



Earl Mortimer students get a taste for further education with a trip to Jesus College, Oxford. See Page 2 for more.

Drive to improve education access for rural students

OUR Principal, Ms Banner, wants to 'level the playing field' for rural students, by helping improve access to the very top universities in the country.

Currently, students living in country towns or villages are significantly less likely to attend university than those from urban areas, according to a study by Rural England.

Ms Banner believes rural schools can learn from their urban counterparts, sending multiple students to the top Russell Group universities.

In response, the school now has 20 students enrolled in the Brilliant Club, which helps gifted students access the best universities.

As part of the programme, they work with a PHD student, across six weeks, to produce a 2,000-word, university-style, dissertation.

The Year 10 students have also visited Jesus College, Oxford, where they attended lectures, toured the campus and met undergraduates.

Ms Banner said: "I think, as a town and a county, we have to be very ambitious for our students. Why shouldn't they go to the best universities?"

"If you look at schools in disadvantaged urban areas, they are sending dozens and dozens of students to the best universities, yet, that is not happening in our town and county. You have to ask why, and what we can do about it.

"Last year, we had a former student go to

Establishing a path to top universities

Cambridge to study medicine. Her success has had a major impact on our students, because they can now see it is possible for someone from their town.

"This is why we introduced the Brilliant Club to the school. We want to give our students the best chance of accessing the very top universities.

"We want our young people to think that anything is possible, and if their dream is to go to one of the top universities, then we have to help them along on that path."

**We want to give
our students the best
chance of accessing the
very top universities...**

**Principal,
Ms Banner**



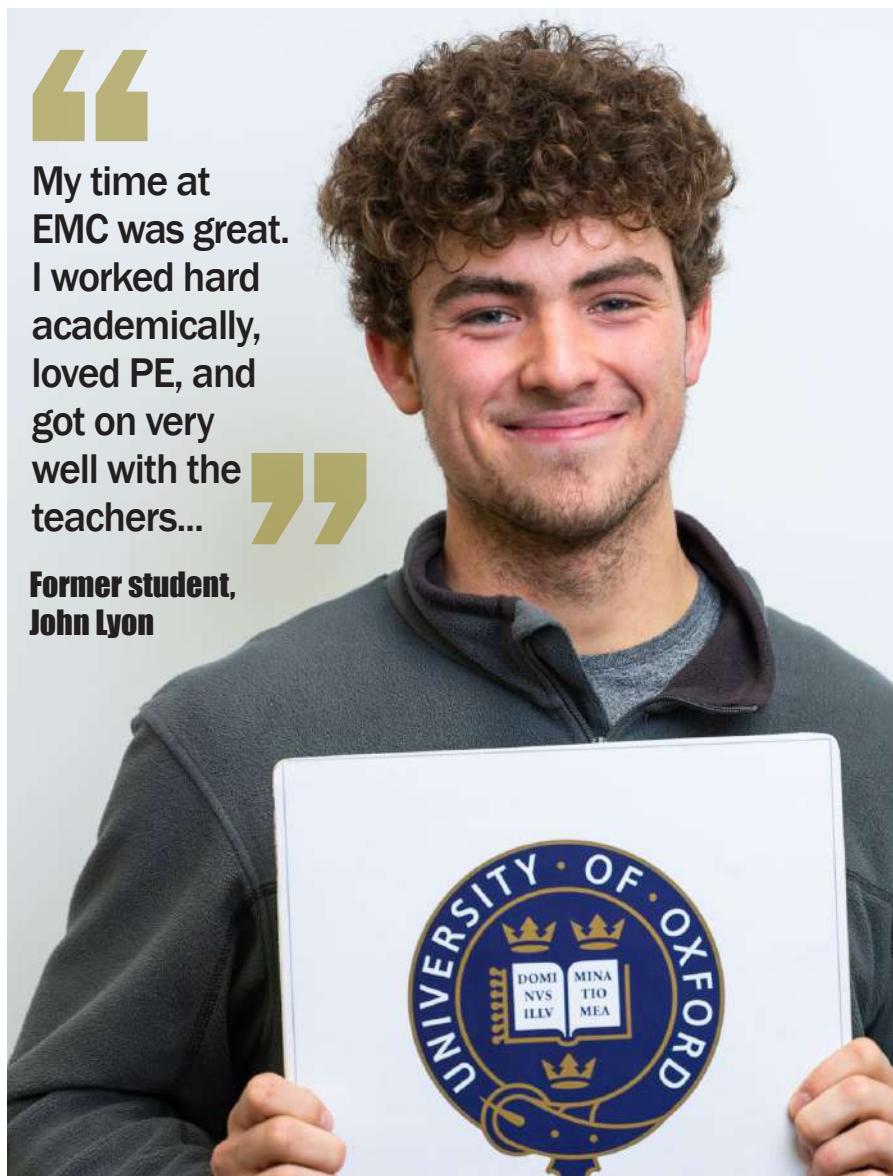
John's hard work pays with a place at Oxford

