



Smith's Wood Newsletter - Autumn Half Term 2

Message from our Principal – Mr Huntington

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the start of the festive season, we can reflect back on what has been a very significant term for SWA. September brought the start of a new ethos and vision for the school which has delivered some strong improvements across all areas of the academy.

We are immensely proud of the work that has taken place and want to start by celebrating the collective success of the Ofsted monitoring inspection back in October. Whilst we are pleased that our improvements have been recognised we are under no illusion that there is still a lot more to do to ensure the school gets a full inspection in due course with a positive outcome.

School attendance has been proven to have a huge impact on achieving good grades. Every student at this school is expected to maintain an attendance level of at least 95%, in line with the Government's expectations. Whilst it is appreciated that children are unwell from time to time, and there may be exceptional circumstances for absences, please think carefully about taking your child out of school, as persistent absence is proven to have a significant impact upon a child's educational attainment. This term we have seen our attendance figures improve significantly and want to thank all families for the support they have shown in helping us achieve that success. We will continue to work with the local authority in terms of tackling persistent absence and issue fixed penalty notices where appropriate.

The last two days have been a very nice reminder of the wonderful students we serve and the opportunity to have some Christmas cheer in school has been a welcome end to a long term.

Please remind your children to remain safe and vigilant over the holiday period and I wish you all a happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous new year when it arrives.

Mr Huntington



Upcoming Events

- Friday 22nd December (12.30pm) – Autumn half term 2 ends
- Monday 8th January INSET Day – SWA Not open to students
- Tuesday 9th January – Spring half term 1 begins
- Wednesday 10th January (5-7pm) – Year 9 Options Evening
- Monday 15th January – Y10 Assessments begin
- Wednesday 17th January (3.20-6.45pm) – Y11 Parents Evening and Careers Fair
- Wednesday 24th January (3.20-6.45pm) – Year 9 Parents Evening
- Friday 2nd February (9.30-10.30am) – Parent/Principal Coffee Morning
- Monday 5th February – Academy Colours
- Monday 5th February – Apprenticeship week
- Tuesday 6th Wednesday 7th February – Y9 Vaccines
- Friday 9th February – Spring half term 1 ends
- Monday 19th February – Spring half term 2 begins

Please see our lunch menu available from our school canteen - [Lunch menu](#) - We will be on the week 1 menu when we return to school on Tuesday 9th January.

Extra-Curricular Timetable

Day	Lunch – 1.20 - 1.55pm	After school – 3 – 4pm (unless stated)
Monday	Rock Band – Music Art Club – Y7 - CA3	Basketball – All Years – Gym Netball – All Years – Sports Hall Football – Y7 – Astro Art Club – KS3 – 3 – 3.45pm
Tuesday	Board Games Club – Y8 – Careers Zone IT Club – Y8 - W2	Football – Y8 – Sports Hall Fitness – All Years Eco Club – KS3 – H8 Rock Band – Y9-10 – Music Science Club – 3.15 - 4pm - S9
Wednesday	Rock Band – Music Board Games Club – Y7 – Careers Zone	Badminton – All Years – 4 – 5pm – Sports Hall Girls Football – All Years
Thursday	Practice Sessions – Music Chess Club – S5 Board Games Club – Careers Zone	Basketball – All Years – Sports Hall Choir – 3 – 3.50pm Badminton – All Years – 4 – 5 pm – Sports Hall
Friday	Maths Club – KS3 – S2 Languages Club – Y7 - W2	Year 9-10 Football – Sports Hall

We would love to hear what other clubs our students would like us to offer. These suggestions can be put forward to our School Leadership team to discuss our School Council meetings or students can speak to their Form Tutor and Achievement Team.

Attendance Focus

Several parents have asked for clarification around attendance at school so we thought it would be helpful to write to all parents with information regarding this.

The DFE guidance states that parents are expected to;

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child is unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

Leave of absence forms can be submitted via the school office but please be aware that we are unable to authorise family holidays during term time. The school is now required to refer these to the local authority who are likely to refer to issue a fixed penalty notice. If you are unsure of term dates when booking family holidays, please contact the school office for clarification to avoid the possibility of receiving a fixed penalty notice.

