



Alban Academies Trust

# Keeping in Touch with the AAT

www.albanacademiestrust.org.uk  
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SUMMER TERM 2019  
ISSUE 002

JOINT AAT NEWS

## AAT MIDDLE LEADER CONFERENCE



On our return from the summer half term break, we moved straight into the second AAT Middle Leader Conference. As in 2018, the conference was held at the Cromwell Hotel, Stevenage which gave excellent service and accommodation. The conference provides the opportunity for middle leaders from Verulam, Sandringham and Ridgeway to consider issues of common interest and planning for the future.

We had over 90 middle and senior staff from the three schools present, covering all areas of the curriculum. To get things started, there was an ice-breaker activity led by Steve Booth and Caroline Maddocks from Ridgeway – thank you Steve and Caroline for this! We then moved in to a short welcome from Claire Oakes, Director of School Improvement for the AAT followed by a session on Vision and Ethos from Alan Gray,

CEO. Our vision is to create a multi-academy trust where all schools can support and challenge each other to improve, and as a result, become even better.

Anthony Flack (Verulam), Mark Nicholls (Sandringham) and Lucy Hyde (Ridgeway) then delivered a session on Changing lives: curriculum, student progression and skills development to all middle leaders. This involved consideration of the new Ofsted framework and how our curriculum intent should be developed as a result. Middle leaders worked with their counterparts from the other schools on this exercise.

Following this, and after a short break we split into individual school groups to take a fresh look at quality assurance and self-evaluation. These were led by Jackie Smith (Ridgeway), Fergal Moane (Sandringham) and Mark Freakley (Verulam).

Jed Whelan (Ridgeway) then gave an inspiring evaluation of the conference before we moved to the bar area for canapés and then a formal meal.

This was an excellent conference that has set us up for the coming year. It reinforced relationships across the trust and helped us look at the bigger picture. A massive thank you to Claire Oakes, Sarah Warren, Tina Crafford and all the other staff who worked so hard to make this event a success. Well done everyone!





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## JOINT AAT NEWS

### AAT ATTENDANCE OFFICER INTERVIEWS FROM A STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE

On Wednesday 26 June I had the pleasure of attending Sandringham School and be a part of the recruitment process for an Attendance Improvement Officer to work for the AAT. It was great for me to have this experience and to be part of the process and it gave me a clear insight into how the interview process works.

Once this process had concluded I had the opportunity to join lessons at Sandringham. It was brilliant to see how the students and teachers work together in such a positive environment. It was clear to see how the schools can work together to give students additional opportunities and I am very proud as a Ridgeway student to have had this experience.

*Abigail Wadsworth, Yr9, Ridgeway Academy*

Last Wednesday I got the opportunity to meet and collaborate with students from Verulam boys school and Ridgeway Academy. Together we conducted a student led interview to find a new attendance Improvement officer who would work with students across the three schools. This was a very interesting experience as I had taken part in interviews before, but not one with students from other schools. It was intriguing to learn the role and significant impact that the officers have on so many of our students who have truanted. The candidates all possessed a fierce motivation to make a difference and better students school experience, so that they too can go on to achieve. The candidates talked about the importance of including parents in the process of getting students back into school and always continuing to support them when attending school. Overall it was important for me to realise the vital work of the officers in the school community as they are bettering the lives of many students and giving them a positive outlook, we should be proud of all their hard work.

*Penny Kyriacou, Yr 10, Sandringham*

### SIXTH FORM INDUCTION

#### SANDRINGHAM

On Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 June, Sandringham and Verulam held the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Induction along with Beaumont School. Over 600 students attended across the three schools. The Induction ran simultaneously across all schools to provide all students opportunities to take sample lessons in their chosen courses. There was also extensive information provided which explained enrichment and extra-curricular activities, and to help students to prepare for life in the 6<sup>th</sup> form. The students were very engaged and it was great to see their enthusiasm for the next stage in their education. We look forward to working with the students from September following a well earned Summer break.

