



Alban Academies Trust

# Keeping in Touch with the AAT

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SPRING TERM 2019  
ISSUE 001

## JOINT AAT NEWS

Welcome to our first ever 'Keeping in Touch with the AAT' Newsletter! We thought this would bring you a snapshot of various activities both across the AAT and in each individual school. It cannot hope to cover everything that takes place, but will celebrate key things that collectively and individually we are really proud of.

It is deliberately student focussed. There will be some wider developments reported on in the summer term, towards the end of our first year of working together.

We hope you find this of interest and look forward to celebrating many more student achievements in issue 2—Summer 2019

### AAT Trust

## AAT LAUNCHES ITS FIRST CONFERENCE—FEBRUARY 2019



Headteachers Alan Gray of Sandringham School, Paul Ramsey of Verulam School and Jed Whelan of Ridgeway Academy are pictured with Sir John Jones, keynote speaker at the opening of the first Alban Academies Trust conference. The three schools formed the Alban Academies Trust in September 2018 and are working together to pursue the vision of Educational Excellence for Everyone.

The conference kicked off on Thursday 14th February with an inspirational address from Sir Jon Jones – an internationally renowned speaker in education, adviser to numerous government and university committees and experienced former headteacher. The theme of 'Count me in' focussed on ensuring all members of the school community felt valued and included, and could add value to the success of the organisation. On Friday, Verulam and Sandringham staff worked together with James Heale, the CEO of Flywheel Learning, to look at what makes organisations great.

Paul Ramsey, Headteacher of Verulam School, said "Working together in partnership as part of the Alban Academies Trust gives us the opportunity to build a learning community that works towards educational excellence for everyone. We are really excited at the benefits this project will bring to the students of St Albans and Welwyn Garden City."

Alan Gray, CEO of the Trust and Headteacher of Sandringham School added "The principle benefit of working as a Trust is to share best practice and to allow our staff to work together for excellence. We have already seen an impressive start with Verulam receiving a very strong Ofsted report rated as Good in every area. We are very confident the school will move to Outstanding in the near future as part of the Multi-Academy Trust with Sandringham and Ridgeway Schools. This is an exciting time for all schools in the Trust and will have long-term benefits for everyone involved."



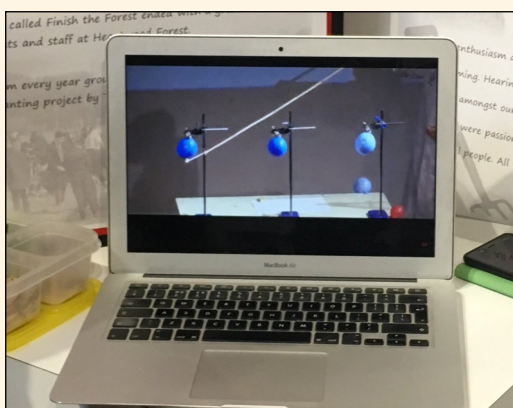
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## SCIENCE BIG LESSON—MARCH 2019

### Alban Academies Trust celebrate Science Week with... the Big Lesson

During Science Week we held The BIG Lesson - the first collaboration between the science faculties of the three secondary schools in the Alban Academies Trust: Ridgeway, Sandringham and Verulam. Broadcasting live via YouTube from the Sandpit Theatre to students in years 7 to 12 in all three schools simultaneously, approximately equating to 3000 students, must be a new World Record! While the lesson had a science focus the technology involved in getting the lesson to be filmed in real time and streamed via the internet to all the classrooms in three separate schools was significant and a lesson in itself for any student interested in STEM.

Mr Lee from Sandringham, Mr Knowles from Verulam and Dr Hercus from Ridgeway became our local celebrities and put on a science lesson based on the theme of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mendeleev's periodic table. The lesson began with a live stream demonstration by Mr Lee of igniting hydrogen and oxygen balloons, to show the difference between the two gases. This was followed by a similar and more explosive Hydrogen and Oxygen mixed balloon. The lesson then went to home schools for students to produce their own periodic table from memory.



Next came Mr Knowles on live stream conducting a demonstration of the Group 1 Alkali metals. This demonstration highlighted the similarities and the trends in properties that the groups on the periodic table have. In classrooms students then completed tasks to allow them to explore the properties of elements.



We re-joined the live stream once more to see Dr Hercus give a flame test demonstration of the transition metals with an explanation of the position of electrons in each element and the reasons why copper burns with a blue-green flame and lithium a lilac flame.