If barriers to attendance start to emerge, please contact the school as soon as possible so that we can work together to improve the situation. Smith's Wood provides lots of pastoral support and the sooner we can intervene the better. It is important that non-attendance does not become a habit as it can be a very hard cycle to break.

We would also appreciate your support to ensure that your child arrives on time to school. When pupils arrive late at school, they miss out on essential teaching and learning at the beginning of the school day. This can reduce achievement, regardless of a pupil's academic ability. Being 10 minutes late every day equates to over 30 hours, (approximately 6 days) of learning lost each year. The school have procedures in place for persistently late pupils, however, we want to work together with you to understand and improve your child's punctuality to school. Good attendance and punctuality underpin good education.

If you have any questions, please contact the Attendance Team. sw-attendance@smithswood.fmat.co.uk

Attendance Expectations

- School is open from 8:15am in the morning and students can access the canteen and outside areas from that time.
- Students will begin line-up at 8:30am. The entrance gate will be locked at this time, students arriving after 8.30am will be marked as late, which will result in a detention.

Please see the table below which indicates the impact on learning time due to absence (this is based on the attendance for the whole academic year).

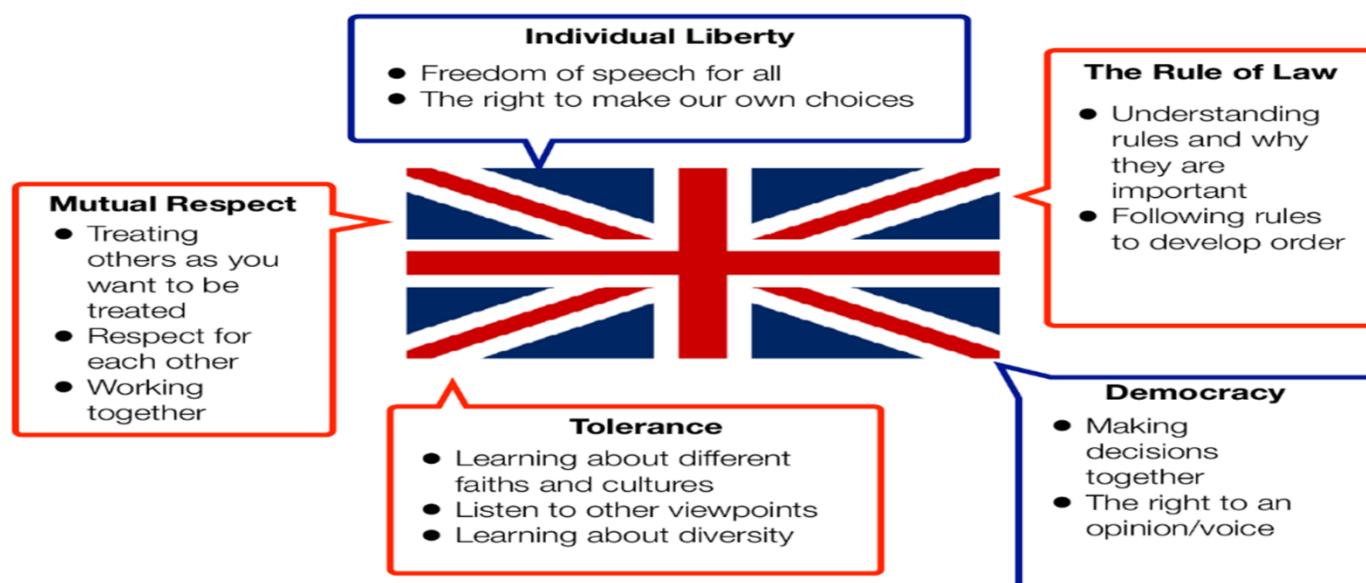
Attendance	Days Absent	Weeks Absent	Lessons Missed (1 hour each)
97%	6	1 week 1 day	30
94%	10	2 weeks	50
90%	19	3 weeks 4 days	95
85%	29	5 weeks 4 days	145
80%	38	7 weeks 3 days	190
75%	48	9 weeks 3 days	240
70%	57	11 weeks 2 days	285

Mr Martin – Assistant Principal

Assembly Focus

Each week students will have an assembly with their year group. We cover a range of topics within our assemblies which aim to develop our students academically, pastorally and holistically. They are a fantastic opportunity for us to communicate our school values and bring the year group together as a community. Assemblies link to our British Values. Teaching British values to children improves their spiritual, moral social, and cultural (SMSC) development. British values underpin what it is to be a British citizen in a modern and diverse Britain and promote moral and cultural understanding that celebrates the diversity of the UK.

