



Parent Bulletin

6th December 2024

The Vyners Staff Conference is always a highlight of the academic year for the teachers and support staff at the school. This year's theme for the conference was belonging and over the two days staff explored the many different ways that children and adults develop a sense of belonging within an organisation, group or community. This is a current theme nationally in education as schools seek to ensure that all students feel that school is a place that they belong so that they attend every day and are motivated to learn, and that adults feel that working in a school setting is meaningful and rewarding for them.

Our keynote speaker on Thursday morning was former rugby player and motivational speaker, Ed Jackson. In 2017, Ed was told, after breaking his neck in an accident, that he would probably never walk again. However, despite the effects of the accident leaving him with life changing injuries and permanent disabilities, Ed now spends a significant amount of his time climbing hills and mountains and has created a charity that supports people with disabilities and spinal injuries primarily by enabling them to access an incredible support network. The charity is called Millimetres to Mountains (M2M) and details of their work and support network can be found here ([click here](#)). As an aside, Ed's story has been dramatised in a film documentary, *The Mountain Within Me*. A trailer for the film can be found here ([click here](#)).



The theme of belonging underpinned the two days as we continue to receive input from a range of practitioners including the school's Occupational Therapist, Geri Pinnock, our Educational Psychologist, Jane Hayward as well as the Educational Psychologist and friend of the school, Dr Martijn van der Spoel. The teaching staff, learning support team and Hearing Impairment department also worked incredibly hard over the two days to further develop ideas around inclusive teaching and learning at the school (adaptive teaching) as it is also incredibly important that all of our students can have a genuine sense of achievement in the classroom so that they feel that they genuinely belong and are ultimately successful well beyond their time at Vyners.

I would like to thank all of the staff, guest speakers and professionals for their input across the two days. I am extremely excited about the potential impact that this conference should have on the students at the school.

Now that the staff conference has passed and December has begun, there are a number of seasonal activities taking place over the weeks ahead.

On Wednesday 4th December, we had the pleasure of hosting the Hillingdon regional finals of the Jack Petchey Speak Out competition. Vyners were given the honour of hosting the event due to the fact that Leena Amin (11H) won last year's event, and it was Leena herself who acted as the host during the evening introducing each speaker onto the stage.

All of the students who represented their individual schools did a wonderful job, but I do have to particularly congratulate the two Vyners entrants, Zeus Ginwalla (10W) and Otto Keyte (10J) who were both excellent on the evening, with Otto placing second overall, only marginally losing out to a fantastic speech from the representative from Douay Martyrs.



Thank you to the Jack Petchey Foundation and the Speaker's Trust for their continued support for this brilliant initiative.

I must also thank the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Colleen Sullivan for supporting the event on the evening as well as our very own Miss Duran, Assistant Subject Leader for English for all of her work in coordinating the Vyners workshops as well as the event on Tuesday evening. I know that there are a number of other staff and students that Miss Duran has thanked for their support in her piece in this update.



On Thursday 5th December, Vyners hosted its annual Senior Citizens' Christmas Party. It was another wonderful event where we had the opportunity to invite senior members of the Hillingdon-wide community into the school. After settling down to tea, sandwiches and cake, our guests were treated to an afternoon of entertainment including musical performances, a Christmas quiz, a session of bingo and a Christmas sing-a-long. This continues to be a wonderful Vyners tradition that was established many years ago but it still inspires so many of our students to engage with senior members of the community. Our staff and students were wonderful ambassadors throughout the afternoon and they have my sincere thanks for making it such a special occasion for everyone present.



On Wednesday 11th December, Vyners will be hosting the Vanguard Learning Trust Christmas Carol Concert at St Lawrence's Church, Pinner. The carol concert is an opportunity for students within the five trust schools and one associate school (Oak Farm) to come together to celebrate Christmas together. The event will commence at 1.30pm. Parents and carers of participating children are welcome to attend. Seats in the church may be taken from 1.15pm onwards.

On Monday 16th December, the Vyners Christmas Concert will take place in the school hall, commencing at 6pm. I hope that as many parents, carers and friends of the school are able to attend as possible as I know that Mr Cullum, his team and the students have been working incredibly hard in preparation for what should be a special event.