#### RIDGEWAY ACADEMY

On Wednesday 25 June until Friday 27 June our new Year 12 cohort came to get a 'taste' of their new sixth form life. All students arrived for a welcome breakfast and information covering what their week would include and what life of a 6<sup>th</sup> form student is all about.

Taster sessions were attended in Sociology, Law, Health and Social care, Biology and many more. It was the perfect opportunity to explore subjects especially if they had not embarked on these at GCSE. We welcomed students from other consortium schools and Ridgeway students enjoyed their first experience of travelling to another school and exploring new subjects.

#### VERULAM

Students successfully completed their induction to sixth-form study on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July. They all experienced typical A level and BTEC in each of their chosen subjects alongside insights into the range of enrichment activities offered through the BSV consortium. Students met their pastoral tutors who will act as academic mentors through post-16 study. We wish all the students a splendid summer break and look forward to seeing them on GCSE results day.





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**Mayor Barbara Fitzsimons visited Ridgeway Academy** on Friday 29 March to recognise and support students with their efforts to show a positive growth mindset.

Since the beginning of the school year our Assistant Headteacher, Caroline Maddocks, has championed the students having a positive mindset, which enables them to be more successful in school because they are happier in their learning.



Students demonstrate this by gaining 'Force points' which means they have showed focus, resilience, optimism, energy and creativity. They are then awarded badges for the degree to which they have achieved these.

The Mayor was able to award Silver Badges to five students and Platinum badges to Rhianna Russell and Tom Savage who have excelled in their positive approach to life. The Mayor also explained what her role was in the local community and how she overcame her own shyness to be able to make public speeches.

Councillor Fitzsimon commented;

"It was a privilege to see how our young people today are prepared to persevere when faced with challenges and I was delighted to see their efforts recognised."



### MASTERCLASS SESSION

Also on Friday 29 March a group of 30 Year 11 mathematicians attended a masterclass session over at Sandringham School. Mr Oakes and Mr Booth said the students were engaged and positive throughout the day, and they accomplished all the targets set for them. This was a brilliant example of the way two schools are able to support each other through our work in the multi academy trust.

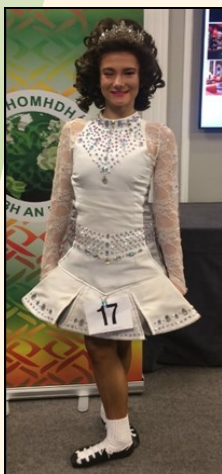




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### CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS

Huge congratulations go to Katie Drage who played for Welwyn Rugby Club in the national girls' under 15 final over the May Bank Holiday weekend. They played Barkers Butts RFC from Coventry and despite a huge effort were just pipped at the post in a 12-20 defeat. We are so proud of her.



A big well done goes to Jessica Periera who recently attended the World Championships of Irish Dancing in Killarney. In her words, "I danced to the best of my abilities but unfortunately didn't recall. But I had an amazing time and enjoyed every second of it. I can't wait to go again next year!" This is another example of the positive growth mindset we are encouraging our students to have. It fits in with the old Japanese saying, ..... "Nana korobi ya oki." Literally it means 'seven falls, eight getting up.' This speaks to the concept of resilience. No matter how many times you get knocked down, you get up again. Even if you should fall one thousand times, you just keep getting up and trying again.

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A METROPOLITAN POLICE OFFICER - *Billie Richardson, Year 7*



I was recently very fortunate to be invited to spend a day with the Metropolitan police as part of their celebration of 11 years of women in the force. I was able to sample a day in the life of a Metropolitan police officer and it was fascinating.

The first activity I did was a briefing session for what the day would entail. I was then kitted out with some of the equipment they have to use during the course of their duties. I was then assigned to a police squad and was able to participate in a range of different interactive activities.

One of the best things we did was to abseil down a very tall building which is part of their physical training programme. We had to stand on the edge and walk down the wall but it was really tricky because there were metal pipes in the way.