British Values



Assemblies during Autumn Half Term 2:

6/11/23	Welcome back - Smith's Wood Expectations	Mr Martin & Mr Stone
13/11/23	National Anti-Bullying Week	Mr Rose
20/11/23	Being 'Ready to learn'	Mr Friswell
27/11/23	Safeguarding	Ms Tucker
4/12/23	Student Leadership	Ms Ellis
11/12/23	British Values & Community	Ms Kkama
18/12/23	Celebration Assembly	Achievement teams

Careers Focus



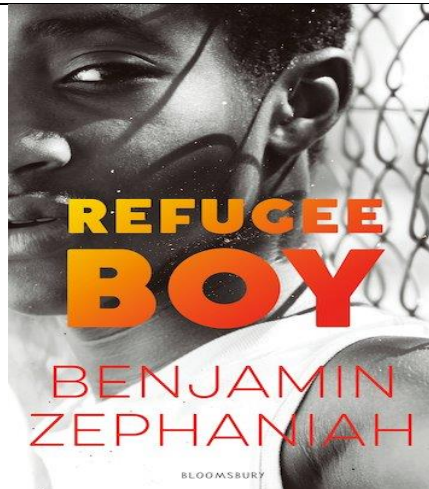
Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) plays a crucial role in ensuring all our students are well prepared and equipped for the next stage in their lives when they leave us after Year 11.

We are delighted to introduce our new CEIAG Lead: Mrs Long.

You can read Mrs Long's latest careers specific newsletter here <https://shorturl.at/cehE2>

You can contact Mrs Long d.long@smithswood.fmat.co.uk

Book Club



Book Review - Mrs Razak, Teacher of English

Book Title - The Refugee Boy

Author - Benjamin Zephaniah

Review -

The book I am currently reading is The Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah. The story follows an amazing protagonist called Alem who believes he is on holiday with his father in London. He is very excited as he has never been abroad before. However, after a few wonderful days in London Alem wakes up to find the unthinkable has happened. His father has left him. This is the beginning of Alem's new life. The story is very powerful full of drama, tension, emotions, and suspense. I highly recommend it!

Recommend reading list

Students - [KS3 - Recommended reading list](#) [KS4 - Recommended reading list](#)

Parents/Carers - [Must reads: 50 best books of all time - Pan Macmillan](#)

Library Focus

This term Year's 7,8 and 9 were given the opportunity to apply to become Student Librarians. We had many applicants, and we are pleased to announce 13 students were successful in their applications.

These students along with the school librarian, Mrs East, have been busy, working hard getting the library ready for its reopening in January 2024. This has been a huge task and our students have given up many of their break and lunch times to help with this.

All students will be able to have access to a reading book and resources to assist with their studies. The library will also offer extra curriculum activities and provide a place of study after school for Year 10 and 11 students.

More information to follow in the new year. Have a Merry Christmas.

Mrs East - Librarian

Library Focus

Student Librarians

Angel A, Joseph B, Ryan L, Katelyn O, Tyler M

Olivia E, Oliver G, Sophie Q, Owen T

Rayna C, Latonielle F, Esther I, Grace O



Extra-curricular competitions

Dodgeball review



21st November - what a result! **Year 7 North Solihull champions!**

Squad: Anfal A, Darnell A, Joseph B, Cavaughn B, Logan B, Jess B, Dalton C, Rosie G, Lily L, Teniola S, Melody S, Amber-Rose T, Ethan V, Harvey W



At the **county finals** on 4th December, our top team shown above in their School Games t-shirts, flung, hurled, lobbed, and launched while ducking, diving, and swerving against Bishop Ullathorne, Meadow Park, Southam, Harris, Ullathorne, and Arden. No winners' medals this time but what passion demonstrated!

Extra-curricular competitions

Netball review

Runners-up in the north!

