

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our AAT Newsletter and I hope you find it interesting and useful in keeping up to date with the activities across all of our schools.

It is not possible to cover everything that takes place and for this edition we have organised items under headings rather than by school.

The most important news is to welcome Sarah Mitcherson to the AAT as the new headteacher at Ridgeway Academy. She takes over from Jed Whelan who has retired following a lengthy and highly distinguished time in education. Jed did an amazing job overseeing the start of Ridgeway Academy and leading it through its first year. Not only did we see a significant improvement in examination results, but the learning environment was transformed and the popularity of the school in its local community leapt from being under subscribed to being full after year 1. Sarah is very familiar with the community having worked at Sir Frederic Osborn School as a senior leader before moving on to a school in Luton. We are delighted that she has returned and wish her every success.



We have been preparing for Wheatfields Junior and Wheatfields Infants' and Nursery Schools to join the trust and most of the work is now complete. Bringing the primary phase into the trust and widening our horizons is a very exciting development and we look forward to welcoming the new members in 2020.

**Alan Gray, CEO**

## Peer Review

On 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October, a team of middle and senior leaders from Ridgeway and Sandringham schools completed the first Alban Academies Trust peer review of Verulam School. The peer review process is built around a professionally led review focused on teaching and learning. The peer review identifies areas for development, bringing key challenges to schools within the AAT for the coming year. It is a joint exercise between the review team and the school; this approach enables open and honest conversations about where the school is and where it is going, to the benefit of all concerned. Our aim is to complete a peer review of each AAT school annually.

It is fair to say that the experience was a mutually beneficial one for both Verulam staff and the peer review team, not least because of the professional and warm welcome offered by Verulam School and the openness with which the staff there embraced the whole process. Thanks go to the senior leadership team, and especially Mark Freakley (Deputy Headteacher) who gave freely of their time and supported the logistics of the days and all staff at Verulam who welcomed the team into their classrooms. Below are some reflections from the peer review team and Mark Freakley on the process.

As a middle leader, being a part of the peer review team was an amazing CPD opportunity: all the staff were incredibly welcoming and I learnt a great deal. Identifying the key lines of enquiry and being able to share our findings was a valuable experience which I believe future peer review schools will be able to embrace and use as qualitative feedback to help move their school's development priorities forward. Having been involved, I am now looking forward to the peer review process taking place at our school.



**Sarah Merrigan**  
**Subject Lead for Business Studies and Head of Sixth Form**  
**Ridgeway Academy**

It was a great opportunity to be part of the AAT Peer Review visit to Verulam in October 2019. Such processes can cause additional work and stress for the schools involved but our aim was that the two days modelled a positive approach to support school self-improvement. None of the team were trained inspectors and there was no intention to replicate a visit from Ofsted; instead the aim was very much to use our professional experience to investigate lines of enquiry agreed in consultation with the school. It was a very positive experience to visit so many classrooms and talk to staff and students across the school about their work. I can see how future peer review visits will both build on the expertise across the AAT and provide further opportunities for collaborative working.



**Mark Nicholls**  
**Deputy Headteacher**  
**Sandringham School**

The peer review was a fantastic opportunity for colleagues across the three schools to spend two days taking part in lesson and form time visits and learning walks which covered every year group and every subject in Verulam School. Each visit was completed jointly with senior leaders from Verulam and a member of the peer review team; this led to excellent discussions, sharing of good practice and a monitoring of Verulam's School development plan. Teaching and learning, assessment, engagement and behaviour were all part of the review and the feedback from this have been used by Verulam to revisit targets and action plans and as a tool to improve practice.

The peer review was a superb tool to prepare for the new Ofsted framework in a supportive and reflective way and also has significant professional development opportunities for the staff involved.



**Mark Freakley**  
**Deputy Headteacher**  
**Verulam School**

The opportunity to be welcomed into a colleague's school is a wonderful experience and one which is made all the greater by a warm welcome, a supportive leadership team and the chance to visit a variety of lessons and to see students working so hard. The peer review experience was beneficial for Verulam in that it allowed staff at the school to share good practice and reflect on their approaches but it was also excellent personal CPD and allowed me to reflect on practice and policy within my own school. I have a renewed sense of purpose after spending two days at Verulam school and have embedded examples of great practice that I saw there, specifically 'silent starters', into my own department back at Ridgeway Academy.



**Lucy Hyde**  
**Assistant Headteacher and English and Literacy Subject Lead**  
**Ridgeway Academy**

When we first met as a team we were all adamant that we wanted to reflect the name 'peer review' and not be seen or behave as an unofficial Ofsted. Our initial focus was how we could support and help to develop Verulam as part of the AAT and how some fresh eyes could perceive strengths and suggest areas of development. What I did not fully contemplate is how having time away from my own faculty allowed me to reflect on what we were doing well at Sandringham, but also how we could improve and how we might implement some of the strategies I saw. Furthermore, it was not until after the two days that I stopped to reflect on a personal level, as to how I had benefitted from the experience and in what direction my next career steps might be.

