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September 2021 - May 2022

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Oxford Spires Speakers win national acclaim

Press release: 9 May 2022



Three students from Oxford Spires Academy yesterday won success in the national finals of the prestigious English Speaking Union Churchill Public Speaking competition, held at Churchill College, Cambridge, and became the highest ranking non-selective state school in the nationwide competition.

Eva Morris, Skyla Woodhill and Olivia Ward-Jacobs were chairperson, speaker and questioner respectively. The team did brilliantly, with expert chairing from Eva, and an engaging and well-received speech from Skyla on the topic "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up", a quotation from Pablo Picasso.

Olivia was awarded the prize for Best Questioner overall in the competition, showing her skill in challenging ideas and thinking on her feet.

After five gruelling rounds, the team were one of six teams in the Grand Final – beating more than 400 other schools, and over 1400 students to be there. Finally back in person after a time online, the annual competition requires oratory, confidence and quick thinking.

"We are delighted with the team's success", said Head of Sixth Form and Enrichment at the school, Dr Jackie Watson. "It's the high point of a whole annual programme of oracy events in the school. We develop students' confidence in speaking from Year 7, with regular in-school events as well as external competitions".

With success in the Oxford Magistrates' Court Mock Trial competition in March, performing for Oxford Council and the University in the recent OPT Shakespeare Birthday celebrations, and the regional round of the ESU Performing Shakespeare competition coming later this week, the school puts articulate speaking at the heart of its learning.



Mock Bar Performance

12 students across all of KS4/5 successfully completed a live, recorded performance to the younger years based on a Mock Trial for Mock Bar on a case based on harassment.

We had planned to compete against other schools in the county, but sadly due to the technical issues we were not able to do so. Despite this, our students still persevered and practised daily to go ahead with the competition, with the intention that the future younger generation can learn from this when they watch the recording.

Mr Hart was very proud of their accomplishments and their leadership skills. They all outdid themselves and the performance was incredible.

Open Evening Success!

With well over 500 visitors arriving through the course of the evening the buzz around the academy was fantastic. Each department welcomed prospective students and their families ahead of them making the important choice of a secondary school. As well as this wonderful evening, record amounts of prospective parents have visited the school on a normal working day for a 'Principal's Tour' and a chance to see lessons in progress.



Geography Bake-Off

The annual Geography bake-off started in lockdown in 2020 and became a popular competition among our geographers who love to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity through cake!

Students were challenged to bake a cake that shows a geographical landform (or as many as they wanted) to impress the team of judges! This year, as the competition window coincided with Fairtrade Fortnight, we added bonus points for each ingredient which was Fairtrade.



National Reading Championship Quiz

Oxford Spires Academy took part in the Oxfordshire and Berkshire heat of the National Reading Championship Quiz. All of the questions were based on fictional titles and involved book titles, characters, authors, brainteasers, and story details.

The quiz always includes some questions on very well-known books, series, and authors such as Harry Potter, Diary of a Wimpy Kid and Roald Dahl, but they also have a strong focus on the breadth and variety of children's publishing available today, including genres such as comedy, horror, graphic, LGBTQ+, historical, classic, BAME and sport.

After a very tense morning of quizzing on some very challenging questions covering over 100 years of children's literature, we did extremely well. Improving on our placings last year.

Massive congratulations to all students involved, including our reserves Henry, Delilah and Alexander who also scored highly, despite not formally taking part; had they been taking part as a team of 3, they would have finished in the top 10.

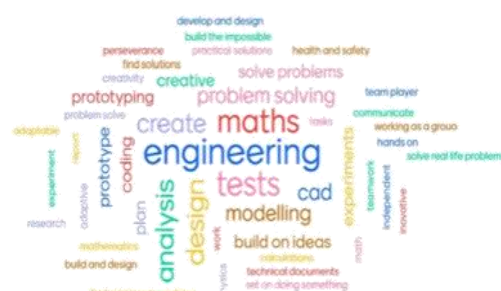


I am delighted to say that our 'A team' of Erik, Mila, Theo, and Ruth scored a massive 66 points and came 3rd out of 20 teams from private and state schools.

Congratulations to our 'B team' of Beatrice, Cara, Leo, and Dylan scored 67 and came 2nd overall!

Engineering Experience Programme

We have 6 Year 12 Physics students who have been selected to take part in an Engineering Experience Programme, where they are working with engineers from Rutherford Appleton Laboratories on a real engineering problem: six of many Year 12s with summer placements in science.