Annual Awards Evening

Our Annual Awards Evening will take place on Thursday 12th December starting at 6pm in the school hall. I am delighted that our guest speaker this year will be Luke Stockwell. Luke is a Vyners Alumni and former Head Boy. After a very successful seven years at Vyners, Luke progressed to university where, amongst other achievements, he gained a master's degree in broadcast journalism. Luke is now enjoying his career as a Production Coordinator at the TNT Sports channel, which is a role that takes him around the UK and Europe managing the production of a range of sports programming including international rugby and champions league football. Luke was always a fantastic role model for the younger students during his time at the school and I am sure that both parents and students will enjoy learning more about his journey during the evening.



Luke Stockwell

Christmas Lunch Arrangements - Tuesday 17th December

I am delighted to confirm that the school Christmas lunch will be on Tuesday 17th December 2024. Our catering team will once again be offering a festive meal of turkey and all the trimmings. There will also be a vegan Wellington option. The cost of the meal (main plus pudding) with unlimited squash for students is £2.93.

Students can buy a ticket at the canteen tills, or you may reserve a ticket via the new offer on sQuid. Where tickets are purchased remotely by parents, we will issue students with their ticket in tutorial the day before. Students eligible for free school meals may request their ticket by asking Mrs Tighe or Mrs McLaren.

As we feed over 500 people on the day, pre-booking is essential. **Students must reserve / pay for their place by 10th December.** Other food options will be available on the day for students not wanting to take part

Finally, this week, I would like to wish all of our students in Years 11 and 13 the very best of luck in their trial examinations. Whilst we know that some students will be more prepared than others, I think that it is worth reminding them that they should give it their best and learn from their mistakes so that they are able to avoid similar pitfalls in the externally assessed exams in the summer. It should also be noted that for written exams, the factor that makes the biggest difference is the use of practice exam papers; marking answers using the mark schemes and fixing their mistakes.

Good luck to each and every student!

Gary Mullings
Headteacher

Jack Petchey Regional Final

On Wednesday 4th December we hosted the Jack Petchey Speak Out Regional Final. It was a fantastic night with 17 talented speakers from across secondary schools in Hillingdon, all showing incredible skill, determination, and courage. Please join me in congratulating both Otto and Zeus in Year 10 for reaching the Regional Final and giving thoughtful, funny, and impassioned speeches about the importance of formal language and how to endure grief. Leena in Year 11 also did a brilliant job as the MC for the evening.

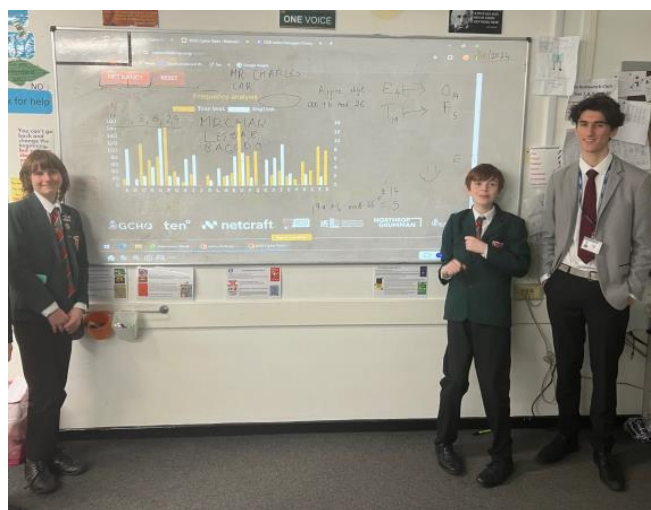
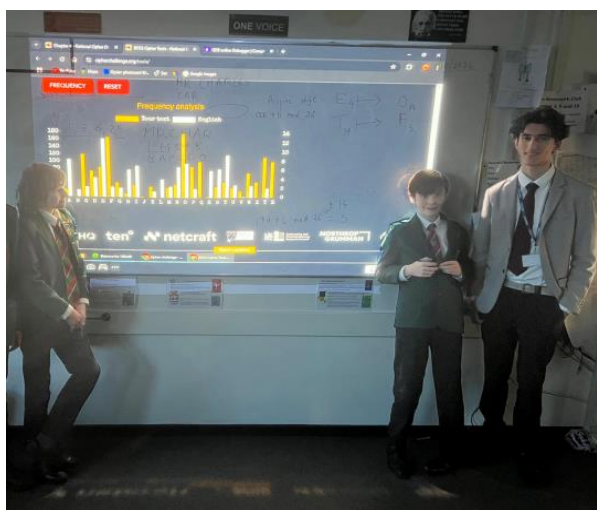
It was a tough decision from the panel of judges, and I am delighted to share that Otto came Second! The overall winner of the event was a speaker from Douay Martyrs Catholic School. All speakers should be immensely proud of their achievements, also recognised by the Mayor of Hillingdon, Councillor Colleen Sullivan, who presented certificates to all.

