

Parent & Carer Newsletter

March 2024



Welcome from the Director of Alternative Provision

It has been a busy two terms since Christmas here at Altus School and I hope that this newsletter will give you a flavour of all that both staff and students have been up to.



Looking ahead to September 2024, we are planning some organisational changes across the school that are described below.

Rutherford House Year 1-6 Capacity: 38	Russet House (KS3) Year 7-9 Up to 40 students Change – currently KS4	Ryeleaze (KS3) Year 7-9 Up to 32 students Change – currently KS4
St George's (KS4) Year 10-11 Up to 40 students Change – currently KS3 & KS4	Eastbrook Rd (KS4) Year 10-11 Up to 48 students Change – new site replacing existing Raikes Centre (KS3)	Belle Vue – The Hub KS3-4 Up to 24 students

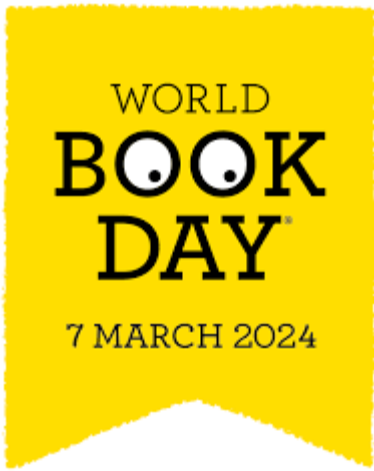
To summarise, this means:

- KS3 students will be based at either Ryeleaze in Stroud or Russet House in Gloucester
- KS4 students will move to our new Eastbrook Road site in Gloucester or be based at St George's in Cheltenham, which will change to be for Y10 and Y11 students only.
- No change for our primary students, who will continue to be based at Rutherford House

One significant change is that we plan to move out of the current Raikes Centre to a new site in Eastbrook Road, which is just over a mile from the current site. This will be an upgrade to our existing facilities, with more outside space and classrooms that will help deliver a wider offer for students. We also plan to develop a more flexible offer at our current Belle Vue site. This will support a smaller number of our young people who may require a much more individualised curriculum with more time off site and in practical activities. We would welcome your questions and comments about these proposed moves; you can send feedback to our school email, admin@altusschool.org.uk, with the title **Questions & Comments**. Please be assured that once the changes for September are confirmed, we will be in touch with you about what this might mean for your child.

Emma Gundry

What's been happening in school?



On Thursday 7 March, staff and students celebrated World Book Day with centres competing for the new 'best dressed centre' cup, awarded by Alex Breeze, one of our Assistant Heads. The competition was fierce, but the cup was jointly awarded to Rutherford and Russet Houses.



Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

PSHE is an important subject in school and tries to empower students with the knowledge and skills to lead productive, healthy and safe lives.

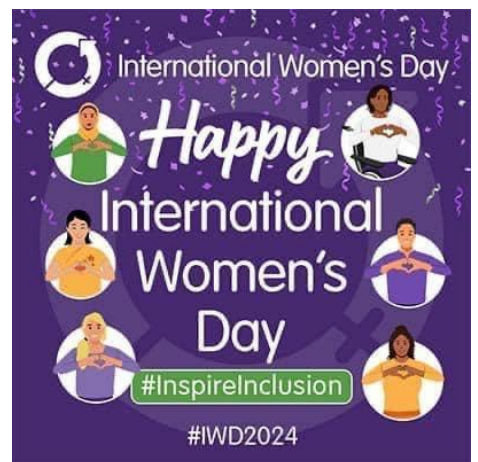
In January, we marked Holocaust Memorial Day, encouraging students to think about how we can promote understanding of diversity in modern Britain.



For Safer Internet Day, we asked students to reflect on how to keep themselves and other safe online.



International Women's Day was a perfect excuse to celebrate all the great women in our students' lives, as well as thinking about important issues of gender equality and violence against women and girls.



Our Senior Leadership Team got involved as well, sharing their 'sheroes' who have inspired them.



