

# SCGSG



JULY 2021

Return of the  
Literacy Festival

Sister Act finally  
performed

DofE with  
a difference

New era of  
Student Leadership

**An unusual year  
with an unusual end...**



A message from the

# Headteacher

*Dr. Barbara Minards*

Since we returned to the summer term on 19th April, we have continued to experience many changes and challenges as a result of the evolving Covid-19 situation. Looking back over this term, so much has been accomplished. Year 11 and 13 students completed their assessments as part of the 'Teacher Assessed Grade' (TAG) process. Teachers were trained on the 'Centre Policy', wrote, marked and moderated numerous assessments whilst support staff photocopied and stored hundreds of papers. Over 2000 grades were submitted on the deadline of 19th June as the school operated as an examination board on top of our usual duties (plus track and tracing close contacts of positive cases of Covid-19)!

We are really proud of how students have dealt with the changing situation, particularly those in Year 11 and 13 who started the year preparing for their GCSEs and A-levels, only to find out in January that those examinations had been cancelled and grades would be awarded using TAGs, the details of which would not be confirmed until months later.

Year 11 had a celebration assembly to recognise all they had achieved since joining Sutton Girls (their Year 7 photos got a lovely reaction), there were fun awards presented and shirt signing before they came back into school for their sixth form induction. Year 13 had a leavers' assembly with some amazing musical performances by individual students, which the whole year group sang along with. Mr Charles, Head of Year 13, had lost his voice so Dr May, Head of Year 12, delivered his speech which made it even more

memorable (and emotional). Best wishes to all our Year 13 students as they begin the next stage in their education, we hope they stay in touch and continue to inspire future generations of Sutton Girls.

We held school exam week for students in Years 7-10 and 12, so they could experience the routines of a normal academic year. This was a timely reminder of where we were at the same time last year when all students were learning remotely.

Throughout the second half of the summer term we have had a mixture of in person and virtual activities. At the start of the summer term it seemed as though we would be able to host the new intake day for students in person, however as cases steadily increased nationally and locally, with Birmingham designated as 'an area of enhanced support' the decision was taken that all Year 6 to 7 transition days should take place virtually. We built on the activities we put together last year and welcomed our new intake via video, letter and the transition activities on our website. We are looking forward to seeing them in person in September.

As the term progressed we saw increasing cases in school with several classes of students having to go home, self-isolate and continue learning remotely. Whilst difficult at times, we recognised that the situation in different parts of the world was considerably more challenging and a non-uniform day for Covid-19 relief in India was organised. We have continued to adapt, changing plans to minimise students' mixing in order to help limit the spread of Covid-19.

The cast of *Sister Act* were especially resilient as we had hoped that the show that was ready to be performed in March 2020 could finally be performed to year groups at the end of term. Unfortunately that was not possible, so they filmed an abridged and socially distanced version in the penultimate week of term. Throughout the term we have chosen to focus on the positive; whilst we took the decision not to go ahead with sports day, we still had a house spirit competition, where students came dressed in their house colours and shared the banners and mascots they had prepared. Large numbers of Year 10 and 11 students participated in DofE with a difference, who would have imagined you could do a bronze expedition around the school site!

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions on Monday 19th July as 'step 4 of the roadmap' seems at odds with what we are experiencing at Sutton Girls, the picture seen in schools locally and across the country, with an increasing number of positive cases in students and staff having to self-isolate after being 'pinged' by the NHS Track and Trace app. The last 2 ½ days of the school year saw as many students learning at home as in school. However, whilst we are all looking forward to more 'normal' times next academic year, we know we will be able to draw on our experiences from this year to deal with whatever lies ahead. For now though, it is time for all students, staff and their families to enjoy a break over the summer.

Best wishes for a happy and safe summer holiday.

