

# Academy Newsletter

## Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent

2024/25 Issue 7 - March 2025

### KS3 History Students Explore the Tower of London

A group of 80 KS3 students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent had an unforgettable experience on their trip to the Tower of London, having been selected for their excellent effort, work, and enthusiasm in History lessons. With students from every class represented, it was a fantastic opportunity to see history come to life in one of the country's most iconic landmarks



The day was packed with fascinating discoveries. Students were amazed by the Crown Jewels, impressed by the rich history of the White Tower, and took part in engaging workshops delivered by Tower of London staff. Year 7 students particularly shone in their Normans workshop, impressing the guides with their incredible knowledge.



Mrs Hodgkins, Head of History, said, "Our students were a credit to us with their behaviour and through sharing their history knowledge. They had fun walking in the footsteps of our kings and queens."

It was a truly memorable day, made even more special by the fact that the Academy was proud to offer the trip free of charge. Well done to all the students involved—we hope this experience has inspired a lifelong love of history!





## Year 10 and 11 Students Receive Emergency First Aid Training

Students in Year 10 and Year 11 took part in essential emergency first aid training during their Life Skills lessons, thanks to a visit from Cookson First Aid. This training session, which Cookson kindly provided free of charge, gave students hands-on experience in life-saving techniques, equipping them with the confidence and skills to act in an emergency situation.

During the sessions, students learned how to put someone in the recovery position, perform chest compressions, and correctly use a defibrillator. These are critical skills that could make a real difference in an emergency, whether at home, school, or in the wider community.

A huge thank you to Cookson First Aid for delivering such an engaging and valuable session. Knowing how to respond in a medical emergency is an important skill for everyone, and we are proud to see our students gaining this vital knowledge.

# Yes, Chef! Year 10 Students Experience A Professional Kitchen

A group of Year 10 students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent recently had the exciting opportunity to take part in a hands-on cooking workshop at Food Sorcery, a specialist cookery school in Didsbury that offers expert-led classes in a professional kitchen environment.

Students worked under the guidance of a professional chef to create their own delicious curry from scratch. They learnt essential skills such as food preparation, time management, and presentation, giving them a real insight into what it's like to work in a high-pressure kitchen.

The experience was hugely beneficial, allowing students to develop their confidence, teamwork, and practical cookery skills. They embraced the challenge with enthusiasm and showed real dedication throughout the sessions. Staff at Food Sorcery were so impressed with their attitude and effort that they wanted to pass on their praise for the students, calling them a real credit to the academy.

A huge well done to all the students who took part—we are incredibly proud of their hard work and commitment. Thank you to Food Sorcery for delivering such an engaging and valuable experience, and to Mrs Canning for organising the visit. We look forward to seeing how these skills continue to develop!



# Year 8 Student Charlie Published in Brilliant Club's Academic Journal



A huge congratulations to Charlie in Year 8, whose dissertation has been published in the Brilliant Club's annual academic journal—an incredible achievement, as only 30 essays are chosen from around 20,000 participants nationwide.

Charlie first took part in the Brilliant Club's Scholars' Programme during Year 7, where he independently researched and wrote a 1,500-word dissertation on a complex literary analysis topic. With guidance from a university tutor, he explored the question, "Write a literary analysis of one of the extracts, through the lens of two literary theories, evaluating its usefulness for studying literature," focusing on Roald Dahl's Little Red Riding Hood.

Being selected for publication is a remarkable recognition of Charlie's hard work, critical thinking, and academic ability. The Scholars' Programme aims to stretch and challenge high-achieving students, giving them a taste of university-level study, and Charlie's success demonstrates just how valuable this experience can be.

We are incredibly proud of Charlie for this outstanding achievement and look forward to seeing what he accomplishes next. Well done!

You can read Charlie's work, along with other essays, at the link below:

<https://thebrilliantclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/The-Scholar-20.pdf>

# Year 10 Students Explore Careers in Sport

Year 10 Sport students had a fantastic day gaining insight into the world of sports careers, with visits to Staffordshire University and Stoke City FC. The day was designed to give them a deeper understanding of career pathways in sport, from sports science to professional coaching and sports management.

At Staffordshire University, students took part in a sports science taster session, experiencing the cutting-edge technology and facilities used to study human performance and athletic development. They also enjoyed a campus tour, getting a real taste of university life and learning about the different courses available in the field of sport.