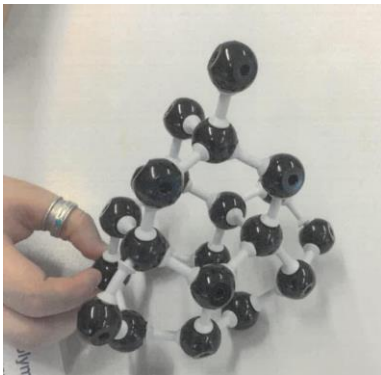
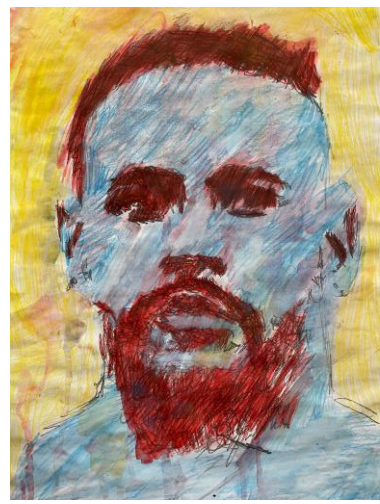
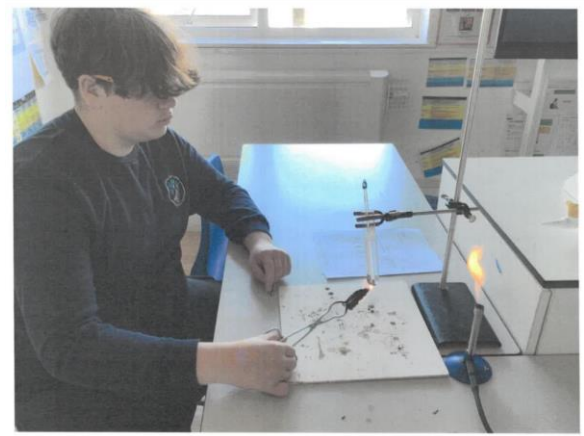
- 🌟 Katie Piper - women's safety campaigner
- 📖 Jane Austen - writer of Pride & Prejudice
- ⚽ Kate McCabe - Arsenal and international footballer
- 💻 Ada Lovelace - considered the world's first computer programmer
- 🏔️ Catherine Destivelle - rock climber and mountaineer
- 🏠 Malala Yousafzai - education activist

Students hard at work



Across the school, students enjoy the opportunity to take part in a broad and balanced curriculum. Our Y11s are particularly busy at the moment, preparing for their exams that start next term. We will be sharing more information about these after the holidays.

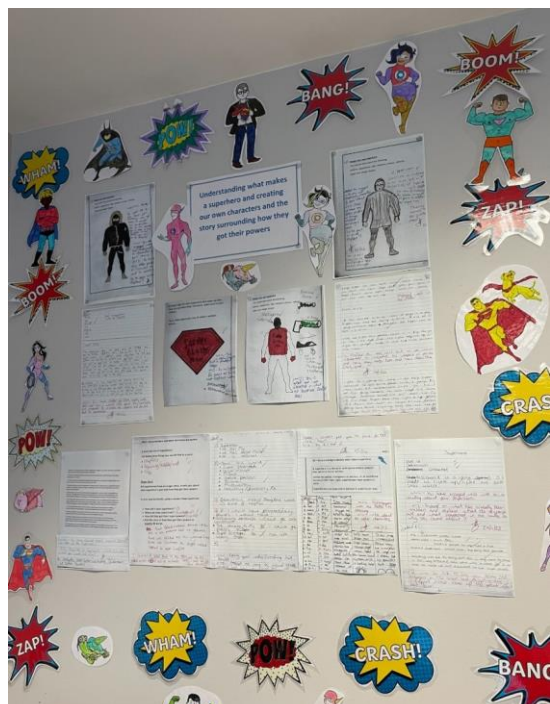
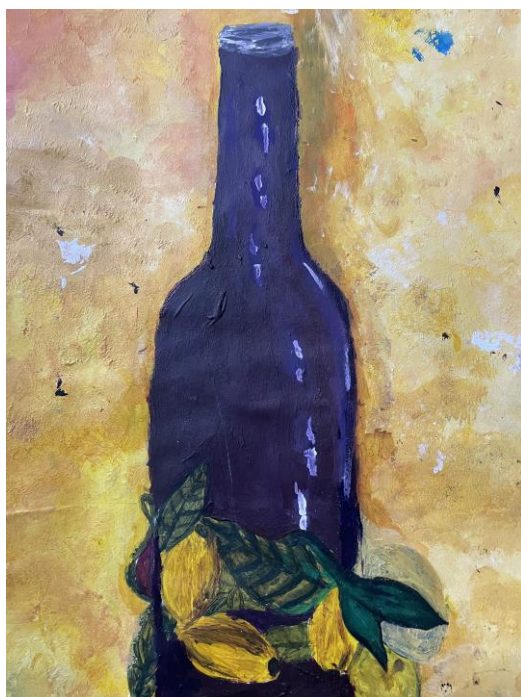
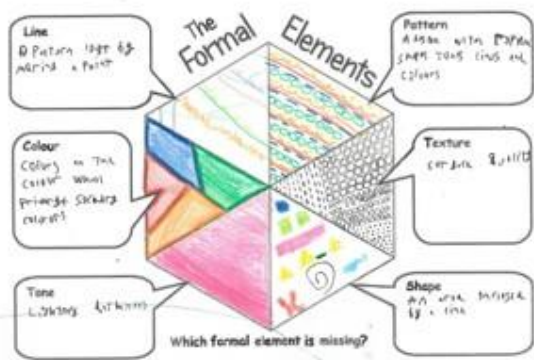
Here you can see a snapshot of what they have achieved in a variety of lessons from Science to Art to Cooking.



