

School Newsletter

October 2023



Dear Parents

It was wonderful to welcome the pupils and Sixth Form students back this term. Our new Year 7 pupils were glowing in their new green uniforms and shiny shoes and our Sixth Form students really looked mature and ready for business in their smart office wear. Thank you to parents for enabling this to happen.

We are really particular about school uniform but there are good reasons for this. Every pupil is equally important at Upton and school uniform is a great way of making sure that they all feel that they start at the same place, with equal opportunities regardless of their background or religion.

Open Evening

Our Open Evening was held on Thursday 14 September. Many of our pupils and Sixth Form students helped out at this. They were invaluable on the evening and acted as ambassadors for the school when guiding our prospective parents around. The next day, I received many emails from visitors complimenting everybody who was involved in the evening. When people who have never visited Upton before come along, they are always pleasantly surprised by our wonderful environment.

Parental Drop In Sessions

Following the introduction of these sessions last year in order that you could still see staff face to face if you wished, we held a 'drop in' on the 25 September from 5-6pm (Years 7-9) and one on the 9 October from 5 – 6pm (Year 10). This provided an informal forum to meet Heads of Year, Form Tutors and Senior Leaders who were available to answer questions. Some parents simply wanted to say hello and have a cup of tea. Year 11 and Sixth form parents also attended other information events. All of these events have been useful ways of staying connected to you, our parents and carers.

New Year 7 Welcome Evening – Chilli and Chat

On Friday 13 October, the Parents and Friends of Upton hosted a social event for all parents and carers of our new Year 7 Uptonians. On this evening, Year 7 parents got the chance to meet some of their

daughters' new friends and their parents whilst relaxing with some delicious food and drinks as well as entertainment in the form of a quiz, music and a raffle. If anybody would like to join the Parent's Association, please get in touch as we always need helpers.

School Performance tables

Yesterday these were updated in England. Once again we were so happy to see that Upton pupils made more progress last year than those at any other Wirral School. Our progress score this year was 1.08 which is our highest ever. This score means that our pupils achieved at least 1 grade higher per GCSE *than pupils of a similar ability* nationally. To this into context, out of 6951 schools nationally, Upton were 50th. This puts us into the top 0.7% of all schools nationally.

This is down to fantastic teaching, fantastic pupils, supportive parents and an amazing team who support the work of everything we do. Everybody deserves to be congratulated on this as it really is exceptional and I couldn't be more proud.

School name	Type of school	Number of pupils at end of key stage 4	Progress 8		Entering EBacc	Staying in education or entering employment (2021 leavers)
			Number of pupils included in this measure	Score & description		
Upton Hall School FCJ	Academy	150	137	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE 1.08	97%	99% (155 of 157 pupils)
Birkenhead High School Academy	Academy	133	130	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE 0.63	37%	98% (103 of 105 pupils)
Wirral Grammar School for Girls	Academy	183	171	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE 0.63	77%	98% (172 of 176 pupils)
West Kirby Grammar School	Academy	185	158	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE 0.56	76%	99% (178 of 180 pupils)
Calday Grange Grammar School	Academy	243	224	ABOVE AVERAGE 0.29	83%	98% (206 of 211 pupils)

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Sixth Form Open Evening

On Wednesday 1 November at 7.00pm we will be hosting our Sixth Form Open Evening which is the chance for our Year 11 and any pupils from other schools to find out why Upton Sixth Form is the place to be for post 16 education. If you have a daughter in Year 11, we would encourage you to accompany her to this event and see how she will be inspired, informed, involved and most importantly be herself. Our Sixth Form provision is simply outstanding and we want as many 16-18 year olds to benefit from the chance to achieve their goals here.

School Mass

Please note in your diaries that the School Mass will take place this year on Saturday 4 November at 11am at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King in Liverpool. The theme of the mass this year is 'Companionship'. Attendance at this Mass is compulsory and takes the place of a whole school day. Any pupils who cannot attend this Mass for any reason are required to come into school to complete the school day on the 17 February 2024. Requests for this should be made in the same way as requests to miss other school days. We really look forward to seeing as many families as possible alongside our pupils and Sixth Form students.