Take care, Dr Minards

## Staffing News

We have three members of support staff retiring after many years of dedicated service to Sutton Girls; Mrs Pearson (Attendance Officer, 11 years), Mrs Gudmunson (Deputy Business Manager, 16 years) and Mrs Ward (Lunchtime Supervisor, 18 years). We wish them all the

best for a long, happy and healthy retirement.

At the end of term we also say goodbye to four members of teaching staff; Miss Backhouse (Maths), Dr May (English), Mrs Plester (Art) and Miss Vidal (MFL). We thank them for all they have done to support students at Sutton Girls and wish them all the best for their future.

We are looking forward to welcoming our new colleagues in September: Mrs Roper, Mrs Hart and Mrs Faulkner (Pastoral Team), Mr Lonsdale (Site Team), Dr Ball (Biology), Mr Garnier (Head of MFL), Miss Ludman (English), Miss Patel (Maths and Economics), Miss Sidebotham (Maths) and Miss Webb (Art).

# Sister Act finally performs

by Cerys & Abigail in Year 10

In the summer of 2019, when we first auditioned for Sister Act full of excitement, we were completely unaware of the journey this was going to be! The autumn term rehearsals helped us to grow closer as a cast; it was almost as if we were becoming family. As two members of the chorus, we couldn't be more thankful for the talent and commitment of our amazing leads!

After Christmas, the rehearsals moved from the music department into the main hall, which made everything feel so much more real and the cast was filled with excitement and anticipation. The musical was coming together nicely when disaster struck. The first sign came during our dress rehearsal to local Year 6 students when they had to leave halfway through



the performance because one of their teachers had tested positive for covid. It later became increasingly clear that our plans for stardom were not meant to be as we were given the news a few days later that Sister Act had been cancelled.

The whole cast were devastated as Mrs Downie and Miss McGivern told us through tear-filled eyes. It was heart breaking to hear the show wasn't going ahead because we had all worked so hard.

After that, we all thought that was it. Sister Act was over. Months had passed with no news as well

as three lockdowns, but in May 2021, (16 months after our Sister Act journey began); we were FINALLY allowed to perform a new, slightly amended version!

Sister Act 2.0 was far from what we expected. With every rehearsal, the show seemed to get smaller and smaller until we reached our final destination; a reduced cast and a socially distanced recording instead of a live performance. However disappointing it might seem that we weren't able to show off our collective hard work, nothing will compare to the sheer joy of having closure and being able to reunite as a cast once again!

To Mrs Downie, Miss McGivern, Mr Collet, Ms Stamoulis and Miss Rutherford, thank you so much for your continuous efforts and your hard work, we couldn't have done this without you!



# A new era of Student Leadership

Mrs M. Lucas  
Assistant Headteacher

Our new Student Leadership Team have now been appointed for next academic year. The Student Leadership structure has been relaunched this year to link it in with our whole school focus on Character Development. This means that there is a team of Sixth Form leaders who are linked with each of the school character strengths of Respect, Being Positive and Resilient, Making Good Decisions, Integrity and Love of Learning. Each team is led by a Student Ambassador who will be assisted by a Senior Prefect in leading projects linked to their character strength.

There is also a team of Prefects for each strength who will all work together to inspire, encourage and motivate all members of the school community to embrace and live all of the school's Character Strengths and "Be their best selves" every day.

The Ambassadors, Senior Prefects and Prefects will exemplify and act as role models for their particular character strength, contributing to the whole school community in areas linked to their team's Character Strength. Mentoring, coaching and working with younger students will also be an important part of their role. Our 5 Student Ambassadors and 5 Senior Prefects are:

## Respect Team:

Student Ambassador - Nur  
Senior Prefect - Priya

## Positive and Resilient Team:

Student Ambassador - Issy  
Senior Prefect - Kaneefa

## Make Good Decisions Team:

Student Ambassador - Jasmine  
Senior Prefect - Olivia

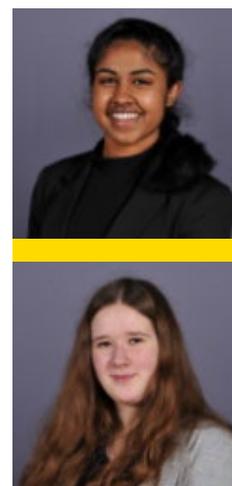
## Integrity Team:

Student Ambassador - Lily May  
Senior Prefect - Jessica

## Love of Learning Team:

Student Ambassador - Aarya  
Senior Prefect - Willow

Congratulations to them on their appointments to their roles and we look forward to working with them next year.



