

School Newsletter

Easter 2026



Dear Parents

With the Easter holidays in sight, I wanted to thank you for your continued support and share with you the wide and varied activities involving our pupils this term. It is always uplifting to learn of all the enriching as well as educational events, in which our students participate, and it is a pleasure to celebrate all their outstanding successes.

Lenten Fundraising

Lent at Upton Hall FCJ

During Lent our school community took part in a rich array of activities linked to prayer, fasting and charity.

The season of Lent started with Ash Wednesday which took place this year during half-term. Lent is the six-week period of preparation for the great Christian Feast of Easter. During this time, Christians are asked to focus on three things that are of a spiritual and practical nature. They are prayer, fasting and charity. During lessons, our focus in prayer during Lent has been on the FCJ value of Hope. Many Year 8s took part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Monday 9 March and welcomed the opportunity to meet a priest. Some Year 9 took part in Via Crucis (Stations of the Cross in Spanish) during MFL lessons

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us to consider the more vulnerable in our society. The charities that we support every year during Lent are Cafod and Caritas through the Diocesan Good Shepherd appeal. To find out more about Caritas, please visit the following page for information and a good video too: <https://www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk/get-involved/good-shepherd-collection/> Each tutor group have been fundraising for these charities by leading a range of activities from the masked singer, dancing to singing to raffles. In addition, some staff took part in Cafod's Family Fast Day (Friday 27 March) and staff donated in return for some of Mr Jones's soup. We thank all our parents and carers for all their help and donations during Lent.

We hope you all have a blessed and happy Easter.

Chinese celebrations

Spring Festival Celebrations 2026 at Upton Hall School FCJ (5–12 February 2026)

To celebrate the Spring Festival, the Mandarin Department organised a vibrant programme of cultural activities for both Mandarin learners and the wider school community.



Mahjong: A Battle of Wits

Year 13 students took part in a lively Mahjong board game session, discovering that success depends on strategy, memory and resilience — not simply luck. The room was filled with concentration and excitement as students confidently called out “PONG!” and “HU!”.

Tea Ceremony



Year 7 and Year 11 pupils explored the six types of Chinese tea, traditional teaware and the stages of brewing. Accompanied by tranquil music, the session encouraged thoughtful reflection on colour, aroma and flavour, as well as the values of mindfulness and respect embedded in Chinese tea culture.

Cookery



Year 9 and Year 10 pupils worked collaboratively to prepare tomato salad, supporting one another as a team. Ms Andrews kindly provided a selection of dim sum for pupils to sample, including steamed buns, siu mai and dumplings.

Tangram Challenge

Year 8 pupils demonstrated creativity and critical

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thinking through arranging tangram puzzle pieces into a variety of designs.



balance and wellbeing.



Cultural Workshops



All Year 7 pupils attended workshops delivered by visitors from the Confucius Institute at the University of Liverpool.

Activities included shadow puppetry, woodblock printing, paper cutting and traditional folk dance. These hands-on sessions fostered creativity, coordination and an appreciation of China's rich cultural heritage.

Food for Thought — and for the Table!

The Library hosted themed reading activities featuring fiction and non-fiction texts linked to Chinese language and culture. Pupils also enjoyed paper folding and colouring activities inspired by the Year of the Fire Horse.



Lunch time Creative Arts and Wellbeing

Students created stencil prints of the character “福” (good fortune), designed decorative paper fans and explored the traditional dress, the qipao, with some showcasing their designs in a celebratory catwalk.



Pupils also experienced Tai Chi, learning how controlled movement and breathing promote

The celebrations concluded with a themed lunch on 12 February, offering pupils the opportunity to sample popular Chinese dishes.



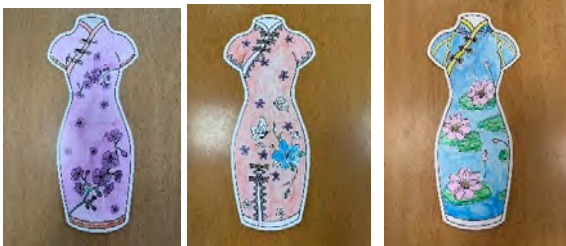
The 2026 Spring Festival celebrations reflected our school's strong commitment to creativity, cultural understanding and global awareness. We are

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extremely proud of the enthusiasm shown by our pupils.

