



Ark Elvin Academy

Newsletter

Spring 1 half term February 2015



A great start to 2015 at Ark Elvin

It feels like only yesterday that we came back to school after the festive period, and yet we have achieved so much! Thank you to all of those parents, carers and others who have spent time with us in Spring 1 helping us to constantly improve as a school and talking to us about how we can best support your children.

With the exam season just around the corner our pupils in years 11, 12 and 13 have been working very hard to get ready and achieve the very highest grades they can in all subjects. It was fabulous to see our pupils taking the mock exams, after school study sessions and all of the additional support provided so seriously. As a result of the hard work of teachers we are also able to offer a number of additional sessions for some pupils during half term. Those pupils targeted for additional support will receive a letter outlining when we would like them to come in, and for which subject(s). Our teachers are taking time out of their holidays to provide this, as they are so determined to ensure that our pupils do well. Your

support with this is greatly appreciated. There will be further support provided after half term and into the Easter break. We will be in touch with more information on this in Spring 2.

Another big focus for us in Spring 1 has been discussing GCSE options with our year 9s. Options interviews are now beginning and we will meet with every pupils and their parent/carer between now and Easter. This will allow us to build a timetable which meets the needs of our pupils and provides them with subject choices which will help them to be successful and fulfil their dreams.

Aside from the particular focus areas above we have all continued to work hard at Elvin this half term, to dare for greatness and to embody our core values of integrity, courage, community and mastery. Thank you again for your support and I look forward to seeing you in Spring 2.

Best wishes,



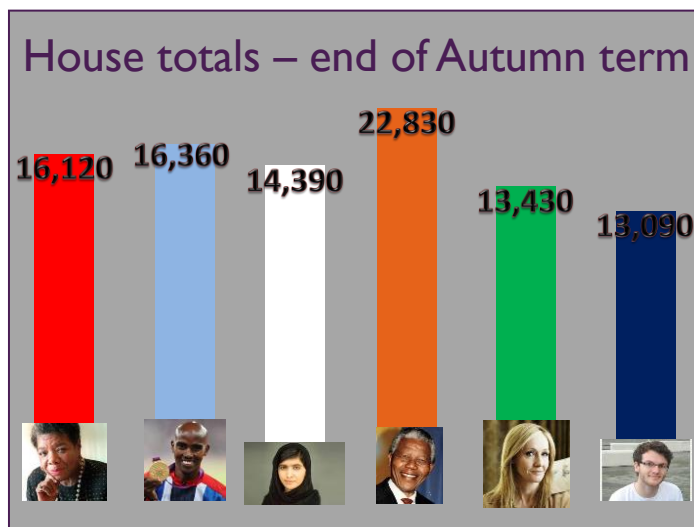
House activities: singing, spellings, and soup!

The past few months have seen an intensifying of activities and competition between our six houses: Angelou, Farah, Malala, Mandela, Rowling, and Sutton. The highlight was undoubtedly the house singing competition, where each house attempted to outperform each other with their renditions of 'Happy' by Pharrell Williams. Every pupil (and teacher) in the school took part, with some displaying excellent musical abilities while others dazzled with costumes, dancing, and sheer effort, enthusiasm, and joy! Every house impressed the judges, leaving them with a difficult decision to make, but in the end Angelou were crowned winners, with Mandela in second place and Farah third.

Meanwhile, pupils were donating tinned and packet food for a local food bank, with house points going to Mandela for collecting the most. More importantly, 85 kilograms of food were collected in total, with the school receiving a letter of thanks and certificate from the Sufra charity for the food that will feed six families in need.

However most of the house points come from the merits pupils receive every day for displaying our school values of integrity, courage, community, and mastery. So, despite the huge 5,000 house points awarded to Angelou for winning the house singing, the leaders of the house competition at the last count (at Christmas) were Mandela with 22,830 house points in total.

We still have half the academic year to go however, so every house has a chance to win the much coveted 2014-5 Elvin House Cup. Pupils are currently studying for the house spelling bee, and other upcoming competitions include a maths challenge, drama competition, and sports day.