The second part of the day saw students head to the bet365 Stadium, home of Stoke City FC, for a behind-the-scenes stadium tour. They explored key areas of the club, from the changing rooms to the pitch, before taking part in a careers and pathways talk, where they learnt about the many roles that exist within professional sport.

It was an inspiring day that gave students a real insight into the opportunities available in the sports industry. A huge thank you to Staffordshire University and Stoke City FC for hosting such an engaging experience.



# Year 9 Students Help Shape Community Event for Tunstall

Year 9 students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent have been working with Urban Wilderness, PiCL, and Tunstall Action Group to develop ideas for an exciting upcoming event in Tunstall.

In their first classroom-based session, students were challenged to come up with a theme for the event, considering colour schemes, imagery, and branding using a variety of different media. This follows on from their photo walk around Tunstall, where they explored the local area and gathered inspiration for their designs. The hands-on project allowed them to develop their creativity while thinking about how to bring the community together through design and visual storytelling.

The students showed great enthusiasm, engaging fully in the task and collaborating effectively to develop their ideas. It was fantastic to see them actively involved in shaping an event that will have a real impact on their local area.

A huge thank you to Urban Wilderness, PiCL, and Tunstall Action Group for giving our students the opportunity to take part in this exciting project. We can't wait to see how their ideas come to life at the event!



# Year 8 Take on the First Give Social Action Project

Year 8 students at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent are getting stuck into the First Give programme, an exciting opportunity that empowers young people to support and advocate for charities that matter to them. They are now working together in their tutor groups to research charities they might want to support in their social action projects.

First Give is a social action programme designed to help students develop confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills while making a real difference in their communities. Throughout the project, students will research local charities, select a cause they are passionate about, and create campaigns and fundraising initiatives to support them. Their hard work will culminate in a final presentation, where they will showcase their efforts and compete for a grant to be awarded to their chosen charity.

At Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent, we are passionate about community and social responsibility, and the First Give project is a perfect opportunity for students to put these values into action. It encourages them to think critically about social issues, work together to create change, and develop the confidence to speak up for causes that matter.



# Success at Trust Public Speaking Competition

Roza and Luo Chen proudly represented Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent at the Co-op Academies Trust Public Speaking and Spoken Word Competition, impressing both judges and audiences alike with their powerful and thought-provoking speeches.

Roza delivered a compelling speech on conflict and oppression in Kurdistan, while Luo Chen explored the value of life. Both students spoke with confidence, clarity, and passion, presenting well-researched arguments that captivated their audience. Their ability to articulate complex ideas and engage listeners demonstrated not only their public speaking skills but also their deep understanding of the topics they had chosen.

Their hard work was recognised with well-deserved awards. Luo Chen was named one of four highly commended speakers, with staff and students from across the Trust describing his speech as "very powerful and meaningful" and "thought-provoking and well addressed." Roza won the award for Best Original Speech, earning praise for her "really informative and passionate use of language" and "engaging, clear delivery." Their speeches resonated with many, with comments such as "your speech was very moving" and "so inspiring!"

As part of their achievement, both students were able to choose a book from a collection focused on social justice issues, further encouraging their passion for knowledge and advocacy.

They have both represented themselves and the academy incredibly well, showing confidence, enthusiasm, and a dedication to raising awareness of important global and philosophical issues. Their performances were a testament to their hard work and commitment, and we could not be prouder.

A huge congratulations to Roza and Luo Chen for their outstanding achievements. We look forward to seeing how they continue to develop their skills and inspire others in the future.



# GCSE Triple Science Students Inspired at Science Live in Sheffield

In the run up to British Science Week GCSE Triple Science students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent had an incredible opportunity to attend GCSE Science Live in Sheffield, where they heard from five of Britain's leading scientists working at the cutting edge of their fields. The event aimed to inspire young people by showcasing the real-world impact of science and providing expert advice on GCSE success.



The day was packed with engaging and thought-provoking lectures from top scientists, carefully chosen for their ability to connect with students and make complex topics accessible. Students were captivated by talks from Prof Jim Al-Khalili, Dr Hannah Critchlow, Dr Giles Yeo, Dr Anna Ploszajski, and Dr Tim Gabriel, each sharing fascinating insights into their areas of research.

As well as hearing from these world-class experts, students received valuable guidance on exam success from an experienced science examiner. This session provided practical tips on tackling GCSE science questions and improving exam technique, helping students feel more confident about their upcoming assessments.