I would also like to thank the following students for volunteering their time to ensure the smooth running of the final: Layan (11P), Avomo (11H), Mahdi (10F), Siya (10W), Jason (10F) for guiding visitors; Marli (11J) and Julie (11W) for being official timekeepers of the competition; and Farah (12M) and Mya (12P) for their incredible singing performances as the event entertainment. A special thank you also to Mr Mullings for opening the event and to all teachers and school staff that helped make the night a success.

Ms Duran, Assistant Subject Leader, English

National Cipher Challenge

Led by Sixth Former Ross Bell and Mr Rahme, a few students have been cracking ciphers as part of the National Cipher Challenge run by the University of Southampton and sponsored by GCHQ, EPSRC, Trinity College Cambridge and Northrup Grumman. With progressively harder 'chapters', the students, helped by Mr Bell and Mr Rahme, solve encoded letters that follow an intriguing storyline — 'The Mystery of the Silver Bullet'. The students have been taught how to crack many types of ciphers using maths beyond the GCSE curriculum, such as modulo arithmetic, and have also been taught to use Python to decipher messages quickly. The students have also learnt to think laterally and try new ideas to work towards the problem as a team. In the pictures below, there are some Year 8 students with Ross Bell in front of a frequency analysis graph, one of many tools they've used to crack these cryptic puzzles.



Mr Rahme, Teacher of Maths

VLT Sixth Form Lecture Series - Neuroscience Lecture

We were delighted to take a group of Sixth Form biologists and psychologists to an insightful talk led by Dr Lecky at Ruislip High School. The talk was part of a newly formed VLT Sixth Form Lecture Series that we have set up within the Trust and is a collaboration between the two schools. It was fascinating to hear about the workings of the brain and how important it is to keep our minds active. Vyners students engaged by both asking and answering questions on the topic, showing a keen interest in the field of neuroscience - they were a credit to our school. Students left with a plethora of super curricular reading and listening recommendations which will no doubt support any future university applications for neuroscience, medicine or psychology.

Mrs Coyle, Head of Sixth Form

Sports Update

Borough Cross Country

As always Borough Cross Country was a success. The weather was perfect, despite the very boggy field at the bottom. Special consideration for our medalists Elsie Fitzgerald (Y8) who came 1st in the Y8/9 category and Dylan Lewis (Y10) who also came 1st in the Y10/11 category. Oliver Taylor (Y7) also came 3rd in the Y7 boys race.

We had some fantastic top 10 results and they automatically qualify through to Middlesex in January: Sam Lynch (Y7 - 8th), Bobby Cornish (Y7 - 9th) and Keira Wickenden (Y9 - 10th). It is also very likely that our 11 place athletes will also qualify nearer the time so a shout out to them - Hattie Kestell (Y7), Leo Da Costa (Y9) and Bella Da Costa Lima (Y9).

Well done to all students involved.



Ms Hawes, Teacher of PE

U13 Girls Football - FA Schools Cup

The U13 Girls football team travelled to Kings Langley to play Ashlyns in Round 4 of the cup on Tuesday. The girls battled hard against an equally matched team and a 1-1 draw led to extra time. Unfortunately, Ashlyns scored in the last minute of extra time securing their place in round 5. As this is a national cup the competition started out with 494 teams and the exit in round 4 means Vyners girls secured a spot in the top 64 in the country. Goal scorer on the day was Libby Scarisbrick.

Ms John, Teacher of PE

Autumn Term Key Dates

Thursday 12th December	Awards Evening
Monday 16th December	Vyners Christmas Concert
Tuesday 17th December	Christmas Lunch (tickets must be purchased in advance)
Friday 20th December	Term ends (12.20pm finish)

Spring Term Key Dates

Monday 6th January	Staff Development Day - school closed to students
Tuesday 7th January	Terms starts
17th - 21st February	Half Term
Friday 4th April	Term ends (3pm finish)