We were delighted to receive a collection of new books from the charity, Read for Good, which is a charity committed to promoting a love of reading. Students have enjoyed them in their English lessons this term.



Students hard at work



LO: To write a short story in first person speak. 01/03/24

!! I would like you to create a story and one of the short stories we have been writing about where you are the character and when the twist comes in tell me how you felt.

I AM BORED OUT OF MY Brain because I'm in a history lesson and I'm in a museum and I hate history, but I like fighting battling and killing in games. I am looking round and get lost in the castle and then I end up in a massive room and then I saw an axe which is massive and there are bits missing and what looks like blood stains. then a man just appeared and said that the axe was used the axe for executioners' axe and he pointed at a stand which people would be executed I was amazed. He asked me whether I like history I said yes. He was about to tell me something I didn't know but suddenly my teacher shouted my name and told me to stop wandering off. I said goodbye to the man and he replied and suddenly removed his head and walked off through the wall. I was freaked out as I realised he was a ghost.

what a brilliant little short story that incorporates all the parts of first person speak. we have included capital letters and full stops which is one of your targets. ★ 01/03/24

Film GROWN UPS

Plot childhood friends met at former basketball coach's funeral. They decide to have a weekend away to scatter ashes. They hire a cabin for everyone. They do lots of activities - waterpark, cooking & parties. They get up to loads of silly things like playing chicken with a bow & arrow. They bump into their old rivals and have a big basketball game.

Best Character is: **LENN FALLO**

Because he is the main character in the film.

3 words to describe this film

ENTERTAINING **ENJOYABLE** **FUNNY/HILARIOUS**

10 word summary: **CHILDHOOD FRIENDS ENJOY A WEEKEND AWAY FOR A REUNION**

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Community Participation

Students at Rutherford House welcomed a visit from our local MP, Richard Graham. He also met staff and members of the management committee, including Lyn Dance, our Chair.

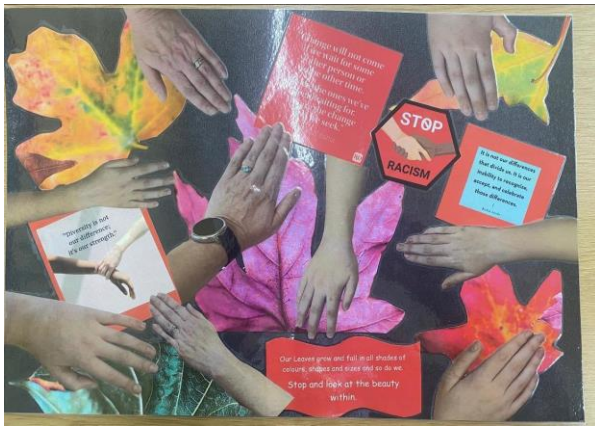


Students asked some really interesting and relevant questions. It was a very useful learning experience as it was a 'real life' opportunity to teach the children a little about politics, what an MP does and the importance of parliament.