Humanitarian Aid Day

It was great to host the first OSA Humanitarian Aid Day. Many students participated in the various events, including: OSA flower themed Bake Off Competition, Beat the Teacher penalty shootout, flower sale and ribbon sale.

Congratulations to Caroline 7T, Amira 8T, and Natalie 8T on their winning cakes.

The best part of the day was seeing how our wonderful OSA students participated; eager to do what they can to fundraise and support those suffering as a result of conflict around the world.

Our fantastic students raised £270 for the Disaster Emergency Committee. Thank you to all students and parents for your contributions.



Biology Olympiad Competition

Three of our Year 12 Biologists took part in this year's Biology Olympiad competition (part of the UK Biology Competition series), which is an advanced problem-solving competition aimed at A Level students.

Students were presented with topics and ideas which they were not familiar with, so had to compete with their problem solving skills and demonstrate their understanding of core principles.

Our students, Sofia, Tristan and William sat two examined papers, competing against over 7000 other students nationally. Though we have unfortunately not progressed to International Olympiad, our students all did fantastically well and will all receive a certificate of commendation for their efforts. They should all be very proud of their achievements. Brilliant work, biologists! We look forward to entering many of our OSA biologists again next year.

Intermediate Maths Challenge

We entered 60 students from the top sets in Year 10 and 11 to compete alongside the brightest mathematicians in those year groups across the country. Bronze certificates are awarded to the top 50%, silver to the top 25% and gold to the top 25%. The top 8000 students are invited to sit one of the upcoming follow-on rounds. We have 21 bronze certificates, 17 silver and 2 Year 11 students (Thomas and Wiktoria) achieved gold and have also qualified for the Pink Kangaroo follow-on round.

Eco Schools

We have been working on our three chosen themes of **Biodiversity, Energy and Marine**. As part of the biodiversity topic, we have put wildflower seeds around the site.

We have also started working towards the Eco-Schools Green Flag award which involves students leading decisions on environmental action around OSA. We have a strong group that meets each Wednesday lunchtime. We have completed our Environmental Assessment Survey identifying key topics to work on in the following months. We are also starting our new allotment which will see students help to grow herbs, vegetables and maintain a safe outdoor space for wellbeing and outdoor learning.



Thames Valley Police Training Centre

We were offered the opportunity to visit 'Thames Valley Police Training Centre' with a student who is looking to pursue a career in this field.

We spent the morning visiting the museum which detailed some of the goriest of crimes and looking at the memorabilia and then headed to the armed forces department where we experienced just how heavy the police protective clothing is – this was even before the stab and bullet proof plates were added to the vest! We were shown the training venue and some of the steps which a trainee Police Officer would go through to complete their extremely rigorous training programme. We feel very lucky to have been in one of the best training facilities within the Police.

The afternoon was spent in the dog section where we met many puppies that were on a training day to see if they would make fully fledged police dogs. We watched a trained 'sniffer' dog in action with his crew mate. The dogs are trained to find the substance and then sit and stare at it. We were amazed by how quickly and effective these dogs were. We then watched a situation where a dog was being trained to catch a criminal and learnt the process by which this happens.

We were really appreciative that we were given this opportunity through our 'Safer Schools' Policing partnership and are truly grateful for the education and experience it gave our student. We hope to continue this visit with a wider range of students pursuing a career in the police. The day gave a real insight for a day in the life of a Police Officer (dog handler / armed police) and has ignited the drive to do the very best at school in readiness for the next step of a career in the police.



Duke of Edinburgh Award

Our Year 10 Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award students braved sub-zero temperatures to take part in their training weekend. They spent two days walking with packs and practising navigation and camping overnight at Hillend. They learned to use gas stoves, and the instructors were particularly impressed with their cooking!

Walking with a heavy load is always tough, but the cold weather made the weekend particularly challenging. However, all students showed great determination and resilience, and everyone successfully passed this part of the Award. We're looking forward to a much warmer qualifying expedition in July!



Primary Multi Skills Event

OSA hosted a Multi Skills event for primary students and were delighted when primary school staff commented on how great our student Sports' Leaders were. "They inspired the younger children to have fun in PE", which is what it's all about. They demonstrated excellent communication and organisational skills and made the Multi Skills event a great success.