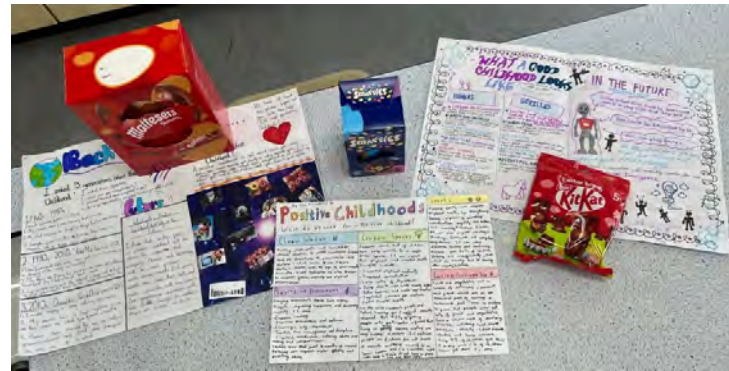


Science Update

British Science Week

British Science Week began on Monday 9th March with an engaging and thought-provoking assembly for Years 7–10, led by our STEM ambassadors; Vanessa, Orla, Hanshika, Hitakshi, Erin, Olivia and Jorjia, centred around the theme of curiosity. They captured everyone's imagination with fascinating facts—such as the incredible idea that if all the DNA in your body were uncoiled, it would stretch an astonishing 67 billion miles. They also explored the story of the Mars Curiosity Rover, a remarkable

robotic explorer sent by NASA to investigate the surface of Mars, searching for signs that the planet may once have supported life and helping scientists better understand our neighbouring world. The assembly highlighted the wide and often surprising range of careers in science, from cosmetic chemists and space psychologists to food technologists. Students were also intrigued to learn about well-known figures with science backgrounds, including Brian May and Lisa Kudrow. It was a fantastic start to a week designed to spark curiosity, inspire ambition, and celebrate the many possibilities within science. British Science Week poster competition



Pupils in years 7&8 took part in this year's British Science Week poster competition. The theme was designing a positive future for teenagers. We had lots of wonderful entries across all ten forms and Mrs Gaunt visited the Science department earlier this week to judge from a selection of finalist the pupil's teachers had selected. Congratulations to Kaley in 7J, Isla 8H and Genevieve 8U who received Easter themed prizes for 3rd, 2nd and 1st place respectively.

Uptonologies Programme



In the Science department, we continue to deliver our Uptonology series of talks. We invite leading, local scientists to come and speak about their work or research and about the personal journey they have undertaken to become a scientist in their specific field. We have heard from professionals from a number of careers and we hope that we can inspire

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our future scientists here at Upton Hall School and introduce them to the wide variety of scientific careers that exist within our workforce. Our recent visitors have included Dr Fay Voller from Edge Hill University to talk about STEM Careers & Research into Mycorrhizal Fungi, Colin Lavelle a local farmer who spoke about The Science Behind Farming Practices, Professor Andy Newsam Director of The Schools' Observatory at John Moores University to talk about Exploring the Dynamic Universe.

If any of our parents have a STEM related role and would like to share their science journey with our students, then please feel to get in touch via the general school email uhs@uptonhall.org, marking it for the attention of Miss E Chadwick, Head of Science.

On Thursday 12th March we welcomed Professor Andy Newsam into school for a talk about *Exploring our Dynamic Universe*. He spoke about the importance of observation and how the equipment makes a huge difference. We looked at the Liverpool Telescope, which is a robotic telescope with a precision mirror which is 2 metres in diameter. This telescope does not need people to be on site to operate it as it is fully robotic, so it can be used by anyone using the internet. We also learned about the James Webb Space Telescope and how much clarity there is in the images viewed by this telescope.

After discussing equipment, we learned all about the types of objects that are found by the Liverpool Telescope. Anything that changes in brightness or position is flagged for closer inspection – many of the discoveries are distant exploding stars called supernovae, but some of them are asteroids which pass close to the Earth (Near Earth Objects). It is important that these NEOs are kept track of so that astronomers can determine if they are a threat to the Earth – it was an asteroid collision that caused the extinction of the dinosaurs, after all!



We could have listened to Professor Newsam talk for hours as the Universe is so huge, there is a lot to find out. In the coming weeks, we hope to sign up to The Schools' Observatory and individual students can have their own account so they can request for the Liverpool Telescope to view something they are interested in. We hope to welcome Professor Newsam back in the future to find out more about future observations!