Coming just before British Science Week, the trip reinforced the importance of science in everyday life and encouraged students to think about the many careers available in STEM fields. It showed how science offers real solutions to many of the world's biggest challenges and inspired students to consider future studies in science beyond GCSE. Each student also received a booklet with details on the speakers, their lectures, and additional articles about studying and working in science.

The trip was an exciting and inspiring experience, broadening students' perspectives and strengthening their enthusiasm for science. Thank you so much to Miss Salem for organising the visit. A huge well done to all of our students for their engagement—we hope this visit has sparked even greater ambition for the future!



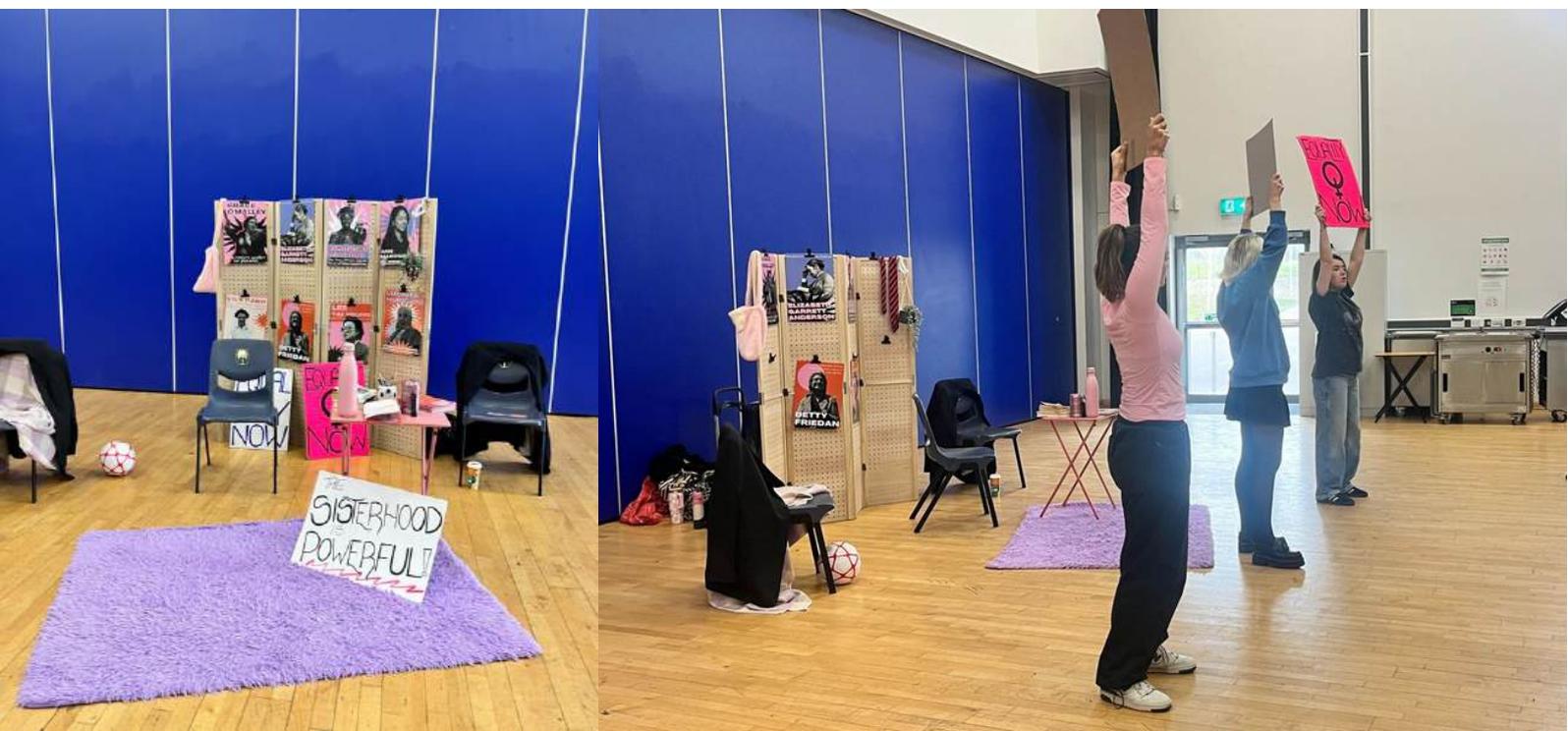
# Year 8 Girls Inspired by See Her Potential Workshop to Mark Women's History Month

As part of Women's History Month and in the lead-up to International Women's Day, all Year 8 girls at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent took part in an inspiring workshop with See Her Potential, an organisation dedicated to empowering young women and helping them realise their full potential.

