Academy Newsletter

Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent

2024/25 Issue 3 - November 2024

Year 7's Junaid Small Signed by Stoke City's Academy!

We're thrilled to announce that Junaid Small in Year 7 has been signed by Stoke City's Academy! Junaid's talent was spotted while playing for his grassroots team, and after impressing in trials, he's now officially part of the Stoke City U-12 Academy squad. This is an incredible achievement, and we're so proud to see Junaid reach this exciting milestone.



We look forward to watching his journey progress and can't wait to see him play in the famous red and white stripes. We are looking forward to supporting Junaid as he balances his football commitments with his studies, and we're excited to follow along on his journey.

Congratulations, Junaid—your Co-op family is right behind you!

Year 7 Students Embrace Farm Life at Jamie's Farm Hereford

Our Year 7 students recently returned from an unforgettable week at Jamie's Farm in Hereford, where they fully immersed themselves in countryside life, teamwork, and hands-on learning.

The adventure began on Monday with a warm welcome and tour of the farm, followed by an exciting countryside walk featuring hill rolling—a huge hit with everyone! Evenings were spent bonding over hearty meals, including a delicious spaghetti bolognese, before winding down with games and stories in the cosy farmhouse.

Throughout the week, students took on a variety of farm duties, from preparing meals to feeding animals and trying their hand at woodwork. They embraced each morning with enthusiasm, dividing into groups to manage breakfast and complete the animal feeding rounds. Cinnamon rhubarb porridge and full English breakfasts were among the farm-fresh treats they prepared and enjoyed together.

Mid-week, students embarked on a stunning hike along The Cat's Back, where they stood on the border between Wales and England, sipping hot chocolate and savouring homemade biscuits against a backdrop of breathtaking views. Evenings were spent around the campfire or watching films by the fire, giving students a warm, memorable end to each day.

On the final day, the group spent time caring for horses, gardening, and whittling spatulas, developing their craftsmanship and teamwork skills. Their last evening was capped off with a lively campfire session, where students shared their favourite memories from the week.



Robert Ashworth, the visit coordinator, summed up the experience: “The young people left the farm with glowing smiles and full of joy from their time on the farm.”

We are incredibly proud of the resilience and camaraderie our Year 7s demonstrated throughout this enriching experience. A huge thank you to Mrs Davies for organising the trip, and to Mr Thorley and Ms Adams for accompanying the students and making the week so memorable—what a week to remember!











At Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent, we united this Remembrance season with heartfelt tributes and events, underscoring our dedication to values of respect, unity, and remembrance. This year, academy cadets and uniformed groups represented us at services and parades across the local area, including in Burslem and Hanley. Ms Williamson and Mrs Tatton laid a wreath at the Burslem Cenotaph on behalf of all staff and students, an act filled with pride and respect.

On Remembrance Day, over 1,300 students and staff gathered on the astroturf for a moving act of remembrance, complete with readings, the Last Post, and a minute's silence. Ms Williamson reflected, "This gathering is a powerful reminder of our shared values, as we honour those who sacrificed so much for our future. It's inspiring to see our students taking such pride in remembering."

The day culminated in our first-ever Festival of Remembrance, where we welcomed representatives from the Tri-Service Veterans, the 388 Sqn Air Cadets, Sea Cadets, Marine Cadets, and the Royal British Legion. The festival featured a poignant array of student work: heartfelt letters and poems inspired by the world wars, a display of felted poppies created in technology lessons, and a beautiful poppy artwork from our art classes. Our head students, Heidi and Kevin, led touching readings, and a special performance of Remember Me from Coco added a memorable musical tribute.

Our Co-op Young Leaders (CYLs) volunteered their time throughout the event, supporting activities and helping attendees. We extend a heartfelt thank you to Mrs Tatton for her dedication in organising this memorable event. Thanks to her vision and the hard work of all involved, our Festival of Remembrance was a fitting tribute to those we honour and remember.

