

19th December 2025

Welcome,

We've had a busy but fantastic final week of term leading up to our Christmas break. It has been a joy to see so many of our school community entering into the festive spirit; whether that be organising 'secret santa' in their coaching circles, taking part in quizzes, singing to Christmas songs in the corridor or generally contributing to the positive atmosphere! On Thursday we held our winter rewards day as we enjoyed a trip to the cinema. To organise a trip for over 1500 students into the city centre is no easy task, but, as always, they did us proud. The behaviour of our students was exemplary, and staff were full of praise for how they represented our school in public.

We also say goodbye to our long-standing member of staff Miss Storer and wish her the best in her next venture.

We send you the very best wishes for the Christmas holiday and hope you have a wonderful and restful time with your families.

We will see you all in the New Year, in the meantime, please enjoy our latest newsletter.

Certificates Evening - Tuesday December 16th

On a dark evening in December, hundreds of students and parents made their way to Pride Park to collect their certificates from the Summer 2025 exams.

There were two presentations. The first was for last year's Year 13, with many of the students returning from university, having not seen each other for a few months.

The second one was for last year's Year 11. A lot of the students are still at the academy in the Sixth Form, but it was good to see some old faces again and find out how they were getting on.

The Year 13 started with a speech from Ms Warren, whilst Ms Leahy spoke on behalf of the Year 11s. The entire year group were read out and students came up to collect their certificates. Each subject gave out special awards and there were also some individual awards for academic achievement, contribution to community etc.

A big thank you to Pride Park for providing a great venue and to the staff, students and parents who tuned up to support the achievements of our fantastic students.

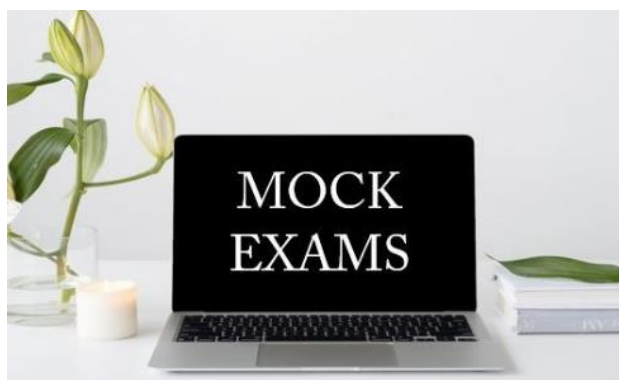


Timetables

At the end of every half term, there are usually some changes to the timetable and this one is no exception! We are sadly losing Ms Storer (Chemistry) after 24 years of service to the school. This has caused some major shuffling around of lessons that has impacted across the school. Changes will go across to Go4schools from tomorrow, so please check timetables as lots of students have been affected.

Sixth Form Mock Examinations

Our Sixth Form students have recently completed their mock examinations, and we are extremely proud of the effort and determination they showed throughout the assessment period. Despite the exams taking place so close to the end of term, students continued to give their all and approached each paper with focus and resilience. Their hard work during this challenging time has been fantastic and will be invaluable as they move forward in their preparation for the summer examinations.



Year 13 Health & Social Care follow up trip

We are so proud of our Year 13 Health and Social Care class - On Tuesday, they returned to Alvaston Infant Nursery School to complete their practical assessment. During their first visit, students explored how creativity is embedded across the curriculum and how this supports children's milestone development. They then planned and designed their own creative activities for the children at Alvaston Infants to take part in.

The activities they delivered were of a very high standard, and their professionalism as teachers—introducing the activities, engaging the children, and offering encouragement—was incredible. We were so impressed with their confidence, preparation, and dedication.





Book Cafe

On Monday the library held its first book cafe of the academic year. Each term, students have the opportunity to spend 500 ICE points in exchange for an hour off timetable for reading in the library. The library is transformed into a coffee shop for the day and those students who choose to participate are rewarded with a hot chocolate and treat whilst reading. On Monday, we had over 60 students participating from Year 7 through to Year 11

with many students already keen to book in for the next book cafe at the end of the Spring term. There is always such a wonderful atmosphere in the book cafe and it is great to see so many of our students choosing to read for pleasure. A huge thanks to all the staff who volunteered their time to ensure the sessions ran smoothly.





Sparx Science

Students have continued to complete Sparx Science as their Home Learning provision this term and the Science team again want to congratulate students who have bought in to this new system. We are seeing really good completion rates but are striving to increase this so all students are accessing this platform .