The peer review process is underpinned by collaborative approach which is supportive and not critical, therefore I would welcome colleagues into Sandringham for a similar process and would value their feedback on our approaches and practice.



**Sam Head**  
**Director of Science**  
**Sandringham School**



### **Verulam School—Examination Success**

I would like to congratulate students on their success in GCSE and A-Level examinations this summer. Verulam pupils surpassed their targets this year and achieved a predicted Progress 8 score of + 0.238 meaning that on average they achieved nearly half a grade higher than boys nationally in 2018. (Boys national Progress 8 Score 2018 -0.25)

John Tromans, Head of Year 11, congratulated all the boys on their impressive results and was particularly pleased with strong results in a wide range of subjects. "I am delighted with our haul of 67 Level 9 grades – these really show how hard our boys have worked."

Head of English, Phyllis Avery, was delighted by Year 10 pupils who sat their GCSE English Literature examination a year early and achieved an 88% pass rate at level 4 or above and with a third of pupils achieving the highest 7 to 9 grades. A number of pupils' performance was particularly impressive as they achieved a grade 3 or 4 levels higher than their targets.

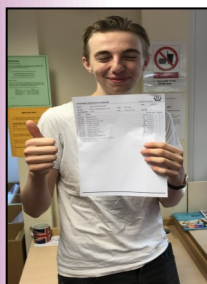
A-Level results were positive with 40% of grades at A/B level which enabled pupils to gain prestigious University places and apprenticeships. 83% of the year group moved onto university study with over 40% of places at top universities. Other students are pursuing apprenticeships, travelling abroad and training as a journalist and a pilot!

**Paul Ramsey—Headteacher**

### **Ridgeway GCSE Results 2019**

Ridgeway Academy is reporting their first set of GCSE results and the school is delighted with the achievements of its students, especially in English and Maths. Excitement was in the air as the students collected their results and there were lots of happy faces as the students opened their results envelopes.

We are so pleased that our results reflect some outstanding performances by our students and as well as acknowledging those results, we would like to celebrate the many success stories of all the individuals who have worked incredibly hard to achieve what may appear to be relatively modest grades by comparison, but which actually represent phenomenal progress. We would also like to praise the work of the primary school teachers who laid the foundations for the achievements of our students."





## Sandringham School—Examination Success



The summer examination results were outstanding once again. At GCSE, 90% of students achieved a level 4 or above in English and Mathematics and 76% a level 5 and above. The Progress 8 measure is around +0.81 which means students have made far more progress than the majority of other schools across the country. A-levels were a similar picture with nearly 70% of all grades being A\*, A or B and a positive value-added progress indicator showing the school in the top 25% of all schools.

I would like to congratulate all our students on their successes and wish them luck in the future, either in the sixth form at Sandringham, at college, work or at University. I would also

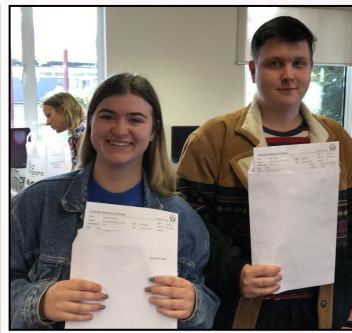
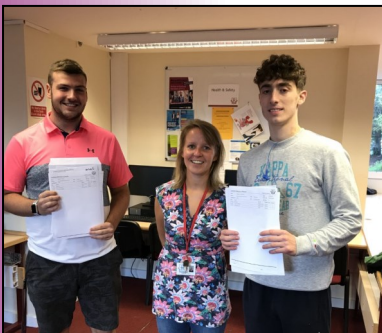
like to say a very big thank you to all our wonderful and talented staff who worked so hard to make these results a reality. Well done everyone!

**Alan Gray, Headteacher**



## Ridgeway A Level Results 2019

“Smiles of joy and happiness” was how former Headteacher Jed Whelan described the A level results morning at Ridgeway Academy. “All the hard work and effort put in by students, staff and parents has been recognised in the fantastic achievements of our students. “We are delighted with the performance of all our students. Each one of them worked hard to maximise their potential and we wish them all every success in their chosen pathways. We should acknowledge the support they have had from their families and also the tremendous work done by both primary and secondary teachers to prepare students for these tough exams”.



