

Academy Newsletter

Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent

2024/25 Issue 2 - October 2024

New extension officially opened!

We are thrilled to announce the official opening of our new extension at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent. The event, held earlier this week, marked a significant milestone in the Academy's ongoing commitment to enhancing the learning environment for students.

The new space is set to provide exciting opportunities for students, offering modern, flexible areas that will support learning and wider opportunities.

Headteacher Shane Richardson expressed his pride in the new development, saying, "We're delighted to open the new extension to our building. It is part of a much wider programme of works that has been taking place over the last couple of years to enhance our facilities and give students the very best environment in which to learn. Furthermore, the building is a wonderful asset for our community, and we want to ensure that it remains so for many years to come. These improvements serve to achieve that. We are thankful to Seddon who have built the extension and to all those who contributed to its design and the management of the project."



The extension is a valuable addition to the Academy, reflecting our commitment to providing high-quality spaces for both academic and extracurricular activities. We look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on our students' experience for years to come.

Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent Opens its Doors: Open Evening 2024

Co-op Academy recently hosted its highly anticipated Open Evening, welcoming prospective students and their families for a night filled with excitement, learning, and a glimpse into life at the academy. The event was a resounding success, with a range of interactive activities and inspiring talks that showcased the vibrant and dynamic environment the school has to offer.

The evening kicked off with a welcome address from Mr. Richardson, the academy's headteacher, who spoke about the school's commitment to academic excellence, personal development, and community spirit. His message resonated with parents and students alike, setting the tone for an evening full of exploration and discovery.

Current students, including our CYLs and prefects, played a key role as tour guides, proudly showing visitors around the school and sharing their experiences. They led families through various departments, where a wide array of hands-on activities demonstrated the innovative learning approaches used at Co-op Academy.

Amongst the highlights were sessions on coding, where visitors got a taste of the academy's cutting-edge computer science curriculum, and a thrilling murder mystery challenge in the Maths department, which had students using logic and problem-solving skills to crack the case. In history, the propaganda room provided an immersive experience, allowing visitors to see how historical events shaped the world of media and communication.



Over in the Music department, the rhythmic beats of African drumming had everyone tapping their feet, while the Robotics showcase wowed attendees with futuristic technology and engineering feats.

In addition to the engaging school activities, we were delighted to welcome several community partners, including the National Literacy Trust, whose presence underscored the academy's focus on literacy and its role in shaping students' futures. The involvement of such partners reflects the school's commitment to building strong links with the local community to enhance student learning and opportunities.

Mrs. Davies, Assistant Headteacher, commented on the evening's success: "We are thrilled with how our Open Evening turned out. It was fantastic to see so many families engaging with the activities and getting a real sense of what makes Co-op Academy special. Our students did an incredible job as ambassadors, and we can't wait to welcome many of these young people to our academy in the near future."

The evening was a true celebration of the school's diverse curriculum and commitment to holistic education. With a blend of academic, creative, and technological activities, there was something to inspire every visitor. From the warm welcome by staff and students to the buzzing energy in every classroom, the event captured the spirit of Co-op Academy: one of community, innovation, and ambition.

As families left the event with smiles and excitement, the academy looks forward to the future, eager to welcome the next generation of students into its supportive and thriving environment.



Scholars' Programme Launch

"The Scholars' Launch event was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate our students' success in the difficult, competitive application and interview process to become a scholar. The scholars' families and teachers were incredibly proud to watch them receive their certificate and official scholars badge. It was a brilliant evening and we look forward to seeing how they succeed within the programme."

- Ms Latham, Scholars' Programme Lead

Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent hosted a special launch event to celebrate the achievements of students selected for this year's Scholars' Programme. Families, teachers, and academy staff gathered to mark the occasion and recognise the hard work and dedication of the newly appointed scholars.

The Scholars' Programme is designed to support high-achieving students by providing them with unique learning opportunities, helping them to develop their academic and personal potential. The programme is competitive, and the students who were selected underwent a rigorous application and interview process to secure their place.

