



# Balfour Newsletter Summer 2022

Dear Parents and Carers, Students and Community

As this term draws to a close, I wanted to mark it by writing to you for the final time in my role as Headteacher of Sir Graham Balfour School.

I first came to this school in 2002 as Assistant Headteacher and in the ensuing 20 years I have seen a lot of changes, most of them for the better! In that time, I have been privileged to be part of a team which has truly transformed our standards of behaviour and attitude and alongside that, the outcomes for our young people. The immense sense of pride I currently feel is due mainly to the fact that the young people of our community are receiving an education as good as any other in the country and better than some. Our children have a right to this quality and to aspire to the same jobs, professions, universities and opportunities that are open to their peers in all parts of the country. We must never stop working for that end.

I recently welcomed our MP, Theo Clarke, and Councillor Jonathan Price to our school. They were full of praise for the calm, polite and purposeful atmosphere that reigns in our school. As is ever the case when I show people around our school, it was a joy to see Balfour through their admiring eyes.

It has been a privilege to be part of this amazing school. The success we now enjoy is not down to any individual, past or present, but the result of the combined efforts of the many staff, students, parents, Governors and community members who have been involved with Sir Graham Balfour. Our school's culture is built around our simple but shared values; the same values held dear by all of us who want our young people to be brave and secure adults, confident of their place in the world. I am utterly certain that these values will continue to hold firm in the future.

Having told you of my plans to retire back in the depths of winter, I am now letting you know that my retirement will have to wait! From September I shall be the CEO of the Multi-Academy Trust of which Sir Graham Balfour is part. Part of my new role will be to look at expanding our Trust with schools who share our values and want to join in our quest to helping young people succeed to their maximum potential. The future is exciting and I am looking forward to my new challenge, as well as supporting our new Headteacher, Matthew Mason, as he takes on his new role from September.

Finally, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all of you, for all you contribute to our school, whether as students working hard and making the most of your education, or parents and carers who support your children and the school.

I hate saying goodbye as it sounds so final, so I shall say to you instead, 'au revoir'; I look forward to seeing you at future concerts, celebration evenings or any other event to which I am invited.

My very best wishes to our entire school community

Lesley Beck  
Your very proud Headteacher

# Remembrance Day

Remembrance Sunday – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Thank you to our students who attended the Remembrance Service in Victoria Square on Sunday. Four of our students were in attendance to lay a wreath on behalf of the school. It was also very humbling to see a number of Sir Graham Balfour students representing other organisations (Scouts, Army Cadet etc) also paying respect.

Mr Tilsley, Miss Nanavati and Mrs Gannon were also present throughout the event





### World Book Day 2022

To celebrate World Book Day we held an Interhouse Book Quiz with Mr Rowley as Quiz Master. It was a lot of fun and all contestants won an Easter egg prize for taking part. The quiz involved audience participation and points and chocolate eggs were given out. Here are the final scores...

World Book Day Quiz		
1st	Tixall	120
2nd	Chetwynd	95
3rd	Weston	75
4th	Shugborough	30
5th	Sandon	20

**Book Fair March 2022** In March we held our second Book Fair of this academic year.



There is always quite a buzz in the DAC as students browse the books on offer and by the end of the Book Fair we had sold £896.10 worth of Books.

The total books sold far exceeds any book fair total we have had in the past and shows just how popular reading is with our students. Look out for the next fair which will be in school at the end of September.

# Debate Club

## Smart Law Mock Trial

On Saturday 21st May 2022, 12 students from Sir Graham Balfour attended the local heat of the Smart Law Mock Trial Competition at Cannock Magistrates' Court for the first year and came runners up. This is a competition organised by the charity Young Citizens and its purpose is to encourage young people to develop their understanding of the Law. It also offers students a fantastic opportunity to develop their public speaking skills.

To prepare for this competition the 12 students had to memorise details of a fictional case and then learn to play their roles in the court room. Students had been attending after school sessions once a week since November to prepare.