New College Debate Competition

Eight students from Year 7 and 8 were brilliantly coached by Mr Hart and were a real credit to our academy. They took on teams from Cheney and New College School with the prepared motion "This house would return the Elgin Marbles". After dinner in New College Hall, the students had 15 minutes to prepare the unseen motion "This house would ban beauty pageants". Flo, Arlen, and Rose all received individual special mentions and we were thrilled to be the overall winners of the trophy for the third time (in fact we have never lost this competition!). Huge thanks to James and Buster in Year 13 for all their hard work in preparing the team.



Collaborative A Level Geography Field Trip to Nettlecombe Court

Queensbury Academy joined Oxford Spires Academy for the first Anthem Schools Trust A Level Geography field trip for four days of fieldwork. The data collected was used to complete independent investigations.

Our Anthem group was based at the magnificent Grade 1 listed Nettlecombe Court in Somerset. It is an historic building held before the Norman Conquest by the son of King Harold. William the Conqueror assumed possession of Nettlecombe after defeating King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. It is surrounded by 223 acres of parkland on the edge of the Exmoor National Park. Nettlecombe also makes a great location for telling historical ghost stories!

The main study sites included Minehead town and Porlock Bay; both located on the South-West coast path. Minehead is well known for its Butlins holiday camp which opened in the 1960s. Learners investigated the impact of coastal defences to find out whether Butlins and the sea front at Minehead would be adequately protected from the risk of coastal flooding in the future. The day at Porlock Bay had perfect weather conditions with bright sunshine which made the measurement of beach profiles and sediment analysis easy to complete. At this location, learners considered the effects of a 'Do Nothing' approach, which is the government's shoreline management plan for the next 90 years.



Student comments: "I didn't realise that we would hear erosion taking place with the sound of the pebbles rolling in the waves on the beach – that's pretty cool. It's geographical relaxation music!".

"Staying at Nettlecombe Court was great. We were able to try new things like data loggers. It's also helped my understanding of 'place' geography and changed how I look at Oxford. I'm constantly asking questions about why and how when I go somewhere".

Creative Career Group

A new group called the Creative Careers Group has been bringing in Creative Professionals to tell Sixth Form students about what they do and how they got there. The professionals give advice and encouragement, and give interested students inspiration and a helping hand into the career of their choice.

We have been visited by Sophie Law, the voice of Radio Oxford News in the morning. She described how she chooses what will be in the news each day, and the practicalities of her working day. She also explained her path from Sixth Form to radio news presenter and students were able to ask her questions. We were also visited by Rachel Morgan who has had an extensive and successful career in television, currently a commissioning editor for BBC2. She also talked through her career path, and described different roles within the television industry. She listened to every students' thoughts about their possible career choices and is going to invite other professionals in that are relevant to what the students said their interests were. She also gave LOTS of advice and tips on how to start off and get your foot in the door of a career in television. OSA student Edie expressed an interest in photography and we had a professional Photographer who works for Getty Images talking to her and other interested students in December.



Rachel Morgan with Year 12 students.

A Level Design Projects

The A level Design Technology students finished their manufactured pieces. Noor and Maria have been working hard to complete their portfolio; considering a client's needs and then producing a working solution which has been researched, analysed and developed into the exceptional high standard prototypes pictured here. Mr Gardner, Mr Creaney and Mrs MacDonald are extremely pleased with the hard work and dedication the two have put into the subject; both pupils take pride in their delivery, go above and beyond in their dedication to the workload and have grown as individuals along the journey.



Year 9 Languages Day-Oxford University

A selection of our Year 9 language students had a great day at Queen's College, Oxford recently. They were thrilled to join the 'Languages Day' within which they enjoyed a taster of what studying a foreign language at Oxford University is like.

Students had the chance to learn a new language within 30 minutes – they left this session joyfully greeting each other in Italian and Polish. They also learned about the studies of Linguistics and which career pathways one could take with a degree in Languages. Who would have thought that a Degree in German or French can be combined with the study of Law? Oxford University makes this possible. The day came to an end with a workshop in subtitling animated films. Our German team were especially excited to bring their monster character to life and create German subtitles for his mischief. Our talented Year 9 linguists really enjoyed their time at the Modern Languages Department of Queen's College. They said that the workshops and lectures were interesting and fun and it opened their eyes to the possibilities that studying French, German or Spanish could create for them.



Natural History Museum Film

A local film crew came to the school and turned a science lab into a film set! Year 7s were filmed in pairs as part of a film project for the Natural History Museum with lights, camera and lots of action. The students learned all about the natural products that are found in everyday items - from kelp in ice cream, to the rubber that is sourced from trees and used in our trainers. The videos are part of a mini-series on biodiversity for YouTube. Through question and answers and playing with props and surprise activities, each pair were fantastic and they were a credit to the school.