The evening was a celebration of the scholars' success, with students proudly receiving their certificates and official Scholars' Programme badges in front of their families and teachers. The event served as a fitting acknowledgement of the scholars' hard work and ambition, and the pride in the room was evident as each student was recognised for their achievement.

The event was a resounding success, highlighting the academy's commitment to nurturing the talents of its students and providing them with the support they need to excel. Families and staff left the evening filled with pride and excitement for what lies ahead for the new scholars.



Year 7 Tackle Robotics Challenge

Two of our Year 7 classes recently took part in an exciting EKO Robotics Challenge, a hands-on workshop that introduced them to the world of robotics and coding. The workshop, delivered by Hyett Education as part of the Defence Nuclear Enterprise's EKO program, aimed to spark students' interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects through practical, engaging activities. For two classes of Year 7 students, the challenge was a huge success, leaving them inspired and eager to explore STEM further.

During the two-hour workshops, students worked in pairs to build and programme robots, tackling a series of creative and problem-solving missions. As they coded their robots to complete tasks, the students developed critical skills like teamwork, communication, and analytical thinking—essential in both STEM subjects and beyond. For many, it was their first time working with robotics, and the sense of accomplishment as they saw their creations come to life was palpable.

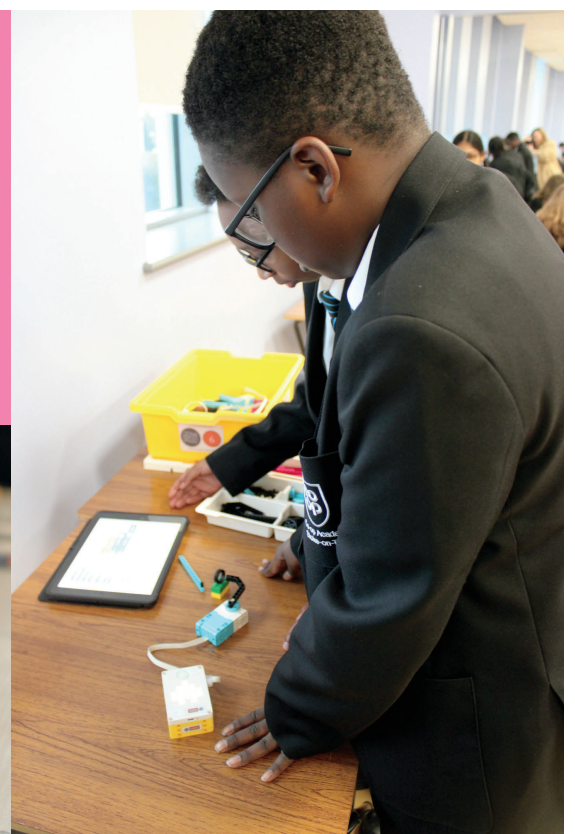
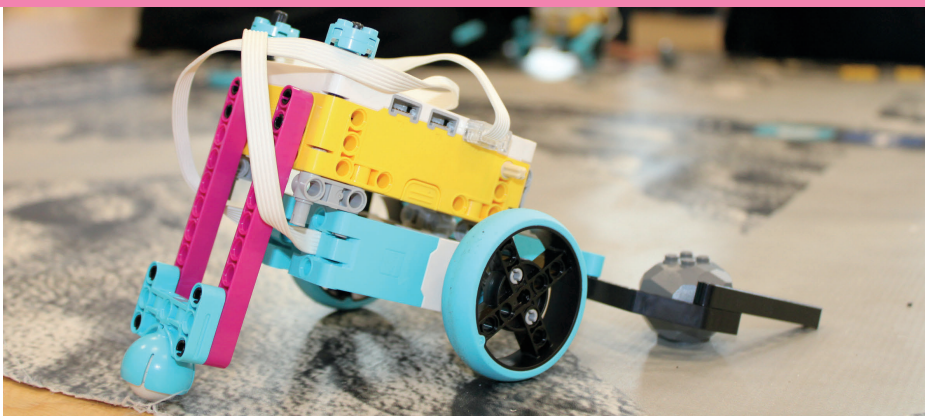
The EKO Robotics Challenge didn't just focus on technical skills; it also gave students a glimpse into the wide range of careers connected to STEM fields, some of which they hadn't previously considered. By applying their classroom knowledge to real-world problems, students gained a deeper understanding of how subjects like coding, engineering, and science can open doors to future opportunities.