The last thing I did on the day was to watch the policemen in the firing range. They had the task of hitting different targets and we were not allowed to take photographs and had to follow the safety instructions.

They then awarded me a special constables certificate! I had a really fun and interesting time.





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## CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD DISCUSSION MORNING

On Monday 13 May we took a group of Year 7 **Ridgeway Readers** and our two Year 10 Work Experience students on a trip to Marlborough Science Academy in St Albans. We were there to take part in the Children's Book Award Discussion Morning. Our Ridgeway students joined students from Marlborough, Sandringham School and Beaumont School to discuss the three shortlisted titles. This annual event is always fun and this year proved no exception.

Mrs Nixon the Marlborough Librarian welcomed us and divided us into groups, mixing up the adults and students from each school to take part in an icebreaker activity before we began to discuss this year's shortlisted titles: ***Armistice Runner*** by Tom Palmer, ***The Light Jar*** by Lisa Thompson and ***The Storm Keeper's Island*** by Catherine Doyle. While the votes were counted, the students took part in various activities, creating bookmarks and other artwork and written work. Each of these pieces was carefully collected at the end and they will be assembled into portfolios which will be presented to the shortlisted authors at the Children's Book Award Ceremony in London on Saturday 8 June. This is a very prestigious event and only four students from Hertfordshire have been invited to attend the Awards Ceremony... more of this in a future edition of Ridgeway News!



*Tamsyn Murray with the Year 7 Ridgeway Readers, Year 10 Work Experience students Kamilla and Dominic*

We also had an extremely interesting talk by author Tamsyn Murray. She gave an insight into her work as an author before explaining how her book ***Instructions for a Second-Hand Heart*** came to be. A question and answer session followed.



**Jayson Lester Year 7** On Monday 13 May, Mrs Lawrence our Librarian took a group of Year 7 Ridgeway Readers to Marlborough Science Academy in St Albans to take part in the Children's Book Award Discussion Morning. Miss Picariello drove us there and back in the school minibus.

We had to read the three shortlisted titles, *The Light Jar*, *Armistice Runner* and *The Storm Keeper's Island*. The event had book discussions of all of them, and a Meet & Greet with author Tamsyn Murray. I was able to buy her book and get it signed.

**Kamilla Kepa and Dominic Sutton Year 10 Work Experience Students** On Monday 13th May we started our Work Experience week by going on a library trip with Mrs Lawrence our Librarian and a group of Year 7s.

The trip was exhilarating, fun and interesting. We talked to other people and asked what they think about the books and which one is their favourite. We worked as part of a team and made new friends while we enjoyed different types of tasks.

**Nellie Ntasi Year 7** On the 13th of May some children including myself went to The Marlborough Science Academy Library. It was filled with fun and exciting activities and delicious snacks. The Marlborough Academy held discussions for the following books: *The Light Jar*, *Armistice Runner* and *The Storm Keeper's Island*. We also attended an author talk by Tamsyn Murray where she talked about her books and inspiration. To end the day off she did a book signing for a few of her books.

To conclude, this was a spectacular event and I would recommend it to all.



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## BRITISH BIOLOGY OLYMPIAD

Last term, seven of our Year 13 Biology students competed against approximately 9500 students around the UK in the Post 16 British Biology Olympiad. Jay Leigh, Matthew Small, Caitlin Shelbourne, Kim Mester, Stan MacMurray, James Panayis and Jessie Forsythe had to complete two online 45 minute tests and the top performing students in the competition had the potential to be awarded Gold, Silver, Bronze, Highly Commended or Commended certificates.



Collectively our students achieved a brilliant 2 Golds, 1 Silver and 3 Bronze awards, and James was additionally selected to compete for a place in the UK team. This involved a residential trip to Warwick University where 16 students completed practical assessments and further tests, all in a bid to be selected in the final four.