“

My time at EMC was great. I worked hard academically, loved PE, and got on very well with the teachers...

”

**Former student,
John Lyon**



Ex-student heaps praise on teachers following his time at Earl Mortimer...

FORMER student, John Lyon, says he is “over the moon” after being offered a place at one of the best universities in the world.

The bright youngster will study a degree favoured by budding politicians - Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) - at St. John's College, Oxford.

He is currently studying for A Levels in Maths, Chemistry, Physics and Modern History at Hereford Sixth Form, having left the school in 2020.

He praised staff at the school, saying they gave him the academic grounding and support to pursue his dream of attending Oxford.

He said: “My time at EMC was great. I worked hard academically, loved PE, and got on very well with the teachers. I generally had a great time with the students.

“Fundamentally, it's this freedom of thought and curiosity which should be encouraged in school, in the hope that university will find those it should.

“I suspect that the best way schools can prepare students, for whatever it is life leads them to, is to encourage thought, teach the arts, and inspire curiosity. The teachers do their best to promote that at EMC.

John is the second student from Earl Mortimer College to attend either Oxford or Cambridge, in the last two years.

Budding medic, Lilly, is now studying at St John's College, Cambridge after being inspired by the brave medics who looked after her uncle during the Covid pandemic.

Principal, Ms Banner, said: “Since becoming principal, my focus has been on raising the aspirations and self-belief of the students who attend this school.

“But we can't do it for them, they have to believe it is possible, and when they see students like John, with the talent but most importantly the commitment, then it is hugely inspirational.”

Elinor aiming for university life

BRILLIANT Club scholar, Year 10 Elinor, says the aspirational programme has made her more determined to get into a top university.

“The trip to Oxford was the icing on the cake and a reward for finishing the course; it was tough.

“I wrote a speech about how the course had changed the way I thought about going to university, and also the difficulties we have had to overcome to complete it.

“We had to write a 2,000-word, university-style dissertation about agriculture laws since the start of Brexit, which I thought was going to be hard at first.

“But because the subject was so well taught, by someone who had really great knowledge of the subject, it ended up being really interesting and so writing the dissertation was not hard.

“When you first start, you think that learning things at university level, and then having to write something, is terrifying but the more you do it, the more you realise you can do it.

“I now think about going to university, even a top one like Oxford, and I think it is possible for me.

“I have completed this course and I know I can do it.”



Prevent Bullying Now ambassadors, Amy, Faye and Bethany, at the recording of their latest podcast.



Podcast aims to raise awareness of issue affecting many students

Campaigners talk the talk against the bullies

STUDENTS have pledged to continue to fight bullying, in a new podcast on the school radio station.

Prevent Bullying Now (PBN) ambassadors Faye, Bethany and Amy also discussed their efforts to create awareness and fundraise for anti-bullying charities.

Faye said: "When I started at EMC, I decided to join PBN because I wanted to help people who were experiencing bullying.

"We were asked for ideas on what we could do to help spread the message of PBN, and I suggested the student radio."

