

## EASTER NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2020

### You Are IT.

**‘Don’t call it an obstacle. Don’t call it a difficulty. Call it a challenge, because challenges are OPPORTUNITIES.’ - Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu**

By Hajera Bashir & Evie Towner (Year 12)

Wed 18 March 2020 14.35 GMT

Our experience in London last week at the ASGS conference in celebration of International Women’s Day 2020 was an experience that came with an unprecedented sense of reward. The chance to pick the brains of five not only successful, but also influential British women was an opportunity not taken lightly, which is why we would like to reflect on this experience by sharing it with all of you.

The first speaker of the day was Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu Phd MBA LLM MA LLB IAQ. Yes, we know what you’re thinking- we don’t know what half those initials stand for either, but what we do know is what they represent. A strong, successful and educated woman of colour who had the ability to surpass the expectations society placed onto her, and surpass she did. Her speech expertly as well as personally covered a range of issues affecting young girls, from standards of beauty to anxiety and demotivated mindsets. However, her most poignant statement had to be this, ‘Push yourself, because your 25/30/35 year-old self is rooting for YOU, and they aren’t going to stop. Do it for them.’ Our hardships will come and go, but the opportunities we gain from them will last forever, so don’t let them pass you by.

The morning continued with Ayla Goksel, CEO of Özyegin Social Investments and then, after a short break, with journalist and former personal adviser to Sheree Blair, Fiona Millar. Although Ayla Goksel’s presentation focused predominantly on her life-changing work for Turkish mothers and children and Fiona Millar’s on the topic of women in the workplace, their key message was essentially the same. We are still in our ‘advanced and modern’ society stuck in these entrenched gender norms where the lives of women are non-linear and unfortunately, do not follow the same smooth pattern as they do for men. As a result, it is essential that young women develop the resilience needed for adulthood as we will be changing direction almost constantly.

The same message was also enforced in the presentation given by Eleanor Mills, former editor of The Sunday Times magazine who stunned us all with her brutal honesty. The role she has played in forcing her company to recognise and cover stories displaying the atrocities endured by women of colour (such as the Nigerian girls abducted by Boko Haram) does not go unappreciated and although such acts should be more commonplace, her bravery in moving away from the ‘Vanilla Sisterhood’ (the name given to ‘white feminists’) is an inspirational model not only for other women in power to follow, but also for us young girls who may one day have the influence to make a difference in the way she has.

‘If you’re just trying to be liked, you won’t get far in business.’

The last presentation of the day was given by Lucinda Montefiore, one of the producers for Woman’s Hour. She honed in on the ever-growing issue of mental health amongst young girls by dwelling rather valiantly on her own battle with it. Her suggestions of developing a friendship with yourself and your internal voice were far from the advice usually given, which allowed us to welcome it with intrigue. We believe this advice is something we should all allow ourselves to try, free from embarrassment since often with diseases such as these, any possible ‘cure’ is welcome.

#### Key Quotes for reflection:

- ‘You are YOUR standard of beauty and excellence.’
- ‘It is not your job to make other people feel comfortable about who you are.’
- ‘The only person you should be competing with is YOU.’
- ‘If women aren’t thriving in society, their children will suffer.’
- ‘Train men and fathers to be ‘change agents.’
- ‘Be a woman with AGENCY.’

#### Recommended Books:

- ‘Becoming’- Michelle Obama
- ‘Our bodies, their battlefields’- Christina Lamb
- ‘Me and White Supremacy’- Laila Saad
- ‘Queenie’- Candice Carty-Williams



### Message from Dr Bruton

As we adapt to what is rapidly becoming the ‘new normal’ I would like to pay tribute to our parents for supporting their children in maintaining their learning and ensuring that they can benefit from the activities that have been made available by their teachers.

Our staff have been working tirelessly in order to devise new ways of supporting learning that are certainly not part of their everyday practice. In addition, our staff have readily volunteered to come in to school at QMHS or at QMGS to supervise the children of critical workers or those who are vulnerable, even during the Easter break.

Naturally a key anxiety for our Y11 and Y13 students is the allocation of their GCSE grades, information on this has been issued today by Ofqual. I will shortly be sending a letter to parents in these year groups that will clarify the school’s position and also how we will operate.

As to the other issues that will emerge over the coming weeks which will require our flexibility in managing in our current operational environment, rest assured that we will endeavour to do all that we can to ensure that our students are able to continue to learn and to prepare for when we are back together again.