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radiographer, an ECG technician and someone who worked in prosthetics.



Pupils were amazed to find out there are over 350 different careers within the NHS and it is the largest employer in Europe. They learnt that it is not only traditional careers such as doctors or nurses but there are a whole range of other jobs including project manager, accountant or human resources.



Pupils enjoyed the range of activities, such as guess the career and a day in the life. They also had the opportunity to live chat with the guest speakers so they could ask questions about their careers. Pupils are now researching some more NHS careers so they can enter the competition where they have to design a job advertisement.



David Attenborough 100th Birthday event

Did you know that Sir David Attenborough has worked in broadcasting for over seven decades and is celebrated for iconic nature documentaries that have inspired millions to care about our planet?

To celebrate Sir David Attenborough's remarkable 100th birthday, we are hosting a cake and cookie competition. Open to all year groups, the event will



take place on Tuesday 5th May in L5, where bakers will compete across four exciting categories: Best Theme, Technical Skill, Best Flavour, and Best Texture. Participants are encouraged to draw inspiration from the natural world that Sir David has spent his life bringing to our screens, from vibrant rainforests to the mysteries of the deep ocean. This competition is not just about baking brilliance, but also about honouring a lifetime of storytelling that has helped us see Earth with fresh eyes and deeper appreciation. So tie on your apron, unleash your imagination, and let your creations tell a story worthy of the natural world itself.

Health and Social Care

Health and Social Care students have some exciting opportunities coming up. They will be visiting Liverpool University to explore potential course and career pathways. In school, students will hear from a visiting keyworker from Wirral Ways, who will share real-life examples of supporting individuals, helping students understand the barriers service users may face. If you are thinking of studying Health and Social Care in sixth form, please speak to Miss Coyne or Mrs Murray for further information.

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Instagram

For more updates on all the fun activities going on around the Science department follow our Instagram page @uptonhallscience!

Library News

Upton Hall School FCJ, World Book Day Visit: Radhika Sanghani. Journalist and author of 'The Girl Who Couldn't Lie'



On the 5th of March, Radhika Sanghani visited local Roman Catholic Grammar School Upton Hall School FCJ.

Sanghani is an award-winning screenwriter, journalist and author, whose book, *The Girl Who Couldn't Lie* was nominated by pupils to be featured on the shortlist for their book prize 'Upton Book of the Year 25-26.' Radhika is also a skilled content writer and a regular guest on BBC Radio 4's Woman Hour. She writes for national broadsheets and

a book signing and later on, the author hosted a creative working workshop. Student journalists Elodie and Daisy had the chance to interview Sanghani and ask her about life as a writer and freelance journalist. These are her responses below:

Can you relate to Priya in *The Girl Who Couldn't Lie*?

Priya is a young girl who pretends her life is perfect, so she doesn't disappoint anyone. However, one day, she puts on her late grandmother's bangle and suddenly begins to be transfixed into telling the truth! The author said that she wrote the story to inspire others to 'come out of their comfort zone... to see the joy of being honest, even if it is hard.'

What is your advice for aspiring young writers?

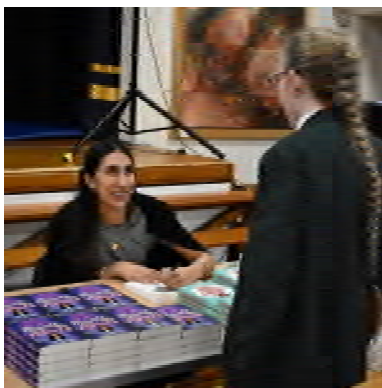
Writing short stories, reading a diverse range



of books and joining competitions were the key pieces of advice from Radhika. She emphasised the importance of getting as much experience as you can, as early as possible. Radhika also gave some advice on where to begin your stories. 'Always try to write for yourself,' she said, 'What story can you tell that not everyone can tell in the same way as you? What message do you want to give to your reader?'

What is the most rewarding piece of writing you have written?

Radhika said that she believed the most rewarding thing about being a writer is 'being able to tell stories for people who wouldn't always be able to have their stories heard. For example,' she said, 'When I was speaking to refugees in Tanzania. Even yesterday I wrote a story about a British man whose parents are jailed in a warzone in Iran on fake spying



magazines including The Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail and Cosmopolitan.