The lesson was a huge success. Those privileged enough to walk the corridors in all three schools commented on how strange it felt to see exactly the same learning in every classroom at exactly the same time. The buzz from students was tremendous and instilled a great deal of pride in the three schools.

The Science teams are looking forward to collaborating more in the future and are all very excited about the Science Week project for next year!

**Mr Lee, Dr Hercus and Mr Knowles**



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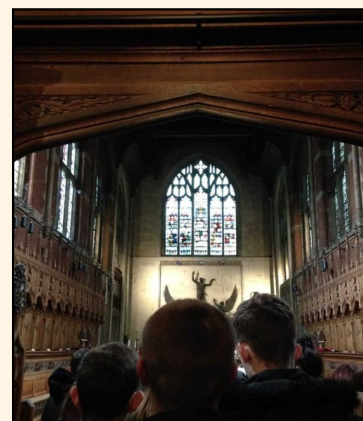
## THE BRILLIANT CLUB

As part of our work to encourage students to recognise their potential and aim higher, we have used pupil premium funding to join The Brilliant Club. This is an organisation that works to encourage more able students to aim for the top Universities after completing their A Levels.

Twelve students from Year 10 were invited to undertake The Scholars' Programme. These twelve students will be taught by a PHD student for one hour a week for six weeks before completing a 2000 word dissertation. This extended essay will be marked by their tutor and they will then be given the opportunity to improve it further. Once submitted, each dissertation will be marked to University standard and a degree grade awarded. The students who pass will be invited with their families to attend a formal graduation ceremony at a top University. All in all a lot of independent work is involved and I am extremely proud that each of the twelve students invited to take on this challenge accepted.

To start The Scholars' Programme, the students were invited to spend a day at Selwyn, one of the Colleges that makes up Cambridge University. Whilst there, the students met existing students, had a tour of the college and its facilities and even enjoyed a three course lunch in the College dining hall. During the day the students learnt about how to prepare for and conduct themselves in an interview and what university life is like.

We are extremely proud of the students who are undertaking this challenge.







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## KACEY-KATE MOYO PROMOTES BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Earlier this year Year 11 Ridgeway student Kacey-Kate Moyo gave an inspiring speech to her peers at her own school. She highlighted the positive contribution many black people have made to society through history, and that this is not always reflected in the history books written. She made everyone consider role models such as Mary Seacole, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King and the positive impact they have had on society.

She was then invited to Sandringham School to present the same assembly to their Year 8 students. It was a great way to share a much needed message across the two schools and it was lovely to hear the grateful comments from Sandringham students to Kacey-Kate at the end of the session.

## PREFECT NEWS

It was share and share alike through the AAT earlier this year when the senior prefects from Ridgeway Academy met with their counterparts from Sandringham school. They enjoyed talking over the job roles they each have and how they can continue to make a positive contribution to their schools. The students also attended lessons together.

Year 11 Stuart from Ridgeway commented : “It was a really interesting experience , to how similar our roles are and that we all are learning the same things. It helped us to be able to challenge ourselves.”

Sandringham prefects Lottie & Charlotte commented:

‘It was an eye-opening experience to see the differences and similarities between our schools and get to know the Ridgeway prefects.’

‘It was a great experience to meet students and staff from Ridgeway, see their different facilities and help their prefects deliver school tours.’





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## STUDENT AND SPORTING SUCCESS

Congratulations to Maisie 10E, who has won 4 world medals at the Irish Dancing World Championships. In January 2019 Maisie also won her age group at the All England Championships. She is now preparing for the next World Championships in Killarney in April 2019.



A big congratulations go out to Rhianna Russell Year 8 who has continued her fantastic achievements in Bowling. She recently competed at Herts Indoor Bowling Centre in Watford in the Hertfordshire County Championships for Indoor Bowling Under 18 (Mixed) event, and despite having to play against much older players, Rhianna won the title. We must also add that this success runs in the family, because her dad also won the Triples and Fours County titles.

## U15 GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM 2<sup>ND</sup> IN THE COUNTY

This season, the U15 Girls Basketball team have been competing in the County league. The girls have worked hard since the start of the academic year to improve both their overall performance and tactics which has seen them work brilliantly together as a team. Results this season have seen comprehensive wins over John F Kennedy School, Queens School and Sandringham!