In the meantime, stay safe and be kind to each other.

Best wishes

*AEBruton*

### STEM

Currently, women make up less than 15% of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) related careers. As a result, the organisation Girls Who Code was established, to inspire girls to remain interested in future career possibilities in technology. A group of KS3 students were invited to take part in a Girls Who Code Club at school and throughout the spring term, students learnt about inspirational women in STEM careers and created their own projects using coding. Some of the project themes included an interactive animation to help new Year 7 students settle in and an informative quiz about climate change.

The club was led by The University of Worcester and in school by Mrs Colley and the Year 11 STEM Ambassadors. There will be a celebration event later in the year, to recognise the fantastic achievements of all students involved and to showcase their brilliant projects.

Mrs Colley

### Careers Events

<https://sites.google.com/a/qmhs.org.uk/careers/careers-news>

QMHS careers site for parents and the Twitter address?

<http://bit.ly/qmhscareers>

Twitter @qmhscareers

Pupil Resources.

<http://bit.ly/qmhsstudentsite>

## LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE Poetry by Heart

After winning our school heats, Tyla and Evelyn were selected to represent QMHS in the regional stage of the UK's Poetry by Heart contest. Amazingly, both girls were selected as finalists, beating out hundreds of students from around the country.

Unfortunately, their appearance at the national finals in London was unable to go ahead, but further opportunities await them in October for National Poetry Day.



### Harry Potter Night

100 students from QMHS, QMGS and Aldridge school participated in our Harry Potter Book Night. We celebrated the magic of JK Rowling's stories and held our own Triwizard tournament. Activities included 'Catching Dragons', 'Retrieving the Golden Egg' and a Triwizard maze. One lucky winner also received a hamper full of Harry Potter goodies

### World Book Day

To celebrate World Book Day the library organised a range of activities. Our annual Book & Film Quiz was entered by students from all years. Students solved our 'murder in the library', took part in our Hunger Games inspired mini archery challenge, as well as a host of other book themed games & crafts. Year 7 pupils and form teachers also dressed as their favourite book character



### Year 9 Modern Foreign Languages Translation Bee 2020

This academic year, all the year 9 students who study European languages have been taking part in a translation bee in their first and second languages. They were given a set of vocabulary to help them build sentences. In the Autumn Term, students had to build sentences in the present tense. In the Spring Term, students had to build sentences in the future tense. Each student has one minute in which to translate as many sentences from English into the foreign language. Fortunately, some classes were able to complete the competition for the Spring Term before the school had to shut its doors.

Here is a list of the highest achievers:

In French, Sumaiyah was the highest scorer with 25 sentences! Muskaan, Malaika, Agnes, Afrah and Shreya also translated 20 or more sentences from English into French in this round.

In German, Nimrat was the highest scorer with 21 sentences! Riya and Jaya were not far behind with 19 sentences translated from English into German.

In Spanish, Sumaiyah was again the highest scorer with 22 sentences! Other high scorers in Spanish were Kya, Malaika and Ava.

Well done to Sumaiyah for being such a high scorer in the two languages that she is learning. This is an amazing achievement!

Congratulations to the whole of year 9 for the hard work that you have put in to making this competition a success!

### ART NEWS

We had 22 students work accepted into the final of the Walsall Young Artists competition this term which was fantastic. All entries were selected by a panel of judges and the final winners were picked by international artist Andrew Tift, here is his website <http://www.andrewtift.co.uk>. 8 schools entered and 156 artworks were on display.

We had some overall winners;

Lucy Y9 won the 14 - 16 categories with her 'Green jacket Portrait'

Special commendations go to Holly Y10 and Zainab Y10 in this age group

Sienna Y9 came second in the 12-13 category with Trapped Octopus

Special commendations go to Zoe and Maithilee in this age group

Many thanks to all students who took part and all the form tutors for promoting this. The response from the girls was overwhelming. Art is such a big part of the school and it is very impressive to see so many of our girls getting involved.

## Academy Conference, Oxford University

On Friday 6th March, we were given the opportunity to attend an Academy Conference held at the Oxford Town Hall, where Mrs Connell joined 13 of us to engage in a variety of lectures.