### **Ridgeway Academy—The Brilliant Club Graduation Trip**

At the beginning of this academic year, twelve of the most able students in Year 10 were selected to be invited to join The Scholars' Club, Brilliant Club. This organisation is dedicated to supporting an increase in aspiration amongst young people to continue their education at university. In addition to explaining and showing students the truth of university life, the workload, the opportunities and the facilities, the programme also runs practical workshops in which students learn how to study independently, prepare for interviews and present themselves professionally.

All twelve of the students we invited to join the programme accepted this opportunity. Subsequently all the students attended university style tutorials, in school, over six weeks, before each producing a 2000-word dissertation. Eleven completed the programme and each dissertation was graded as equivalent of 2:1 status which is the second highest class of degree awarded and therefore a brilliant achievement.

Our new graduates of The Brilliant Club are producing and delivering an assembly to Year 9 and 10 students to share their experience and explain what they have gained from it. Our own internal analysis shows that, subsequent to completing the programme, 91% of the students strongly agree or agree that they are determined to attend a redbrick university, an increase of 73%.

### **Sandringham School**

Ilirian Bushi, 10F, spent 3 weeks of the summer filming the lead role of Charlie in an independent feature film called Cardboard Fort on location in Harrogate. The film, written and directed by Sam Hartshorn, is a coming of age comedy, which starts when new kid Charlie's beloved cardboard fort is mysteriously burned to the ground. His developing friendships are shattered as he has to retrace the steps of his volatile summer to hunt the arsonist down. The film is currently in post production and will be premiering in 2020.

Well done, Ilirian!



### **Verulam School - STEM club**



Following its success last year winning the Herts Advertiser teaching award for innovation, Verulam School STEM club has enjoyed a busy start to the year.

This first term focused on chemistry and included understanding how hydrogels work in nappies including adding household substances to wet nappies to try to reduce the weight! They also measured how stretchy different types of sweets are and whether heating them up made a difference.

The rest of the year will see different STEM faculties taking the lead on half termly projects. The students will learn some coding and investigate some computing hardware, produce some magical maths and enjoy understanding how art is also a major part of STEM. They will be also having some visits from STEM ambassadors with an engineering focus and taking part in trips to see their STEM subjects in action in the world of work.

### **Verulam School - Charity fundraising**

Congratulations go to Oscar Afonso-Trindade who took the opportunity to raise over £300 for Herts Young Homeless on Halloween. Adopting an ET theme, Oscar collected for the charity dressed as Elliot with his dog Lola as ET.





### **Sandringham School - Exchange trips German Exchange**

22 German students and their 2 teachers spent an unforgettable week with us at Sandringham School. On behalf of the Dietrich-Bonhoeffer Gymnasium and Sandringham School, Frau Beensee, Frau Schaller and Mrs Kincaid would like to thank our families for their wonderful hospitality towards our guests. Exchanges offer people a unique experience. One of our German students has given his reflections on his time here.

*Eine Reise bringt neue Eindrücke, eine Freundschaft Zusammenhalt.*

*In einem Schüleraustausch lassen sich diese Dinge vereinen und wir, die Schüler des Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Gymnasiums, und die der Sandringham School konnten eine solche Gemeinschaft erleben, neue Freundschaften schließen und sich sprachlich fortbilden.*

*Ganz nebenbei entdeckten wir, wie andere Menschen leben und lernen und nehmen eine Menge Gelerntes wieder mit zurück nach Deutschland.*

*Dankeschön!*



We look forward to our return journey to Hamburg in March 2020 and wish our students continued success in their studies of English and German.

**Mrs Kincaid, Assistant  
Director of Learning: MFL**

### **Sandringham School - French Exchange**

Myself and several other students have been undertaking the second half of the French exchange. It was finally our turn to fly over to France and meet our correspondents for the second time!

We all stayed in the beautiful region of St-Jorioz, Annecy for one week with our exchanges and their families and during that period we had the opportunity to participate in a number of fun activities. After a very warm welcome, the activities were underway. These included visiting The United Nations in Geneva, travelling to the picturesque city of Lyon and going on a treasure hunt in Anecy city centre, not to mention spending a weekend with our families.

It really was fascinating to see the French way of life and I think it has definitely deepened my understanding of the language; in particularly conversational French. All in all, it was a wonderful return leg on a very successful school exchange!



**Grace MacMurray, 9J**



### **Ridgeway Academy—Geography and Reward Trip to Wales**

Outstanding students from Year 9 and 10 travelled to Brecon in Wales at the end of last term. This was a reward for outstanding attitude, effort and attendance during the year. The students kayaked, climbed hills, negotiated gorges and waterfalls, hiked and explored towns and forests during the trip. We also enjoyed a boat trip into the CBD in Bristol, a world food market and the Bristol Harbourside. Their hard work and great attitude and approach to learning gained them an invitation to this fun trip. Thanks to Mr Sargeant and Mrs Picariello for a great trip!