Sanghani visited the school on World Book Day; for an inspiring talk with year 7 and 8, followed by

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charges. Being able to tell stories like that is really powerful.'

Journalism and Choosing the Right Subjects

Radhika spoke about how although it is important to consider how A-Level subjects can inform what you do later in life, the most important thing is just studying what you are really interested in. However Radhika reassured that it is okay if you do not know what kind of journalist you want to be, or if you don't have a specialism. "I think just do what makes you happy. I always think we're more likely to do better at the things we genuinely are passionate about".

The reality of Freelance Journalism

"I really love being my own boss. I love being in charge of my schedule". By working from home, she can go for a walk and practice yoga in between writing which gives her a clearer headspace. She can also write more diverse publications as a freelance writer whereas if she was working "In-house", then her writing would be more limited. Sometimes you can even earn more money as a freelance journalist but unfortunately the downside to freelance is that it can be economically unstable. "Sometimes if you have a quiet month it can be a bit stressful and I definitely have moments of 'Oh no! Will it ever get busy again?'".

Radhika's advice for students without industry connections



"Just be brave". Radhika said she did not have any industry connections and actually, despite briefly working for her local newspaper when she was 17, she struggled to get work experience when she was at university. She stressed the importance of "thinking outside the box" and "just finding your own way to get it". Radhika thought outside the box when, at the age of 20, she got work experience in Chile in South America. "I just called this English Language Newspaper in Santiago and asked if I could

come and do an internship...and they said yes!". She went for two months in her second year of university in the summer and it completely changed her career. "When I came back to England, everyone was so impressed with my CV".

By Elodie B & Daisy G, student journalists at Upton Hall School FCJ

Book Club- Celebrating Chinese New Year



Students in the Year 7 Book Club celebrated Chinese New Year by trying their hands at the art of origami. They also kick started the library Chinese reading sticker challenge by collecting panda stickers for each book they read which celebrated Chinese culture. Well done Book Club!

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The Austen Festival
26.01.26- 30.01.26



The English Department Podcast: All Things Jane Austen



Here is the link to the wonderful podcast hosted by Miss Fletcher in conversation with our brilliant guests Mr Pearson and Mrs Seed.

The teachers discuss their own personal interest in Jane Austen; connections to Shakespeare in the novels and what makes her novels so magnificent.

Listen Here: <https://rss.com/podcasts/the-english-department-all-things-austen/>

Regency Medicines Session



Mrs Bailey hosted a wonderful session on Medicine in the Regency Era, the period of history that Jane Austen was writing her novels. Pupils used red cabbage to make a natural indicator as at the time of Jane Austen they used natural materials as medicines



Drama Performances: Exploring Jane Austen



In January Year 7 Drama Club explored the works of Jane Austen with a series of brilliant performances organised by Miss Geary.

What an exciting way to understand the characters in the works of Jane Austen, well done Year 7!

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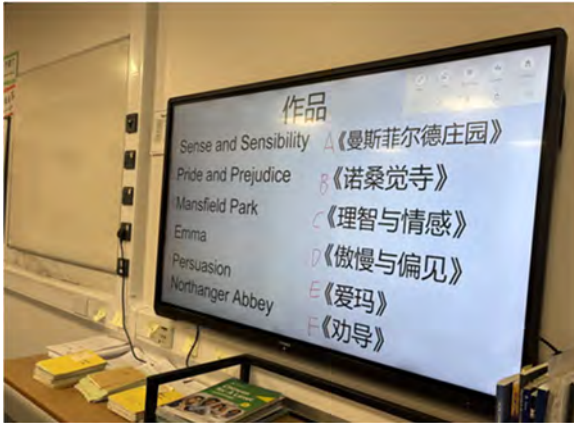
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Mandarin Titles Challenge



In their Mandarin lessons students took part in a characters challenge to match the Austen title to the Mandarin characters. Well done for your efforts!



Regency Era Historical Writing Scheme: Year 8



Students in Year 8 were taught a series of lessons on the Regency Era in their History studies. The historical briefing included insight into the political context that Jane Austen was writing; the importance of class to her society; the royal family; cultural events and wider historical factors. Students were then given tasks to explore daily life in the era and create mood boards to inform their own

piece of historical writing. The level of effort and inspiration shown in this work was superb and some are pictured below.