Lest We Forget: Remembrance 2024







Students Visit National Memorial Arboretum

In a fitting conclusion to our academy's Remembrance activities, a group of students from Year 7 to Year 10 visited the National Memorial Arboretum to reflect on the sacrifices made by so many. Chosen by their Heads of Year for their dedication to learning and conduct, the students were accompanied by Mrs Tatton and Mrs Toon on this meaningful visit.

The arboretum provided a poignant setting for reflection, with students exploring the memorials and learning more about the stories behind them. The importance of remembrance and gratitude was felt deeply throughout the day, as students took time to honour those who have served and sacrificed.

We were incredibly proud of the students' attitude and behaviour during the visit, which was noted by several employees at the arboretum. Their respect and engagement showed their understanding of the significance of the occasion and made them exemplary representatives of our academy.

Thank you to Mrs Tatton and Mrs Toon for leading this important visit and to the students for their thoughtful participation in such an important act of remembrance.



Year 7 and 8 Students Energised by STEM Roadshow

Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent's Year 7 and 8 students recently experienced an exciting and interactive STEM theatre roadshow, delivered in collaboration with BAE Systems, The Royal Air Force, and The Royal Navy. This engaging event, part of the academy's ongoing focus on promoting STEM subjects, brought the theme of electricity to life through a series of thrilling demonstrations.

The 50-minute performance explored the fundamentals of electricity, from creating simple circuits to the pros and cons of different energy sources. Students were fascinated by the electrostatic charge created with a Van de Graaff generator and enjoyed seeing their teachers get involved in the finale, where pedal power lit up a colourful LED windmill. The roadshow was packed with 'shocking' demonstrations that left students both entertained and educated.

Ms Williamson, Assistant Headteacher, said: "It was a fantastic opportunity for our students to see science in action. The interactive demonstrations really sparked their interest in STEM, and we're excited to see how this enthusiasm carries into the classroom."

The academy is proud to be part of this collaboration, inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers through such an engaging event.







Celebrating the Reopening of The Emma Murray Library

We're thrilled to announce the reopening of The Emma Murray Library at Co-op Academy, a meaningful space dedicated to the memory of Emma Murray, a beloved former colleague whose love for literature inspired our students. Our Library Manager, Ms Corbally, worked tirelessly to keep reading alive from her library kiosk during the closure whilst building work took place, and the library's return is a true celebration of learning, reading, and community spirit.

For this special occasion, we were honoured to have Emma's mother, Kath, join us, adding even more warmth to the celebration. We invited students who have made exceptional contributions to reading and creativity, celebrating their achievements with the academy community. Shyo, who won second place in the Gareth Jones Award for Excellence with her beautiful poem on this year's theme of change, was joined by Gareth's wife, Lynn Jones MBE, and Beth Lovatt-Wood, who oversees the award.



I'm so pleased and proud to have re-opened the Library with an event honouring the legacies of Emma Murray and Gareth Jones - who both had a passionate belief in the young people of Stoke-on-Trent - and celebrating some of our current students' achievements.

As Shyo read her awarded poem and spoke about the message behind it, she embodied everything we work together to achieve in the Library. A place which develops the confidence of hard-working, creative students and gives them the space to be themselves. We look forward to seeing the Library and its users continue to flourish.

Ms Corbally, Library Manager

Ahmed, another talented writer, was also recognised, having been highly commended in the international Foyle Young Poets Award, a prestigious competition that received over 17,000 entries worldwide. His accomplishment stands as a testament to his dedication and creative talent.

We were also delighted to celebrate Year 7 students who completed the city's Library Summer Reading Challenge and congratulate Luo Chen, the winner of the National Literacy Trust's Be The Change competition. Luo's prize included a trip to Wicked in the West End and an invitation to meet Queen Camilla at Clarence House—a truly remarkable honour.

Thank you to Ms Corbally and everyone involved in this journey. The reopening of The Emma Murray Library is a beautiful reminder of the power of books, learning, and community, and we're excited to see the library once again at the heart of our academy.