## UK Maths Challenge

Mr D. Biggin  
Math Department

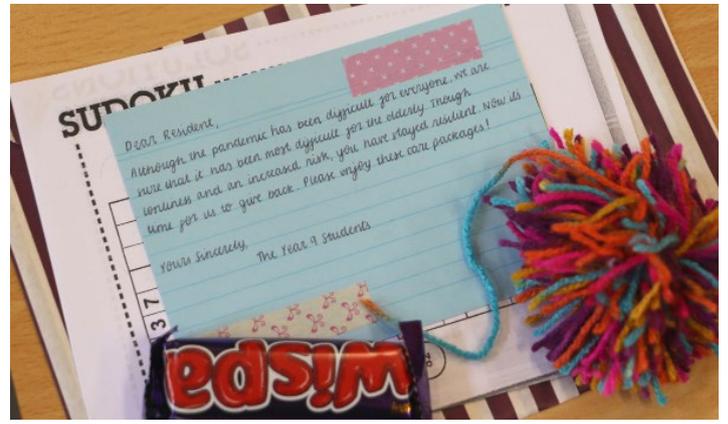
On Thursday 29th April all of Year 7 and Year 8 took part in the Junior Mathematical Challenge. Thousands of students take part in the challenge each year from across the UK, it aims to encourage mathematical reasoning and problem solving. Questions are often asked

in unfamiliar ways requiring participants to think creatively about possible solutions.

Once the paper has been marked, the top performers nationally are awarded a certificate. Congratulations to our students who achieved an impressive 114 bronze, 67 silver and 19 gold certificates. A particular well done to Eve

(7AHU) and Mary (8MDC) who achieved the best results in Year 7/8 respectively.

We also had 19 students who qualified for the next round, the Junior Kangaroo. Of these, five scored in the top 25% nationally and achieved a merit - well done to Megan (8JBA), Mary (8MDC), Eleanor (8NOP), Isabel (8GDA) and Isabelle (8RHU).



# Cloud 9 Volunteering Projects

## Grace in Year 9

To begin with, the whole group brainstormed ideas for a project that could benefit the whole community. Ideas such as a fayre and a book sale were introduced, before we settled on a joint performance with the Drama/School of Pop group for our support staff, and creating care packages for the Gracewell Care Home along with a recorded edition of the performance.

Our group immediately showed determination as they split into three subgroups- organizing the event, care packages for our

support staff, and care packages for the local care home.

Throughout the process, all groups stayed in contact with each other to create 3 very organized afternoons, all whilst assigning leaders within their own groups and ensuring every single student had a role. Eden, Ellie, Frankie and myself lead the subgroups, whilst some groups decided to share responsibility. Contents of the care packages were quickly decided; a small chocolate bar; a letter; a small crocheted item; and a nostalgic film poster. The organizing group rapidly got to writing invitations

and setting up refreshments, and every single student was ready to accept job roles and responsibilities.

We are very proud of every single student that was involved in this process, and very much hope the support staff and care home residents enjoyed their care packages and live performance. We are also glad the School of Pop and Drama groups got to showcase their projects and the talents within each group.

Finally, we would like to thank Ms Silcock, Miss Hewitt and the IT team for their willingness to help with this volunteering project.



## Year 7 students raises £2100 with 10k run

by India in Year 7

I recently ran 10k with my uncle for the National Autistic Society. I wanted to help people like my cousin to learn and flourish, and be able to go through adulthood with confidence.