Ark Elvin pupils plan for their futures



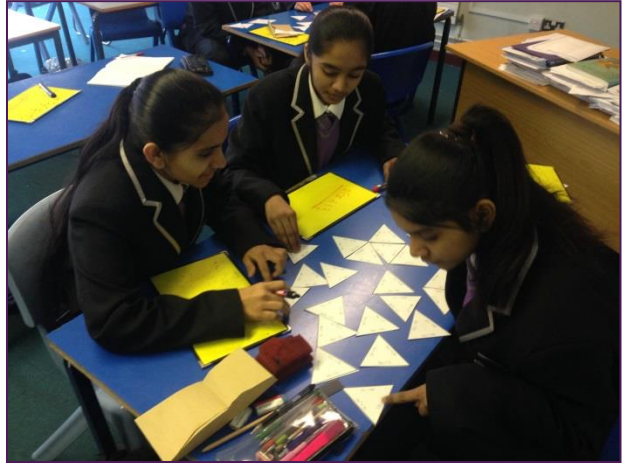
This term has seen years 9, 11, and 13 working hard to prepare for their next steps as we enter the second half of the academic year.

Year 13: It's been very exciting to see university offers flying in thick and fast for our year 13s, which are rewards for many years of effort in their learning. We are on track for 100% of pupils receiving offers, and here are just a few highlights:

- Rashmi Raghvani, our Head Girl, has received **all five offers** to study Psychology including the University of Birmingham, Surrey University, Aston University, Southampton University, and Hertfordshire University.
- Ayman Zeidan received **all five offers** from his universities to study Law, with his firm choice as Liverpool University which is part of the famous Russell Group top universities in the UK.
- Jerome Lake received **all five offers** to study Economics and has chosen East Anglia University as his top choice.
- Saynab Sharif received an **unconditional offer** from Roehampton university to study History and English Literature based on her outstanding application.
- Jeneil McDonald received an **unconditional offer** from Portsmouth university to study Sport and Exercise Science based on her Sports qualifications and contributions.
- Mohamed Salhi has received offers to study Physics at prestigious universities including the University of Birmingham, Warwick University and Kings College London.

It is particularly impressive to have pupils receive offers from all their choices, or to receive unconditional offers which mean that the university is so impressed by their application that they have agreed to take them whatever final results they achieve in their A levels. This application process has been supported by a weekly enrichment session, bringing in interesting and inspiring speakers from the worlds of work and universities, and by regular trips to universities and employers to help sixth formers make the right choices – such as the trip to PA consulting in central London on 29th January, pictured above.

Year 11: Meanwhile, our year 11 pupils have also impressed as they step up their efforts in the final few months leading to their final GCSE exams. 2015 started with two weeks of mock exams, which year 11 approached with exemplary focus and determination – an excellent preparation for their exams this summer, and an opportunity for pupils and teachers to work together to understand what topics they need to improve on in the final straight. Year 11 teachers also been working hard, increasing lesson times for GCSE pupils and offering after school sessions which have been very well attended by pupils keen to do everything they



can to secure the grades that they deserve and that will open up future opportunities. Teachers will even be working in school with targeted year 11 pupils throughout the half term holiday, and on selected Saturdays next half term.

Year 11 have also been looking beyond their GCSEs and making decisions about their options next year. These decisions have been supported by daily assemblies – thank you to Ms Bayes for putting together this excellent programme of assemblies – which have given year 11 lots of information and guidance. We are delighted that many of our pupils will be choosing to stay at Ark Elvin Academy for sixth form, and there was a strong turnout at our information evening where they heard more about our sixth form next year. This included hearing about the wide range of subjects we will be able to offer by joining forces with Ark Academy in Wembley Park, and also the generous bursaries available through Ark to financially support our pupils through university. For more information on our sixth form, please visit our website at arkelvinacademy.org.