Students were then given a story recipe for a piece of Regency Era historical writing. They have been researching and writing their short stories in library lessons and after a process of re-drafting and accuracy checking these will be submitted to The Historical Association as part of their Historical Writing Competition. Well done Year 8 for your efforts and we wish you luck in the competition.

Austen Lecture: The Notion of Accomplishment in Austen's Novels



Miss Fletcher delivered an engaging and insightful lecture for our 6th form and Ada Lovelace students on the topic of female accomplishment in Austen's Novels. The lecture got to grips with female empowerment against the backdrop of patriarchal and societal restrictions. Students learnt about how each heroine undergoes a journey of self-discovery alongside personal fulfilment.

Austen Competition Prize Winners & Austen Brunch



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We had two exciting competitions running throughout this term to celebrate the Upton Hall School FCJ Austen Festival: Austen Heroines Challenge & Austen Reading Challenge. For the Heroines Challenge students were invited to explore the Heroines of Austen's novels and decide which character they resonated with the most. They were asked to write a response about the attributes of their preferred character and submit these. Students in the reading challenge were asked to challenge themselves to read the novels of Jane Austen, with Gold Award for the students who read all of Austen's Big Six novels. Prizes were given out during our Austen Brunch.



Congratulations to the students listed below:

Bronze Reading Award: Orla D.

Gold Reading Award: Calia B, Anya G, Bea F., Genevieve S.

Highly Commended Heroines Challenge: Verity P., Akatiki E., Sophie P.

Runner Up Heroines Challenge: Niamh R.

Winner of the Heroines Challenge: Isabella A.



Library Lessons- Researching Austen Year 7 & 8

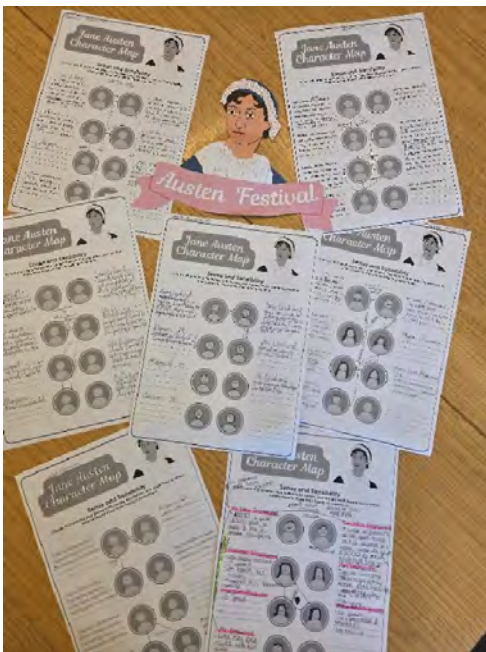
Students in Years 7 & 8 worked to research different aspects of Jane Austen. They explored either her life, novels, famous quotes or characters in her novels. They created beautiful display pieces on what they had learnt and shared the information with other students in their class. Well done Year 7 & 8!





Library Lessons- Mapping Sense and Sensibility Year 9

Students in Year 9 learnt about the legal context of Sense and Sensibility and explored what this meant for the heroines of the novel who could not inherit their family home.



Then students listened along the audiobook of Sense and Sensibility, mapping out the family and their connections to each other. Students worked really well to understand the complexities of Austen's work.

The House Cup and Reading Champions



Congratulations to year 7 students in Earth house for their incredible efforts in reading this term. They have won the house cup for reading engagement.

1st place: Earth (7S), 2nd place: Water (7H), 3rd place: Fire (7C), 4th place: Aether (7U), 5th place: Air (7J).

Individual prizes were also awarded to students in each house who have gone above and beyond in their reading efforts this term. Congratulations to: Nmesomachi A-O, Anya G, Paige R, Hattie P, April H, Maria M, Bridget M, Victoria B, Isabella Shardlow, Calia B, Martyna K, Lucia M, Cara M, Daisy J & Daraire I.

The points have now been reset for the summer term so if you would like to become a reading champion and lead your house to victory next term, now is your chance. Students can earn reading engagement points for reading around school; finishing their books; handing in reading bookmarks to the library and pushing themselves to read more.

Congratulations to Earth House and all of our inspirational Reading Champions!