I decided to do the 10k for many reasons, all of which are very close to my heart, the first of which was for my cousin, who would be in Year 7 if he were in mainstream

education, but because he has Down's syndrome and is on the higher end of the autism spectrum. He gets an amazing education moulded around his abilities.

Even though I am so pleased to have raised over £2000, I did it to raise awareness for the charity. Thank you to all my friends and family that have donated to such an amazing cause!



# Return of the Literacy Festival

Mrs L. Jowett  
Senior Librarian

This year we celebrated our love of books with a variety of competitions and events.

Years 9 and 10 had the opportunity to take part in a virtual visit with Sufiya Ahmed, who after a long time working within the Houses of Parliament became a children's author and writer for the Independent. Years 7 and 8 received a virtual visit from award winning author Tamsin Winter, who spoke about her books and the issues facing teenagers today. We also had the pleasure of hosting astronomer and author Colin Stuart, co-writer of the Astronaut test guide with Tim Peake. He spoke to the whole school about the real possibility of going to Mars, and the reality of being an astronaut!

In addition to our wonderful author visits, we also held our annual Sutton Girls Book Bake Off, although this time the home edition! Competition was incredibly fierce this year with so many of our students showing their baking talents. Our 'Open Doors' competition was equally competitive, as form groups transformed their form room doors into a chosen book or genre. Our hallways came



alive for the week in an amazing tribute to literature.

Mrs Greaves and Mrs Parkes held a 'favourite words' terracotta pot painting workshop for every year group, and Mrs Willis invited students into the ILC for bookmark making and Origami. We also had our website scavenger hunt for famous book covers and a 'sinister supervillains' competition.

The festival ended with a non-uniform day, with proceeds going to the 'Read for Good' charity that provides books and storytellers to children in hospital. Students had the option to dress up as a book character, and we had some wonderful costumes from Red Riding Hood to Gangsta Granny!

It was a wonderful week, and we are already excited for next year!