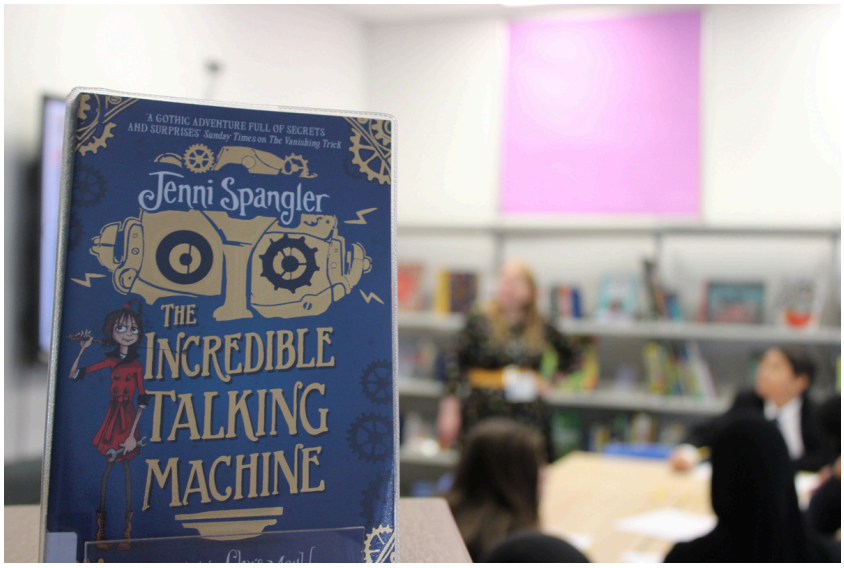
It was an honour to welcome Mrs Murray's mother Kath to the library celebration. She was incredibly proud to hear all of our students' fantastic achievements in The Emma Murray Library, named in memory of her daughter, a much-loved English teacher here at the academy. It was a special moment that reminds us of Emma's lasting impact and the powerful inspiration she continues to bring to our academy.

Mrs Davies, Assistant Headteacher

Creative Careers Week

During November, Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent celebrated Creative Careers Week, giving students the chance to explore the vast and exciting opportunities within the creative industries.







The week started with Urban Wilderness workshops, where Year 9 students explored their role in the community and brainstormed ideas for a possible Tunstall Carnival. Following this, we also hosted an inspiring session with Jenni Spangler, a renowned author and illustrator. Students got hands-on with illustration, learning techniques and hearing first-hand about the diverse paths available in creative careers.

This celebration came at a crucial time, as highlighted by the recent Sutton Trust report on social mobility in the creative industries (November 2024). The report underscores the importance of supporting young people from all backgrounds to access creative education and careers, noting the challenges many face in entering and thriving in these sectors.

Ms Williamson, Assistant Headteacher and Careers Lead, shared her thoughts: “It’s been incredible to see our students so engaged with these creative workshops. Events like this not only highlight the diversity of opportunities but also inspire students to consider how their creativity can shape their futures.”

Thank you to everyone involved in making Creative Careers Week a success. We’re excited to continue celebrating and supporting the talents of our students!

Amazing Workshops with HoJo Hattery!