The team consisted of Sophie, Dena and Erika who had the role of magistrates, Anya, Izzy, Elouise and Bettie who carried out the lawyer roles, Violeta, Laila and Femke who were witnesses, Jayda was our defendant and Willow our legal advisor.

The students did exceptionally well on the day, giving emotive speeches, responding to unfamiliar questions from other teams and remembering the order of procedure within the court room.

They competed in two rounds. In the first round they were against Codsall Middle School and during the second round, John Taylor High School.

Well done to all who took part!



# Y12 Prom



# Y11 Prom



# Department News

## Food Technology – Stafford College

### Year 10 Hospitality and Catering Taster Day at Stafford College

Our Year 10 food group were invited to Stafford College yesterday for a Hospitality and Catering taster day. They had a tour of the college and made a chicken stir fry, a selection of mocktails and pancakes with fruit cooked in syrup. The students had a great day and got a good feel of the college environment and what they had to offer.

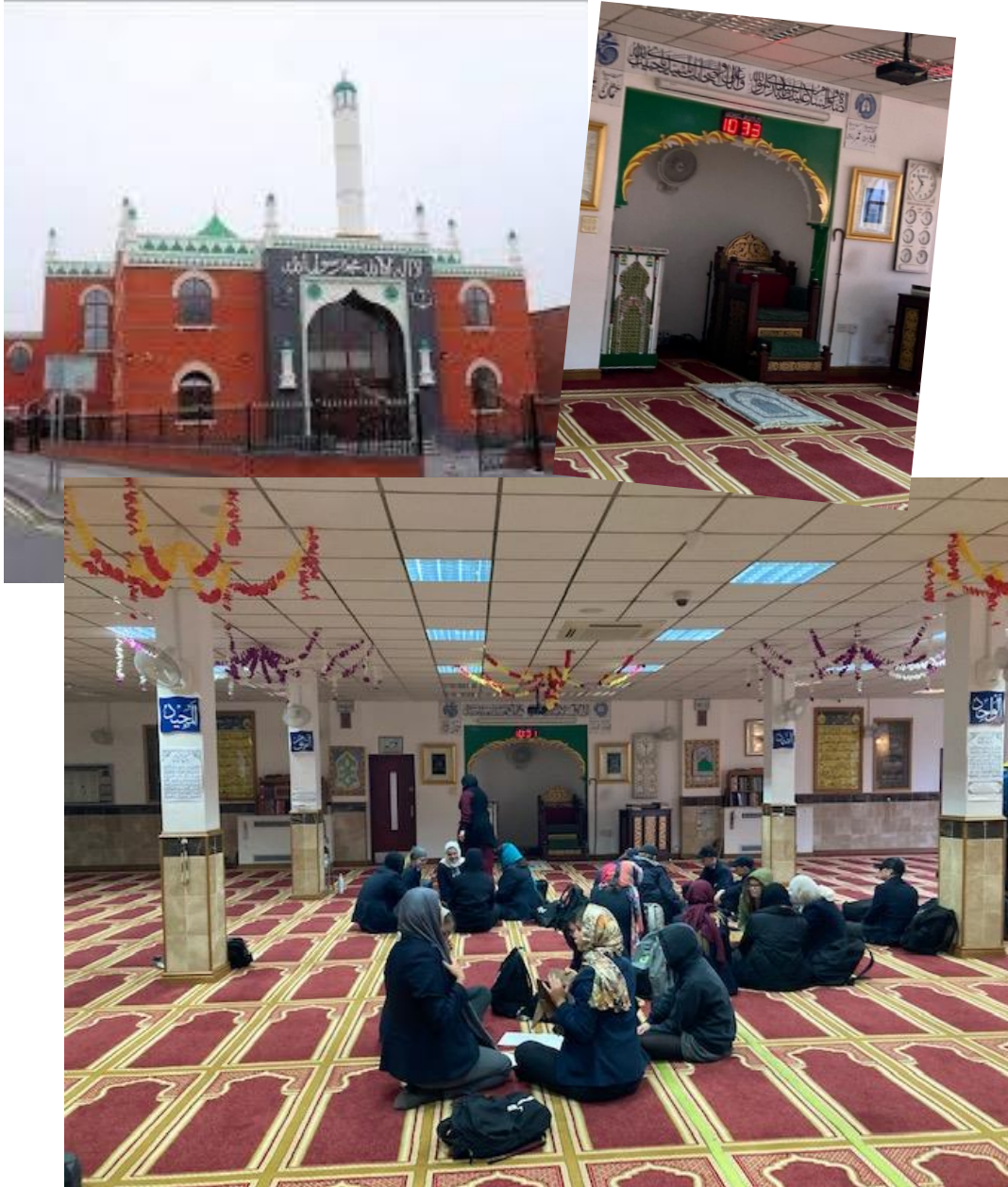


## **Humanities**

### **Religion and World Views**

Our year 10 GCSE Religion, Philosophy and Ethics group visited Jamia Mosque in Derby. The visit expanded their subject knowledge and gave them the experience of Islam in lived Reality. Whilst on the visit, they were able to learn about the Islamic culture, artwork and their practices (WUDU). After touring the mosque, they competed in group quizzes and engaged in a Q&A session with Muslim leaders.

A massive well done to year 10 for demonstrating their exceptional knowledge.