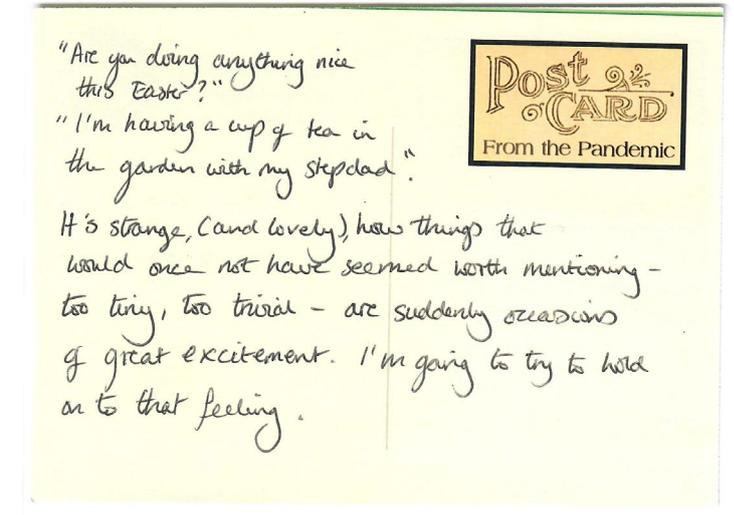
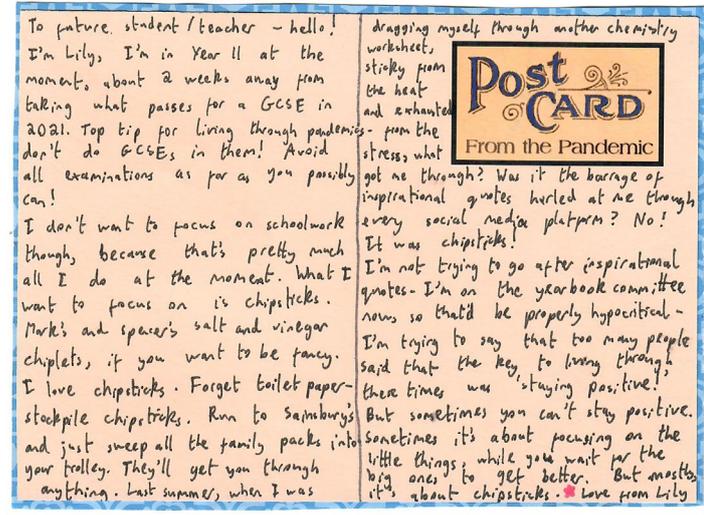
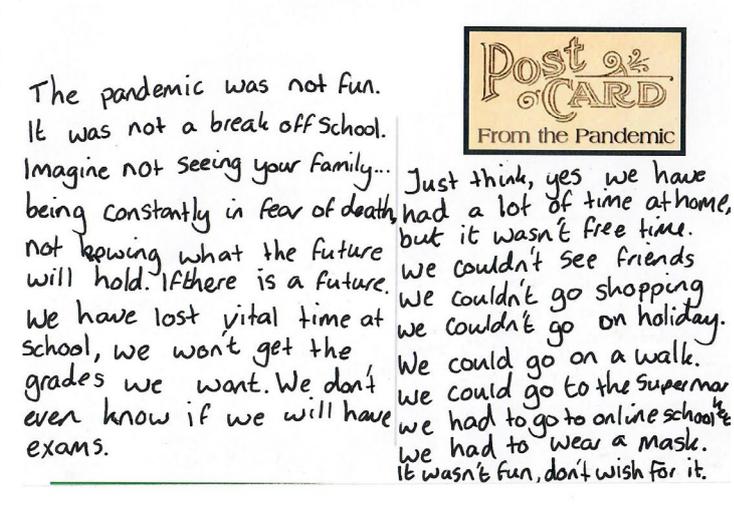
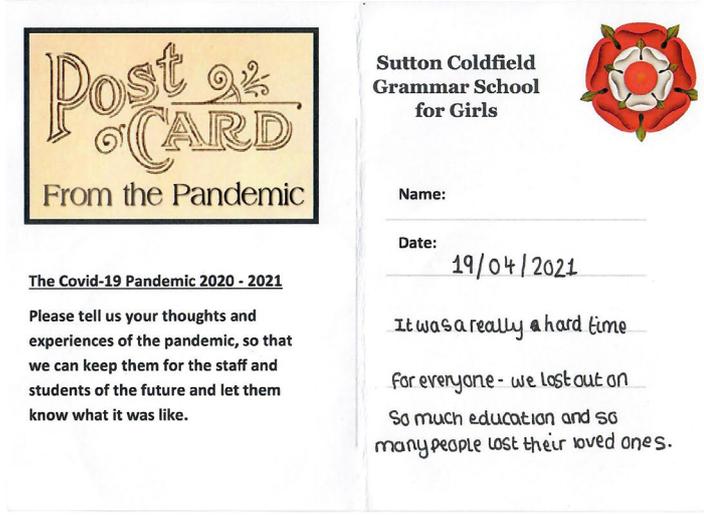
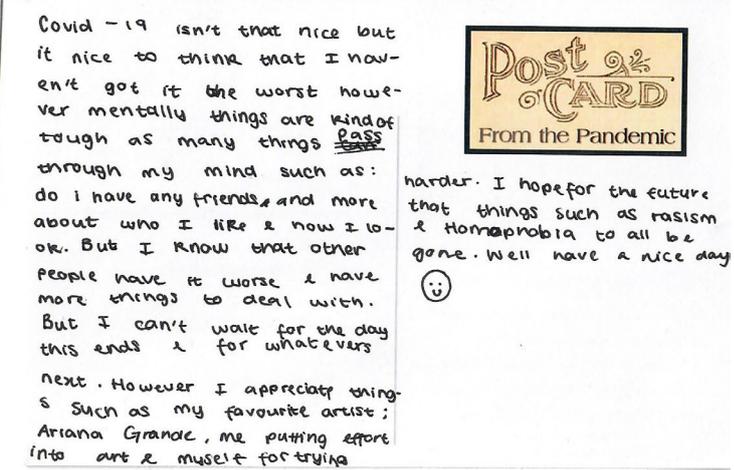
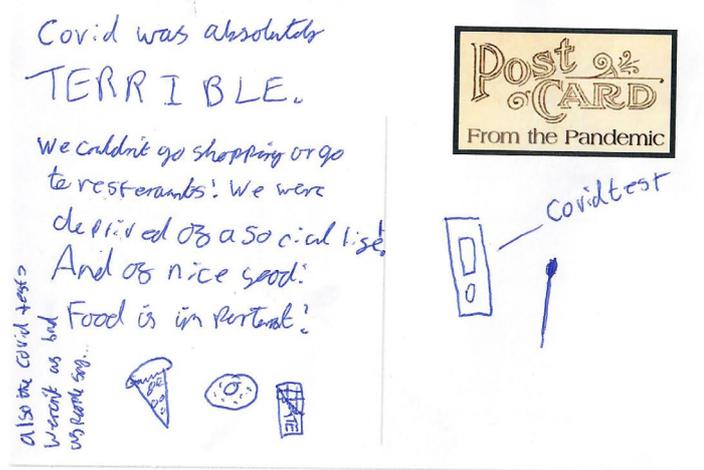
# Postcards from the Pandemic