For Co-op Academy, the EKO Robotics Challenge is part of a broader commitment to offering students experiences that go beyond traditional classroom learning. By providing opportunities like this, the academy hopes to inspire a lifelong love of STEM and help students discover new passions and career possibilities.

The enthusiasm and success of the Year 7 students during the EKO Robotics Challenge mark just the beginning of their STEM journey at Co-op Academy, and the school looks forward to offering more enriching, hands-on opportunities in the future.

"The EKO Robotics Challenge was an amazing experience for our Year 7s. They were fully engaged throughout the day, and it was incredible to see how quickly they picked up new skills. This kind of hands-on learning really helps students connect with STEM subjects in a meaningful way, and the confidence they gained was clear. We're excited to see how this experience will shape their future interests."

Ms Williamson, Assistant Headteacher



An extra-ordinary rowing opportunity!

Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent has embarked on an exciting new partnership with Trentham Boat Club, with the latter offering rowing taster sessions as part of the school's PE curriculum. These sessions, designed to introduce students to the sport of rowing, have been met with enthusiasm from pupils eager to try something new and challenging. This collaboration not only aims to develop the physical fitness of the students but also introduces them to the discipline and teamwork that rowing demands.



The taster sessions, which took place during PE lessons, provided a unique opportunity for students to experience rowing both on indoor rowing machines and through hands-on coaching from experienced members of Trentham Boat Club. These sessions are part of a broader initiative to make rowing more accessible to young people in the local area and to foster an ongoing relationship between the club and the academy.

Mr. Rogers, the Head of PE at Co-op Academy, shared his excitement about the partnership:

“The rowing taster sessions have been a massive hit with our students. They’ve not only enjoyed the physical aspect of the sport but have really embraced the team-building and perseverance that rowing requires. It’s been fantastic to see their engagement, and we’re thrilled to be building a long-term relationship with Trentham Boat Club. This is just the beginning of what we hope will be a lasting collaboration.”

Students who participated in the taster sessions have expressed a keen interest in continuing their rowing journey, with several planning to join Trentham Boat Club’s youth programs outside of school. For many, this was their first experience of rowing, and it has opened their eyes to a sport they may not have previously considered.

The partnership represents a fantastic opportunity for both the students and the community, combining sport, education, and teamwork in a way that empowers young people to challenge themselves and grow both mentally and physically. As the relationship between Trentham Boat Club and Co-op Academy continues to grow, there’s no doubt that many more students will discover the joy and benefits of rowing.

New Year Group Student Councils Meet for the First Time

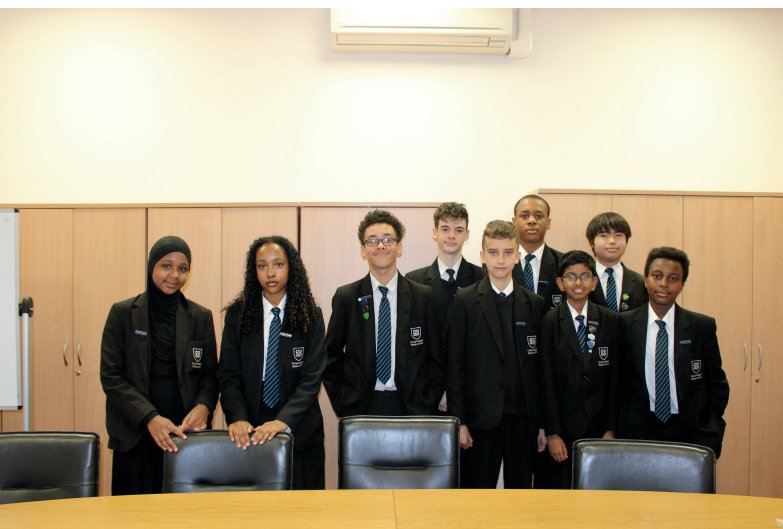


Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent's newly formed year group student councils recently held their first meetings, marking the start of an exciting year of student leadership. During the sessions, each council appointed chairpeople, secretaries, and committee members, with students proudly wearing their new leadership badges.