Year 10 in National Careers Week

When approximately 140 Year 10 students were on work experience recently the remaining 70 students remained in school with Dr Watson and learnt about making job applications, writing CVs and had individual interview practice. In a simulation of application for two posts advertised, we congratulate Zoha and Pedro on 'being appointed'. Students also had speakers on college courses, apprenticeships and careers in technology as part of the week (thank you to Richard Hadfield for his help with the last of these). Finally, they also worked in groups to pitch an idea to an audience and judges – developing confidence and public speaking skills on the way. This time they advocated a particular charity to receive money from non-uniform day.

Creative Careers Programme

As part of the Creative Careers Programme, we had a guest speaker, Stu Forster, who is a Sport's Photographer, talk to the Sixth Form Media students. He explained how his love of his local football team led to a successful career in Football and Sport Photography. He discussed photographic equipment, techniques, routes into the industry and gave individual advice to students who asked questions.

One keen Year 13 Photography and Media student asked if Mr Forster could look at some of her work and he agreed, giving her really helpful and positive feedback – suggesting she enters some of them for competitions and offering her help and advice in the future. The Creative Careers Group is all about opening doors and helping students into careers they may never have thought were open to them, or even didn't know they existed and getting contacts in the industry who can mentor and advise.

We are excited about Edie's talent and look forward to seeing where it takes her.

Being Brilliant

12 students from Year 9 took part in this year's Brilliant Club programme at Oxford Spire. This national scheme involves students at universities researching PhDs working in secondary schools to encourage learning about their areas of expertise and teaching students how to research independently in that area.

Supervised by Tom Pickford, from Warwick University, the group worked on electrically active polymers and their usage in electrical components. As part of that they learnt how to write extended essays, learning in a university-style way and to interpret scientific data.

They were delighted to graduate at Jesus College in Oxford just before February half-term. Presented with their certificates for completing their research projects, they also had a look around the college and talked to current Oxford students about entrance to the university.

As part of the graduation ceremony, Otilie and Leo worked together on our presentation, telling other schools about the area of our research. Particular congratulations go to Karolina, Leo and Merca who received first class classification for their work.

London Art trip 2022 – Tate to Tate

Our Year 11 and 13 artists headed to London to see some artwork in-the-flesh. It was wonderful to be back in the galleries with students again, and the students were an absolute delight to take out on a much-awaited trip.

We visited both the Tate Modern and Tate Britain, arriving by coach but travelling by boat between the two galleries on a short river cruise, taking in some famous landmarks.

There was something for everyone as the Tate Britain houses artwork dating back to the 1500s to the present, amongst spectacular surroundings. The Tate Modern contains a huge range of modern and contemporary artworks in an industrial building (former Bankside Power Station).

The research gained by the students on the trip will greatly impact on their coursework as well as them enjoying the experience of seeing artwork first-hand and learning outside of the classroom. It was a very productive and fun day out and the students were a credit to the academy.



BFI Film Academy Course

Three A-Level Media students, Josh, Arthur and Gianluca successfully applied for the BFI Film Academy course run during the holidays and additional weekends. Based at Film Oxford they joined other 16-19 year olds from Oxfordshire to learn how to create short films from industry professionals and using professional cameras, lights and tripods. Each team created an original short documentary about local people, responsible for every stage of the process from shot lists to colour grading and credits. It was an intense week, and there was a lot to learn.



As in the real world not everything went according to plan and the teams had to adapt and still hit the deadline with a professional looking finished product.

Celebrating Success in Acting

London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art is the oldest drama school in the country, with an amazing reputation around the world for excellence in acting, mime, musical theatre and public speaking. The drama school originally opened over 130 years ago and some of its alumni include Dominic Cooper, Brian Cox, Benedict Cumberbatch, David Haig, Julie Hesmondhalgh, Patricia Hodge, Anna Maxwell-Martin and Maurine Lipman (if you don't know the names, Google them – because you will recognise the faces from TV, Film and Theatre).

As well as doing various degree courses in Acting and Musical Theatre students can take LAMDA graded exams. The lowest grade is Grade 1 and then gradually the challenges of the exams get harder until Grade 8, the highest level of difficulty. Students are graded either a Pass, Merit or Distinction, and most exams have academic accreditation on the national qualification framework: in some cases the same as taking another GCSE or A level. The best thing about LAMDA exams is they are all practical; they have no written paper – so it allows acting students to shine through their performance work.