Our fantastic Year 7 netball girls entered the borough netball skills competition on 5th December and completed the complex team challenges in 7 minutes 27 seconds. Park Hall pulled off a fabulous 6 minutes 32 seconds in the final round, taking the honours for the north. John Henry Newman achieved 7 minutes 43 seconds. Grace, Tudor Grange Kingshurst, and Coleshill were not in attendance. Alderbrook won amongst the south schools.

Our team: Joelyn A, Sienna C, Zarka K, Kasey M, Nothando N, Valery O, Gracie S, Roxanne S.

Table tennis review



Our Year 7 table tennis team (Riley S, Corey M, Jamaine B, Zach W, and Jess B) performed admirably against some outstanding club-level players at the borough championships on 7th December. We did manage a victory or two throughout the evening and practice sessions will take place at fitness club on Tuesdays after school in the spring term. Opposition schools: Alderbrook, Arden, Coleshill, Grace, John Henry Newman, Lode Heath, Park Hall, Tudor Grange Solihull.

The Smith's Wood Year 9/10 team battled well against the same schools listed above on 11th December in the borough championships. Again, there were some excellent performances. Team: Ayo A, Justin B, Kylie G, Jay P, Sabih R, Alfie-Jay V, Nathan W.

Extra-curricular competitions

Basketball review



Our senior basketball team opened its league account with a loss at home to Alderbrook but is looking forward to the remaining league encounters in the spring term. Team members:

Ayo A, Kylie G, Raf L, Arinze N, Sabih R, Mason S, Mohammed S, Parminder S, Alfie-Jay V, Toby-Jai W.

Mr McIlwraith – Teacher of PE & Maths

Extra-curricular clubs

Best attenders at sports clubs so far this year:

Badminton

20 – Amaya T, Taegan T
14 – Charlee-Jay S, Joey V
11 – Logan B

Twenty-one other students have attended 1+ badminton sessions.

Basketball

18 – Raf L, Mason S
16 – Alfie-Jay V, Sabih R, Ayo A
13 – Arinze N

Thirty-two other students have attended 1+ basketball sessions.

Fitness

8 – Kristian P, Ava E
7 – Henry J, Riley W
6 – Shay E, Kai S, James E, Ousmane K, Alfie-Jay V, Alfie D,

One hundred other students have attended 1+ fitness sessions.

Mr McIlwraith – Teacher of PE & Maths

Extra-curricular upcoming fixtures

Upcoming events (after school except where indicated)

Year 8/9 'Fit's a Knockout' fitness competition on Tuesday 16th January at John Henry Newman.

Cross-country county championships involving some of our star runners on Saturday 20th January at Warley Woods.

Three further **under 15 basketball league matches** to be completed by half term, versus Tudor Grange Solihull, Arden, and John Henry Newman.

Football cup competitions continue – dates to be arranged.

Mr McIlwraith – Teacher of PE & Maths

Science Club

The Science Department is thrilled to present our weekly Science Club, an exclusive and highly sought-after opportunity for students. Our Science Club, an invite-only affair, promises an exhilarating journey through an array of scientific marvels, placing great emphasis on fun and discovery.

Every week, our Science Club delves into thrilling experiments, engaging students in hands-on activities that seamlessly blend entertainment with education. Recent enthralling experiments include:

Raft Building and Water Properties: Investigating the physical characteristics of water, students constructed rafts, plunging into the captivating realm of buoyancy and flotation.

DIY Speaker Construction: Merging our passion for music with scientific exploration, participants crafted their own speakers, unravelling the mysteries of sound propagation.

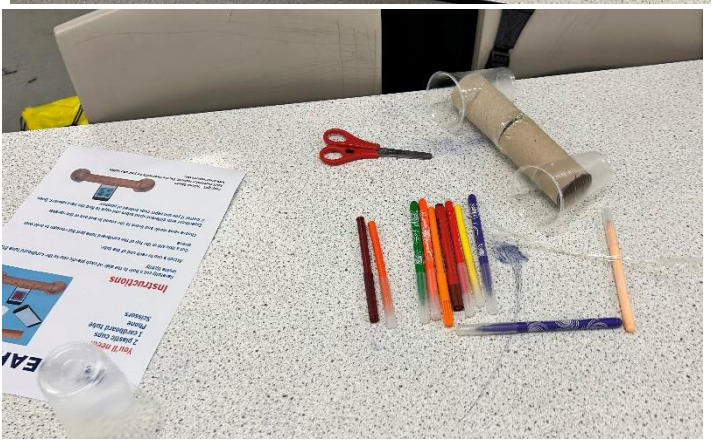
Parachute Design and Trial: Grasping the forces at play in the air, students fashioned and tested parachutes, observing the principles of air resistance from lofty heights.