The councils are already buzzing with great ideas on how to improve school life and make a positive impact on the academy community. Students are eager to get to work, bringing fresh energy and enthusiasm to their roles.

Ms. Williamson, Assistant Headteacher, shared her excitement about the new councils: "It's been fantastic to see the energy and commitment from our new student councils. They're full of brilliant ideas, and I can't wait to see the difference they will make this year."

With their first meeting completed, the new council members are ready to represent their peers and lead on important school initiatives.



Year 9 Students Take Part in STEM Workshop

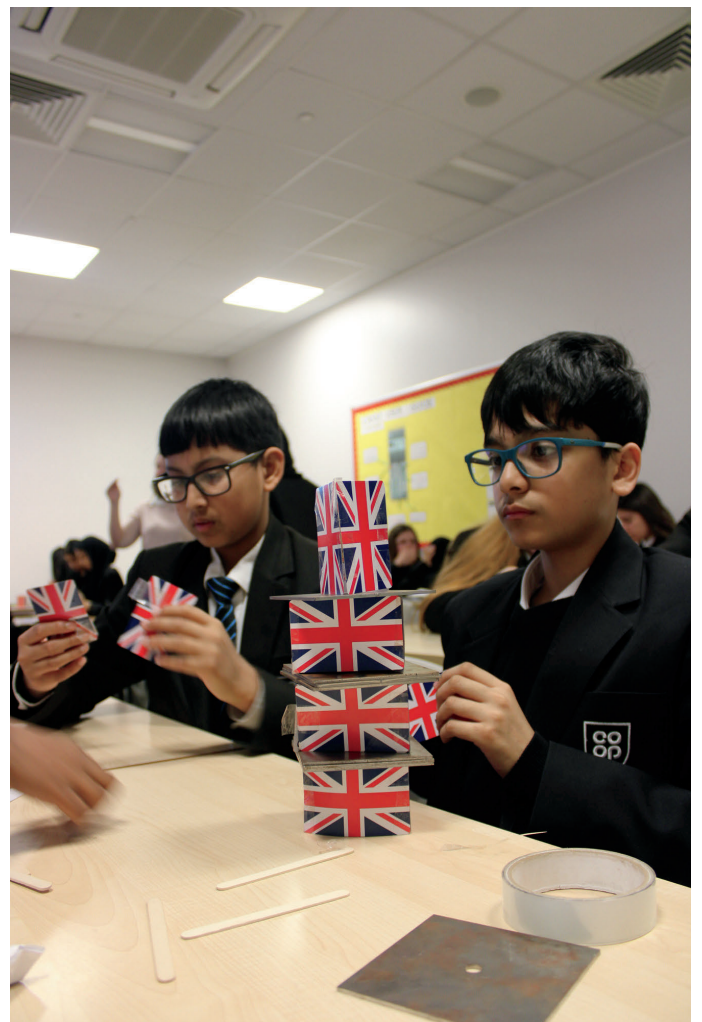
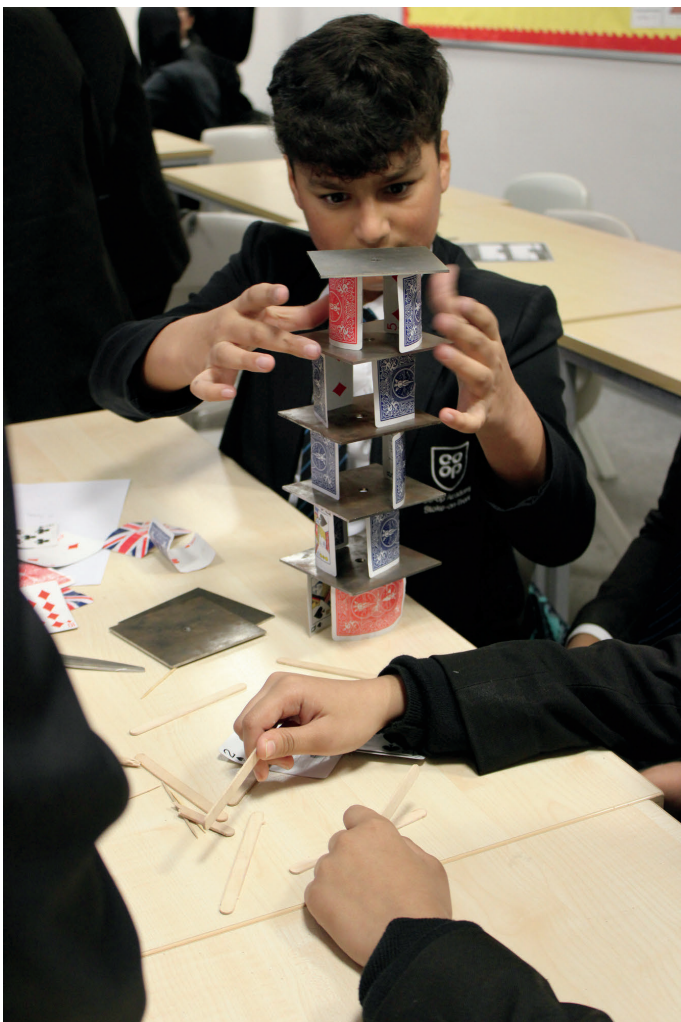
All Year 9 students at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent recently participated in a one-hour "Critical Load" workshop led by The Inspirational Learning Group (TILG). The workshop focused on showing students the real-world applications of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) as they prepare to choose their GCSE options.

