreme cold during the liquid nitrogen experiments. These experiences sparked their curiosity and passion for science. Overall, British Science Week at Queensbury School provided students with an opportunity to explore and learn in a fun and engaging way. The combination of building self-powered cars and conducting experiments with liquid nitrogen showcased the diverse and exciting aspects of STEM education.



Fly2Help visited 6th Form

At New Horizons we were delighted to finally have Fly2Help to visit. Scott and his team travelled all the way from Gloucestershire to talk to the sixth-form students. Fly2Help are a charity that encourage students to look at volunteering, job and career roles in the aviation industry. Although the discuss more familiar roles such as pilot and cabin crew, they also look at many behind the scenes roles such as air traffic control, baggage handlers, security and even aircraft marshaller (the person who has the sticks who helps the pilot park the plane). Rather than just talking at the students, there were interactive sessions and displays of cockpits, cabins, air traffic control and airport security. The students had a good time using the equipment and asking lots of questions.
As each of these sessions only took up part of the day there was a STEM project for each class to complete. The challenge was to build a car that powered itself using a balloon, elastic band, sail or something similar. No motors, no engines, no batteries. Classes could build more than one car but at least 4 students needed to be in each team to encourage teamwork. Prizes were on offer for the car that went the furthest, the fastest, looked the best and had the best design. At the end of Friday, after some stiff competition, several steward's enquiries, fast and furious testing, the prizes were awarded as follows:

The car that travelled the furthest – 6.3E Infinity
The car that went the fastest – 6.7D Skyline
The best looking car – 6.1N Vision
The best design – 6.4E Orbit

6th Form Employability day

Sixth-Form Employability Day
On Monday, the sixth-form students took part in an employability day based around assessment centres. Assessment centres are put on by employers when they are looking to take on apprentices, employees and volunteers. They usually include a formal interview but also other tasks such as group interviews and even team working practical activities.
To add some reality, students were split in to new groups and mini groups. They attended 3, one-hour workshops looking at interview techniques, teamwork and skills and qualities. As this was the
first time we have done this, everything was done in a low stress format, allowing us to build on what was learnt in the future.
Workshop 1 – Jordan Rees from Willmott Dixon Construction brought in a practical assessment project. Students had to work in groups of four to build a bridge using blocks and straws that a model truck could drive underneath but also drive over. Teams needed to work together to make sure it was tall enough and strong enough. The task is used to see how people think, work in a team, respond to pressure, accept instruction and whether they are willing to lead or not. It encourages teamwork, leadership and communication which are vital skills. Students were given feedback on how they did and how they can improve.
Workshop 2 – Nick Turner from GMI construction worked with class teacher Naveed to look at one to one formal interviews. Rather than putting the students under the stress of mock interviews they looked at popular interview questions and how they might be answered. Using online videos from CareerVidz the students could see model answers and then construct their own responses. Students would write them down and could read them out to the group if they were happy to. This will lead in to more formal mock interviews in the future.
Workshop 3 – Class teacher Sameer and I, looked at skills and qualities. In the lead up, students all took the Buzz quiz personality test. This tells them some of the traits and qualities they possess and we were looking to expand on that. The idea is that if asked a question such as what are your skills or what are your qualities or tell me about yourself, students can think of a skill or quality they have and deliver a sentence or two in response. Again, students wrote down their answers and sentences but could read them out if they wanted to. We will expand on this work in the future, when doing formal mock interviews.
The students did well with the workshops, despite having to work with different students and people, having to talk about themselves to others and tackling interviews in general, which are always daunting.
You may be asking why we put students through this. All schools help to prepare students for interviews, employment and beyond. However, a recent BBC report showed that
'Ambiguous interview questions and application forms are keeping autistic people out of work, a report has found. While 53.6% of all disabled people are in work, only 30% of autistic people are, the latest official figures show.'
Therefore, we need to work harder than other schools to prepare our learners in the best way we can to ensure they have the best possible chance in these situations.
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University of Wolverhampton Visit

University of Wolverhampton Discovery Day.
Every year the Walsall campus of University of Wolverhampton invite our MAT schools (Queensbury, New Horizons, Wilson Stuart and Mayfield) to a Discovery day. This gives students to find out about universities in general, courses, student life, accommodation and finances. There is also a focus on what the University of Wolverhampton have to offer. Students had a campus tour, workshops on What do you know about university, university for SEND students and What Wolverhampton university has to offer. Students were mixed in with students from other schools and generally spent
time with university staff and students so they could get their views away from Queensbury staff. Every single student was an absolute credit to the school with their attitude and behaviour being nothing short of perfect throughout. I look forward to taking another group of students next year.

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UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

Attendance

ATTENDANCE MATTERS
every school day counts.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Join the PTA!

What is the Queensbury School PTA?

Our School PTA is a group of parents and teachers who meet to organise events and activities to improve communications and experiences amongst all members of our school community: school as an organisational body of staff and teachers, parents and pupils. Our primary purpose is to raise funds for items the school would not normally be able to afford and to have fun whilst doing so. Every parent automatically becomes a member of the PTA when their child enters the school. Meetings usually take place via Zoom, 1 per half term, and last approximately an hour.

Why do we do this?

Simple – for our children whose welfare and best interests are our paramount consideration. We try to organise fun events for them. What does the PTA do? The PTA usually gets to organise a lot of the fun stuff! Main events may include: Christmas/Summer Fetes; school discos; parents' social evenings. The PTA always welcomes feedback and new ideas.

Join Queensbury school PTA team by emailing us on pta@queensbury.eiat.org.uk
OR
Contact us on 0121 373 5731 to speak with a member of the PTA team.

Useful Information

PLEASE NOTE - There is NO Staff supervision in School before 8.15am. Students must not be in School unaccompanied before this time.

Also, if your child is being collected by a different family member/friend please notify Reception.
Without prior permission we are unable to let your child off school premises until we have contacted you.

Magic Breakfast

"Breakfast in the Classroom
We have re-joined the National School Breakfast Programme alongside Fareshare-go.

This means students will be offered a breakfast of bagels, toast or pastries in class every morning free of charge"

A message from the CEO

Mr Jon Harris

"I have enjoyed seeing the students enjoy the new Astroturf - I have enjoyed having a kick about myself! Queensbury really is a great place to be a student now and there are so many more opportunities. There is a real focus on student engagement and improving learning and outcomes. I am also really pleased that we are engaging so much with outside organisations during term time and holidays.

We are in really difficult times in Birmingham, and we are all doing the best that we can to support families. Mr Wilson is leading the way with other Head teacher colleagues in how we respond to the Local Authority. I am also heavily involved in work around preparation for adulthood and making Birmingham a more inclusive city. We must be campaigners but also actively involved in shaping a better future for our city and our students.

I hope that you all have a great holiday and that the sun shines a bit!"

Regards
Jon Harris

CEO

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