Mrs L. Jowett  
Senior Librarian

Following our return to school on March 8th, we asked our staff and students to share with

us their thoughts of lockdown by writing 'Postcards from the Pandemic'. Our hope was to create a collection of our experiences to keep in the archive for future generations to read.

The accounts were incredibly varied and poignant, highlighting the difficulties of the pandemic, and the growing appreciation for family, friends, school and every day life.



# Reflections on the School Year

It's been a tough year for everyone, with so much change, uncertainty and negativity around, we asked our students to reflect on the positives of the 2020/21 academic year...

Social distancing, swabs, sanitiser...  
The list seems never to end,  
Of the measures in place to keep us safe,  
From this virus against which we must defend.

Bubble groups have imploded with a pop,  
And we adapted to a lockdown in the spring.  
We made it through – together, it's true,  
Until we ventured back into the school swing.

The gone academic year is unprecedented;  
There was no familiarity to claim.  
In this challenging year, only one thing is clear:  
Certainty of uncertainty will remain.

**by Eva in Year 7**



This academic year has been very interesting due to the time we've had off as a collective as well as individuals from covid-19. Trying out online lessons whilst at home as well as some classrooms needing online lessons during school time has been a difficult experience but also one to make us all really appreciate the lesson time and interaction we get with each other as well as with our teachers.

Personally, I believe that the time we've been able to be back at school has been helpful, specifically with the teachers who are offering review lessons for the lockdown period. A big thank you to teachers who have allowed us to catch up and have time to act like we've had a 'normal' year.

**by Jaya in Year 10**

This academic year has forced us to do all things a little differently. After coming back from an almost 6 months break from school, we all knew that this year was going to be very unprecedented. Everyone at Sutton Girls, and everyone around the world have had to adapt to the new 'normal'. There is a lot which I never thought I would have to incorporate into my life from wearing face masks, to having to constantly use hand gel and having to follow the one way system.

It has all been very unusual. Alternatively, there are some things that this year has enforced upon us which I am sure we will continue to use, for example using Microsoft Teams as our main platform throughout this year to make school a safe environment for all. Despite the fact that we have only been in school for only 7 months, and maybe even less for some, we have been able to make a difference to others, for example we have been able to support local food banks and the Indian Covid crisis.

This year has taught us to be better people, reflect on things we have, and spend time with people we love.