Students worked in teams to solve engineering challenges, designing and testing solutions to balance a "critical load." The hands-on activity helped students see how subjects like maths and science can be applied to careers in fields like engineering and technology. The workshop encouraged problem-solving, teamwork, and creative thinking, helping students make connections between their studies and potential future careers.

Ms. Williamson, Careers Lead at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent, praised the workshop's impact:

"The Critical Load workshop has been a great way for our Year 9s to understand how STEM subjects link to real-world careers. As they approach their GCSE choices, it's crucial that they see the practical applications of what they're learning."

As students begin to make important decisions about their future, this workshop was an inspiring reminder of the diverse opportunities available to them in STEM fields.



Year 11 BTEC PE Students Visit Etihad Stadium



Year 11 BTEC PE students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent recently enjoyed an exciting trip to Manchester City's Etihad Stadium. As part of their coursework, the students toured the iconic stadium and facilities, gaining insight into the world of professional sports.

The highlight of the day was using the team's first-class facilities as a backdrop to film key sections of their PE assessments. Students demonstrated their skills in a real-world sports environment, capturing footage to support their coursework.

The trip was a fantastic opportunity for students to experience a professional sports setting while progressing with their BTEC assessments.



Hands-on Helicopter designing for Year 7!

Co-op Academy's Year 7 students had an exciting and informative experience thanks to a visit from the Royal Navy. As part of the academy's careers plan, the Royal Navy delivered an engaging assembly, where students

learned about the wide range of careers available within the Navy, as well as the important skills required for success in various roles.



The assembly was packed with valuable insights into life in the Royal Navy, focusing on teamwork, leadership, and the technical expertise needed to thrive in such a dynamic environment. Students were introduced to career paths in engineering, navigation, medical fields, and more, expanding their understanding of the diverse opportunities that could be available to them in the future.

Following the assembly, students took part in interactive workshops that gave them a hands-on experience with some of the practical skills used by Royal Navy personnel. In small groups, they designed and tested the aerodynamics of model helicopters, learning how important factors like balance, weight, and structure are to successful flight. These workshops were not only fun but also tied into real-world applications of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects, encouraging students to think critically and work collaboratively.

Ms. Williamson, Assistant Headteacher at Co-op Academy, praised the partnership with the Royal Navy, saying:

"This was an amazing opportunity for our Year 7 students to explore a variety of careers while engaging with practical, hands-on learning. The students were inspired by the assembly and loved the challenge of the workshops. This kind of experience is key to helping them understand how the skills they develop in school can be applied to exciting careers in the future."