We are delighted to announce that James secured his place and will compete in the International Olympiad in Hungary, this summer. Over the next few months, James will attend further training sessions in London with his

fellow team members, before representing the UK in the International competition. Congratulations to all our Biologists and good luck to James in Hungary!

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Each Spring, lower 6th students apply for the various leadership positions on offer to them. These positions include Head Girl and Head Boy, together with Deputies, Senior Members of the Executive Team and Senior Prefects. Following a lengthy process, I am delighted to announce the following appointments.

**Head Girl:** Elena Kite

**Head Boy:** Alex du Preez

**Deputy Head Girls:** Kristen Kemp-Robertson, Eleanor Brown, Anna Leeson.

**Deputy Head Boys:** Jubril Adigun, Joel Hodgson-Stokes, Jack Peacock

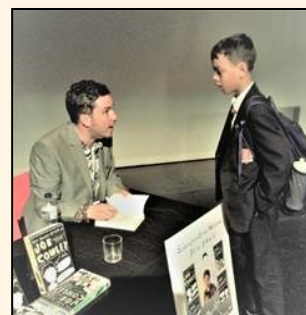
Many congratulations to all of the students who applied. It was a pleasure to meet them all and witness high-quality interviews from our senior students. Well done everyone and particularly to Elena and Alex and their deputies.

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## AUTHOR VISIT – YEAR 7

On Thursday 2 May we had an author visit from Ben Davis, who spoke to the whole of Year 7 in the SandPit, during session 2 (Lifelong Learning) It was an entertaining talk with readings from two of his books and the Year 7s created a character which was drawn onto a flipchart. Ben Davis writes the series “Joe Cowley” series.

This author visit was won by Renee Browne in 7T when she entered a writing competition





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## CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS

The County Athletics Championships were recently held at Jarman Park with 28 students selected to represent Sandringham at this level, which is the most we have had in a number of years, if not ever. In some very tough conditions we had some outstanding results on the day. We had 3 county champions in Bryce Breen (Inter Boys Pole Vault), Harrison Taylor (Junior Boys Javelin) and Joseph Beardon (Junior Boys High Jump). We also had a number of people in the finals and making the podium, including Will Jackson, Margot Koppe, Tomer Cohen, Jaiden Hall, Elliot Diprose, Damola Bolarin, Welsey Mudziviri among others.

Well done to all of these students who participated at this competition.

We also had news that Bryce Breen and Elliot Breen have both been selected to represent Hertfordshire at the English Schools Championships in July. A great honour and we wish them all the luck in preparing for this.



Huge Congratulations to the U13s St Alban's Football club Victoria team who competed in the recent Isle of Wight football tournament and came first!

Sandringham school pupils in the team are Ed Askam, Zac Davies and Ashton Latter. Well done, boys, what a great achievement.

Olivia Clarke 8SH, won Regional and County Gold in individual figures at the East of England Synchronised Swimming Champs on 22 June.

She was also part of a team competing in their first event and won a County Bronze for their routine. Congratulations, Olivia!



Congratulations to Tilly Logan, 10T, who has done a fantastic job volunteering for the St Albans Special Olympics. Tilly helps disabled riders at the equestrian stables at Oaklands College, Hatfield Road in St Albans where she has spent the last year assisting with tacking up horses, and leading or side-walking with the disabled riders.

## THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD UPDATE

On Monday 13 May, eight of our Year 13s attended a Gold Award Presentation ceremony at Buckingham Palace, accompanied by proud parents and Mr Swann.

They had lovely weather and enjoyed their time at this prestigious event. We are all immensely proud of their achievements and this was a lovely occasion to mark the end of their DofE journey.





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## WORLD CLASS SCHOOLS VISIT TO WYMONDHAM COLLEGE

This term seven of our students: Elena Kite, Alex du Preez, Penny Kyriacou, Sophia Hakim, Alex La Placa, Dorka Molnar and Keerthana Appandairaj visited Wymondham College to support their re-accreditation as a World Class School. The students were fantastic ambassadors for Sandringham and thoroughly enjoyed the visit.