**by Maleeha in Year 10**

I have really enjoyed my year at Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls. It was a pleasure meeting all the new teachers and making a lot of new friends. I have learnt many new skills and knowledge at this school. The teachers are very passionate about teaching us new information. Also, there have been many opportunities to do. There is a variety of clubs to do during lunchtime with your friends. Although Coronavirus is happening, Sutton Girls didn't let it affect our school year and still made sure that we had a great time at this school.

**by Raameen in Year 7**

I am so proud of this school. I have learnt so much here already and developed personally and educationally. Everyone here is so kind and the atmosphere is so welcoming.

**by Sophie in Year 7**



This year has been an exhilarating experience of ups and downs, highs and lows but I've enjoyed every moment.

Starting the year was very nerve-racking and the size of the school was quite intimidating. However, I soon realised that all the other students were in the same boat and in a way, we were all going through the same emotions. Settling in, everyone was really friendly, and I got along with both the teachers and my classmates. Walking round school, I was always able to ask around if I needed help finding my way through corridors or where I could find a teacher.

I've really enjoyed my year 7 experience and I hope that although some things might not go to perfectly, all the new pupils have a great time making new friends and learning new things.

**by Sarabjeet in Year 7**



This year has been a rollercoaster for everyone, especially for students and teachers. We are fortunate enough to have a school full of people willing to support us through these times. I couldn't have achieved what I did without the consistent effort put in by teachers along with the constant uplifting attitude of my friends and peers.

**Year 10 Student**

The school year has been very unique, bubble terms, remote learning and being in and out of school due to self-isolation. Although this has been bizarre, it was fun to be able to do school like usual at home and to see each other after a long time.

As we were in a full lockdown last year, we have had our first experience of end-of-year exams, house spirit competitions and our first full-out literacy week we decorated the doors which was very fun! Learning this year has been different but I still have enjoyed it like I would in face-to-face school!!!

**by Nikki in Year 8**



What a different year it has been! Looking back at the start of the year, I remember how we would all complain to each other about these masks we had to wear and this one-way system, a complete pain to us back then. But as we always do, we have found new ways to adapt to this new school environment, and even enjoy it too! Though the past 2 years (mainly this year) have been extremely strange, personally, I've enjoyed it. Change is usually for the better and learning to live a new type of lifestyle used to be a fairy tale- now it's reality.

**by Zara in Year 8**

# Vada Studios: Ex Cathedra Recording Day

Natalie in Year 12

This year has been a difficult time for the arts; all too often we have faced cancellations, the ominous and recurring phrase 'Plan B' and an array of challenging Zoom rehearsals to which pets routinely invited themselves – though this last detail was certainly more amusing. This was why, when I heard that a recording session could take place in July, I was overjoyed. It was a performance to look forward to after a year of relative quiet and inactivity in the musical world. Whilst a lot of effort was put into arranging and editing virtual concerts, nothing quite compares to the in-person experience.

As members of the Senior Academy of Ex Cathedra, one of Birmingham's chamber choirs, we were booked for a recording session at Vada Studios on Saturday 3rd July. There was an



uplifting mood when everyone started to arrive that morning, the sense of excitement building as people drove through the unmarked, seemingly inconsequential entrance round the winding driveway to the recording studio, a beautiful old chapel founded in 1260 and surrounded by 20 acres of fields and formal gardens. The idyllic grounds offered the perfect setting for a joyous day of singing, finally having the opportunity to work together again and produce a unified sound as a choir. It was a day of musical release and a

true bonding experience after so much time in small boxes on a screen. During the day, we were sent in groups of two or three within our sections – Soprano 1 & 2, Alto, Tenor and Bass – to the recording booth. Inside the studio, it was impressively modern with bright lighting, acoustic panels, microphones and a glass window offering a glimpse into the control room. To have this kind of opportunity after such a challenging year was truly wonderful.



## Year 11 student enjoys working on BCMG project during lockdown

Amelie in Year 11

At the start of Lockdown, I took part in 'Soliloquies and dialogues: music made in lockdown'; a project run by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (BCMG) where the commissioned composers from around the world to create pieces for solo artists who they worked with over digital platforms to rehearse and record the music.