The event formed an important part of the academy's ongoing careers plan, which aims to expose students to a wide array of career options early on in their school journey. By offering opportunities like the Royal Navy workshops, Co-op Academy ensures that students not only hear about different career pathways but also gain a sense of the practical skills and knowledge needed to pursue them.

Year 10 Students Complete DofE Bronze Expedition



A group of determined Year 10 students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent have successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) expedition in the beautiful Staffordshire Moorlands.

The expedition marked the final section of their DofE award, following months of dedication to the volunteering, physical, and skills sections of the programme.

The students navigated through the woodland terrain, demonstrating teamwork, resilience, and problem-solving as they camped and hiked over two days. The experience was both challenging and rewarding, and the students returned with a great sense of accomplishment.

“We’re incredibly proud of our Year 10s for their hard work and commitment throughout the DofE programme,” said Ms Williamson, Assistant Headteacher for Personal Development. “They’ve developed valuable life skills and shown amazing perseverance during their expedition.”

The expedition capped off a fantastic journey for the students, who are now looking forward to receiving their Bronze awards!



National Poetry Day Celebrations

This year's National Poetry Day was a truly cross-curricular event, raising the profile of poetry across the Academy and showcasing the creativity of students and staff alike. The activities were inspired by *How to cut a pomegranate* by Imtiaz Dharker, with contributions from Food Technology, Art, Drama, and the Library.

In the lead-up to the event, six Year 7 and Year 9 students gathered after school on Tuesday, 1st October, to bake pomegranate cakes under the guidance of Miss Hewitt and Ms. Corbally. For many of these students, it was their first encounter with pomegranates, and some had never attended an after-school cooking session before. They embraced the opportunity, working well together as they followed instructions, supported one another, and helped with the clean-up. The finished cakes looked—and smelled—delicious.

On National Poetry Day itself, the Academy poetry trail saw 12 staff members choosing food-themed poems to display. The pomegranate cakes and juice were distributed on The Street, where 136 students stopped by to taste these treats, including 57 who had never tried pomegranates before. KS4 artwork, inspired by the theme of 'Natural Forms' and featuring pomegranates, provided a fitting backdrop to the day's events.



Adding to the atmosphere, two Year 11 Drama students delivered a stirring reading of *How to cut a pomegranate*, which inspired six Year 7 girls to step up and take turns reading the poem aloud—a wonderful example of how poetry can spark enthusiasm and confidence.

National Poetry Day was a vibrant reminder of the power of words and the joy of bringing different subjects together to celebrate creativity. Thank you to Ms Corbally for organising such an inspiring day, and for support from the Art and Drama departments, and especially to Mrs Hewitt and the Food Technology team, for making this inspiring event possible.



We are excited to announce the beginning of a fantastic new partnership with the Abram Wilson Foundation, as part of Co-op Academies' ongoing relationship with the charity. The foundation recently visited the academy, delivering inspiring assemblies for Key Stage 3 students, complete with live performances, and hosted engaging workshops for music classes and some of our most talented young musicians.

The assemblies were a highlight for students, who were captivated by the live music and the powerful messages shared by the Abram Wilson Foundation team. Following the assemblies, students in music classes had the opportunity to participate in interactive workshops, where they explored different musical styles and techniques. The academy's most gifted musicians then took part in a special workshop, receiving personalised guidance and inspiration to develop their talents even further.

This partnership marks the start of an exciting journey, and we look forward to seeing it grow in the months ahead. The academy is thrilled to continue working with the Abram Wilson Foundation, providing students with more opportunities to explore their creativity and build their confidence in music.

KS3 Inspired by Music Workshops and Performances



New CYLs train to be leaders

Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent recently hosted a training session for its newly appointed Year 7 Co-op Young Leaders (CYLs), focusing on building communication, teamwork, and leadership skills. The session was designed to help the academy's newest leaders prepare for their roles, with older CYLs stepping in to support and guide the Year 7 students.