Our Science Club sessions are meticulously designed to spark a fervour for science among participants. These hands-on experiences are crafted to arouse students' curiosity and nurture their scientific passions.

Keen to be part of the excitement and witness these scientific wonders firsthand? Don't hesitate to approach your teacher for more details. Who knows? There might be some thrilling prizes awaiting those who embark on this exhilarating scientific journey!



Science Club



Science Club



Thursday 23rd November

1 Mr Ion's favs	→	7	8	6	= 21	IV
2 The Kane one	→	6	8	5	= 19	
3 The winners	→	8	8	6	= 22	← II
4 The chairs	→	7	2	4	= 18	
5 Oliver C.	→	8	8	5	= 21	III
6 Kha'Sarah		8	8	4	= 20	
7 The Posters		8	8	7	= 23	← I
8 The Arians		8	7	5	= 20	
9 Lili's one		7	7	5	= 19	
10 Joshua's		8	8	5	= 21	II
		75				



Mr Ion – Teacher of Science & Science Club Lead
Mr Abbas – KS4 Leader in Science

Mr Hassan – Teachers of Science
Mr Ashraf – Faculty Leader for Science

Year Group Focus – Year 11

The year 11 prefects have been working hard in their roles throughout the school and supporting with the recent pupil council meetings. At these meetings the prefects supported students from every year group to gather students' views on a variety of school matters. This information has been related back to senior leaders so that they are aware of the views of the students in all year groups.

It is hard to believe that the year 11 students have already completed half their year 11 studies, with their exams starting in May. Students have completed one set of mock exams and will have a second set of mock exams in February. We know that many students have been taking advantage of the intervention sessions that have been put on for them, both after school and during lunchtimes.

We would encourage students to use GCSE pod regularly so that they are ready for the February mocks and their final exams in May, if anybody is having issues getting onto GCSE pod, please let the year team know so that it can be sorted out. GCSE pod is an amazing program that students can use to revise any of the subjects that they do in school. The program uses short videos followed by questions to help students with their revision.

There will be a year 11 parents evening in January, it will be great to see as many people there as possible. At the moment it is planned to be face to face, and hopefully this will be able to take place as last year was moved online due to the snow! At this evening there will also be a careers event where post 16 colleges will be present along with employers, trainers and universities.

The academy has recently appointed a careers advisor who is busy arranging appointments with year 11 students. We know that many year 11 students have already applied for college or 6th forms, which is great, if any year 11s have not applied for training or a course in September, we would encourage you to do this very soon. The year team are happy to support anybody with any questions you might have about applying for post 16 provision.

Finally, we are very much looking forward to the end of year Prom on 5th July and hope that as many year 11s will come and enjoy themselves together for the last time at the Drayton Manor Hotel.

Mrs Douglas & Mr Collins - Achievement Leader & Assistant Achievement Leader – Year 11