### **Verulam School - Maths - UKMT Senior Individual Challenge**

28 of our Year 12 and 13 students sat the UKMT individual challenge on 7th November and we are delighted to announce that 18 will receive awards for their achievements.

Congratulations to the following students:

Gold award	Matthew Stevens
Silver Awards	Mahim Nosor , Adam Johnson, Liam Winter, Dominic Lamb, Maxwell Robertson
Bronze awards	Alex Gate, William Foy, Kieran McCarthy Joseph Britten, Daniel Coleman, Oliver Broomfield, Anuk Tilakumara , Benjamin Kelly, Sam Mistry, Jaime Gama, Joseph Moss, Kaviraj Mutty

Matthew took the British Olympiad Challenge on 29th November and we look forward to hearing how he got on.

### **Verulam School - Maths - UKMT Senior Team Challenge**

On Wednesday 20th November, Matthew Stevens, Dominic Lamb, Jack Fitzpatrick and Joseph Moss competed in the UKMT team challenge against 17 other Hertfordshire schools. This is always an extremely tough competition. The commitment shown by our students both before the event, in practicing as a team, and during the challenge was outstanding resulting in being awarded 4th place, a fantastic achievement.

### **Sandringham School—Senior Maths Challenge**

Huge congratulations to all our sixth form further mathematicians following their fantastic results in the recent UKMT senior maths challenge. After two hours of rigorous problem solving mathematics, a huge hoard of 4 gold, 11 silver and 12 bronze award certificates were achieved. In particular, special congratulations go to Katya Rees, Harry Masters and George Taylor from Year 13, and Sam Ralph from Year 12, for being invited to participate in the next round of the competition, putting them with the top students in the country.

We are extremely proud of all our participants and wish Katya, Harry, George and Sam every success in the next round. Well done everybody!

## **Verulam School - Holocaust Education Trip to Poland**



39 boys and 4 members of staff formed Verulam's inaugural Holocaust Education trip to Poland. It was to be a trip that will not easily be forgotten by any of its participants. We started with a visit to the former Jewish quarter of Kazimierz, where there had been a Jewish community in this area of Poland for around 400 years and a chance to visit the Remuh Synagogue was not to be missed. A very small building it nonetheless has centuries of history and, after the atrocities of the Nazi occupation and desecration of the area, has returned to being a place of worship once again.

We had a full day study visit at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum. If a single word can epitomise evil, perhaps it is 'Auschwitz': near the small Polish town of Oświęcim where around 1.1 million people were murdered as the Nazis' Final Solution reached its terrible zenith. This day will, in the words of some of the boys who were there, stay with them forever. It is a difficult place to visit and there were many different feelings and responses from the group. Some commented that it was like the place had been frozen in time, others felt that they had not appreciated quite how big the complex was. For some the things that will remain in their minds are the collections of possessions that were found when the camp was liberated in 1945, for others it was the fact that more people were killed in a gas chamber at any one time than there are students at Verulam. We took the time at the end of our visit at Birkenau to remember the victims of the Holocaust. We gathered around one of the Pits of Ashes and lit a candle, heard two readings and paused, in silence, to remember.



On our final day, we visited the infamous Plaszow labour camp just outside Krakow (this is the camp that is depicted in the film Schindler's List) and a visit to Oscar Schindler's factory in Krakow itself. The factory is now a museum to life in Krakow before, during and after the events of World War Two and, for some, the images of the Nazi flag were a difficult thing to see.

This trip was organised as part of Verulam's ongoing commitment to Holocaust Education. We are proud of our status as a Holocaust Beacon School and we hope that this trip is one of many to come. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the boys and staff who came on the trip. Although a tough few days it was a trip that will stay with us all for a very long time. I said to the boys as we returned that I was very proud of them and I reiterate that here. They were true ambassadors of their school and to witness these young men as they explored the horrors of the past was a great privilege.



### **Sandringham School—Maltings Art Competition**

Last term students in Years 7, 8 and 9 were encouraged to enter the Maltings Art Competition. This involved making a painting or sculpture inspired by the city of St Albans. All schools in St Albans were encouraged to enter and this meant there were at least 1600 entries.

Sandringham Students responded enthusiastically and we entered over 250 pieces of artwork. We were delighted to discover that we had 11 finalists who were invited to St Albans museum for a presentation and private view of the artwork. This was very enjoyable and the quality of the artwork on view was impressive. The finalists were presented with medals and then the winners in different categories announced.

Mylo Watson in Y8 was the winner for the Sculpture section with a beautifully detailed ceramic sculpture of the Clock Tower. Joe Lailey not only won the 13 to 16 age group, but was the overall winner of the competition with an outstanding painting of fireworks over the city.