The workshop delivered a powerful message about ambition, self-belief, and the importance of planning for the future. Students learnt about inspirational women from history, exploring their achievements and the barriers they overcame. A thought-provoking drama performance brought these stories to life, reinforcing the idea that bravery and determination can lead to incredible accomplishments. Following the performance, students worked through an engaging workbook activity, encouraging them to reflect on their own goals and aspirations. A key theme was giving themselves the privilege of time—the space to think, dream, and plan their bravest futures.

Ms Williamson, Assistant Headteacher, praised the workshop, saying, "It was fantastic to see our Year 8 students engaging so positively with the workshop. See Her Potential delivered such an important message about ambition and resilience, encouraging our students to think about the incredible futures they are capable of achieving."

The session left students feeling motivated and empowered, reminding them that they have the potential to achieve anything they set their minds to. A huge thank you to See Her Potential for delivering such an inspiring and thought-provoking workshop. We look forward to seeing how our Year 8 students take these messages forward in their own journeys!



# Year 9 Girls Take Part in Inspiring Maths4Girls Session

During Women's History Month and National Careers Week, a group of Year 9 girls from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent had the fantastic opportunity to take part in a Maths4Girls virtual session, joining students from across Co-op Academies Trust. The session aimed to inspire young women to explore the vast opportunities that Maths can offer in the world of work.

The students heard from Freya, a Masters student in Data Science at the London School of Economics, who shared her incredible journey working across Europe in sectors such as banking, AI, and machine learning. She spoke about how Maths has been the foundation of her career, allowing her to take on exciting and varied roles in cutting-edge industries.

Mr. Baillie, our CEIAG Co-ordinator, reflected on the session:

"This was a great opportunity for some of our students, as they got to hear from Freya, a student at the London School of Economics, who is currently pursuing a Masters in Data Science. She talked about some of the varied and exciting roles she has had, working across Europe in a range of impressive sectors such as banking, AI and machine learning, and the way that these have all allowed her to put into practice her Maths knowledge. Maths is at the forefront of many cutting-edge fields, and holds many opportunities for students who are willing to work hard and apply their curiosity."

A truly inspiring and eye-opening session for our Year 9 girls, showing them first-hand how Maths can lead to a world of possibilities!



Maths is at the forefront of many cutting-edge fields, and holds many opportunities for students who are willing to work hard and apply their curiosity.

*Mr Baillie, CEIAG Co-ordinator*

# Celebrating British Science Week 2025

British Science Week was a fantastic opportunity to explore the importance of science, with this year's theme focusing on "Change and Adaptation". Students across the Academy took part in a range of exciting activities, discovering how science helps us understand and respond to an ever-changing world.

In the lead-up to the week, our GCSE Triple Science students attended GCSE Science Live in Sheffield, where they heard from five of Britain's top scientists working at the forefront of their fields. They also received valuable exam tips from an experienced science examiner, helping them prepare for their GCSEs.

Back in school, students enjoyed fascinating hands-on experiments in both KS3 and KS4 Science Experiments Club, exploring how different scientific processes link to this year's theme of change and adaptation. Students had the chance to apply their knowledge in practical and exciting ways, helping to deepen their understanding of key scientific concepts.

Students in KS3 are also taking part in the Co-op Academies Trust British Science Week Poster Competition, designing creative and thought-provoking entries based on this year's theme. We have selected our five Academy winners, shown below, and we're keeping our fingers crossed for success in the Trust-wide competition!

British Science Week has been a brilliant way to engage students in science, helping them see how change and adaptation shape the world around us. A huge well done to everyone who took part—we hope it has sparked even more curiosity and passion for science!



# Year 9 Girls Take Part in Microsoft Girls IT Day



As part of Women's History Month, a group of Year 9 girls from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent attended Microsoft Girls IT Day at UA92, joining students from 10 other schools to explore the role of women in the future of AI technology.

The event was an exciting opportunity for students to learn about advancements in AI, discuss the importance of female representation in tech, and take part in engaging workshops designed to develop their digital skills. Many of the students had already been involved in the InnovateHer programme at the academy, and this event allowed them to build on their knowledge and aspirations for a future in the industry.

The trip was arranged by Mr Jennings, Trust Lead for Computing, and we would like to thank both Mr Jennings and Mrs Canning for supporting our students on this fantastic experience.