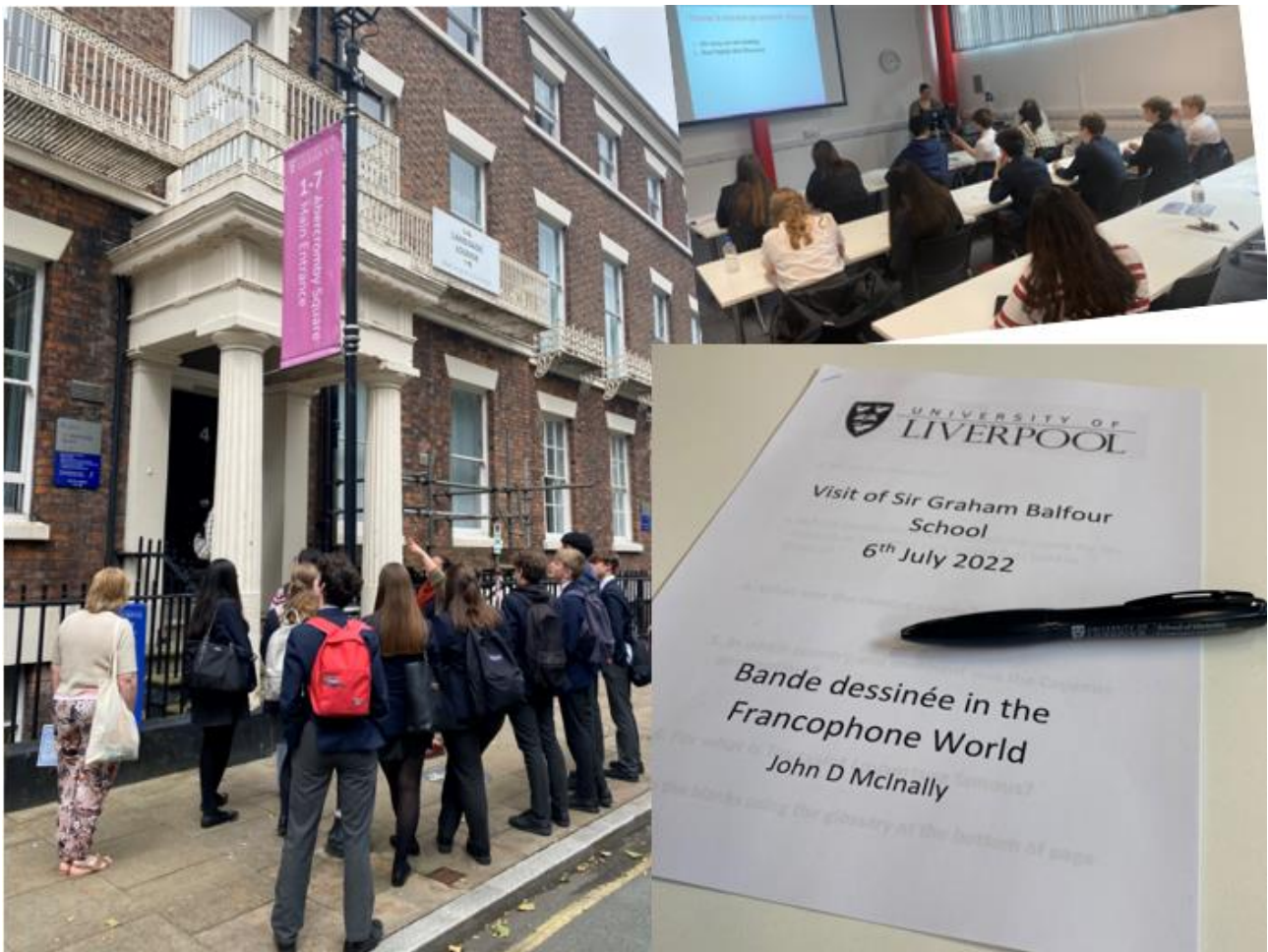


## Modern Foreign Languages

University of Liverpool Trip - Tuesday 6th July

A group of Year 10 & 12 French students visited the University of Liverpool where they had the opportunity to experience first-hand what it's like to study Languages at university. They experienced a university-style lecture about la bande dessinée, a translation workshop and a student-led tour of the campus.

The students were a credit to our school and the university staff were highly impressed with their interest and linguistic ability.



## PE Department

Year 8 and 9 girls have been brilliant and made it to the Under 14s District Final; sadly they lost, but are still fantastic runners up.



And under 15 boys made it to the semi-finals of the district cup for the first time



## Manchester United Visit

The Manchester United trip was for the pupils doing great in PE and who picked up the PE awards this year. It was also for pupils who attended a lot of extra curricular activities after school and during lunch.

Because of their interest in sport, they were very fortunate to be given the opportunity to see an elite sport club and how it operates behind the scenes.



# Fundraising

## Big Walk for Katherine House Hospice and Unicef (Ukraine)

Our annual big walk took place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December with all proceeds being split between UNICEF and Katherine House Hospice. Our amazing children raised over £2600, a staggering amount of money in aid of these two charities. Well done to everyone who took part.



# Sports Day

Our annual Sports Day took place on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July. Despite the warm weather students wholeheartedly participated, with Shugborough House taking the title of overall winner. Well done to everyone involved and thank you to the PE Department for organising the event.



# School Trips

## London Trip – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July

Last Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, I went on a school trip to London. We all met at the station and were gathered into groups with teachers, I was in a group with Miss Watson. We got on the direct train at around 9:40 to take us to Euston. The train journey, despite being long, was alright as I played cards and chatted for most of it, but I'd soon realize how much I'd miss sitting down. After about 2 hours we arrived there and that's when we went into the underground. I haven't been on the trains there before, so it was a new experience and a relatively scary one. The escalators were high, and the place was completely crowded. I imagine that the city people could tell we were country kids. I nearly fell over before I learnt to hold onto the bars in the train. Luckily, this wasn't a first for my friend, so she acted like a tour guide for me which lessened my fear.

I'm not sure which station it was, but when we arrived on the underground train we navigated through a long tunnel. We went up the stairs to the surface, but we ended up going back down because there was supposed to be a closer entrance to the National History Museum, which was our goal, which ended up being closed so we went back up the original staircase. It was refreshing to walk afterwards as it was a lot more breathable and from there it did not take long to get to the museum. It was way bigger than expected, more so on the inside. My first impression of the place was 'wow'. A meeting time was arranged for everyone near where we were going to eat, and I enjoyed the freedom of being able to branch off to witness all the sights.