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Careers News

Liverpool John Moores University British Science Week Event 18.3.26



To celebrate British Science Week, 12 x Year 10 pupils were invited to Liverpool John Moores University to hear from some inspirational scientists.

Today, myself and a few of my peers went on a trip to John Moore University to learn about career paths in STEM. To summarise the trip, we heard from two female speakers who both had careers in STEM with one being a civil engineer and the other being an experimental physicist. The lessons that I took away from this experience is to be myself and not to give up when things get difficult. Both speakers faced many challenges but stayed true to themselves and persevered which is very inspiring to me. In the afternoon, we watched 'Hidden Figures', a movie about three female African-American Mathematicians who played a pivotal role in astronaut John Glenn's launch into orbit while facing racial and gender discrimination at work. The movie, which is a true story, shows that despite discrimination and stereotypes, women of all backgrounds can have a great impact in jobs previously dominated by men by working in STEM.

From Michelle 10S

Biennial Careers Fair 4.2.26

Many thanks to all of the participants who gave up their time so freely to share their expertise with our students at our biennial Careers Fair.



The event was well attended by pupils and their parents who had the chance to talk to a wide range of employers, universities and colleges.



Many thanks also to the speakers that gave talks about popular careers. It was lovely to see so many former pupils who were happy to return.

Sixth Form Spanish Exchange



At the end of February 22 of our Year 12 & 13 Hispanists had the opportunity not only to visit the beautiful southern Spanish region of Andalucía, but also to experience the Spanish lifestyle first-hand by

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staying in the homes of Spanish students from our partner school Francisco de los Ríos in the town of Fernán Núñez.

From the moment we arrived our Sixth Formers were treated to wonderful Spanish hospitality by the host families, being shown many of the local sights and plied with more food than they could possibly have imagined! During the day our students took part in excursions to various iconic Andalusian cities and landmarks, and in the evening they were able to socialise with their new Spanish friends and make the most of the fantastic opportunity to practise their Spanish.



Our first trip was to Sevilla, the regional capital, where we enjoyed a guided tour of the cathedral and climbed to the top of the Giralda tower for impressive views over the city. In the afternoon we visited the beautiful Real Alcazar palace and gardens and the spectacular Plaza de España – both very Instagrammable!



The following day we headed to the city of Granada, visiting the former home of poet Federico García Lorca, one of whose plays we study for A Level, before climbing (with some effort!) up to the stunning Alhambra palace for a guided tour.



Our final excursion was to Córdoba, with a stop for delicious *churros con chocolate* before visiting the impressive Mosque-Cathedral, with time for a little shopping afterwards.



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The final day our students got to spend some time in our partner school, finding out what school life is like in Spain, before spending a final fun evening with their partners.



Throughout the week Miss Cano and Miss Cochrane were really impressed with how all our Sixth Formers really threw themselves into the challenge and were determined to speak as much Spanish and learn as much as possible – we were very proud of them.

As we write, the return leg of the exchange is taking place, with the Spanish students and their teachers spending the week here on the Wirral, staying with Upton families and enjoying discovering all about the local area, the unpredictable weather, roast dinners and fish & chips! MUCHÍSIMAS GRACIAS to all the families who have worked so hard and given students both ends such a fantastic welcome, to the Upton Finance team without whom the trip would not have

been possible, and to all the students involved for participating with such enthusiasm, resilience and companionship.

Mobile Phones

You will know from my recent letter that the mobile phone rules are changing from the beginning of June. There will be an information sharing session in regards to this on 15 April in the school hall. We will be joined by one of our parents who has been working hard to increase awareness about the damaging affects mobile phone usage is having on our young people. I want to stress to parents how this measure, while it may seem radical is for one purpose only and that is the wellbeing of our pupils. The mobile phone pouches we will be using are now on sale on Scopay ready to be purchased for the changeover.

Uniform

Summer Uniform - Year 7 and 8

From the start of the Summer term, the style of blouse worn as part of the school uniform for Year 7 and 8 pupils will change to a white short sleeved open necked blouse. This can be purchased from the online uniform shop.

Standards of uniform have been excellent at Upton this year and apart from the ongoing ageless battle of the rolling up of the skirt, Upton pupils always look *fabulous*. *Please can you remind your daughters that sports socks are not permitted as these have crept in recently.*

I should like to wish you and your families a very enjoyable holiday and an Easter filled with blessings.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Andrea Gaunt
HEADMISTRESS