Library News

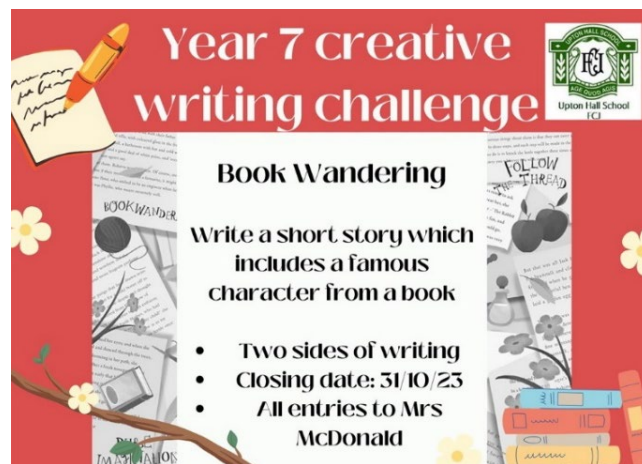
Author visit: Anna James 26th September 2023

Author Anna James visited Upton Hall School on Tuesday 26th September 2023 to deliver a talk to



students in Year 7. The author talked to students about finding hidden stories and her own places of inspiration. Students helped to craft plot outlines for a fairy tale and a myth. Anna James went on to share

her own inspiration in writing and her ambition for her books to be connected to the books that inspired her during her formative years. A book signing followed hosted by Lingham's Booksellers. Copies of books in the *Pages and Co* series are available in the library.



Students in year 7 have now been set a creative writing challenge based on *Pages and Co* and the concept of book wandering.

Frances Hardinge Author Visit 27th September 2023

Author Frances Hardinge visited Upton Hall School on the 27th September 2023. Students in year 9 and 10 watched the author in conversation with Sue Porter from Lingham's.



The conversation was full of inspiration and interest, covering gothic childhood houses, the author's previous career as a graphic designer and the unique moments of inspiration that contribute to her writing.



After the Q & A the author treated students to a reading from her latest book *The Unraveller*. Students were also able to take part in a book signing with the author. Copies of books by Frances Hardinge are available in the library.

National Poetry Day: Poetry by Heart School Final

Over the summer break students entering year 8 at Upton Hall School spent their time learning a poem by heart. Some students chose a poem they had learnt together in school, some a poem with a special meaning to them and some chose one they had written themselves. Each performer stood and recited in a classroom competition and then the top three performers entered the school final which



was hosted on National Poetry Day. This year, students from previous years opened the final, with a special performance from Lea Reynolds who performed at The Globe in the 2022 Poetry by Heart National Final. We were also treated to readings by Enya Webster, Devin Whelligan-Woodworth and Evie Currums.

Music Department News

It has been a busy start to the academic year in the Music department! In celebration of European Day of Languages on 26 September, our Senior Orchestra, Yr.11 GCSE musicians and numerous soloists performed at a lunchtime concert in our Chapel, which featured music by European composers, such as Beethoven, Erik Satie, and Slovenian composer Blaž Pucihar, as well as songs by Swedish pop supergroup ABBA, to name but a few. An excellent recital, and a thoroughly enjoyable way to spend a lunchtime!





On Thursday 5 October, our GCSE and A Level Music students were fortunate enough to be able to attend a concert at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, featuring both the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir, of which both Mrs Hulme and Miss O'Hara are members! In the first half, the orchestra, led by conductor Matthew Halls, treated us to a fantastic rendition of Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, followed by Haydn's '*Surprise*' *Symphony*, (which included a well-timed mobile phone ringing during the second movement – if you know, you know!) In the second half, the choir and orchestra joined forces for a performance of Beethoven's magnificent and moving *Mass in C*. A thoroughly enjoyable concert for audience members and performers alike!



On Sunday 8 October, members of our Chamber Choir attended 11am mass at St. Joseph's, Upton, as

they celebrated the 160th anniversary of their parish. The girls sang a beautiful rendition of "O Salutaris Hostia" by Andre Caplet during communion, as well as leading the congregation in the singing of hymns. It was lovely to be asked to be a part of such an important celebration for the parish community. Well done to all involved.

Rehearsals and preparations are well underway for both our whole school mass, which takes place on Saturday 4th November at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King in Liverpool, and for our whole school production of *West Side Story*, scheduled for the 28th-30th November, which is certainly keeping our young musicians busy! Thanks to all of you for commitment and dedication to the musical life of the school.

If you would like your child to begin instrumental lessons in school, please see the information below. The deadline for applications is Friday 20 October for lessons to begin after half term.