We have been offering LAMDA Grade 8 (equivalent to an AS/A level in Drama) for several years as an option for Year 12 students. This year we have also opened it up as an extra-curricular opportunity for any student wanting to develop their drama skills or just have fun working with others. The exam took place in February and students did absolutely brilliantly, showing what an amazing talented group of children we teach.

GCSE Dance Students Workshop

GCSE Dance students took part in a workshop with visiting dancer Maliq Henry. Maliq is a recent Bird College graduate who regularly auditions and takes on roles in the professional dance and acting world. Maliq planned an exciting and full-on day of workshops looking at technique, lyrical, street dance and musical theatre, some of which he had learnt from professional works he had been part of.

GCSE students excelled themselves and applied their skills and knowledge in new dance styles. They were offered insight into the professional dance world through a question and answer session as well as completing workshops in an audition style.



Each workshop allowed students to look at basic techniques within each dance style as well as learning a section of choreography to perform. They learnt choreography from Hairspray as well as choreography to Janet Jackson. We hope to make this an annual event with visiting dancers coming into to share their expertise and offer insight into their career path.

House Musical Review 'West End Wonders'

Wow!!

Students stunned in the Music Review 'West End Wonders'. 87 students from Years 7 to 12 raised the roof in the OSA theatre. Singing songs from West End hit musicals to a packed Theatre of friends and family.

Songs from Annie and Oliver, Matilda and Mamma Mia were the focus of the House Competition with Tolkien smashing the competition to win



Panto

With glitter, smoke and fantastic performances, panto is a tradition within Oxford Spire that has been going on for over 10 years. Always fantastically run by Miss Morris, this year was no exception. Students from Year 7 all the way up to Year 13 took part in magical performance of Aladdin. A special mention has to go to Mrs Robinson, playing the Empress of China, what a magnificent performance.

Whilst it might be the first time for our Year 7s, this was Daisy and Buster's 7th and final time, they signed off with a flourish. Daisy finally playing the role she has wanted for years had audiences in stitches with So Shy the Monkey, whilst Buster's evil Abanazer had the audiences booing and jeering the whole way through. If their stage presence was not enough they were also of great support leading the younger students through rehearsals and workshops.



The panto is not just about the performances however, it is also about the workshops. This is where a select group from the cast go to our local primaries and run workshops under the support and supervision of Miss Morris and Mr Sheppard. This year, despite Covid we managed to go to both Tyndale and Church Cowley Saint James, where in both schools we had extremely enthusiastic Year 5s taking part. With Ella leading we had great fun at both schools and the students there learnt some of the panto techniques, such as slap stick and got to do a Q & A with the cast.

Oxford University Success!

We are delighted that three of our Year 13 students received offers recently to study at the University of Oxford next year. This is a real achievement and reflects a lot of hard work from the students involved in this process. We congratulate Alex Dunn, who has an offer to read French and Portuguese at Trinity College; Gaby Reynolds, who is to study Maths and Computing Science at Worcester; and Martin Conmy, for History and Politics at The Queen's College.

This continues the growing tradition of Oxford entrance from OSA Sixth Form, with five students gaining places last year for Medicine, Biomedical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Maths and Philosophy, and Engineering.

Onatti Play

Year 10 German students watched the play '*Horoskop*' performed entirely in German by the *Onatti* theatre group. Our gratitude goes to Magdalen College School for hosting this event and providing our Germanists with such a great opportunity.

Our students were filled with joy and laughter while realising that their hard work in studying German has all paid off, as they followed the storyline with ease. They said:

'I thought the storyline was funny and I found the German really useful, as it included a lot of colloquialisms. It really did help me adjust to German speech.

and

'The storyline was simple, which meant that I could focus on the language instead of the plot. I think it helped me understand German more casually.'



Chemistry Enrichment Day

10 of our Year 10 students attended a Chemistry Enrichment Day at Trinity College. The day started with a welcome from the Head of Access, a taster lecture from Kam Poon, a PhD student, on the future of plastics. This was followed by a Q&A session with some of the current students and then lunch – this was a very popular part of the day! The afternoon consisted of a quick tour followed by a problem-solving chemistry challenge. Congratulations to Annet and Zoe who were the first to solve the Chemistry problem!