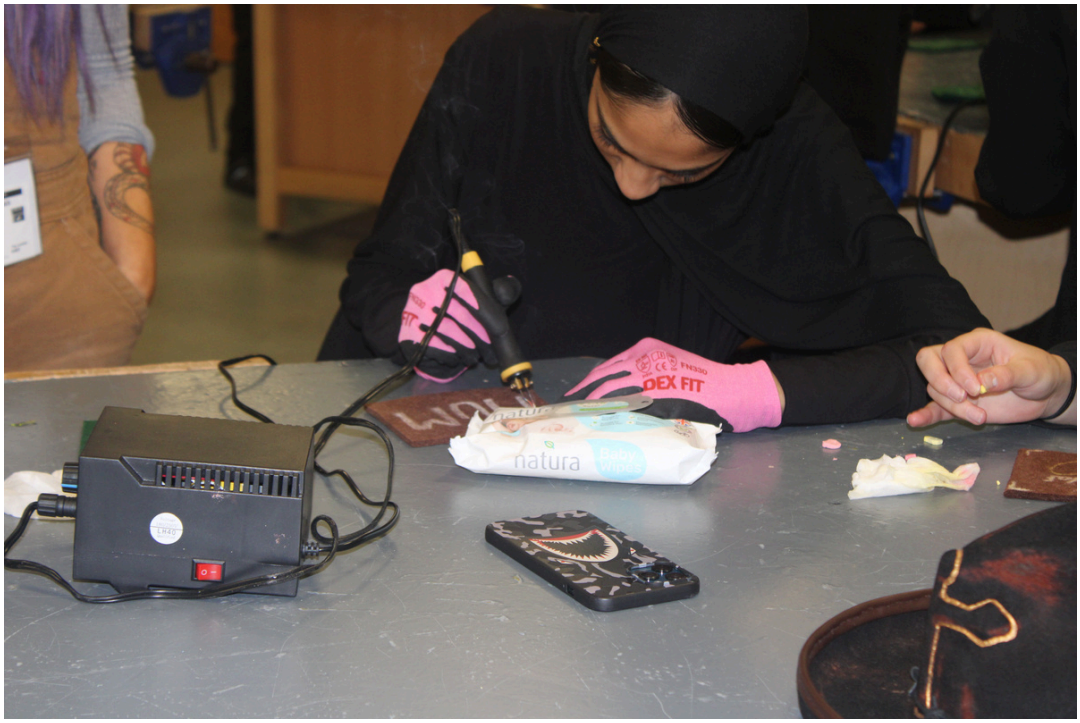
As part of Creative Careers Week, Year 9 classes and Year 10 Art students at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent were treated to an incredible workshop with Holly Johnson of Hojo Hattery. Holly shared her expertise and passion for traditional felt hat making, giving students a fascinating insight into creative techniques and career opportunities

Students had the chance to learn about traditional hat-making methods and even got hands-on, practising their skills on felt. It was an inspiring session, packed with creativity and excitement, and the students left buzzing with ideas for their own artistic projects.

Ms Williamson, Assistant Headteacher and Careers Lead, reflected on the success of the session: "It's so important for our students to meet professionals in creative industries. Experiences like this show them the diverse career paths they can take and inspire them to see where their creativity can lead."

These workshops, and other careers talks this week, were commissioned by Partners in Creative Learning (PiCL) as part of their Creative Careers Programme, which is funded by Arts Council England. The programme, delivered in partnership with creative practitioners and organisations, highlights pathways into the creative industries across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. It also received funding from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), managed by Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

Thank you to Holly Johnson for an inspiring day and to PiCL for supporting this wonderful programme. It's exciting to see our students discovering creative careers and gaining new skills!
To learn more about PiCL and their work with schools in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, visit: www.picl.uk.com



Marking Anti-Bullying Week at Co-op Academy







Co-op Academy came together to recognise Anti-Bullying Week, reinforcing our commitment to kindness, respect, and inclusivity within our school community.

At lunchtime, our Wellbeing Ambassadors handed out Anti-Bullying badges to students, symbolising our united stance against bullying and promoting positive relationships. They also created a powerful anti-bullying display in the canteen, featuring a positive message board where students shared uplifting words and encouragement with each other.

To spread even more positivity, we provided affirmation message cards for students to pick up and pass along to friends, classmates, or anyone who could use a kind gesture. It's been fantastic to see students actively supporting and uplifting one another.

Together, we're building a school environment where everyone feels valued and supported. Thank you to our Wellbeing Ambassadors and everyone involved in making this day so meaningful!

The academy's Wellbeing Ambassadors led the way to help raise awareness for national anti-bullying week. The ambassadors held a stand at lunchtime where students could interact with games, collect an anti-bullying badge, write on the 'positive messages board' and pass on positive affirmation cards to their friends or classmates. They created a real 'buzz' and got students talking about anti bullying and how we can respect others in our school and local community.

Mrs Timony, Lead Mentor

Inspiring Futures: BBC Bitesize Careers Roadshow Visits Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent

We were thrilled to welcome the BBC Bitesize Careers Roadshow to Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent. Each year group from 7 to 10 had a dedicated one-hour session, packed with career insights, practical advice, and local pride.