Year 9: Last but by no means least, year 9 pupils have been taking the first important step on this journey by starting the process of deciding their GCSE subjects. The process started with sixteen assemblies this half term, each exploring the benefits of a different subject. Parents joined at an information evening at the end of January and will each join their child for an interview with a senior teacher to make final choices. For the first time at the school, pupils will choose their options with very few timetable restrictions, and once these decisions have been made the timetable will be built to ensure that as many pupils as possible can study the subjects of their choice. It has been inspiring to hear the incredible aspirations our year 9 pupils have, which truly embody *magna aude*, and we are putting every effort into supporting them with their decisions so they can take the right steps to fulfilling these goals.

George the Poet inspires at Ark Elvin

On 30th January we were delighted to welcome George the Poet to speak to our year 9 and 11 pupils. George is a British spoken word artist, public speaker, writer and recording artist with an interest in social and political issues.

Growing up on the St Raphael's Estate in Harlesden, North-West London, George began performing rap and grime when he was 15 years old. He attended Queen Elizabeth's School and studied Politics, Psychology and Sociology at Kings College, Cambridge where he decided to adapt his rap output into poetry to communicate more effectively with his audience.

During his time at university, George pioneered a social enterprise and won £16,000 to fund The Jubilee Line, a series of poetry workshops for underprivileged children in London. He has since actively used his poetry as a force for social change on the likes of Sky News and has visited universities across the country to start a dialogue amongst the younger generation about the various issues faced by young people today.

Due to his recent commercial success after the release of his EP titled The Chicken and the Egg, George has been nominated for the BBC Sound of 2015 award, MTV's Brand New for 2015 award and has been shortlisted for the Critics' Choice Category at the 2015 BRIT Awards. Our pupils were truly inspired by his talks, with one year 11 commenting that "he really made me think differently about what I'm doing with my life. I feel like I've been hit in the brain!"

Malgorzata in year 9 has written this report of the event:



"On 30th of January we were delighted to welcome a young artist, George Mpanga better known by his stage name George the Poet. George visited our school to speak to pupils about his experiences while at school and beyond. He also spoke about how poetry changed his life at university and how he started his career as a poet.

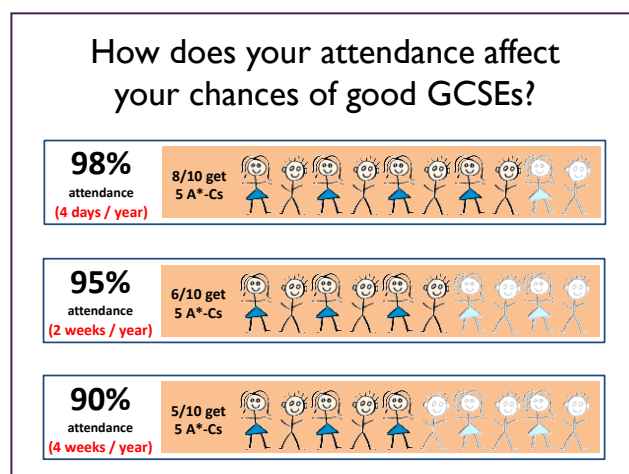
George is a very inspirational character for our year 9 and year 11 pupils as they have to make very important decisions such as picking GCSEs, Colleges and Universities. The session gave them some reflections on how it might be, and how they might feel while taking steps towards their future.

When asked 100% of students said that the speech was very inspirational to them, especially because the person that gave the speech was from the same environment as them, and been through situations that most of our students were or will be in.

Our school motto is Magna Aude. All of Ark Elvin's teachers and staff believe that all of our students Dare For Greatness, and with hard work and dedication they can reach for the stars, and be as successful as many known people in our society."

Pupils show their commitment with high attendance

Last term, all pupils had an assembly reminding them why high attendance to school is so important. National data shows that pupils with the highest levels of attendance (around 97%) have the highest chances of getting the best GCSEs, with 80% of them going on to get the widely accepted minimum target of five C grades or above, including maths and English. What surprised pupils, however, was that a drop of just a few percent to 95% attendance – which still sounds high, with only three days off a term – makes it much harder to get these GCSEs, with only 60% of pupils succeeding. A



drop to 90% makes it very difficult to succeed, with the chances of getting 5 good GCSEs now only 50%. Though in most things 90% is usually a great score, in attendance it means missing half a year of school by the time you get to your GCSEs.