Wymondham College is a state boarding school, which accommodates both day school students as well as international boarders. Our visit included insightful discussions with a range of students about extra curricular activities that they had taken part in such as genius hour and debate club as well as trips and exchanges for example the Malta diving trip and the Argentina exchange. We also watched some lessons taking place followed by a tasty lunch in their canteen.

It is a really interesting experience to be at someone else's school for a whole day and an opportunity that I would definitely take part in again. Pride, Positivity and Passion are Wymondham's core values and they were clearly expressed to us through the staff and students that welcomed us to their school. The students at Wymondham have an amazing sense of community despite coming from extremely different backgrounds and experiences and their effort for good mental wellbeing stood out to us especially when talking to Y12s about support intervention sessions.



## FUTURES DAY

At the end of June Year 12 had their Futures Day which involved a heavy emphasis of starting to write personal statements and to also attend opt in sessions that matched student interest. We were lucky enough to have visitors from universities, companies and ex-students to offer information and support in regards to career pathways and the UCAS/apprenticeship process. These covered areas such as covering law, science, history and politics, the pharmaceutical industry, business and finance, psychology, and even a cartoonist!

We also had a very informative talk from a representative from Durham University giving hints and tips for writing UCAS personal statements and students were fortunate enough to also have some engaging talks from ex-student apprentices, Elliot and Alex, who are now one year into their apprenticeships at Harrods and Google. Former students Emily and Leo gave their honest reflections on uni life and Benji's practical talk on medicine even had Miss Wills walking around in a neck brace!

A massive thank you to all those that gave up their time for the benefit of our students!

## CLIMATE CHANGE PROTEST

On Friday the 24 of May, we attended a climate march protest in London, where we marched to try and make a change for our climate. It was a peaceful protest and we walked around the streets of London with our signs, while we chanted some catchy phrases to get the message inside people's minds. We made sure our signs were seen by the Londoners, we wanted to be noticed! We listened to people giving inspirational and informative speeches on how we can make a difference and change our way of living.

We also were told how politicians can help improve the ways in which they tackle climate change. Later on, we marched for a while longer until we finally sat on a wall just down the road from Downing Street and protested to the people passing by. Many people took photos of us which were then posted on some popular social media accounts, which spread some awareness around. We were interviewed by many people including the BBC who talked to Rosie, which later appeared on BBC News. We marched because we need to be noticed by the government and people in power, so they can notice the problems that climate change is causing and help resolve some of the problems and make vital changes to save our environment and climate.

*Jess Anfield 9F, Rosie Hart 9F, Jess Parr 9F, Kira Hardyal 9F, Molly Charnock 9F,  
Ruby Timmis 9E, Mona Alden 9E*





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## VERULAM SCHOOL STEM CLUB WINS HERTS ADVERTISER INNOVATION AWARD

Mrs Cornmell who teaches Maths at Verulam was awarded the Herts Advertiser Innovation Award in June for her work with Verulam's STEM club.

The STEM Club was set up in September 2017 with the aim of helping our students to understand how the topics studied and methods learned in science, technology, engineering and maths combine in the world around us.



We began by choosing different activities each week centred around one of the STEM subjects but carefully bringing in aspects of others. For example, physics, engineering and maths combining when building foil boats and understanding upthrust and buoyancy. We quickly began using resources from the National STEM Network and March 2018 we were invited to take part in one of their activity trials, "Making Movies". It was fascinating for our students to understand lots of different aspects of the science behind making movies including how fake wounds are made, how to achieve false perspective and they even made model film sets in technology.

Following our work with the National STEM Network we were nominated for the National STEM Clubs award. (We were highly commended for our work but unfortunately did not win the award!).

## STEM CLUB WATER CHALLENGE

This year our aim for our STEM club students was to continue to develop their understanding of how the STEM subjects link together but also to introduce them to people who work in STEM professions. We achieved this by working with Transport for London on a number of ongoing initiatives and taking part in Affinity Water and WaterAid's Challenge Water 2019.