Here is what our students had to say about their day:

"It was an amazing experience. We learnt so much about chemistry in university... We acted like university students and even had a lecture – it was so much fun." - Talaa

"I learned that just good grades won't get you into Oxford, you need to have experience... We also had a workshop that used all of our chemistry knowledge... We had a great fun experience." - Rosani

Year 11 Step-Up Programme

Dr Watson was delighted to be able to take a group of 25 Year 11 students to New College, Oxford. OSA is one of 30 schools nationally to be part of the Step-Up programme, which guides students to make successful competitive university application. Students are part of the group through Year 11 and into Sixth Form at OSA.

Following a workshop in school, the group visited the college this term, with sessions on university entrance with current undergraduates and an admissions tutor, tours of New College, St Catherine's and Jesus, and a delicious lunch in New College's dining hall. The students were a real credit to OSA – asking lots of questions and engaged in finding out as much as possible during the day.



Accelerated Reader – Update

The Accelerated Reader competition has been a closely fought one. With 3 different tutor groups taking the first-place spot for "Words Read" at different points of the term. Mr Shepperd has watched with interest how it will end up. Year 7 have been quizzing brilliantly and have so far, a total of 33.7 million words read, whilst Year 8 have a commendable 14.1 million words read.

Throughout most of the term Jasper, (Tolkien) has held first spot, then Danyl (Earhart) took it off him and it was a back and forth between the two. Then out of nowhere Miriam (Seacole) has taken it from both boys by getting herself to 2.8 million words. However, Jasper is a mere 8000 words of her total and Danyl only 19,000. . . Other students in the top 5 "Words Read" for Year 7 include Robyn and Sylvie (both Earhart).

For the other competition within Accelerated Reader, we have Quizzes Passed. In this Eleanor (Bannister) has been a comfortable pace setter. Currently she holds 41 quizzes passed, nonetheless Jasper has now almost caught her, holding 40 quizzes passed himself. There will still be twists and turns of this battle for 1st place. Other students in the top 5 of "Quizzes Passed" include Kourtney (Tolkien), Clara (Bannister) and Yama (Earhart)

Year 8 have their competition focused on their English classes rather than tutor groups, and with this in mind it is Ms. Abbott's class who currently hold top spot for both the "Words Read" and "Quizzes Passed" competitions. For Words Read it is very close between the top 3 students Florence (Bannister), Theo (Tolkien) , and Zaimal (Earhart), whilst just behind these three with only 20,000 and 80,000 words difference is Shazia (Earhart) and Eben (Bannister).

World Book Day 2022

World Book day this year invited author Matt Killeen (shortlisted for the Costa Children's Book Award) to speak to the Year 7 & 8 students. Miss May lead the charge on getting students reading, with a particular focus on strong female characters and historical fiction. Matt's talk took the students back to the horrors of Nazi Germany, and how one young girl called Sophie spied on the Nazi regime with the "aim to destroy them".

Matt focused on how we should challenge evil and unkindness wherever we see it or hear it. Giving examples as diverse as Luke Skywalker from Star Wars to Hannie Schaft, a Dutch resistance fighter. As Matt gave a reading from his book, the theatre was silent with anticipation as Matt read about Sophie and her treatment in the Nazi training school, where she was spying. The talk ended with Matt explaining to the students it did not matter who said unkind words, whether it was close friends or a total stranger these words should be called out and not allowed to take root in our society.

Matt expanded his talk to Year 8 speaking of his other novel "Devil Darling Spy" which was based in Africa during World War 2 and was significantly darker, talking about the use of biological weapons used. Whilst also historical fiction, it looks at the consequences of the darker features of human behaviour. This clearly had an impact as all copies of this book were borrowed at lunchtime.

In both talks Matt graciously told the students they could ask him any questions at all and there were certainly lots of hands up. All the students who volunteered asked intelligent or thought provoking questions, such as "What inspired you to write this story?" to which Matt gave a very personal answer relating to his growing up with German family friends. "Why did you want a girl spy" they asked, and Matt explained about the strong women in his life and that many of the deadliest resistance fighters were young teenage girls who were overlooked by the Nazi regime.

At lunchtime Matt was more than happy to autograph books which students had bought as well as general stickers with the imagery of his books on. Matt's first book "Orphan Monster Spy" has also been the most popular in library lessons with many requests to read it during the lesson.

Matt did a workshop about creative writing for a group of Year 7 and 8 students; it focused on stories and how to begin them. The hour sped by and the students were enthralled with the tips and ideas Matt gave them to start a story.



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