Form tutors have been working hard to support pupils with their attendance, having conversations with pupils and their parents to see how we can help you make sure your children come to school every day, meeting our target of 97-100% attendance. We are also delighted to have appointed an Attendance Officer, Dramista Patel, who took on her new role this year after many years at the school.

Spire Hub supports year 10 pupils to achieve



Twenty four of our aspirational year 10 pupils have begun working with Spire Hub, an after school charity focussing on developing young people's life skills as well as supporting with key aspects of the curriculum such as abstract thinking.

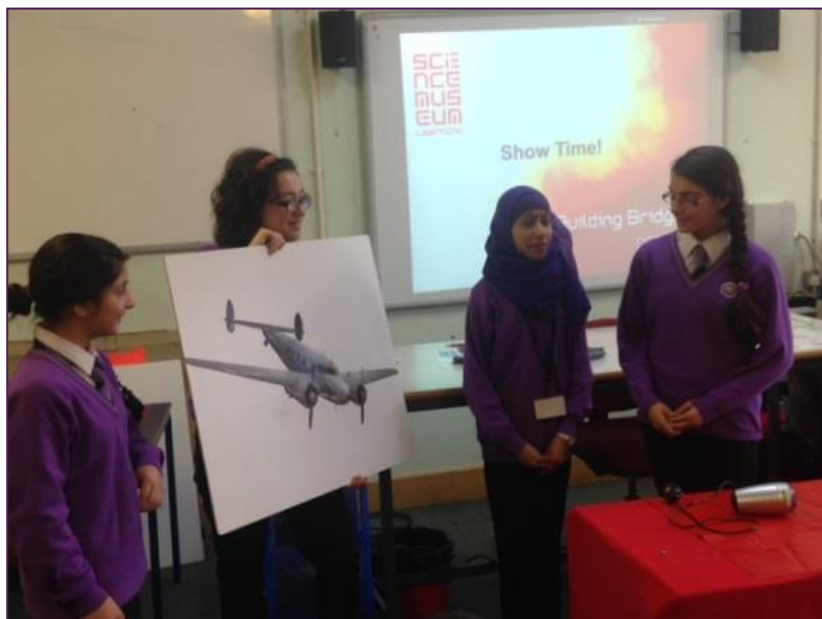
Every Thursday hubs are set up in the library between 3.30 and 5.30 in conjunction with the school. Each session brings together targeted high-ability students with qualified teachers and high-achieving young mentors from the local community. The teachers are retired professionals who are keen to continue supporting school pupils with their achievement, and the mentors are typically local university graduates. In each session, students benefit from working in small groups of six students with their tutor and mentor.

Spire Hub focuses on three interconnected areas: ensuring students are on track to achieve top GCSE grades; developing their life skills and emotional intelligences such as confidence and resilience; and developing their awareness of higher education and careers options to foster higher aspirations.

Key Stage 3 Elvin scientists impress

It has been an exciting few months for our young scientists in Key Stage 3. On 22nd January, we welcomed representatives of the world-famous Science Museum to come in and work with our pupils through the Building Bridges programme. The day started with the whole of year 7, 8 and 9 enthralled in an exciting and entertaining community time assembly on Electricity. A selected group were then trained to perform a science presentation of their own. They prepared, rehearsed and delivered some excellent presentations

which linked objects in the Science Museum to their own science demonstrations. They were judged on their presentation skills, and the facilitators, who visit many schools, commented on how impressed they were with our pupils: "their presentations were amazing!"