The aim of the Challenge was to increase awareness of the water shortages in the short and longer term in the South East in particular. In addition, we were asked to raise funds for the Charity WaterAid.

Our students worked hard campaigning to reduce water usage by their peers, fundraising for WaterAid and designing an upgraded VIP latrine design. The campaign included running assemblies, hanging clear plastic bags filled with blue cups in the maths department to represent the number of filled cups that would be used for a 2 minute, 4 minute and 8 minute shower, making posters and running surveys.

To fundraise for WaterAid, our students ran a wear blue, non-uniform day for donations to WaterAid, set up a "blue" cake sale for WaterAid donations, including writing and hand delivering letters to Morrisons and Simmons asking for donations of cakes and set up a website for the wider community to donate.

We also kept our social media platforms updated with photographs and comments, including our own @verulamstemclub, our school Facebook page and our in-house weekly newsletter, Verulam Voice. We have raised approximately £1,300 for WaterAid, a sum that we are very proud of.

Two of our students worked very hard to design an accessible toilet for use in countries less fortunate than ourselves. They spent time analysing the cost versus benefit of all proposed additions and produced a model for a latrine that can be used as a fertilizer to help crops grow.

The final part of the challenge required our STEM Club to write a summary report and to present our findings, including a 3D model of the Verulizer! The students rose to the challenge and presented confidently in front of three other schools and a panel of judges at the finals day.

Our students were highly commended for their work on the challenge, but were beaten on the day by a brilliant team from Beaumont School.



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## **OTHER STEM CLUB INITIATIVES**

### **ENGINEERING MASTER CLASSES**

Four of our Year 9 students were chosen to represent Verulam at the 2019 Royal Institution of Engineering series of six Masterclasses on a Saturday morning. Each week they studied a different type of engineering, including how paper is made, sustainable energy sources, electronics, and even the topic that they are most excited about being aerospace.

We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both our students and the organisers of the masterclasses as to the enthusiasm and ability of our four Verulam ambassadors.

### **MATHS CHALLENGES**

Our school enters students into all of the available UKMT team and individual competitions.

In the Winter Term 28 of our 6th form maths students sat the UKMT Senior Individual challenge, with 23 receiving awards for their high marks. We also entered a team of four 6th form students into the UKMT Regional Senior Team Challenge. They came 9th overall, which was an impressive result given the number of schools competing.

In the Spring Term 57 of our year 9,10 and 11 mathematicians sat the UKMT Intermediate Challenge and again we were delighted that 29 students received awards and 4 took part in the next stage of the challenge, one achieving a merit.

In the Summer Term 60 of our year 7 and 8 students sat the UKMT Individual Junior Challenge, with 36 students achieving gold, silver and bronze awards. Two of our students will be taking part in the Mathematical Olympiad and Kangaroo follow on rounds.

We have also entered teams from year 7, 8, 9 and 10 into separate UKMT, AMSP and Hertfordshire regional team challenges throughout the year.

### **YEAR 7 MATHS CHALLENGE**

A team of year 7 pupils travelled to Stevenage on the 24th April for the finals of the Year 7 Hertfordshire maths team challenge. They qualified for this as one of the high scoring runners up in a local competition, and took on 14 other schools from across Hertfordshire. As well as solving challenging maths puzzles on a variety of topics, there was a round where two of the boys could see a poster of mathematical shapes and symbols, and had to remember and describe this for the other two boys to draw. We were delighted when the team placed 5th in the competition.



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## DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD SUCCESS

We were delighted this summer that a number of ex-Verulam students were presented with their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards at Buckingham Palace.

Luke Gibbins, who is currently studying Film Production at the University of Portsmouth, was presented with his award on Monday by the Earl of Wessex.

Luke was delighted to meet two fellow ex-Verulam pupils James Mee and Ross Leopold who were receiving their awards. Rhys Armstrong of Year 13 also received his award.