The following leaderboards showing the top students across the whole school

Student Leaderboard launch day until Thursday 18th December:

Academy Leaderboard

1. **Lucas the CEO** – 128,116 XP
2. Ryan the Mastermind – 128,040 XP
3. Nikhil the Champion – 45,710 XP
4. Jude the Legend - 33,540 XP
5. May the Phoenix – 33,437 XP
6. Hanaa the Illusion – 27,017 XP

Student Leaderboard Monday 15th Dec until present:

Weekly Leaderboard

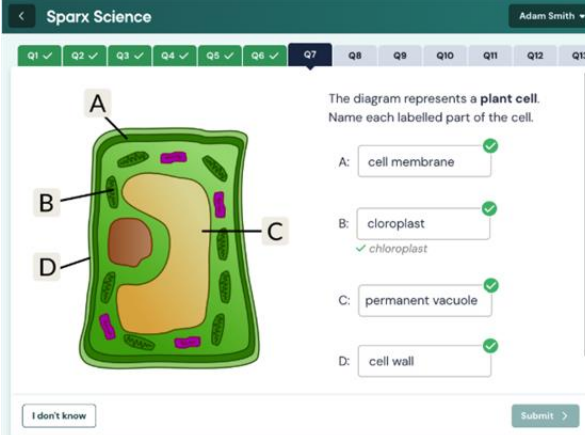
1. **Lucas the CEO** — 11,370 XP
2. Ryan the Mastermind — 9,670 XP
3. Harry the Biologist — 2,235 XP
4. Brooke the Wordsmith — 1,961 XP
5. Marnie the Traveler — 1,760 XP
6. Amar the Scientist — 1,600 XP

Amazing work, well done. 500 ICE points will be awarded to the top 3 students and 100 ICE points awarded to the next 3. Keep it up guys, amazing completion.

In addition 500 ICE points will be issued for the top 6 students in each year group for this Autumn term.

As detailed in last weeks newsletter all KS3 and KS4 students are being issued Sparx Science Home Learning. For KS3 Home Learning will be around 30-40 minutes for Year 7; 40-50 minutes in Year 8 and 50-55 minutes in Year 9. For KS4 Home Learning will be around 60/70 minutes per Science Subject. Teachers will be issuing 10 ICE Points for completion and -3 ICE Points for non-completion. To be marked as completed, students should either spend the time allocated above on the tasks set on Sparx, fully complete or almost fully, complete it. If students are struggling with their Sparx tasks they need to see either their teacher or Miss Petrie who can make adjustments to the program to ensure students are issued the correct level of task.

Parents should also be receiving emails directly from Sparx detailing a weekly update on their child's completion. If you, as a parent, are not included in these emails please let Miss Petrie know as we want to work with parents to encourage completion of tasks as Sparx Science is a powerful tool that helps students to progress in Science. Again, I want to congratulate all students who have been working with this new system, please see an example of the questions below.



The screenshot shows the Sparx Science interface for a user named Adam Smith. It displays a series of question tabs from Q1 to Q13, with Q7 currently selected. The main area features a diagram of a plant cell with four labels: A (pointing to the cell membrane), B (pointing to a chloroplast), C (pointing to the permanent vacuole), and D (pointing to the cell wall). To the right of the diagram, a text prompt reads: "The diagram represents a plant cell. Name each labelled part of the cell." Below this, there are four input fields with corresponding labels and green checkmarks indicating correct answers: A: cell membrane, B: chloroplast (with a correction to "chloroplast" below it), C: permanent vacuole, and D: cell wall. At the bottom left is a "I don't know" button, and at the bottom right is a "Submit" button.

Cycle safety

We are keen to support all our students who wish to cycle to and from school. It has been brought to our attention, however, that a number of them are not doing so safely and that some of the bikes that are being used are not roadworthy.

We urge all parents to speak to their child about road safety and to check that their child's bike has effective brakes and has the correct reflectors and lights fitted.

Cycle helmets should be worn at all times.



Wellbeing & Safeguarding Newsletter

Please find attached the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Newsletter attached below for this Autumn Term. It highlights some of the key events, actions and initiatives this term, as well as signposting you to support for over Christmas regarding wellbeing and online safety.

2026

5th January - Inset day

6th January - Return to school for all students

6th January - 9th January - continued Year 12 mocks

14th January - Year 9 Parents evening - 4-7pm

22nd January - Year 13 Parents evening - 4-7pm

5th February - Year 12 Parents evening - 4-7pm

9th-27th February - Year 11 mocks

13th February - Break up for half term