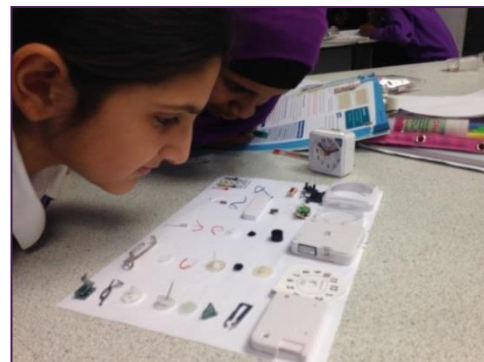
The science faculty has also been running a weekly KS3 Science Club. Each member of the faculty runs a session after school every Tuesday with the purpose of motivating and enthusing students towards a love of science. Ms Humphreys, our senior technician, diligently prepares equipment and chemicals for the science club as well as suggesting inspirational experiments to perform. Activities our pupils have enjoyed so far have included making gliders, marbling

milk, and investigating the cooling curve of chocolate. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the practical work as well learning about the science behind the fun experiments they carry out' here are some of their comments:

"I like science because I can do experiments and do challenges. I feel so great. I can learn to do things and there is lots and lots to do. I feel like coming every day."

"I like the Science Club because it is a source of fun and knowledge. It makes us more intelligent in science. Our lovely teachers give us reasons why the experiments work. It is very exciting too because when we come every Tuesday we think about what new knowledge we will learn today. The club makes us passionate towards the subject."

"I like science club because we do fun experiments but we still learn. We learn different things every week. This is a rare opportunity. These teachers have given up their time to teach us so we can be even better. This helps people who want to do a science related job so this will help us in the future too."



Elvin pupils collect Jack Petchey awards

On Tuesday the 3rd February 6 Ark Elvin students received Jack Petchey awards for outstanding service to the school. They attended a fantastic awards ceremony with their friends and family at Brent Civic Centre. Students from across the borough were present and there were musical performances from talented students from across Brent's schools. The students received their medallions from the Deputy Mayor of Brent, Councilor Lesley Jones.

Ryhan – Year 10 – received his award for outstanding leadership and community spirit. Ryhan is a member of the Air Cadets and he helped to organise the poppy appeal in the school. Thanks to Ryhan's hard work the school raised £86 for the Royal British Legion. Ryhan has also been recognised by the Air Cadets and he recently went to the Tower of London and helped dismantle the ceramic poppy display.

Shubham (Year 12): Shubnam has been given an award for his hard work in the library. He is a student librarian and has given up a considerable amount of his free time to help reorganise the library.

Leo (Year 13): Leo received his award for outstanding sports leadership. He has been running basketball training across the school for different year groups.

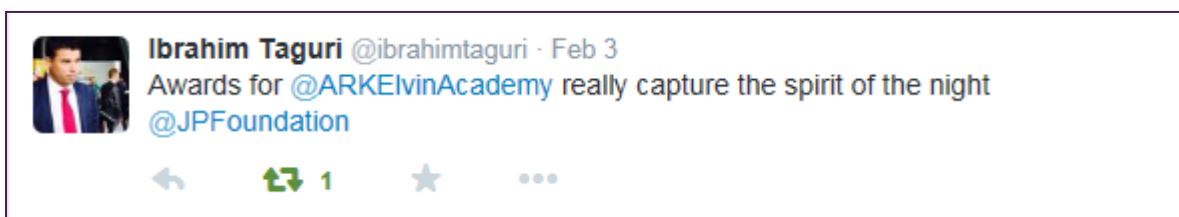
Noorul-Ain: Noorul-Ain was a student at Ark and is now studying History at University. Noorul-Ain is multi-lingual and spent a lot of her own time helping younger students learn English.

Halimo (Year 10): Halimo won her award for her excellent work during year 9. Halimo started the school with limited English, but through her sheer hard work she learnt to speak and write fluently. In doing so she hit many of her Year 9 targets.



Rikki (Year 10): Rikki won his award for his hard work in Year 9. Throughout year 9 Rikki displayed a particular dedication to his studies which culminated in him making sustained progress and hitting his target grades.

The awards ceremony was enjoyed by all, and our pupils impressed many of the guests, with local MP Ibrahim Taguri even tweeting his admiration.



Key Dates for next half term

Friday 13th February:	Staff training day – no school for pupils
Monday 23rd February:	Start of spring 2 half term
16th - 20th March:	Assessment week for all pupils
Friday 27rd March:	Last day of spring term
Monday 13th April:	Staff training day – no school for pupils
Tuesday 14th April:	Start of summer term