Firstly, we were very lucky to experience a lecture from Dr Christopher O'Neill, a lecturer, from Oxford University, who discussed the science behind happiness. He argued that happiness, as we all know, is complex, and statistically decreasing in the UK where 14% are mentally ill and a further 17% are 'languishing'. We attempted to answer some thought-provoking questions, such as why be happy? As well as deciphering whether we can measure something as subjective as happiness objectively. O'Neill's lecture also built upon the theory of 'growth mindsets' which we already implement in our learning at school and that they can lead to improved wellbeing, better mental health, and lower levels of stress.

There was a wide range of lectures throughout the day, each one covering a different subject. One was about the philosophy of love and relationships, where we discussed the impact of 'the symposium', which was written by Plato. It explored the different views of love from a range of philosophers such as Phaedrus, Eryximachus, Agathon and most importantly Socrates, and Diotima's ladder of love.

There was a lecture based around Shakespeare and the four humours, and how to understand human behaviour in Shakespeare's plays. The key message was that an individual was balanced if they have the following four humours equally distributed: anger, melancholy, optimism, and apathetic. To understand this, we explored different characters in some of Shakespeare's works such as Hamlet and Duke Orsino.

Julie Arliss held a lecture based around epistemology, a new concept for us based around the following questions: what do we know? And can we know that we are right? We explored different views; Aristotle argued that knowledge is obtained through sense experience; Kant argued that we can have knowledge of how things appear, but not about how things are in themselves. All of these points of views were most definitely eye-opening and provoked so many questions!

The conference concluded with a debate to argue whether a healthy mind was more important than a healthy body. Through this debate, we were all able to expand our knowledge, understand the importance of considering both sides of the argument and reach a judgement ourselves. After a riveting debate, the majority of the hall concluded that a healthy mind was more important, as although your body is a vessel to the mind, an unhealthy mind can have a negative impact on both your mental and physical health. We felt that this debate was a wonderful opportunity to hear many different ideas, but also left us with some very insightful thoughts to ponder upon afterwards.

To conclude, the Academy Conference was a rewarding experience, and truly thought provoking; it presented endless concepts that we are still pondering over now. We would recommend the experience to anyone who enjoys expanding their knowledge, evaluating a range of options, and debating different theories.

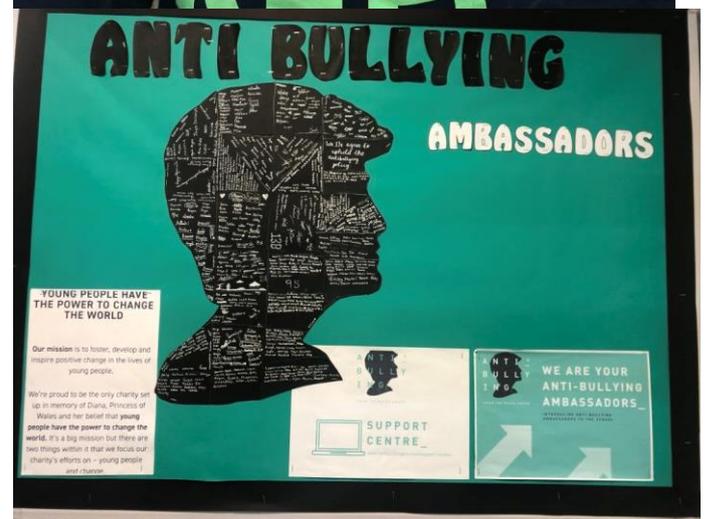
Khushi 11S  
Pavan 11B

## *Anti-bullying Ambassadors Easter update*

This term has been really busy for the ambassadors and a really successful one.

Ten ambassadors were sent on some upskill training at the start of March, where they were able to showcase what we have been doing as a school to other students from the West Midlands. Mrs York and Mrs Prosser explained that the students "were an excellent example of the brilliant work Queen Mary's students are doing" We were able to inspire other schools at this training but also get some inspiration for our next steps which is really exciting and I hope students take on board some of the tasks we will be asking them all to do in the next term.

Since November 2019 we have been working hard to earn one of our badges through the Diana award and we started the application for the Well-being badge to reflect everything we do in school. In February we successfully gained the Well-being badge and we were commended on our hard work and brilliant creativity, especially in regards to our work in anti-bullying week. It has been brilliant to see the students take on board the ambassadors activities and plans and show how important they are within the school community! Well done team! Further good news is that Isabel in Year 10 has successfully gained a place on The Diana Awards Youth Ambassador Board. This is an excellent achievement and we are extremely proud of Isabel who has worked extremely hard for both the school and excited to see what she will achieve in this role!