Mr Toley was also invited to a Buckingham Palace garden party to recognise his contribution to the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme over the last 20 years. It is remarkable that the current staff leading our award scheme were themselves pupils who benefitted from this experience whilst at Verulam.

I am extremely grateful to all the staff involved in the DofE scheme who give so much of their free time to help our pupils enjoy the challenges and rewards involved.

I would also like to offer my best congratulations to all the Year 10 pupils who undertook their Bronze practice expeditions this summer. Over 100 of them hiked and camped in the Chiltern before taking part in their final expeditions to the New Forest.



## HOLOCAUST EDUCATION AT VERULAM

Verulam's Holocaust Education initiative coordinated by Ms O'Kelly has been underway for a number of years in conjunction with UCL's Holocaust Education Project. Next year we hope to gain the Quality Mark for Beacon School Status in Holocaust Education. The issue is already prominent in Year 9 Curriculum Enrichment days and 6<sup>th</sup> Form lectures and in October Year 11 will be making a visit to both Krakow and Auschwitz.

The efficacy of our work with Year 9 was underlined by the results of a pupil survey conducted by UCL. Our students showed that they understood much more about the nature and scale of anti-Semitism and Holocaust than the national average.

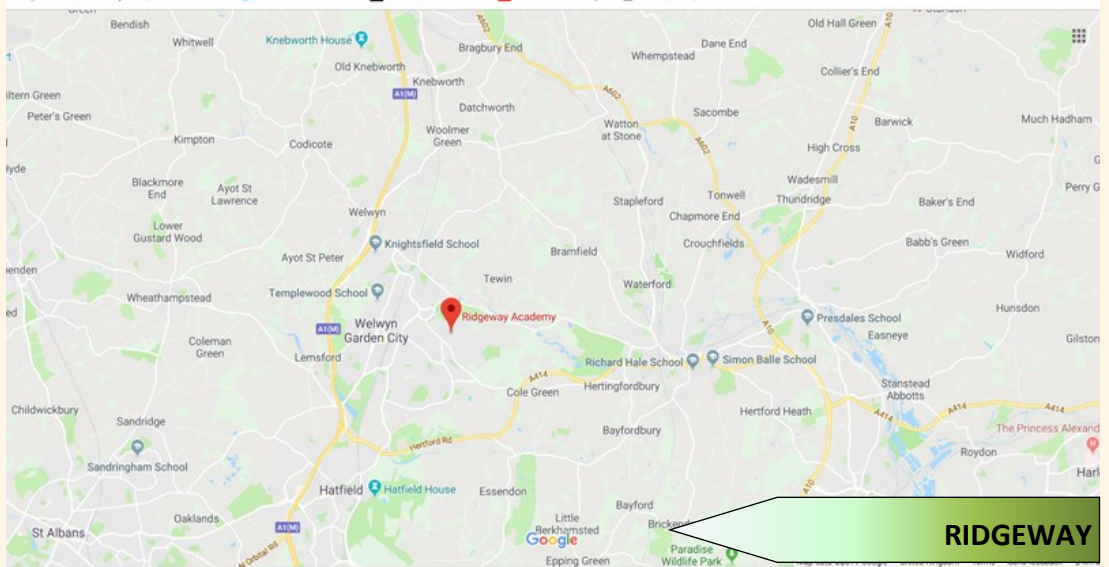
Next year we aim to train five more staff and to continue our programme of lectures by survivors. We will also explore issues around the Rwandan genocide and the Rwandan Sisterhood set up after the 1994 genocide.

Both pupils and staff feel this work is of real importance in a world that is increasingly being split by nationalism and conflict.