This was a fantastic achievement. Joe received prize money of £200.00 and Sandringham Art Department a cheque for £1000.00.

Well done and congratulations to all the finalists:

David Gubik,  
Zoe Hamp  
Daisy Wilson,  
Joe Lailey  
Hollie Wynn  
Tia Patel

Mylo Watson  
Ellen Wang  
Katie Leigh  
Ollie Carpenter  
Theodore Templeton



### **Verulam School - Year 7 Christmas Show**

For the first time, Verulam had a school production which was solely for the year 7 students. Year 7's were invited to audition for the Christmas show shortly before the half term, and were cast in the Christmas Pantomime. Students then spent their Wednesday after school, and some lunch hours, rehearsing for the 90 minute show. 'Robin Hood and the King's Gold' was performed to parents and guests on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of December.

Students have loved being part of the process, not just acting, but some were working behind stage and in a lighting or sound capacity. We encourage all the boys to get involved and explore the technical aspects of drama in order to broaden their involvement in school shows.

Follow the progress of the Drama Department on Instagram and Twitter @VerulamDrama



### **Ridgeway Academy—Drama**

Year 11 and 12 students attended a Drama trip to the Bunker Theatre in October to see 'In anchor We Hope' and as always, our students did Ridgeway proud with their attitude, behaviour and enthusiasm.

The play is set in 2016, in a pub in Pimlico, about to be closed down before certain political decisions were made, a multi-generational cast of five perform as Landlord, bar staff and punters sharing their stories of their friendship and crazy nights drinking.

Our students were so enthralled by the writing, production and performances that we have decided to use it as our Component 3 practical exam. Lots of monologues and duologue opportunities. Think Two, meets Road (Jim Cartwright)... but updated and relevant for our youngsters. Very funny, entertaining and accessible. Plus the set is a working pub...great tip to get there early and enjoy.

A massive thank you to Anna Jordan and the team at The Bunker Theatre for giving us and our students this opportunity to see quality new theatre.

Mrs S Standage  
**Drama Subject Leader**



### **Sandringham School—Platinum ArtsMark Award**

Sandringham school has been re-awarded the prestigious Platinum ArtsMark Award. This is awarded to schools that can demonstrate a real commitment to the arts across the curriculum by offering both qualifications in all the key arts subjects as well as an extensive extra-curricular programme in the arts. This is well deserved and I would like to thank all of our arts staff for their work in delivering such an amazing programme of activities across the curriculum. Well done!



**Artsmark  
Platinum Award**  
Awarded by Arts  
Council England

**Ridgeway Academy** would like to congratulate Rhianna for winning the SADLBA (St. Albans & District Ladies Bowls Association) Champion of Champions.

Early in the competition Rhianna's eventual victory was not assured, she rallied to take a slight lead before her opponent eased ahead. A great fightback then took place with Rhianna winning a number of consecutive ends to draw level before Rhianna scored a win 21-19. This is a great example of resilience and perseverance; she never gave up and pulled ahead to win.

As a result of her victory and progress in Ladies Bowls, Rhianna will be one of sixteen girls trialing for the England U18 team later this month, an immense achievement made all the more impressive as she is only 13 years old! We are all very proud of Rhianna but not in the least surprised as she was the first girl in the school to achieve a Growth Mindset Ambassadorship.



### **Verulam's Sporting Elite**

**Alexander Culkin Year 10** - Alex has represented England in 4 international competitions in **Foil Fencing**. His best result was 35<sup>th</sup> out of 200 competitors in the World under 15 Championships. Alex finished last season ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the country for Under 17's, and also recently finished in the top 32 in the Under 23 National Championships.

**Charlie Mitchell Year 11** - Charlie has represented Team GB internationally in the sport of **Horseball**. It is a game with teams of 6 (4 on pitch and 2 subs.) and matches last 20 minutes. Charlie explained the sport by saying 'it is a mix of rugby and basketball on a horse whilst throwing around a size 4 football'. He was top scorer in the Champions league earlier this year. Next year he is hoping to play in the World Cup in the Under 21 age category for England.

**Will Miller Year 11** - Will has competed in both national and international competitions for **Diving**. In 2017 Will came 2<sup>nd</sup> at the British Nationals for his age group. Recently Will represented his club at an international competition and competed against divers from USA, Ireland and Scotland, and he was excellent in winning the platform competition.

**Tomas Galvez Year 10** - Tomas recently represented Finland U15 national **Football** team at a national camp in Finland. Tomas played against Spain, Italy and Portugal, this comes after his incredible goal in the National Cup Final for Verulam in May. Tomas also plays for Watford FC in what has been a very successful side this year, winning 16 of 18 games.