One of the composers, Celeste Oram, composed a duet which I was invited to play with professional CBSO trumpeter, Richard Blake. We 'met' over

zoom where we discussed the background behind the piece. This helped us as players to add our own interpretation and make the piece more authentic. I then had a tutorial with Richard and then we recorded the piece.

This was all through zoom and email which made it hard as it was new and being creative in a group is easier face-to-face. After some online rehearsals and advice, we each recorded our part on video which Celeste put together and which was released on the BCMG YouTube channel. Now that we are able to meet, I am performing the piece with another CBSO trumpeter,



Ryan Linham in a few concerts at the end of June.

This was an amazing opportunity and I am very grateful to have been a part of it.

# Virtual Summer Concert

**Mr C. Collet**  
Music Department

We are so proud to announce our Virtual Summer Concert 2021. Students have recorded themselves at home.

The music in this performance is accompanied by photographs taken by students and staff over the last year of lockdown, ending with the school 'Lockdown Orchestra' performing 'Summer Nights' from 'Grease'.

A big thank you to all who submitted recordings, thank you to Mr Hall for collating the performance, and a special thank you for the photographers:

**Year 7:** Diana, Isla, Arya and



**Amelia. Year 8:** Sophi, Izzy, Nidhi, Alesha, Esmee, Matilda, Arkar, Jiya, Eloise and Zara.  
**Year 9:** Maliha, Francesca, Qiao and Evelyn. **Year 10:** Amelia, Halima, Maneesha and Hannah.  
**Year 11:** Aksha. **Year 12:** Aman

**Year 13:** Grace and Jodie. **Staff:** Mrs Forshaw, Miss Pettit and Mr Hall.

Head over to our website for the full performance.

# DofE With a Difference

Mrs K. Tunstall  
DofE Coordinator

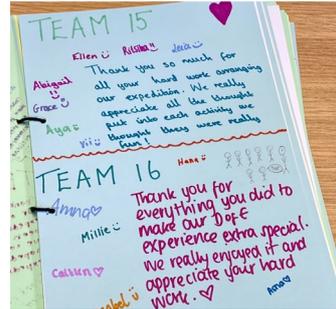
The sun was shining and we we're ready to welcome the 106 participants on their restricted spaces expedition! From a scavenger hunt, to geocaching, an escape room and team challenges, everyone had a go at cracking the codes and working as a team. Then came the three peaks challenge!

Covering the distance of 23 miles with full rucksacks on their backs! Everyone remained in high spirits, even when the rain came on day two of the expedition. With a 100% pass rate, all those who took part should be feel very proud of completing the expedition and gaining their full Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. A huge well done from your DofE team who enjoyed every minute of the action.





# #DofEWithADifference





# Sports Leaders complete Level 2 qualification

Miss B. Hughes  
Head of P.E.

Back in September, seven Year 12 students decided to get involved in an additional qualification available to them during their enrichment time on a Friday morning. The Sports Leaders qualification required the students to study and apply the key skills, behaviours and characteristics that are integral for being an effective leader.

Each student planned and delivered physical activity sessions to their peers, family or friends either in person or via digital media. It was so fulfilling to see each individual grow, not only in terms of their skills, but also in confidence.

The course culminated in a Year 12 bench ball tournament, which was planned and delivered superbly. The atmosphere on the day was electric and every participant involved had a great time.

The students have since been running physical activity sessions with their peers on a Thursday after school and during their Friday enrichment slot.

A huge congratulations to all of the newly qualified Level 2 Sports Leaders.



## Year 10 stay active with an afternoon of sporting activities



You can look forward to our next newsletter at the end of Autumn 1 in October 2021. In the meantime, keep up to date by following us on:

[facebook.com/suttcold](https://www.facebook.com/suttcold) or [twitter.com/suttcold](https://twitter.com/suttcold)



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