Show Racism the Red Card.

Students have been reflecting on the work of this important anti-racism charity. Students at Belle Vue produced this impressive entry for their KS3 competition.



Gloucestershire
Wildlife Trust



Staff and pupils enjoyed a morning planting trees with the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust at the Hempsted recycling centre. The project works with schools across Gloucester to transform it into an 'Eco Park' in the future. All the pupils did an incredible job, from digging the hole to using the plastic guard around the tree. Working alone as well as demonstrating great teamwork, a total of 30 trees were planted which will form part of a new arboretum for wildlife and humans alike to enjoy for generations to come.



Community Participation



We welcomed visitors at St George's this term from the British Army Outreach Team. They spent the day with staff and students in Cheltenham, talking about careers pathways and leading a variety of team building activities. Lots of learning but more importantly, also lots of fun!



We had a great morning with the school beat team who came in to meet students in Rutherford House. They really enjoyed dressing up in the police uniform and learning about the work of the police, including what happens at the scene of a crime.



Exploring Gloucestershire

Outdoor education is an important part of our curriculum, and this provides students with lots of opportunities to get out into their local community. The rain rarely dampens their spirits!





Safeguarding Information

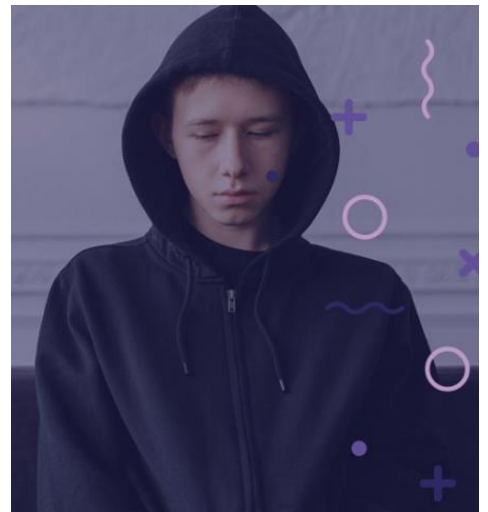


Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Debbie Kirkham. She is supported by a wider safeguarding team. If you have any concerns about your child's safety or wellbeing you can contact Debbie or her team who are there to support.

At Altus School, we prioritise the safety and well-being of our students. We believe it is essential to educate parents and caregivers about potential risks to our children's safety, including the concerning issues of child criminal and sexual exploitation, as well as sexploitation. By working together, we can create a secure environment and empower our children with knowledge and awareness. Here is some crucial information to help you better understand these topics and take necessary precautions:

1. Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation:

Child criminal and sexual exploitation involves the victimisation and manipulation of children for illegal activities, such as drug running (County Lines), violent crimes or sexual abuse. It is crucial to remain vigilant and recognise the signs of potential exploitation. These signs may include unexplained absences from school, sudden changes in behaviour, secrecy regarding new friends or online activities, or signs of physical abuse. Should you suspect any form of exploitation, please speak with your child and report it immediately to the appropriate authorities, such as the local police or the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) helpline.



2. Sexploitation and Online Safety:

Sexploitation refers to the act of coercing or exploiting children or teenagers into engaging in sexually explicit activities, often through the internet. The digital world poses unique risks, making online safety education crucial. We encourage you to have open and honest conversations with your child about responsible internet use, the importance of privacy settings, and the potential dangers of sharing personal information online. It is also essential to monitor your child's online activities and educate them about appropriate boundaries, recognizing and reporting any suspicious or inappropriate content.