### **Will Andiyapan Year 10**

Will has enjoyed a hugely successful year and has now represented Wales at international level for **Football**. His first match was against Slovakia last month where he started at left back. He also signed for Tottenham this year and as right back has been involved in wins against Chelsea and Arsenal.







### **Ridgeway Academy**

A huge well done goes out to Callum Nicolson in Year 11 who has just received the Queen's Sapphire Jubilee Award which is presented to young people who excel at sport.

Callum is an accomplished footballer and a talented runner.



### **Ridgeway Academy**

Year 10 pupil Abigail (on the right in the photo) and her dance partner was crowned 2nd place in the UK for Street Dance pairs for under 16's.

They also came 5th in the UK for Rock n Roll under 16's which is especially fantastic for 13 and 14 year olds.

Sarah Mitcherson, **Headteacher**

### **Sandringham School**

Well done to the 14 boys from Y8, 9 and 10 who represented the District at Football in the Inter District matches in September at Woolams V Watford. It's a great honour to play at this level and to have so many boys playing demonstrates the standard we are playing at. A special mention should go to the 8 boys in the Y8 squad who are currently unbeaten.

### **Ridgeway Academy**

#### **Stuart Plumb – Golf Success**

I am delighted to share with you the success of Year 12 student Stuart Plumb, during a recent 'champions of champions' golf competition. Please see Stuart's report below.

"On Saturday (19th), I played in the Champion of Champions which is an annual competition where the Mens, Ladies, Junior and Senior Club Champions from all 17 crown golf clubs play to become the Champion of Champions. I was representing Mill Green as the Men's Club Champion which I won back in the summer. This year it was held at Milford Golf Club in Surrey which was a challenging course that had recently undergone changes to the layout. I played well and shot a gross 71 (+2) which was enough to win Men's nett, Men's gross and the overall prize.



### **Sandringham School**

Congratulations to Jack Leeson, 10J, centre of photo, who is a member of Watford Waterpolo team.

They won bronze at the National Waterpolo competition in Sunderland.



### **Ridgeway Academy**

Megan (9K) entered the East Regional Synchronised Swimming competition last Saturday where she achieved a Gold Medal for her Grade 2 figures in Hertfordshire and also got a Silver medal for her routine.

Huge congratulations!





### **Sandringham School**

Both the U12 and U16 girls Futsal teams were in action on Monday in the County finals of the competition. Both teams committed themselves superbly to the task at hand and performed exceptionally at this level of the sport. The Y7 girls after winning the District round got through to the final in a repeat of the District final against STAGS. In a close match they unfortunately lost to become County runners up. The Y11 girls went one better taking the county title in a superb display all round. Well done to all the girls involved and good luck in the next round at the Regional level.



### **Verulam School**

Verulam PE department hosted two big events recently at the beginning of the Autumn Term. Firstly, the District Badminton Tournament for Year 8-11. This involved many pupils from across the district and I am pleased to report that our Year 9 team won the competition and therefore advance to the County Final at Hertfordshire University in December. Secondly we hosted the final round of the District Cross Country league with our junior team taking overall victory.

### **Sandringham School - U16 Futsal**

The U16 girls futsal team remained undefeated the entire tournament with some extremely convincing wins in their pool rounds. Drawn against a strong team in the final, it was a tough battle, that went goal for goal, ending in a draw at the end of the game, and a referee's choice of sudden death penalties. We are so proud of the whole team for winning the country tournament and look forward to the national rounds! Well done to the top scorers of the tournament, Katie & Eliza—both with 7 each! Well done to Ida Sondergaard, Eliza Telford, Katie Leigh, Yasmin Howgego and Millie Fields, superstars!



### **Verulam School - Autumn Sport**

Our football sides have enjoyed much success in recent years and I am pleased to report that our county and national cup campaigns for 2019 are off to pleasing starts with both Year 9, 10 & 11 winning their respective first round ties. The all-star year 10 team overran Goffs School 5-0 in the National Cup first round. The dominance of our sides has once again been reflected in District School selection with a large number of pupils successful selected at the recent trials held at Samuel Ryder School.

This term will see the Hertfordshire Schools Rugby Festivals take shape for Years 9 & 10. These one day competitions are designed to cut down on the amount of time the pupils and staff are out of lessons playing and coaching sport. We look forward to reporting good progress.

Verulam PE dept have hosted two big events recently, firstly the district Badminton Tournament for Year 8-11. This involved many pupils from across the district and I am pleased to report that our Year 9 team won the competition and therefore advance to the County Final at Hertfordshire University in December. Secondly we hosted the final round of the district cross country league with our junior team taking overall victory.