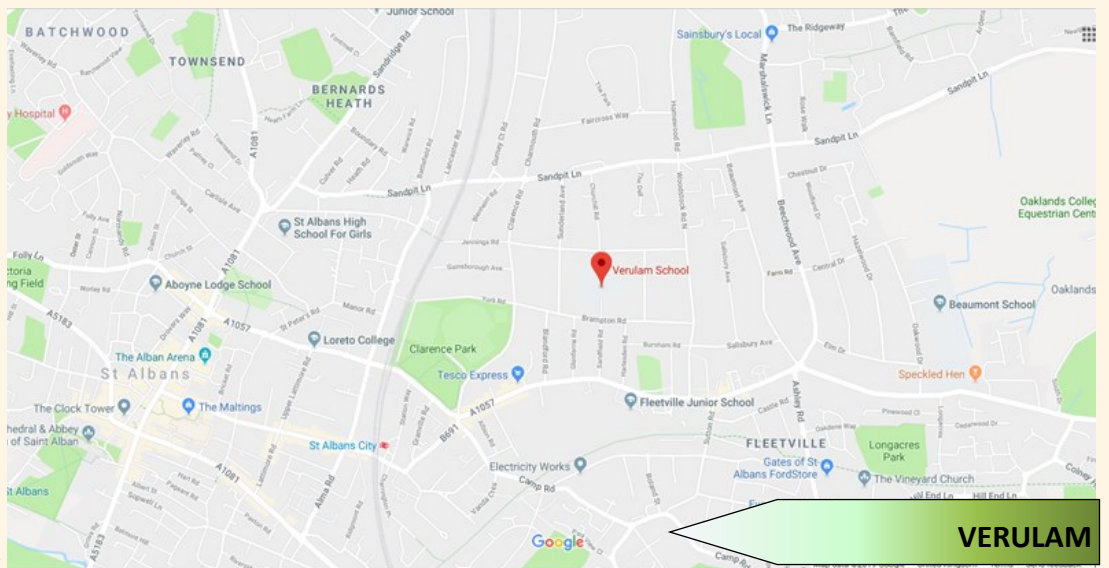


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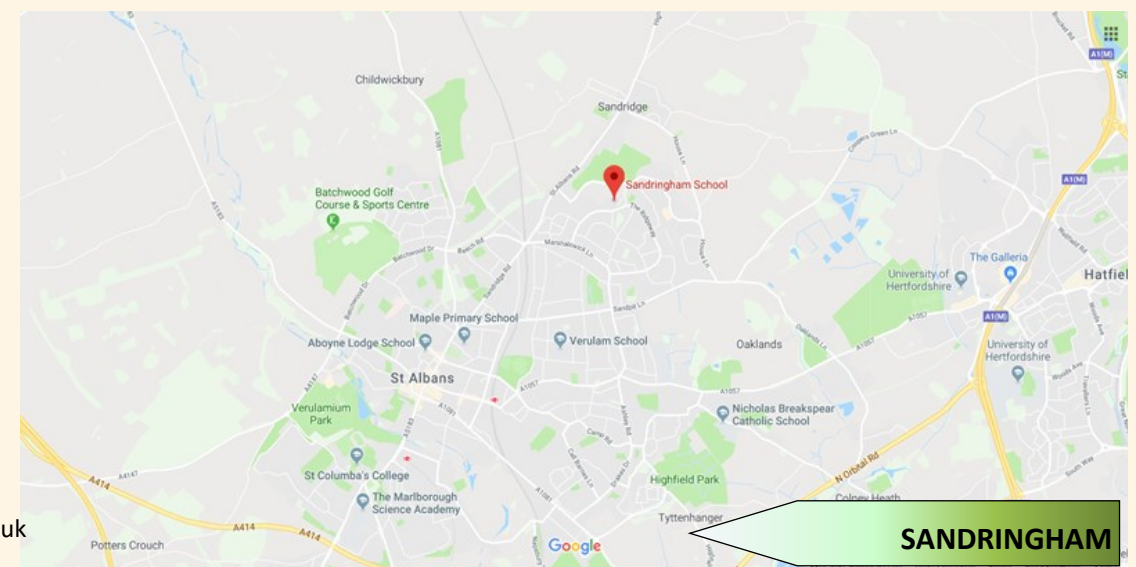
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