The girls played in the final, finishing 2nd to a very strong Beaumont side; this means the girls have finished 2nd in the county! A fantastic result, we are incredibly proud of all the team!



## PLAYGROUND LEADERSHIP TRAINING – WATERSIDE ACADEMY

On Tuesday 23 October, the Leadership Academy ran Playground Leadership Training to one of Ridgeway's family primary schools – Waterside Academy. Playground Leaders is where Year 5 or 6 students are trained in order to run clubs and sporting sessions within their schools during break and lunch times. Some schools even choose to have an ambassador team who can train and lead other students within their schools to start leading different sessions.

As part of the training, students learn about the theory of leadership, how to plan a session, the 'STEP' framework, what a good session looks like, as well as being able to lead their own sessions in small groups to the rest of their class. The picture shows the students leading some sessions to each other.







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## 'VELOCITY' DANCE SHOW

With around 200 performers and over 30 different acts all linked to the central theme of Festival, students from Sandringham performed 'Velocity' dance show. This was a really impressive piece of theatre which has taken a year to produce. The standard of dancing was at its usual high standard but most importantly, it was clear just how much pride and enjoyment was shown by each student taking part.



## FARAFENNI SCHOOL, GAMBIA



16 students from Years 11 & 12 accompanied by Ms Pizan, Mrs. Lyons and Mr Gray visited Farafenni Senior School in The Gambia. They had the opportunity to see the latest project sponsored by Sandringham families, a new canteen. This was formally opened during the visit and our group were the first to make use of it before coming into operation by the school.

The school put on a cultural show which was exciting and everyone joined in with the dancing. One of the highlights of the trip for many was visiting the primary school. Despite the lack of resources in the school, the engaging lessons provided by the teachers and the enthusiasm of the children created a very positive atmosphere. The reactions of the children when we gave them gifts will stay with us forever and their gratefulness for something as simple as a pen made us thankful for everything we have. Whilst we were there, we donated them lots of books for the library which we hope will benefit the children's learning.

We would like to thank all the students involved in the trip for being wonderful ambassadors and embracing the unique nature of our link with Farafenni School.

## SIXTH FORM EXPEDITION TO CHINA

25 6th form students from Sandringham followed a packed itinerary travelling across China from Chengdu to Xian and Beijing. They undertook conservation work at a panda centre in Chengdu, clearing out enclosures, preparing bamboo and feeding the pandas.



They travelled by bullet train to Xian enabling them to see more of the country and some even managed some revision! The streets of Xian were brightly lit with lanterns as it was the end of Chinese New Year and the Lantern Festival. Over the next 2 days they visited the Huaqing Hot Spring park and a local market where students bartered for local goods and souvenirs. A real highlight of the trip was the Terra Cotta Army. Students were amazed to see how well preserved the soldiers were and to learn about Chinese history.

A short flight took the group to Beijing and the last leg of their expedition. Following a trip to the Birds Nest and Water Cube Olympic stadiums, they enjoyed the challenge of a hike up the Great Wall of China.





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## MUSIC NEWS

### 'The Voyage' concert in aid of Age Concern UK

Last Saturday, we took a group of students from our school chamber choir to take part in a collaborative concert with the Aeolian Singers and Dacorum Community Choir. The concert featured 'The Voyage' by Bob Chilcott in the first half and items from each choir in the second half. After a very moving first half, the chamber choir performed 'Ave Verum Corpus' and 'You Will Be Found' to rapturous applause! The concert raised £2,800 for Age Concern which will be used for the Boxmoor Good Neighbours project. Well done to all the students involved, they performance was of an extremely high standard and they were a credit to the school.



## FRENCH EXCHANGE

Thursday 14 March to Wednesday 20 March



Last Thursday, we finally had the opportunity to meet our French exchange students from St Jorioz. We were all so excited for them to experience a week in our lives. On the Friday, both the English and French students took a trip to the beautiful Oxford University. A tour of the 'New College' and its stunning gardens was a perfect introduction to life in England. The days that followed were so fun: a weekend with host families, trips to London and St Albans town centre left us extremely sad to say good-bye. Overall, it was a fantastic experience!