Mrs Gummer said: "The podcast has come out of our work for Anti-Bullying Week last term. We did activities to raise awareness and had The Courtyard Theatre in to do anti-bullying sessions.

"Carrying on their good work, PBN are going to be doing weekly podcasts, in preparation for Mental Health Awareness Week in May, when the Courtyard are coming back to do mental health sessions."

The podcast can be found on the school website.

When I started at EMC, I decided to join PBN because I wanted to help people who were experiencing bullying...

Student, Faye



Will, Joseph and Lucas get familiar with the equipment at the school radio station.

Trio love radio training

YEAR 7 students Will, Joseph and Lucas have been learning the ropes in the school radio station.

The trio have been learning from their older peers, who have been passing on their knowledge.

Lucas said: "We think it's really cool and gives us another opportunity at school.

"We are trying to work our way up to producing a podcast."

Joseph said: "We have been learning all the controls for the headsets, and how to do the volume and the speakers. It's really fun."

Will added: "We haven't done all the training yet. We need to do a few more bits to learn and understand everything.

"We play music and, inbetween songs, have a chat with people who are listening, or do a sports review."

Giving students a chance to shine



PRINCIPAL Ms Banner

AS you will read in this newsletter, we have been supporting our students to help them develop the key skills they will need to build successful futures.

Data shows that students from rural schools are among the least likely in the country to access the very top universities.

The biggest factor, I believe, is not talent, because our students are just as smart as those from big cities and other parts of the country.

It is about confidence. To attend Oxford or Cambridge, or one of the other big universities, you have to feel like you have a chance to get in.

Our students need to be exposed, through programmes like the Brilliant Club, to these top institutions, so they know they're not out of reach.

To achieve academically, in whatever area they choose, students need to feel safe and supported in a calm learning environment.

That is why we have dedicated much of our energy to looking after the mental health and wellbeing of our students.

We are very pleased to work with the excellent 'No Wrong Door' campaign, who have been helping students from across year groups.

We now have a new Student and Family Support Manager, who is dedicated to supporting our families as we bounce back after the pandemic.

This term, as we celebrated Careers Week, there were a number of programmes, workshops and visitors helping to guide students towards rewarding careers.

Our job is to allow our students to see that there are many different options out there, and that they should pick wisely; you spend a lot more time at work than you do at school!

As society begins to further open up, we are hoping students will get to enjoy more and more of these enrichment opportunities.

It just remains for me to wish you all a happy and restful Easter break. We look forward to welcoming you back after the holiday.

MORE ONLINE
earlmortimer.org.uk

Extra support for pandemic



Mrs Neill, Mrs Brittain, and Mr Wharam make up the Student Welfare Team.

THE school have employed a dedicated student and family support manager, as part of a programme to rebuild, following two years of the Covid pandemic.

Mrs Brittain joins the Student Welfare team to help our community recover from the impacts of lockdowns, school closures and illness.

She said: "My role is about making contact with families and steering them through external help, life's challenges, and being somebody on the end of the phone."

"The teachers are really busy and can often only get to parents at the end of the school day, but sometimes, a parent has a question or a worry."

"We also have a wellbeing room, and I go up there daily, to be a listening ear. It's somewhere students feel safe to talk."

Mrs Neill, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, has been at the school since last Easter. Her background is in children's mental health, and working with families.

She said: "Our new team is really proactive and we work really well together."

"We are always working with the best interests

of and on behalf of our families.

Mr Wharam said: "As a school, we are stepping up to support our learners so that they can reach their potential. I feel that we are making a big difference."

“My role is about making contact with families and steering them through external help, life's challenges, and being somebody on the end of the phone...”

**Mrs Brittain,
Student Welfare Team**

Solar panels are bright idea

THE school has joined forces with Herefordshire Council and Caplor Energy to install solar panels.

Installing the electricity generating panels on the school roof has already begun.

Assistant Principal, Mr Wharam, said:

"During the construction period, students have noticed scaffolding creeping up the 25 metre walls of the college"

"The work has in fact been very discrete, with the panels hidden from view on the roof."