A huge well done to all the girls who took part—we hope this event has inspired them to consider the exciting opportunities available in the world of technology!

# Exploring Future Pathways with NSCG Careers Tour

As part of Careers Week, KS4 students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent had the fantastic opportunity to take part in the NSCG Careers Tour. With many of our students going on to study at Newcastle College, it was a great chance to explore the courses and career pathways available after Year 11.

NSCG visited the academy to deliver engaging sessions, giving students an insight into different industries, qualifications, and the skills needed for future careers. A particular highlight was the Careers Bus, where students took part in interactive activities and received expert guidance to help them consider their next steps. The experience was invaluable in helping students make informed decisions about their post-16 plans. Many left the tour feeling more confident and excited about the opportunities available to them.

A huge thank you to NSCG for delivering such an informative and engaging experience. We are incredibly proud of our students for making the most of this opportunity and taking an active role in shaping their futures!



Well done to our KS3 boys' basketball team for a brilliant game against St Margaret Ward.

At the buzzer it ended in a narrow loss, but our team showed incredible skill, spirit and teamwork throughout.

# Year 8 and 9 Scholars Take Part in Magistrates' Mock Trial

A group of Year 8 and 9 Scholars from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent recently took part in the Magistrates' Mock Court Trial, an exciting competition designed to give students first-hand experience of the legal system. Held on a Saturday whilst the court was not in normal session, the competition saw six schools from across Staffordshire and Cheshire go head-to-head in a realistic courtroom setting.

After months of preparation with Mr Mackirdy, students took on a variety of roles, including magistrates, ushers, legal advisers, witnesses, defendants, and lawyers. They worked hard to analyse evidence, prepare arguments, and perfect their questioning techniques before stepping into court to present their case. Each school argued twice—once as the prosecution and once as the defence—giving our students a well-rounded understanding of how a real trial unfolds.

The teams were scored by real magistrates and legal professionals, who assessed their persuasiveness, legal knowledge, and courtroom etiquette. Although we were not the overall winners, our students did a fantastic job, demonstrating confidence, teamwork, and impressive public speaking skills.

At the awards ceremony, Julia Mitchell, High Sheriff of Staffordshire, and one of the Deputy Lord Lieutenants presented each student with a certificate and praised them for their outstanding performance and professionalism. The experience gave students a valuable insight into the legal profession, inspiring many to consider a future career in law.

A huge thank you to Mr Mackirdy and Ms Williamson for taking the students on the day, to Mr Mackirdy for his hard work and guidance throughout the preparation, and to our students and their families for their dedication and support in making this opportunity possible.



# An Unforgettable Experience: War Horse at the Regent Theatre

Students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent had the incredible opportunity to watch War Horse at the Regent Theatre, and what a show it was! Based on Michael Morpurgo's novel, War Horse tells the moving story of Joey, a horse sold to the cavalry at the outbreak of World War I, and Albert, the young boy who sets out on a journey to bring him home. With breathtaking puppetry bringing the horses to life and a powerful storyline filled with emotion, the production had a huge impact on everyone who watched it.

Our students were captivated by the stunning visuals, emotional depth, and incredible performances, with many describing it as one of the best theatre experiences they've ever had. The show was not only a chance to enjoy world-class theatre but also tied in perfectly with our students' participation in the Speak Up programme with the National Theatre, which encourages young people to engage with the arts and develop their voices. More about this exciting programme can be found at [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/speak-up](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/speak-up).

It was fantastic to see our students fully immersed in the experience, and their enthusiasm and conduct did not go unnoticed by others in the audience, with one nearby audience member saying to the accompanying staff:

"I just want to congratulate you on their behaviour. My heart sank when you all sat down, but they were perfect. Please can you tell them?"

A huge thank you to the Regent Theatre for an unforgettable afternoon. We are so proud of our students for their enthusiasm and engagement, and we look forward to seeing how this experience inspires them in their own creative journeys.



# Year 11 Performing Arts Students Visit BAFTA HQ

Year 11 Performing Arts students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent had an unforgettable experience as they travelled to BAFTA HQ in London for a career insights day, exploring opportunities in the film, television, and creative industries. The trip took place during National Careers Week, making it a perfect opportunity to inspire students about future career paths.

Students were given a personalised tour of BAFTA's iconic headquarters, where they had the rare opportunity to see the prestigious BAFTA awards up close. They also took part in a Q&A session with BAFTA staff, gaining valuable insights into the industry and the wide range of careers available behind the scenes in film and television.