With my friends, we started from the top and made our way down. On the top floors there were lots of things encased in glass as well as statues placed around, including an entire room dedicated to rocks. Overall, there wasn't really anything that interested me until we really started to dig deeper into the museum. It was funny when we had a personal experience of finding a whole school in the basement and having an awkward conversation with a staff member who mistook us for being on work experience. My favorite part of the museum must have been the space exhibits which took us most of the 2 hours allocated to find, including a lot of stairs. Shortly after, we found a room designed like a Japanese shop which we only discovered was an earthquake simulator when the floors started moving. And only after being positive



that we had seen everything there was to see did we go to the café. The pizza that I had, which seemed to be the popular choice, was decent for a museum and was just the break I needed to continue walking around later.



After the museum it was time to move onwards. We all made our way back to the underground on a journey to Green Park, which wasn't as bad as my nerves had settled with the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> train we had been on. Exiting the station, there was a nice park which was pleasant to walk through, though it started getting hotter for what seemed like the rest of the day from here. Just on the other side of this park was Buckingham palace, which I don't think I would be able to afford any time soon. We spent a short while looking through the gates and around the general area before we set off to move again. Our next stop was Saint James's Park which had a lovely lake. Following some overpriced ice cream, we walked until we reached the smallest Tesco's you would ever see. Although, Big Ben was in view and in all honestly it was bigger than I expected. More walking led us to Trafalgar Square and Leicester Square, we also saw the London Eye on our way there, which again, was bigger in person. Everyone spread out while my group of friends went to China town, which was decorated with lanterns everywhere, who would have guessed it was only down the street? By this time all the walking had caught up to me, so the journey back was energizing. That sums up my personal experience in London, something new yet fun for me. My favorite must be my time in the museum, Afterall, it's not something you could witness every day.

Keelie-Mae

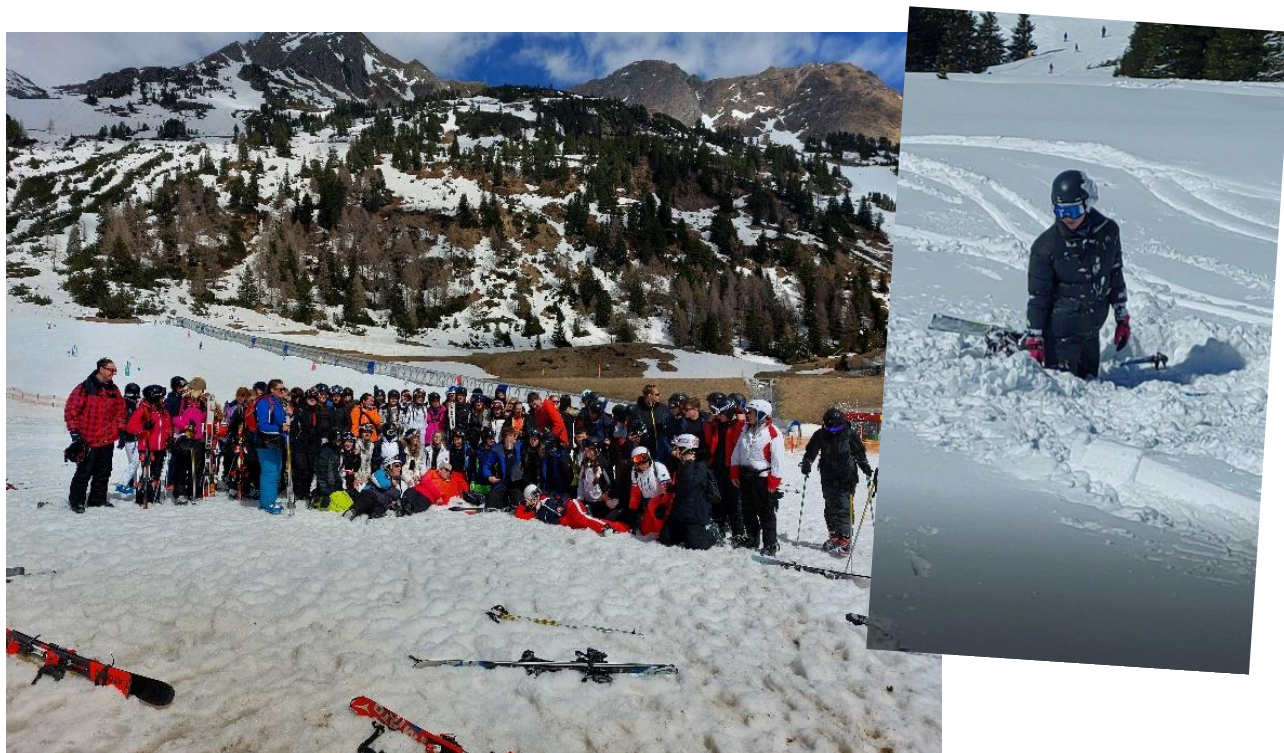
### **Ski Trip Obertauern- Austria April 2022**