*Grace MacMurray, 8J*

Jeudi matin les anglais nous ont très bien accueilli avec des boissons, un repas délicieux et des fruits. Le lendemain, nous sommes allés visiter l'Université de Oxford. C'était magnifique et très grand. Le lendemain je suis allée en centre-ville à St Albans pour faire du shopping. L'après-midi nous sommes allés à la piscine. C'était cool. Dimanche nous avons fait plus de shopping avec Sophie et Megan, puis du bowling. C'était super ! Lundi, nous sommes allés à St Albans pour visiter le Cathédrale – magnifique ! Mardi, nous sommes partis à Londres et nous avons visité 'Tower of London' et les bijoux de la reine. Mercredi, c'était l'heure du départ. J'ai adoré le voyage. C'était exceptionnel et incroyable ! J'y retournerais bien !







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## STUDENT AND SPORTING SUCCESS

We are so proud of our student, Gabriella Farrugia, 9S, who spoke at the launch of a new Research project for the Mental Health CAMHS department at Great Ormond Street Hospital at the beginning of the year. She spoke with eloquence, poise and honesty and she made a real difference to the launch.



Well done to Lauren Presland 7A, who competed at the Harrow Regional Qualifier and came away with a bronze in the 200m free, a silver in the 200m backstroke and a gold in the very tough 400m IM.

Sandringham School 'topped' the medal table from English competitors at the Hamburg Karate Open as William (10T) & Olivia



January saw our Y7 boys football team come back from the Christmas break to enter unknown territory for a boys team at Sandringham. They played St. Peters School from Huntingdon in the National Cup last 32 at home. It was a superb display from the team dominating the first half and creating chance after chance from out wide. The first half ended goalless somehow, and the second half continued just as the first ended with us pushing for the first goal. With minutes remaining we went on to double the lead and take us through into the last 16 schools in the whole country. A great victory and outstanding achievement for the school. Well played boys. What is equally impressive is the record of 6 clean sheets in the competition.

## ECO STORY by Freya Barker 7A

Dearest Ocean,

Lately I was looking at a photo of us together and remembered what a hard time I had given you in school. You are such an extraordinary person, overcoming everything I threw at you and managing to accept it and move on, still content.

To begin, pestering you was honestly meant to be a funny joke to impress the classmates, but it began to bother you, I could see it in your eyes. They no longer had such a beautiful sea green shine. Still, and I don't know why, I continued to heckle you. The comments changed from jokey to harmful and, I hate to admit it, were crafted to make you feel inferior. You were scared, and I knew it. Scared of coming to school, because I would be there.

Then one day, I guess you got fed up of the endless heckling. You climbed the trim trail, and shouted and pleaded across the shocked playground for help and for someone who would help you. Everyone began to laugh, and I can only imagine the horrible ringing in your ears of embarrassment and just longing to disappear. They laughed at your name, your ocean blue eyes and the homemade shell bracelet, hung around your wrist. I'm sorry, Ocean, but sorry won't ever cover what happened next. I climbed up to where you balanced. I pushed you. You fell. Your eyes rolled back behind your eyelids. I remember the ambulance lights, blurry in my confusion: guilt or victory? Mixed feelings shrouded me like a mist until you returned, safe, but you had learnt your lesson. Nobody would ever listen.

I thought you would never be the same, but with everybody's support, you could return to your former state.

I feel so ashamed and I am very happy to recall that finally they listened. They saw how I was slowly destroying your faith in humanity: would anybody ever help? They saw how ignoring your appeals was only encouraging me. They helped you to stand up for yourself and face your fear.

In the present, I have changed for the better, and I have always thought of, but never been able to, actually write to you. Until now, I suppose. In Secondary school I lost my control. A taste of my own medicine; being ignored and the tables turned. One day in the summer you came over, and I remember that when your friends laughed and suggested that you could get your back- maybe spitting in my face or kicking me- I was scared. I deserved it. Closing my eyes and fearing the worst, I was surprised to open my eyes to be enveloped in a hug. You told me I was in a bad place; but that it would be over sooner if I persevered and believed and then you left. I never saw you again: simple as that. You changed me. I never bothered anyone ever again; but I will always remember how the class, the people, realised their mistakes and helped you, Ocean.

Best wishes for the future,  
Pollution.