Student Leadership Team



Head Boy – Aaron

Head Girl – Fanta

Deputy Head Prefects



Charlee



Jahmelia



Hayley



Rebekah

Anti-Bullying Prefects



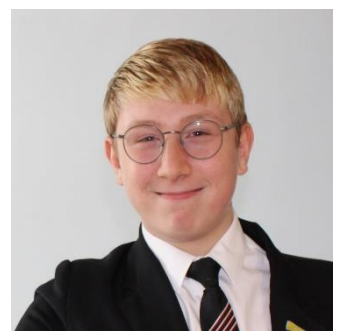
Katy



Josh



Miriella



Kaicey

Equality & LGBTQ+ Prefects

Community Prefects



Kobe



Leila



Jayden

Lead Prefects



Meredith



Ashlea

House Captains



LUTHER KING
Lily



PARKS
Nowaf



HAWKING
Sky



PANKHURST
Harmony

Not in photos – Equality & LGBTQ+ Prefect – Molly, Community Prefect – Taegan

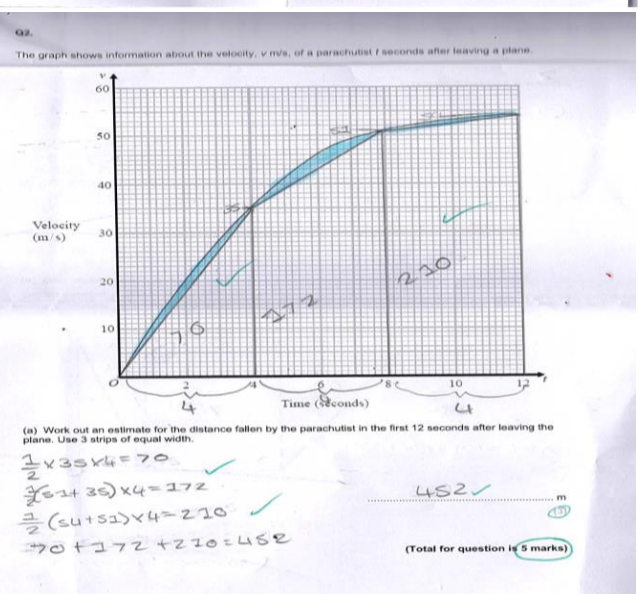
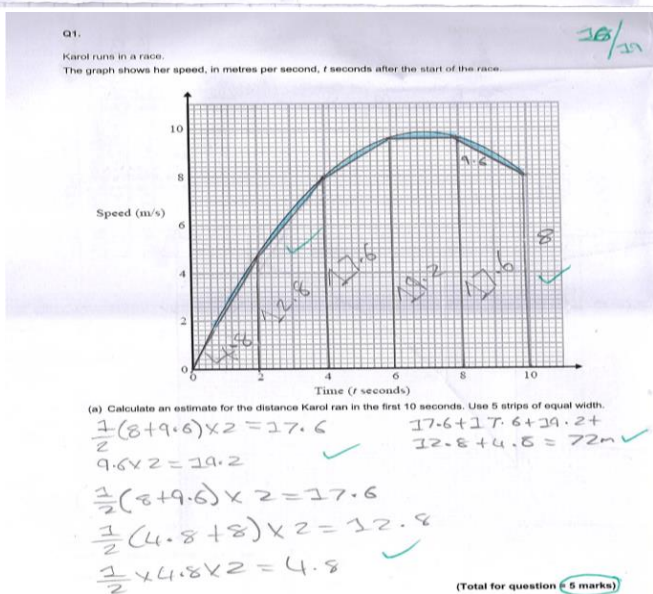
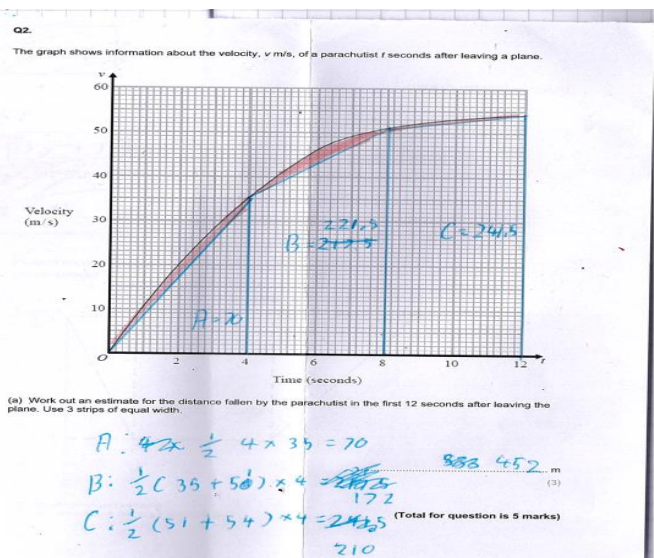
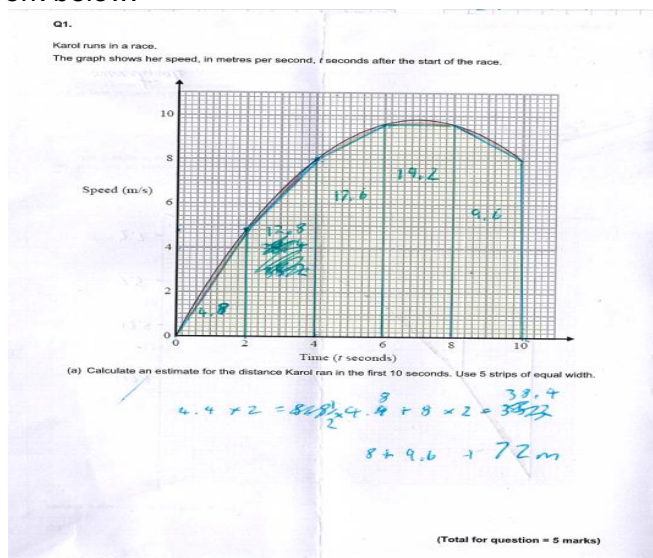
Subject Focus – Maths