3. School's Commitment and Support:

At Altus school, we are committed to creating a safe and secure learning environment for all our students. We have implemented preventive measures, including safeguarding lessons, awareness campaigns, and child protection policy. Our staff receives regular training on identifying and responding to potential cases of exploitation. Additionally, we collaborate with local authorities, child protection agencies, and organisations like the NSPCC to ensure a comprehensive approach to safeguarding our students.



Holiday Activity and Food Fun is back!

HAF will be returning this spring holiday between **25 March- 5 April** to bring you fun, free activities for your children to enjoy. Expect cookery classes, arts and crafts, sports camps, circus skills, forest schools and much, much more this holiday!

What you need to know...

HAF First look: From 12pm 4 March, you will be able to view all the activities that will be available this spring in your district. However, you will not be able to book any activities until 11 March. This is opportunity to browse activities will give you more time to plan your HAF holiday before making any bookings.

Bookings go live: From 12pm 11 March, you will be able to begin booking your activities for the holiday through our Children's Activity Booking System (CABS). It is important that you make sure all of your details on your CABS account is up to date to make your booking experience as seamless as possible.

Any questions in the meantime?

If you have any questions in the meantime about HAF, you can email us at HAFparentenquiries@gloucestershire.gov.uk where a member of the team will get back to you.

Please do not hesitate to contact Nicki Woolway, Pastoral Officer, if you have any questions.

Nicki.woolway@altuschool.org.uk Office: 01452 309510



Exam Season

As we move into the exam season, mental health and the support of our friends is really important. The school will ensure that all our students have the relationships they need and are supported. Our children and young people are encouraged to reach out for support should they need it or feel that a friend is in need. Child-friendly posters are around the school with information on how to do this, so everyone knows they can reach out to any member of staff. Our DSL / pastoral team will be supporting everyone too.

The Young Minds website has great advice [Staying mentally healthy during exams | Resources | YoungMinds](#)



We asked young people to give us some wellbeing advice for exam time and this is what they told us:

1. Always take a moment just to breathe, whether in the exam, before or after.
2. Remember that school does offer support, just reach out and ask!
3. Keep your work balanced. Spend time revising, but socialise and relax too.
4. Keep a self-care routine so that your revision is the most productive it can be whilst you feel as good as possible.
5. Break up revision with food and exercise to make sure you stay energised.
6. Remember that results do not define you.
7. Find a revision space and style that works for you: silence, background chatter, music with or without lyrics.
8. Work to your own pace - everyone is different in how they work.
9. If you feel nervous about the time pressure of an exam, practice timing yourself when you revise, or try some test papers.
10. Plan in some treats to reward yourself, and celebrate when it's all over!

Looking ahead to Term 5

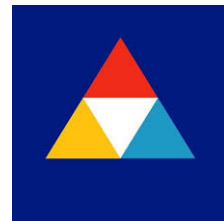


Staff return to school on Monday 8 April for an INSET day, so no students are expected in school that day. Tuesday 9 April is a RESET day – staff will have been in touch to arrange a parent/carer meeting. This is an important opportunity to review your child's progress and set targets for their next steps. We look forward to welcoming you into school.

All students return for their normal timetable on **Wednesday 10 April..**



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We are always sorry to say 'goodbye' to students but are delighted in the success of so many making the journey back to mainstream. We are proud to be a small part of their school journey and are really pleased to work with colleagues from other schools to support their transition.

Please do discuss this with staff during the RESET day if you want to start this transition for your child.



Keep in touch!

You can find out what's happening in school throughout the year by following us on social media. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram and X/Twitter.



By following us you can easily stay up to date with what staff and students are up to, as well as get more information about school holidays, local support and emergency closures for example.

For more general information about the school you can visit our website www.altusschool.org.uk

Do you want to get more involved in school life? We are looking for volunteers!

The Management Committee oversees the running of the school. It is a volunteer body who work alongside the school's leaders to agree the aims, policies and priorities of the Altus School. We would welcome any parents and carers who would like to join this group.

If you are interested – the committee meets just 5 times per year – then please do make contact at admin@altusschool.org.uk

**Wishing you all a very happy Easter.
We look forward to seeing you all again next term.**