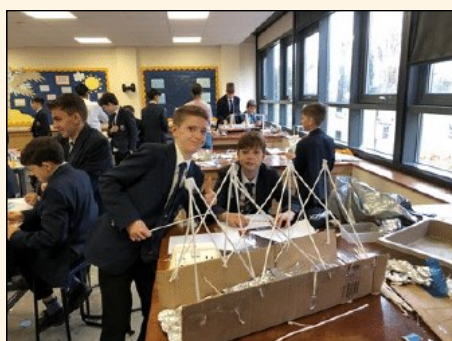
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## ENGINEERING MASTER CLASSES

Four of our Year 9 students were chosen to represent Verulam at the 2019 Royal Institution of Engineering series of Master-classes. Oscar Afonso-Trindade, Faizan Qutby, Sean Tidd and Jonathan Wilding all attended their first session on Saturday 19th January where they studied the engineering of paper and even made their own paper! They all very much enjoyed the session and are looking forward to the next 5 weeks where they will learn about so many different engineering topics.

## STEM

Our Year 8 students had an inspiring day of STEM on Wednesday for CED led by Transport for London engineers, project managers and finance professionals. Our students enjoyed understanding how bridges and tunnels are built and how expensive they are too! The day concluded with the boys costing, designing and building river crossings. We saw superb working cable cars, stable and secure bridges and well engineered tunnels. Thank you to Brent Leyshon and his TfL team and to our dedicated STEM teachers for all their enthusiasm and hard work in making such a successful day for our year 8 students.



## “YEAR 8 BRING HISTORY TO LIFE”

Earlier this academic year, the History Department commemorated the First World War centenary by showing Peter Jackson’s “They Shall Not Grow Old” film. Continuing this act of remembrance and bringing history to life in the classroom, this month Year 8 embarked on a project to create their own model trenches from the First World War. The time and effort put into these projects was phenomenal. Ranging from cross sections to bird-eye view models, the Year 8s got to grips with the layout and function of how the trench worked. Some boys even decided to make their models in cake form which the rest of the class thoroughly enjoyed tasting! An excellent example of the creativity and dedication of some of our KS3 historians.



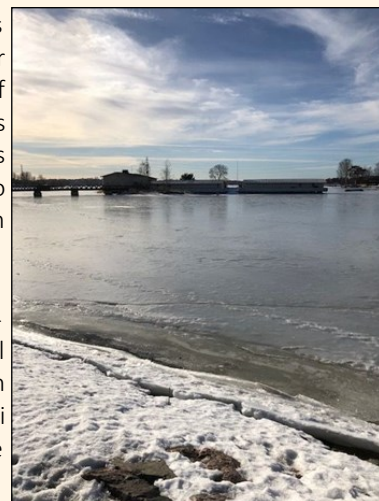


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## #SWEFINEST

During half term Verulam Geography Sixth Form A-Level students all began their travels around the Baltic Sea, visiting the three countries of Sweden, Estonia and Finland in four days, via planes, ferries and coaches. The aim of the trip was to show the students a variety of physical landscapes and how the weathering and geology has shaped the lands over millions of years. We looked at new regeneration programmes throughout the Scandinavian countries and the changes to Estonia after the collapse of Soviet rule. The students were able to witness architecture from a range of periods and leaders, cultures and communities from across the globe and interact with artifacts and real working lives within the capital cities.

We started at Fjällgatan to see the magnificent view of the Swedish capital, spread out on 14 islands with Lake Mälaren on one side and the Baltic Sea on the other. We visited the Royal palace, the Cathedral and the City Hall and stopped at the recreational island Djurgården before the overnight cruise Stockholm to Tallinn. In Estonia we admired the Alexandre Nevski church and Dome Church and the 13-14 century Danish-German castle, today the seat of the Estonian Parliament.



We boarded a smaller ferry from Tallinn to Helsinki. Arriving in colder, snowier and now frozen waters of Baltic Sea our first stop were the large city parks. We visited local churches, houses of parliaments and local streets before we embarked on our final ferry towards Stockholm.

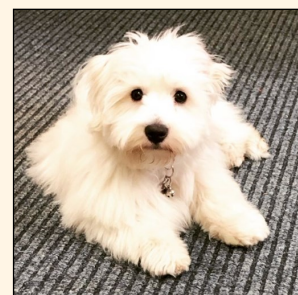
#SWEFINEST19 was a brilliant event, we saw a range of locations and lives, we made new friends and respected the world we live in. Our students have now found a greater drive to achieve higher grades to ensure in the future they have the options to travel to even more countries.

## WELLBEING ON FOUR PAWS

In January the pastoral team were joined by Bobby, the well-being dog, owned by our school receptionist. He was born in November last year, in a litter of 3. He quickly settled in to the school routine and is already providing valuable support for our students, learning the sights and sounds of the school – including the school fire alarm.