Maths at KS4

This half term started off with year 11 completing the first of two sets of mock exams that will take place this year. Students sat a full set of GCSE papers, just as they will in the actual GCSE exams in the summer. It was really pleasing to see the level of maturity that our students approached the mocks with and their level of ambition, during what had the potential to be a challenging few weeks for them.

Attention now turns to year 10, who will complete formal assessments of their own in January. For most of them it will be the first time they have had the experience of a big exam hall. My message to year 10 is to show resilience, and just be the best version of yourself that you can be. We cannot ask any more.

In class year 11 higher students have been learning to estimate the gradient of a line and the area under a curve. This is a topic that as well as being important for GCSE maths will also stand them in good stead for progression to A-level maths, if that is the path that they choose to take. Have a look at some of the excellent work below:



Subject Focus – Maths

Maths at KS3

It has been an exciting term for maths in KS3. Across FMAT we have moved to a new curriculum, utilising resources from White Rose Maths, to ensure a greater focus on mathematical reasoning and correct mathematical vocabulary. Fun fact: there are more words on a GCSE Maths paper than there are on a GCSE English paper. This means that developing literacy and oracy in maths is just as important as it is in any other subject.

It is particularly pleasing to see our new year 7's settling in well. I have watched them grow in confidence by the day, the work they are producing is impressive to the point that you have to remind yourself that they are just 11 and 12 years old. Just take a look at some of the work that has been produced by our year 7 students this term:

Handwritten student work on grid paper. The left page shows a list of numbers in pairs: (8, 9), (13, 18), (15, 18), (14, 16), (20, 20), (7, 17), (5, 6), (8, 15), (10, 13), (8, 19), (8, 14). A date '6th December 2022' and 'Deep feed back' are written. A calculation shows a median of 14.5 for the numbers 12, 17, 14, 20. The right page shows a sequence 19, 23, 28, 37, X with an arrow pointing to 27, and another sequence 15, 28, 17, X with an arrow pointing to 16. There are also some scribbled-out numbers and calculations.

Handwritten student work on grid paper. It shows several mathematical problems:

- d) two hundredths = 2×10^{-2}
- e) $6 \div 100,000 = 0.00006 \times 10^{-6}$
- f) $0.000004 \times 100 = 0.0004 \times 10^{-4}$
- g) $2000 = 20$
- h) nine billionths = 9×10^{-10}

 A question asks: 'What is the same and what is different about each set of numbers?'

- a) 4×10^{-3} , 6×10^{-3} , 8×10^{-3} . Answer: 'Some different there all have a 0.001 but the thousandth are different number'.
- b) 5×10^4 , 5×10^1 , 5×10^6 . Answer: 'Some different The all have a 5 The 5 are in different places'.
- c) 8000 , 8×10^3 , 0.008 , 8×10^{-3} . Answer: 'Some different They have an 8 and 10^3 The 8 is before and after the decimal point.'

I understand some adults reading this will not have particularly fond memories of studying maths at school. However, we must ensure that we bring up the next generation with a positive mindset; what seems like just one throwaway negative comment can really have an adverse effect. Maths lessons are very different to what they were like when we were children, and the message is simple: Maths really can be fun!

Finally, I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and that the mighty Cambridge United can pick up a few much-needed wins.

Mr Trafford - Faculty Leader – Maths

You can find out more details about what we study in Maths and all other subjects at Smith's Wood [Curriculum Plans – Smith's Wood Academy \(smithswood.co.uk\)](http://smithswood.co.uk)