The roadshow, hosted by Lucas Yeomans from BBC Radio Stoke, featured an inspiring panel of local professionals. Panellists included Fran Anderson, a Production Assistant and Fast Track Apprentice with BBC Introducing; Jemma Green, a Food Science Technician at Premier Foods; and Ryan Grant, Director of Marketing and Communications at Port Vale. Each speaker shared unique career stories, including memorable experiences working on live broadcasts from festivals like Glastonbury and even interviewing big names like Ryan Reynolds! These exciting stories showed students what's possible in fields like media, food science, and sports marketing.

"It was a truly motivating experience for our students to see what's possible right here in Stoke," said Ms Williamson, Assistant Headteacher and Careers Lead. "Events like this show our young people that there are many paths to success and that confidence grows with experience."

The roadshow was full of practical takeaways on different career paths, and students were especially inspired hearing how even the most successful professionals started out nervous but grew in confidence. Thank you to the BBC Bitesize team and our panellists for sparking fresh ambitions at Co-op Academy!

National Saturday Club

We're thrilled to announce that 16 of our Year 10 students have successfully secured places in the prestigious National Saturday Club! Starting this term, these students will spend their Saturday mornings at either Keele or Staffordshire University, delving deeper into subjects they're passionate about, including Science and Art.

The programme provides a unique opportunity to explore these subjects in greater depth, connect with university resources, and experience learning beyond the regular curriculum. Miss Cunningham shared her pride in their dedication, saying, "I am really proud of the number of Year 10s who have successfully applied to the National Saturday Club. The fact that this group of students is willing to spend their Saturday mornings learning more about the subjects they enjoy shows the high aspirations our students have."

Congratulations to all of our National Saturday Club participants—your academy is behind you every step of the way!



Diwali Celebration Lights Up Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent!

To mark Diwali, the festival of lights, Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent's RE Leaders organised a vibrant day of celebrations, bringing the academy community together to enjoy and learn about this special festival.

During break, students enjoyed a sweet sale, with all profits going to Dougie Mac Hospice. Dougie Mac provides invaluable care and support to people facing life-limiting illnesses across our community, and we're proud to be contributing to their work through this celebration.

The celebration included a beautiful display of paper lanterns symbolising the lights that helped guide Rama and Sita home in the Diwali story. At break and lunch, students also had the chance to visit a popular henna stall, adding a creative touch to the festivities.

As part of the celebration, our RE Leaders led special lessons for KS3 students, sharing the story of Rama and Sita and how families light up their homes at Diwali to symbolise hope and keep away evil spirits.

Thanks to our RE Leaders, the day was a fantastic blend of learning, creativity, and community spirit, raising funds for a great cause while embracing the diversity that makes our academy unique!



I am very proud of what the RE leaders achieved in planning and delivering such a happy and successful Diwali celebration. A lot of thought, hard work and creativity went into the day. It also takes a great deal of confidence to deliver lessons to your peers and the RE leaders were mature and professional in their role. One of the aims of the RE leaders is to celebrate the diverse range of religious festivals which mean so much to students in our school community and they did that brilliantly.

Mrs McDermott,
Head of Humanities Faculty



Scholars' Programme Welcomes First Guest Lecture on Physiotherapy



During November, students who are part of Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent's Scholars' Programme attended their first guest lecture, featuring Cameron Brown from Swan Physio. The session offered an exciting glimpse into the world of physiotherapy, inspiring scholars to explore careers in this dynamic healthcare field.

The workshop introduced students to routes into physiotherapy, the use of x-rays and MRI scans in diagnosing and treating patients, and the essential tools and techniques physiotherapists use every day. Students even had the chance to step into the role themselves, learning how to diagnose conditions and use a stethoscope in practical demonstrations.

Ms Latham, Scholars' Programme Lead, reflected on the success of the event: "The scholars had a fascinating opportunity to partake in a workshop about careers in physiotherapy. Students learnt about routes into the profession, how physiotherapists use x-rays and MRI scans to complete their work, and even had a chance to act as a physiotherapist by diagnosing conditions and learning how to use a stethoscope. It was an incredibly interesting session, and we are grateful to Swan Physio for giving us an insight into the profession."