Cuddles with Bobby can be just what is needed when a student is feeling anxious. He helps to calm students and turn around emotions when students have low mood, anxiety or are showing challenging behaviour. For some students it makes the school day more engaging, which in turn improves attendance.

Bobby likes to keep busy and helps students not wanting to come in to school in the morning, with friendship issues or when they are distressed. He provides the boys with comfort and a listening ear. As one of the boys said, 'you don't have to answer to a dog'. I believe that working with Bobby provides our students with many benefits, including building confidence and self-esteem. Bobby provides comfort and breathing space and our students think he is very soothing.







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## STUDENT AND SPORTING SUCCESS

The Spring term has seen both individuals and teams achieve significant success. In sports as varied as fencing, horseball, cycling and running individual pupils have competed at both national and international levels with great credit.

Particular congratulations go to Alex Culkin (Year 9) who finished the 2018 season as the No. 1 fencer in England in the Boys U15 Category having amassed almost twice the number of points as the boy in 2nd place.

The spring term traditionally focuses on football and here the Under 14 squad have really distinguished themselves by reaching the District, County and National cup finals. Having defeated Langley School 5-2 in the semi-final the team will now travel to the Hawthorns, home of West Bromwich Albion, in May to contest the final against Thomas Telford School.

Congratulations to Matthew Nicholls who has been selected to represent Hertfordshire in the Schools' Year 7 National Cross Country

## VERULAM U14'S PUT THEMSELVES INTO THE FOOTBALL HISTORY BOOKS

Verulam under 14 boys' football team became the first school from Hertfordshire to ever reach the Elite national cup football final. The boys and PE staff travelled to Langley school in Norwich, an independent boarding school that has an affiliation with Norwich City Football Club for their semi-final in the most prestigious football tournament in the country for schools football.

Verulam took an early lead but Langley dominated much of the first half taking the lead 5 minutes before half term. Verulam started stronger in the second half going on to a 5-3 win and enjoying making history and reaching the Elite National Cup Football final which is likely to be held in May in a major football club's stadium.





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## AAT SCHOOL LOCATIONS



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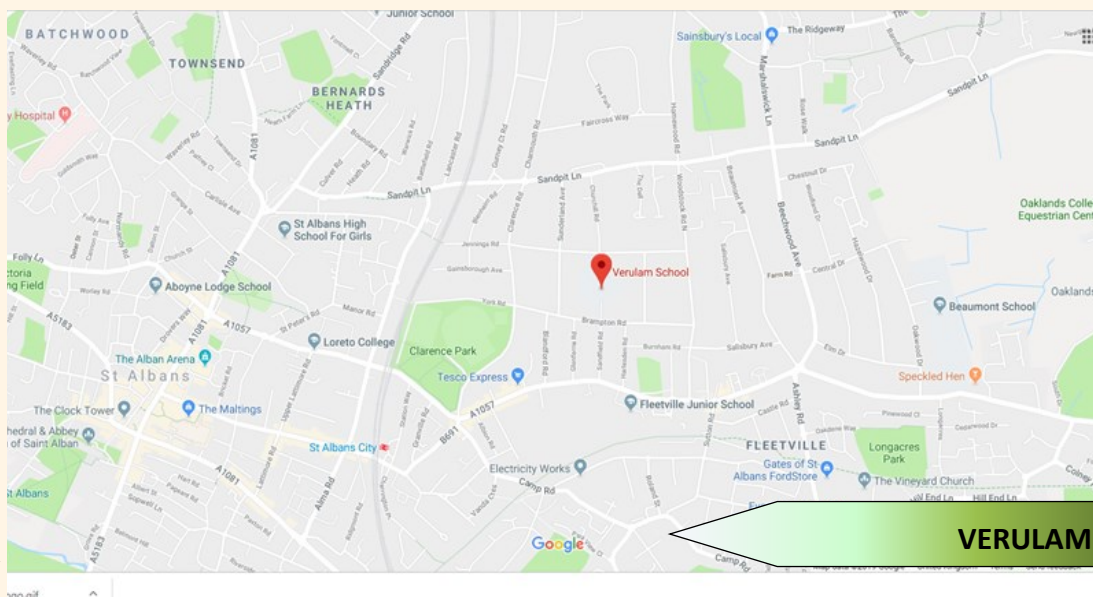
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