If you're unsure about which instruments are available/suitable, we also have a representative from Music for Life visiting school on Thursday 16th November, who will be able to demonstrate and provide expert guidance.

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Learn a Musical Instrument at School!



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- Free access to ensembles and performances
- Not-for-profit organisation with a small, friendly and efficient team

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admin@musicforlife.org.uk
01244 728 922

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admin@musicforlife.org.uk
01244 728 922

**INSPIRE
CREATE
PERFORM**

"The opportunity to learn an instrument offers something very special that can last a lifetime"

Sports News

Our Junior swim team have qualified for the National finals in freestyle and medley relays



U13 and U15 indoor Cricketers won their first matches



U15 football team have qualified for the next round of the ESFA Cup



U14 team made it through to the 3rd round of the ESFA cup



Our U13 team are into the second round of the ESFA cup.

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Our Year 7 to 13 pupils had a great master class session with @SGerrardAcademy



Junior, intermediate and Senior Cross country teams have all qualified for the Regional Finals



Year 7 Cross country runners performed well in the PB series run by Warriors Pentathlon and Athletics club



Year 8 Netball are through to the next round in the 'Sisters in Sport Cup'



Congratulations to Zoe Killington on winning the Wirral Sports Forum Young Sports Person of the Year for her Snooker. We are delighted for Zoe and wish her every success in her future competitions.



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Congratulations to the Inters Swimming Team, coming runners up for the Wirral Sports Forum Girls Secondary School Team of the Year.

Good luck to Holly Representing Great Britain in Bali for the World Biathle Championships.



Geography Update

Over the last two half terms, Geography students have had the opportunity to visit Iceland, Liverpool, Formby and a lecture at Manchester Metropolitan University.



In Iceland, students had the opportunity to walk on glaciers, bath in hot springs and visit black sand beaches, spectacular waterfalls and even spotted the eruption of Litli-Hrútur from the window of our flight into Reykjavik.



We were lucky enough to encounter a beluga whale on Heimaey whilst visiting the island to see the impacts of the famous 1973 eruption which show houses buried. The trip was a fantastic experience for all involved and we look forward to launching our Iceland 2025 trip in the next couple of months.



For our GCSE geography case study, we visited Formby dunes. It was an amazing opportunity to see and experience what we have been learning about. We spent the day collecting data and recognising all

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of the various management systems in place at Formby. Collecting the data at Formby made understanding it and answering questions about it easier and more engaging. I really enjoyed walking through the different sections of the dunes, it helped build a clear image of each section and its different features

By Josephine Morris

Science News

KS3 STEAM CLUB Ellen Willmott



Our KS3 STEAM Club runs on Monday lunch time and is an opportunity for students from Year 7 and 8 to study science beyond the National Curriculum.

We started off this year by studying 'one of our own'! Ellen Willmott (1958 – 1934) was a student at Gumley House, another FCJ school in Middlesex.

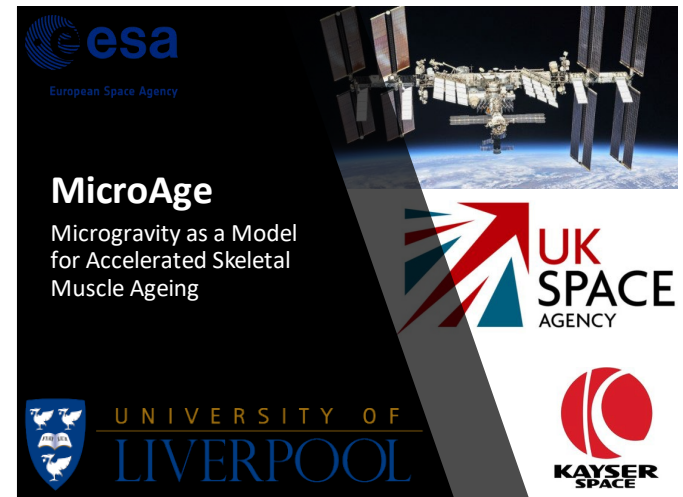
Ellen grew up at Warley Place, a house and grounds in Brentwood, Essex. She led a large team of gardeners but was very hands on and in 1897, she was awarded the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) most prestigious award, the Victoria Medal of Honour, a sign of how much her work was admired. Under her influence the gardens at Warley Place became recognised internationally and were visited by the Royal Family. She cultivated new species of daffodils and introduced an alpine rock garden, with cascading streams and a fern grotto. Warley Place is now a 25-acre nature reserve maintained by Essex Wildlife Trust.