Finally, our Year 10 basketball team have won all 3 matches so far this season and look firmly on track to win their respective district league.





On Monday 11 November the entire school community gathered for our Remembrance Day Service to mark our respects to those fallen during World War I and subsequent conflicts around the World. The Art Faculty had arranged for students to produce hundreds of small crosses that were planted around the school sculpture near reception, and the service included a reading of In Flanders Fields before James Cooke in year 10 played the last post. The school then held a one-minute silence to reflect and remember the occasion. This was the 100<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day and we were proud to be part of the Nation-Wide events to recognise the importance of the day. Many students came in their cadet or scouting uniforms and we hope that even more choose to do so next year.



Students' poppy artwork on display  
outside school reception



## **Verulam School History & Podcast**

**Remembrance Day is of vital importance, sharing stories and commemorating those who have fallen in past conflicts, including World War One.**

This year, the History Department at Verulam School is remembering The Great War by writing, delivering and broadcasting a special history podcast on the St Albans local radio station. This is about a local St Albans man called Herbert Hiskett who grew up on Hatfield Road, attended Hatfield Road Boys School, fought, and unfortunately died, in World War One. Herbert's story is one of many that help us understand what some people have gone through by giving their lives in defence of the country.

Helped by Mr Pettitt, the podcast was written and delivered by Henry Hitchiner (8H), Henry Gaskin (8C) and Roan Hoggarth (8C). These Year 8 boys visited the studio at Radio Verulam, showing resilience, determination and a real passion for history.



The boys were ambassadors for the school; one of the board of directors at Radio Verulam said that the boys were "an absolute pleasure to work with. Their level of engagement, attention and commitment to their work is outstanding." This act of remembrance was aired on Monday 11th November on Radio Verulam (92.6 FM) and officially launches Mr Pettitt's new History Podcast series on Radio Verulam, broadcasting local stories to the community of St Albans.

Alongside the Remembrance Day podcast about Herbert Hiskett, two other episodes in Mr Pettitt's first series have been written and delivered by boys at Verulam.

Dennis Haggart (Year 13) recorded a podcast about the local DeHavilland Aircraft Company, delving into its rich aviation history surrounding both St Albans and Welwyn Garden City.

Ronan Hewit (11P) and Logan Hewit (11Y) also visited the studio at Radio Verulam to record their history podcast about Bride Hall, in Ayot St Lawrence, a quiet dwelling until the start of the Second World War which witnessed it being transformed into an espionage base. Bases like these were responsible for some of the undercover systematic secret planning for missions like Operation Anthropoid, the successful assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, a high ranking Nazi SS officer.

Mr Pettitt's new history podcast series for the local radio will be broadcasted on Radio Verulam (92.6 FM), weekly, from 11th November.





This year marks 100 years since the first Armistice day national silence. With this in mind I wanted to ensure this is properly and respectfully marked by our entire school community. We held a Remembrance Service and two minute silence to honour the servicemen and women who gave up their lives in order that we may enjoy freedom.

I am incredibly proud of how students and staff respected this important event.

*Sarah Mitcherson, Headteacher*



*The community at Ridgeway Academy have come together to remember together the service and sacrifice, friendship and collaboration of the men and women of Britain, the Commonwealth and Allied nations who fought together 75 years ago. The collaboration of Britain with our Commonwealth friends and Allied nations in 1944 continues to shape our society today. Many communities, whose ancestors served side by side, now live side by side in a multicultural Britain. To honour the sacrifice made by the peoples and nations who fought alongside each other 75 years ago, our service reflects our shared communal heritage."*



Thank you to everyone who wore their service uniforms today.

Pupils: Erin Limacher and Charlie Starkey - **St John Ambulance**  
Shian Kennelly and Georgia Hattam - **Army Cadet Force**  
Grace McAndrew-Miller, Owen Atfield, Jack Burgoyne - **Sea Cadets**  
Alexander Burt, George Robinson, Alfie Robert Jarvis, Luke Hornsey - **Scouts**

Alani Tomlinson, Lucy Nicholson, Angel Lee – **Guides**  
Ryden Vespa-Mainer - **Marine Cadets**



### **Sandringham School -UK Politics Week**

We've had a Speaker's Corner with students representing the Conservatives, Labour, SNP, Liberal Democrats and the Greens who have been presenting their party's policies. Additionally, there have been politics themed LL lessons and Y13 held a Question Time session.



### **Verulam School**

#### **FEED 2019 - Supporting our community**

As part of the school's educational role, we aim to help pupils think about important community and social issues. This wider education is vital in helping young men and women to become successful members of society.