Award in recognition of international outlook

EFFORTS to embed international awareness and understanding across the school have been recognised with the granting of the British Council International School Award.

Assessors praised the school's "admirable commitment" to enriching pupils' learning about different cultures. To achieve the award, the school had to provide supporting evidence.

We can now begin working towards the intermediate level and then the full accreditation.

The assessors said: "There is evident enthusiasm and whole school support to develop and progress this important work.

"We are delighted you have specifically decided to further develop your provision to broaden both the experiences of the young people to develop as well-rounded, informed global citizens.

"We recognise excellent efforts in seeking to develop and embed a whole school commitment to cultural capital, modern foreign languages (MFL)

work and international teaching and learning.

"You have an evident whole-school approach to make global connections through your commitment to increase understanding of other nationalities."

The assessors noted our work in building links with overseas schools including our pen pal scheme.

Principal, Ms Banner, said: "It is a huge honour to be given this award. We are very pleased the assessor noted efforts to broaden the horizon of our students by fostering an appreciation of different cultures."

Good sports get off to a winning start

Gracie played for our Year 8 football team and scored the first goal, while Milo, right, featured for Year 7.



OUR Year 7 football teams have made a strong start to the season, in their first taste of competitive secondary school sport.

The year sevens have already racked up two victories this season, most recently beating rivals, Tenbury, 3-0.

Milo, who played in the match, said: "It was tough, they started off quite strong but we got a goal in. We then found it easier as the game went on and scored two more.

"I've found it really fun playing football with the school, especially when there are people that I know on the other team.

Meanwhile, our Year 8 team had a fantastic 5-0 victory against Lucton. Gracie, who scored the first goal, said: "The season is going really great. We played our first game and we were really good.

"Since it was our first game back, we were all really excited to see how it would go.

"We were really happy to be back playing sport after a long time of lockdown."

PE Teacher, Mr Bescoby, said: "To see them happily playing competitive sport, and how well they interacted with each other on the pitch, was lovely."



Sensible cyclists who put road safety first

MORE students have been getting a handle on cycling safety, following last term's successful Bikeability programme.

Instructors took the students out on their bikes around Leominster, helping them gain confidence and learn how to navigate roundabouts, traffic lights and junctions.

They were also taught about different aspects of cycling safety, as well as bike maintenance and repairs. All the students, 24 in total, have now passed their Cycling Proficiency Level three.

Year 8 Sophie said: "We cycled around town and the instructors would stop us, every now and then, to explain what we were doing and how to do it correctly. It was quite helpful to practice with traffic coming past us. At first, it was quite intimidating, but as the session went on, it got more comfortable to ride around."

The school hopes the training, delivered for free by the Bikeability charity, will help build confidence among those who cycle to school.



Keeping active

OUR students will be going for gold, by taking part in a new awards programme, aimed at encouraging them to get the most out of school life.

The exciting new scheme will see Year 7 work towards the top prize, by taking part in a choice of extra-curricular activity.

There are 15 possible after school challenges, with students having to complete five before earning their badge.

Year 7 Harley said: "It just makes school life more fun. I think this award has helped me get involved in more things and helped push me to make greater achievements.

"I have been doing choir after school, Bikeability and football. It encourages you to not going home after school, but to take part in new things and make new friends. It is great."

Students enjoyed a series of activities for Science Week.



Science Week is out of this world

THE school marked Science Week with a series of talks, fun activities and experiments.

Engineer-turned-author, Roma Agrawal, gave an insight into her career path and the need for more diversity in her profession.

Meanwhile, students had a wonderful chance to sample space travel from the comfort of the school thanks to an

inflatable Planetarium.

Head of Science, Mr Langley, said: "It was great experience for all of our students.

"They got the chance to closely look at Beyonce's favourite planet (Saturn) because there is a ring on it.

"And they proved Pink Floyd wrong, there is no dark side of the moon – only a far side."