This guest lecture marks the start of an exciting series of events for our Scholars' Programme, designed to broaden students' horizons and explore high-level academic and career opportunities. We're grateful to Swan Physio for sharing their expertise and look forward to welcoming more inspirational speakers in the coming months!

Inspiring Future Mathematicians: Online Maths Careers Workshop for Years 9 & 10



High-achieving Maths students from Years 9 and 10 at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent recently participated in an Online Maths Careers Workshop, an enriching event held in collaboration with the Trust's Specialist Executive Maths Teacher. This unique session was tailored to showcase the vital role Maths plays in various careers and the value of continuing Maths studies beyond GCSE.

During the 40-minute workshop, students interacted with a panel of guest speakers, each from a unique career path where Maths is an essential tool. Panellists shared insights into their day-to-day roles, describing both the challenges and rewards they encounter. By listening to these real-life applications, students gained a new perspective on how Maths skills translate to the world of work.

One of the workshop's goals was to help students make valuable connections between their curriculum and future career pathways. With each event offering different speakers and new insights, our Maths department looks forward to further workshops, continuing to inspire the next generation of mathematicians!

Students Meet Co-op Board to Share Their Work with Barnardo's

A group of students recently had the opportunity to visit Manchester, where they met with members of the Co-op board to discuss the incredible work they've been doing with Barnardo's in the local community.

The students have been involved in a range of activities with Barnardo's, focusing on making a positive impact in the area. During their visit, they shared their experiences and the difference their work has made, impressing the Co-op board with their commitment and passion.

Hannah Peake, Barnardo's Co-op Partnership Manager, praised the students for their professionalism and hard work, saying, "They were a delight and a credit to themselves and everyone who works with them."

The visit was a proud moment for the academy and the students, showcasing the positive influence young people can have in their communities through partnerships like this one.

Black History Month 2024: Reclaiming Narratives at Co-op Academy

This October, Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent celebrated Black History Month under the theme Reclaiming Narratives, with a focus on learning about Black trailblazers and lesser-known heroes whose contributions have often been left out of the mainstream narrative. Throughout the month, our tutor programme spotlighted inspiring Black Britons, from pioneers in civil rights and the arts to innovators in science and technology, allowing students to discover and appreciate these influential stories.

A highlight of the month was our academy-wide design competition, where students were encouraged to create artwork inspired by Black British history and culture. The response was fantastic, and the winning designs are now proudly on display on The Street, forming a powerful visual celebration of Black heritage.

Winners were awarded a book by renowned historian and author David Olusoga, adding to their understanding of the history they helped illustrate.

We closed the month's events with a food tasting experience, where students and staff sampled puff-puff, a popular West African snack. The CYLs did a fantastic job running the stall, sharing the delicious fried dough balls that are a staple at celebrations across West Africa. The stall was a hit, and the aroma of freshly made puff-puff added a festive touch to the day.





Thanks to all involved, especially our CYLs, who helped make Black History Month 2024 a memorable celebration of heritage, creativity, and learning at Co-op Academy.



Miss Hazell Wins Silver at TeamGym European Championships

Miss Hazell's achievement is incredible and a testament to her talent and commitment. She's an inspiration to both our students and staff.
Mr Rogers, Head of Performance Faculty



Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent is incredibly proud of Miss Hazell, PE teacher and Regional Sports Co-ordinator, who recently competed in the TeamGym European Championships in Azerbaijan.

Competing as part of the mixed senior team, Miss Hazell and her team brought home an impressive silver medal, showcasing their hard work and dedication on the international stage.

In addition to her success in the European Championships, Miss Hazell is busy organising an upcoming gymnastics competition for local Co-op primary schools, where students will get a chance to showcase their skills and passion for the sport. We're all excited to see the event come together and continue to be inspired by her dedication both inside and outside the academy!

To learn more about TeamGym on the British Gymnastics website here.



Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent

Ofsted Good Provider

Christmas Fair

Friday 6th December

4.30-6.30pm

Free entry

Santa's Grotto

Food and drink

Games Crafts

Community Stalls

Gifts Toys

and lots more!





Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent
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