2022 welcomed the return of the ski trip for Balfour students. The introduction of this trip saw an unprecedented number of applications and so to avoid disappointing too many students we were able to double the original capacity, allowing 83 students and 11 staff to travel. After much uncertainty and several changes to the planned departure due to Covid restrictions, 2 coaches headed off to the beautiful resort of Obertauern in Austria.

The majority of our students and staff were novice skiers or they had a small amount of experience so it was an absolute pleasure and privilege to witness the progress and personal goals that each and every individual made throughout the week; some becoming very accomplished skiers and I am sure they will be pestering parents for family ski holidays in the future. We were very fortunate with the snow conditions, having a mix of sun and snow fall, paved the way for a decent week of skiing.

The week was full of activity, after each day of skiing the staff and students went off to do evening activities in their year groups, including bowling, swimming, shopping and a pizza meal out. The hotel was exceptional, and the facilities included table football, 2 x table tennis rooms, a pool table and a cinema room, this was more than enough to fill any down time that the students had.

Our students were exceptionally well behaved and a real credit to the school and their families, we had lots of laughs along the way, I can speak for everyone when I say we came back exhausted, full of enjoyable memories and stories to tell but more importantly injury free, that in itself was a huge success.



### Liverpool – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July

The trip we took to Liverpool was very informative and fun! We learned lots of facts and got to see the whole of Liverpool (whole view from the Radio Tower). We saw statues of historic people and we also saw loads of famous buildings and the docks. It was exciting knowing that historic people were inside buildings we were in. We saw The Beatles statues, historic statues like King Henry I, Shakespeare etc. We saw libraries, offices, play/ film buildings. This was a very fun and an enjoyable educational time. I would like to go again soon.

Weronika P



The trip to Liverpool was an amazing school trip. There was so much to do and it was lots of fun walking around. Our guides told us lots of interesting facts about Liverpool. There were lots of things to look at and a lot to take in. The Radio Tower was the best of all because of the aerial view of the city. You could see lots of landmarks. The library was impressive, and it was good to see some things that aren't as modern and older themed. Some of the books were astonishing to look at. The place we went for food was so nice and the trip to the beach was fun. There were some cool statues on the beach and they looked like real people.

Harley M

### **Toughest Challenge**

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> a number of students were fortunate to take part in a 'Toughest Challenge' trip. The aim of the experience was to develop their leadership skills and conquer different challenges, in order to build confidence. Activities included raft building, rock climbing and making a fire with a flint. All of the students were great and enjoyed the challenges set for them.



**Have a fabulous Summer break  
and we look forward to  
welcoming students back in  
school on  
Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022**