The interactive training featured a range of activities that encouraged the students to work together, solve problems, and strengthen their leadership skills. The older CYLs shared their experiences and provided valuable tips, helping the Year 7s gain confidence as they developed their ability to lead.

The training marked an important step for the Year 7 CYLs, who are now ready to take on leadership responsibilities within the academy. The academy is excited to see them thrive in their new roles and make a positive impact in the school community.

Year 11 Students Attend Grade 9 Maths Workshop at Co-op HQ

A group of ambitious Year 11 students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent recently attended a Grade 9 Maths workshop at Angel Square, Co-op's Manchester HQ, as part of the Co-op Academies Trust's Maths Excellence Programme. The workshop focused on higher-tier topics, challenging students to push their skills to the next level in preparation for their upcoming exams.

The day was filled with a real buzz as students tackled complex problems and deepened their understanding of advanced maths concepts. They returned to the academy feeling inspired and confident, ready to aim for the highest grades in their upcoming mock exams.

The workshop was an invaluable opportunity for students to engage with challenging content and gain the skills needed to excel in their GCSEs.



Wellbeing Ambassadors Lead World Mental Health Day Activities

To mark World Mental Health Day, Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent's newly appointed Wellbeing Ambassadors hosted an interactive stall during lunchtime, creating a space for students to engage in conversations about mental health and wellbeing. The event featured games and activities designed to encourage students to open up about their feelings, with the aim of raising awareness and breaking down the stigma around mental health.

The stall was filled with information and resources, offering advice and guidance on how to maintain good mental health and where to seek support if needed. The Wellbeing Ambassadors, who have recently taken on the role, were on hand to talk to students, share tips, and help create a supportive atmosphere. The activities proved popular, drawing in a large crowd of students eager to learn more and get involved in the conversation.

The Wellbeing Ambassadors have also begun working with Year 7 tutor groups, providing additional support to younger students as they transition into secondary school life. Their role focuses on offering a friendly face and a listening ear, helping Year 7s navigate any challenges they may face.

For those seeking additional support outside of school, you can contact:

- YoungMinds (www.youngminds.org.uk) – Offers information and support for young people dealing with mental health challenges, including a crisis text line: Text YM to 85258.
- Samaritans (www.samaritans.org) – Provides 24/7 support to anyone who's struggling. Call free on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org for confidential help.

The Wellbeing Ambassadors' efforts mark an important step in creating a more open and supportive school environment, helping students feel more comfortable discussing mental health and knowing where to turn for help.



Year 11 High Achievers continue prestigious programme



Following their participation in the Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College High Achievers Programme during Year 10, a group of Year 11 students have continued their journey into this prestigious programme. Delivered in partnership with Oxford University and Higher Horizons, the programme offers students the chance to explore new academic horizons.

The Year 11s recently attended their first workshop of the year, focusing on philosophy, where they engaged with thought-provoking discussions and challenging ideas. The sessions introduce students to topics and subjects not typically studied until Key Stage 5, giving them a unique opportunity to stretch their thinking.

The students are excited for future workshops, which will continue to broaden their academic experience and deepen their understanding of subjects beyond the usual curriculum. The academy is incredibly proud of their dedication and enthusiasm for learning at such a high level.

Wear It Pink Day for Breast Cancer Now

On Friday 18th, Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent held a cake and doughnut sale in support of Wear It Pink Day, raising over £200 for Breast Cancer Now. Organised by Mrs Tatton and supported by the Co-op Young Leaders (CYLs), the event brought students and staff together to raise awareness and vital funds for the cause.

The CYLs helped manage the stall, where cakes, doughnuts, and Breast Cancer ribbon pin badges were sold. Many staff and students wore the pink ribbons with pride, while numerous staff members also joined in by donning pink clothing in a show of solidarity. All proceeds will go directly to Breast Cancer Now, helping to fund essential research and awareness efforts. It was a fantastic day of fundraising, and the academy is proud of the collective effort in supporting such an important cause.

WEAR IT
PINK

BREAST
CANCER
NOW

Breast Cancer Now aims to change the lives of people affected by breast cancer by combining the power of research and support.

To learn more or access support visit <https://breastcancernow.org/> or call 0808 800 6000.