Students enjoyed participating in some traditional Chinese dragon dancing and sampled some food, as part of a series of cultural workshops.

Workshops are roaring success

Chinese dragon dancing forms part of popular cultural events...

STUDENTS explored Chinese customs, with a series of theatre workshops and dedicated day of cultural learning.

Courtyard Theatre actors taught Year 8 students about traditional dragon dancing, animal signs of the Chinese zodiac, and helped create skits and monologues.

The fun-packed day of learning ended with small groups of students performing plays to their peers.

Later in the term, Year 7, 8 and 9 students took their learning outside of the classroom, spending the day immersed in Chinese culture.

They learned about Chinese myths using shadow puppets, made lanterns, cooked Chinese cuisine and made Koi cars inscribed with Chinese proverbs.

Cultural Capital Coordinator, Mrs Gummer, said: "We are trying to raise cultural capital in the school, giving students opportunities outside the curriculum.

"We want them have interesting new experiences, so that when they go out into the wider world, they can compete on a level playing field with those from privileged backgrounds."

We are trying to raise cultural capital in the school, giving students opportunities outside the curriculum...

Cultural Capital Coordinator, Mrs Gummer

Wellbeing Club offers students a chance for headspace

YEAR 7 and 8 students will have a stress-free place to relax with friends, thanks to our new Wellbeing Club.

Students will take part in games, art, drama, and activities which help them improve their wellbeing.

Run in partnership with youth support project No Wrong Door (NWD), the club will run after school every Monday in the drama studio.

Alongside the club, NWD have also run exam stress support sessions for Year 11 students, as well as sessions on the importance of mindset in achieving goals.

Linda, from NWD, said: "We are excited to take up a permanent residence, every Monday, at EMC, to give extra support with wellbeing.

"It is a great pleasure to work alongside a school which takes the emotional wellbeing of their students so seriously and puts their mental health at the top of the agenda."

Focus on future

OUR GCSE and A Level students had the chance to hear from a range of employers and further education providers at the school's careers fair.

They had the opportunity to explore the different options available including college, university, an apprenticeship or the work of work, when they leave school.

Mr Maddock, Senior Assistant Principal and Careers Lead, said: "It was a worthwhile addition to our school careers programme for Years 10, 11 and sixth form students.

"Over 20 further and higher education and apprenticeship providers, local and national businesses and the armed forces were all in attendance.

"The aim of the event was for all providers to have the opportunity to come into school, meet with our young people and give them information and advice about career options and pathways.

"Providing young people with up-to-date

information about career opportunities is crucial, especially in the present economic climate."

Post 16 providers who had stalls at the fair included Hereford Sixth Form College, Herefordshire & Ludlow College and Hereford College of Arts.

There were also representatives from Harper Adams University, New Model Institute for Technology & Engineering (NMITE).

Training providers included Herefordshire & Worcestershire Group Training Association, Riverside Apprenticeships and Nova Training.

Students also had the chance to speak to potential employers including the Army, Royal Air Force, Halo Leisure, Balfour Beatty and Honeybees Childcare.

Year 10 students will get the chance to undertake work experience placements in July as well as a taster day at Herefordshire & Ludlow College.



The careers fair gave students the chance to assess their future options.

Learning from French school

STUDENTS have been learning about life in France through exchanging letters and photos with our twin school in France, Collège les Sources in Saverne.

With the pandemic preventing the school from running overseas trips for the last two years, students have been getting to know their French counterparts remotely.

They have contributed to playlists, sharing their favourite songs in their respective languages, sending letters sharing what they like to do in their free time and what they did over the holidays.

The school hopes the pen pal exchange will continue to flourish, and that the usual trips will be up and running again soon.

Students have also been hearing first-hand about France from language assistant Souhila, who has been at the school since October through a placement organised by the British Council.

Souhila, who hails from Brittany, said: "The students were all very kind, curious and happy to have me in their lessons.

"They quickly accepted me and I hope I was able to make their French lessons more interesting."