Other STEAM activities

This week saw year 7 & 8 pupils collaborate on a spaceship model making task where they were able to explore the engineering behind what makes spaceships so great! After half term pupils can expect to get involved in bridge building, conducting flame tests and taking part in our rocket blast challenge.

If you are in Y7 or 8 and enjoy Science then come along and have some fun in L3 on Monday lunchtime from 1.15pm to 1.45pm

Uptonology Event



Dr Kai Hoettges from the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the University of Liverpool, came to speak to our KS4 and 5 about his current work on the MicroAge Project which looks at Microgravity as a Model for Accelerated Skeletal Muscle Ageing. This multi-faceted team from the University is working in conjunction with the European Space Agency, the UK Space Agency and Kayser Space. As we age, we experience a number of changes in our bodies including a loss in muscle mass.

When astronauts spend time in space, they experience similar symptoms but at a much more rapid rate and so during a 3 week space flight they can see an effect that would normally take 10 years due to natural aging. This project is, therefore, studying this accelerated response in space so we can learn more about the aging process in humans.

The team from the University of Liverpool are involved in designing in vitro studies on muscle cells that that are then conducted in space under microgravity conditions. Dr Hoettges' role is to design and engineer 'a whole lab into a package measuring only a few centimeters across' that will run automatically when launched into space. Once the artificial muscles return from their space flight, they are analysed for stress markers, the presence of



specific proteins and the loss of interconnectivity between mitochondria, the powerhouses of our cells.

Dr Hoettges outlined the immense amount of strategic planning required amongst multidisciplinary teams to undertake such an investigation. In addition to this they also have to plan for the added potential problem of the spaceflight being delayed! In the future, Dr Hoettges thinks that the next step in the MicroAge project will be to test the effectiveness of drugs to prevent loss in muscle mass.

Our students were able to recognise the significance of this work as in Year 12 we study cell organelles including the structure and function of mitochondria and Year 13 we study the structure of muscles and the use of ATP in the sliding filament theory of muscle contraction.

This talk was part of our Uptonology programme. Our Uptonology events are to encourage our students to make connections between their studies in the classroom and the wider world, increase awareness of the wealth of scientific careers available to them and inspire them to be the great scientists of our future. If anyone from our parent body works within the scientific community and would like to come and talk to our students about their role, then please contact Miss Chadwick, Head of Science. We would love to hear from you!

Parental Code of Conduct and Communication

At Upton we aim to develop excellent working relationships with parents to support our pupils and students with their learning. Our expectations are set out in the Parental Code of Conduct, a copy of which is available on the school website. I would ask that parents be polite and courteous in their dealings with all staff in the school community. If you contact school on the year group address, we aim to get back to you as soon as possible. Please be mindful that all staff are primarily teaching staff and that if they have lessons, these will take priority over your query.

Everyone will however, get back to you as soon as they possibly can, however, please note that we do have a 48-hour response policy. Please do not

continually telephone school or turn up at reception as this will not make any difference to the response time. If you are emailing, please use the dedicated email address for the year group detailed below:

Year 7: yearseven@uptonhall.org

Year 8: yeareight@uptonhall.org

Year 9: yearnine@uptonhall.org

Year 10: yearnten@uptonhall.org

Year 11: yeareleven@uptonhall.org

Year 12: sixthform@uptonhall.org

Year 13: sixthform@uptonhall.org

Road Safety

At 3.45pm each day, we have almost 1000 pupils leaving the school site. Most pupils are very sensible and cross roads with due care and attention to their own safety. Unfortunately, because of the times in which we live, we also have pupils and Sixth Form students who are preoccupied with their mobile phones and don't focus on what they are doing.

It is essential that parents talk to their daughters about taking responsibility for their own safety. We do this in school through Assemblies and Form Time. Please ensure your daughters (particularly the younger ones) know that if they miss the bus they can come back into school and we will help them find a way home.

If you drop your daughter off at school in the morning or pick her up at the end of the day, please could you be mindful of safety and do not park on double yellow lines. If you do so, you run the risk of causing an accident which could involve your own child.

I look forward to seeing many of you and your daughters over the coming year and to continue with you in sharing the joy of watching them grow up.

Mrs Andrea Gaunt
HEADMISTRESS