To start the term, we decided to look at an issue which was both local and accessible to all pupils. Food poverty is an increasing problem in the UK and research shows a significant rise in demand with more than a million people being supported by food banks.

St. Albans is fortunate enough to benefit from a well organised and supported programme known as The Feed Project. Each local secondary school supports this food bank for 1 month of the year. Verulam sponsors September and due to the generosity of parents and enthusiasm of students we hold the record for the largest number of donations.

With an uncertain national picture, this year could be our most important yet and we hope to collect **7000** items.



### **Mental Health—Verulam School**

We have entered the Herts **#Justtalk competition** for the past two years and won both times. Ryan Kennedy in Year 8 came up with his concept in a PSHE lesson last summer and his storyboard won the #justtalk competition. He was given the opportunity to help direct his storyboard in the summer term.

The Just Talk representatives said that Ryan was a deserving winner with his frank and engaging film that highlights how talking can lighten the load when things are getting us down.

Ryan commented: "I was so happy that my storyboard was chosen to be part of the #Justtalk campaign. It was really cool working with a real cameraman and high-quality cameras. It allowed my story to come alive!"

Ryan also appeared live on the **BBC #Justtalk campaign**.



### **Sandringham School**

**Modeshift STARS** is the national schools awards scheme that has been established to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel.



The scheme encourages schools across the country to join in a major effort to increase levels of sustainable and active travel in order to improve the health and well-being of children and young people.

Sandringham is proud to have been awarded the Bronze certification in recognition that over 80% of our students walk to school. This year, we came in 14<sup>th</sup> place nationally in the Sustrans 'Big Pedal' campaign to encourage students to cycle to school for the benefit of their own health and reducing pollution.

### **Sandringham School—Year 7 Peak District Trip**

Despite the poor weather, our new Y7 students had a really enjoyable time at Ilam Hall in the Peak District at the beginning of term. The highlight was the walk on day two which takes them across rolling countryside before dropping down in to Milldale and then following the River Dove to Thorpe Cloud. The climb up Thorpe Cloud allowed everyone to take in the amazing scenery once the cloud layer had lifted, and students were able to see Ilam Hall in the distance. We normally stop for an ice cream on the way back to the youth hostel, however, this year we just missed the opportunity due to the shop closing early (probably due to the poor weather). Hot showers and a change of clothes were required when we arrived back before the evening meal followed by a disco. Needless to say, the students (and staff) had a very good nights sleep! I would like to congratulate the students on their attitude towards the various challenges set for them, and Ms Dawson and the rest of the staff for giving up their time to accompany students on this trip. Well done everyone.



### **Sandringham School—Mob Race**

At the beginning of term we held our annual Mob Race for the district with almost 500 students from Y7 running the 2km for their school in a closely contested circuit of the school field. The weather was good and every starter made it back safely across the line. We had huge representation as ever, with Anton Riddell and Zoe Hilton being our first finishers in both the boys and girls races. Well done and thank you to every Y7 student who participated.

### **Verulam School—Mob Race**

The new sporting year has begun in fine style. Our debutant Year 7 pupils continued the school's proud tradition at the annual Sandringham School fun run on Tuesday evening. The event is held to introduce St Albans District pupils to the challenge of competing for their new school. Verulam has an outstanding record in this event. This year 40 pupils eagerly lined up on the start line hoping to do themselves justice. I am pleased to say that they all delivered with Verulam pupils filling 3 of the top 12 places including the overall winner Max Fergie (7P). We also celebrated 3rd place with Nikolai Cherniaev (7P) and 12th place with Louis Dracos (7B). This team's performance placed us 1st overall and we proudly regained the "Mob Race" trophy. Congratulations to all runners on this achievement.



### **Ridgeway Academy**

Growth Mindset at Ridgeway continues to grow with 83 students earning FORCE certificates. It was with pleasure that I awarded Rhianna, Year 9, with her 15th certificate and Eduard and Ali both Year 11 with their 11th certificates.

We are particularly proud of the 70 Year 7 students who have already earned their FORCE badges proving that focus, optimism, resilience, creativity and energy abound at Ridgeway Academy.

### **Verulam School—Curriculum Day**

The first Curriculum Enrichment Day of the year took place on Tuesday 5 November. The Sixth Form undertook an adventurous treasure hunt in London on the tube, whilst Year 10 enjoyed a series of PSHE lessons focusing on culture, attitude and coping with change. Despite the weather, Year 9 enjoyed house sports, whilst Year 8 experienced a language themed day where they got to try out a variety of languages including German and Welsh. Meanwhile STEP (St Albans and Harpenden Christian Education Project) delivered many sessions surrounding current social issues and religious thought provoking matters to Year 7. Year 11 did not participate in the Curriculum Enrichment Day as they are currently taking their trial exams.