Awesome adventures

AROUND 50 students have volunteered, taken part in sport, and will attend a camping expedition to complete their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

They had to put in 50 hours of volunteering, three months of physical activity, and practice of a skill to receive the prize.

They have been supporting our local community by working in charity shops and by supporting people with dementia at Leominster Meeting Centre.

The camping expedition is expected to take place next term, with students progressing to their silver next year.

Those who complete their bronze certificate by May half-term will get the chance to take part in an expedition to earn the full bronze award, and can then progress to the silver award, next year.

Year 10 Alfie, has won praise for coaching our Year 8 football team.

He said: "I have enjoyed developing their football skills. I have developed my own leadership skills, improved my communication, and it has given me the opportunity to run a sports team.

Mr Bescoby, who oversees the programme, said: "The Year 8s respect and look up to him, which is amazing considering he is only two years older. He is a promising young leader."

"It is a great example of how this programme can help young people develop a wide range of skills, which will stand them in good stead in the future."



Alfie gained a lot from coaching our Year 8 football team.

Teaching tolerance

THE school marked LGBTQ+ History Month with a range of activities throughout February.

Students were taught about LGBTQ+ rights, identities and trailblazers, and celebrated our own LGBTQ+ community.

They also learned about how to identify homophobia, the importance of calling it out, and were signposted to organisations which can provide support.

Anti-bullying coordinator, Mrs Gummer, said: "We have got a strong group of LGBT students in school, so it's a time we can come together as a school to celebrate them and raise awareness.

"They learned about the history of the flag, periods of time when people weren't very nice to the LGBTQ+ community, and how we have tried to change that today.

A key part of this work was exploring how language, often used in the context of 'banter', can actually be harmful.

Mrs Gummer said: "One of our main focuses was learning about the power of language. We looked at words that are negative and why it's not right to use them.

"It was about teaching the students to use terms correctly and 'get off the banter bus' because it is not funny and can hurt people's feelings"



Staff embraced World Book Day by dressing up as a range of wonderful characters.

Characters shine on World Book Day

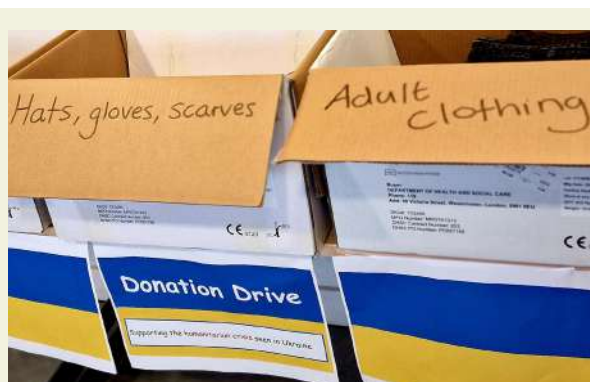
YEAR 7 students ditched their uniforms, to spend the day dressed as their favourite fictional characters, to mark World Book Day.

The fun-packed occasion was part of a range of activities across the week, to promote reading for purpose, progress and pleasure.

Activities included character charades, finding golden tickets for Wonka chocolate bars, and a game of spotting characters around the school.

Miss Stanik said: "I would like to thank all students and staff for their enthusiasm and participation in the tasks and competitions.

"It was pleasing to see that each and every year group has been enthusiastic and immersed in the activities."



Uniting for Ukraine

OUR community has come together to show support and solidarity with the people of Ukraine by donating essentials. Donations can be left with the school.



Sparkling designs for our festive card contest

OUR competition, asking local primary school students to design Christmas cards, has been hailed a great success, after attracting 57 entries from nine schools.

The winning designs were printed and sent out to our families, and it was hoped they could be sold at the Christmas fair but it was unable to go ahead, due to Covid restrictions.

It is the first time the school has run a competition for feeder primary schools, and spring and summer contests are now also being planned.

Transition Coordinator, Mrs Hughes, said: "We love working with our wonderful primary school neighbours. Forging links really does benefit everyone.

"This means, if they do join us at secondary school, they know our school and they know we are a warm and welcoming school to join."