# Student Welfare and Safeguarding

As we come to something of a strange end of term we are all getting used to looking after our families and ourselves in a way that we are not used to. It is important that we enjoy a break over the Easter holidays even if that is going to take a different form to what we are used to.

As we are spending more time in each other's 'pockets' or more time online here are a few top tips and reminders on how we can make sure we all keep safe.

## **Staying safe online**

It is inevitable that we are spending more time online as we are both completing school work and using it as a means of socialising whilst following the social distancing rules. We are sure like different staff teams at QMHS, students and parents have tried new and different means of communication over the last 2 weeks. Whether it be Microsoft teams, Google Meet, Zoom, WhatsApp, Snapchat, tiktok or others! It has been both a challenge and a giggle. I for one have used 3 of these for the first time ever! It was strange at first, but I guess a lot of things feel strange at the moment and we will be slowly adjusting to them becoming the norm for the time being.

**Unfortunately, there are still some very unscrupulous people out there who will be using the opportunity to prey on unsuspecting people and there is predicted to be an increase in Child Sexual Exploitation during this period of social isolation. Therefore, both students and parents please, please be extra cautious over what and who you and your children are interacting with online**

If you have any concerns about online interactions further advice can be found through the following websites:

[Childline](#) for support

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content

[CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

There is also expected to be a rise in Domestic Violence as we all spend more time at home together. As much as this is unthinkable for many, there are families where this does happen. If you are worried about Domestic Violence in your own home or for members of your family and friends, there is support. This can be found from Back Country Women's Aid on 01922 649569 or by phoning 999 in an emergency.

We continue to have a school safeguarding email account should you be worried about any of our students. This is: [safeguarding@qmhs.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@qmhs.org.uk)

**Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs Debbie Connell who can be contacted on 07395395711**

Further safeguarding advice can be found on our website

## **Keeping mentally healthy**

When we had to close the school we did signpost support helplines and websites including Childline, Young Minds and Anna Freud. Our Educational Psychologist has kindly signposted some further resources which are attached to this newsletter.

On a very practical note:

Talk to each other - Try and stick to a routine - No one is judging you - Be Nice - Be Happy

**Have some fun**

Our pastoral staff are always happy to help. Please do get in touch with us if you need some help or are worried about your child.

## **Community Spirit**

Getting behind our NHS and front line workers is more important than ever. We know many of you have joined in with the NHS Big Applause last week and last night. What an amazing way to come together as communities and show support for each other in these times. We are all being affected differently and it is important that we remain united at this time. Many of you will have family members who are key workers or being affected by Coronavirus. Our thoughts are with you all.

and show support for each other in these times. We are all being affected differently and it is important that we remain united at this time. Many of you will have family members who are key workers or being affected by Coronavirus. Our thoughts are with you all.



### Support for Key Workers

The school has been working in collaboration with QMGS to offer support for the students whose both parents are key workers and require supervision for their children. This will continue over the Easter holidays as below:

Mon 6<sup>th</sup> – Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> April at QMGS

Tues 14<sup>th</sup> – Fri 17<sup>th</sup> April at QMHS

The provision will be from 9am – 3pm at both sites and there will be a member of staff from both schools present.

Should you require use of this supervision and have not already communicated this with us please let us know via [care@qmhs.org.uk](mailto:care@qmhs.org.uk)

### Parental support

We have been made aware of a parental workshop being delivered by happy twins to help with the stress of home schooling. It is on Monday 6th April at 6.30pm for 1 hour. If you are looking for some top tips on how to manage this new situation take a look at the website and register your interest. <https://www.tappytwins.com/free-parental-session/>

The link to register is <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/v5Uqce-grjkrIccxLPbTQByCfOfOnZYalw>

## **Reports**

As per our usual reporting cycle we will be publishing reports for Y7-10 and Y12 today (Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April). Please note that Form Tutor comments were written before the schools were closed and so some comments relating to the summer term may well seem incongruous at this point.

In addition, staff absence at the point of the compilation and entry of the data will result in a few gaps. These are unavoidable as parents will appreciate.

Understandably, given the advice published by Ofqual, we do not propose to publish reports for Y11 and Y13.

AE Bruton