Following their visit to BAFTA, students enjoyed a coach tour of London, taking in the city's most famous landmarks, including the Houses of Parliament, Downing Street, and the London Eye. The chance to see these iconic locations added an extra layer of excitement to the trip, making it an even more memorable experience.

Mrs Leighton, Head of Drama, praised the students, saying, "Sadly, heavy traffic prevented the students from experiencing some of the day's activities, but their conduct and attitude was incredible." She also reflected on the impact of the visit, adding, "Hopefully the day will inspire our students to pursue a career in our capital in the future!"



Despite some unavoidable delays, the students made the most of the experience, demonstrating enthusiasm, curiosity, and professionalism throughout the day. It was a fantastic opportunity for them to gain an insight into the creative industries, and we hope it has sparked inspiration for their future careers.

A huge thank you to BAFTA for hosting such an insightful visit and to the staff who supported the trip. We are incredibly proud of our Year 11 students and look forward to seeing where their Performing Arts journey takes them next.

# Talent on Display at Stoke Heats of Culinary Competition

Eight pairs of talented students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent recently took part in the Stoke heats of the Culinary Competition, battling it out in a Ready, Steady, Cook-style showdown. The competition challenged students to plan, cook, write their method, plate up, and leave their workstations spotless—all while working under pressure.



The mystery bag of ingredients was Italian-inspired, with students using their creativity to produce a variety of impressive pasta dishes. The food looked and tasted incredible, making the job of the judges extremely difficult.

The judging panel included Mrs Hewitt, Head of Food Technology, Esther Thornton, Barnardo's Link Worker and Alexandra Littlejohn, Community Governor. The Community team of Mrs Garrity and Mrs Barnett were also in attendance, emphasising the importance of the community in everything we do and the ability of food to bring communities together. They praised the students for their culinary skills, teamwork, and attention to detail, making it clear just how tough the final decision was.

After much deliberation, the winners were announced. Hooria and Halimah, both Year 9, who will now go on to compete in the finals at 1 Angel Square against other Co-op Academies students.

Ms Williamson, Assistant Headteacher, was incredibly impressed by the students' efforts, saying, "The standard of cooking was outstanding, and it was fantastic to see our students working together, showing creativity, and producing such high-quality dishes. Community is at the heart of everything we do, and this event was a brilliant example of that in action. A huge thank you to Mrs Hewitt for overseeing such a fantastic competition."

A huge well done to everyone who took part and represented the academy so brilliantly. We wish Hooria and Halimah the best of luck as they go forward to the finals—we can't wait to see how they do!

# Celebrating Excellence: First Headteacher's Achievement Awards Presented

March saw a very proud moment at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent as the very first Headteacher's Achievement Awards were presented. This new initiative celebrates outstanding student achievements, recognising those who go above and beyond in their dedication, resilience, and success.

The first two recipients were Luo Chen and Roza, following their fantastic performances at last week's Co-op Academies Trust Public Speaking Competition. Their powerful and thought-provoking speeches impressed both judges and audiences, earning them well-deserved recognition.

As part of their award, Luo Chen and Roza spent some time sitting down with Mr Richardson, Headteacher, to discuss their achievements in detail. This personal recognition allowed them to reflect on their hard work and dedication, reinforcing the academy's commitment to celebrating excellence.

To mark the occasion, both students received gift bags filled with treats as a token of appreciation from Mr Richardson. It was a well-deserved celebration of their success and a reminder to all students that determination and ambition are always recognised and valued.

The Headteacher's Achievement Awards will continue to highlight remarkable student accomplishments throughout the year, and we look forward to seeing more of our students recognised for their dedication and achievements in the future. Congratulations to Luo Chen and Roza on this incredible honour!



# Numeracy Week Celebrations: Pi Day Competition Success

As part of Numeracy Week, students at Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent took part in an exciting Pi Day competition on 14th March, testing their memory and mathematical skills by recalling as many digits of Pi as possible.

The competition was fierce, with students across year groups challenging themselves to beat previous records. In an incredible display of memory and determination, Marwan in Year 9 emerged victorious, breaking the academy's previous record by correctly recalling 120 digits of Pi. An outstanding achievement!

We are so proud of all the students who took part, showing enthusiasm and perseverance in celebrating the beauty of mathematics. A huge well done to Marwan for his record-breaking performance—we can't wait to see if anyone can beat his total next year!

