

# AS-SAWT THE VOICE



Tauheedul Girls

The Newsletter for Tauheedul Islam Girls'  
High School and Sixth Form College

**Edition 38 - February 2021**

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## Winter (Gift) Wonderland!

By Humairah Choksi, 10T4

At the approach of winter, temperature plummets and vulnerability soars, exacerbated by the pandemic wreaking havoc and upturning lives. Seizing the opportunity, Star Academies and the schools within launched the Winter Gift Program in order to aid and contribute to the community, just in time for Christmas.

Beginning on 16th November, up until Christmas, all 29 schools within the Star Trust partook in a variety of volunteering and fundraising projects, striving to make a difference to those struggling within the community.

Pupils at Tauheedul piled in with a mountain of donations: hygiene items, food supplies and funds to purchase toys for children. In addition to this, food hampers were created for the elderly living in Springfield Care Home in Blackburn. Due to the collective efforts of the students and staff, support was provided to many local charities, including Community Spirit, Blackburn Foodbank, The Wish Centre and Night Safe. Along with this, all 29 Star schools participated in the 'Food for All Week' scheme from 7th – 13th December, where 50,000 food parcels and meals were distributed to the less fortunate and disadvantaged.

The concept of charity within Islam is hugely important, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) listed it as one of the three things which continue to benefit a person even after death: *"When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah (ceaseless charity); a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (for the deceased)."*

Despite the restrictions and difficulties the pandemic has brought, the schools have done an incredible job in spreading positivity in the community. Aaminah Issa, a Year 10 student, said: *"Although we were limited by lockdown and distancing measures, we were still able to raise an exceptional sum. In my year group, we raised money for the multifaith centre at the local hospital – I hope our efforts have brightened the days of hospital staff and patients."*







## Chair's Reflections...

All praises to the Almighty, Lord of the Worlds and the Master of our fortunes, and salutations to our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Seal of the Prophets and the guide for all our actions.

Schooling our children has never been more difficult – but we must keep going

In schools up and down the country, including our own, many days during the first term were the same.

The phones would start ringing from 8am onwards as parents report that their daughter has tested positive overnight. The Principal and the designated 'COVID Silver Team' then go through a set of actions. They speak to the student testing positive (hopefully they are at home instead of at school), check on their wellbeing and identify who they spent their social times with. Then, they look at the seating plans – including on the school bus – and identify which pupils sat close to the 'positive case', before going around the school and placing each of these 'close contacts' into a holding room to be collected by their inconvenienced parents. These pupils would now have to isolate for up to two weeks and access their lessons online, often using a laptop and learning resources hastily provided by the school.

There are also a multitude of calls to make – to parents of close contacts, the Local Council, Public Health England and the Department for Education. Moreover, several forms need to be completed and dispatched to each of the different stakeholders who want to ask the same questions but in a myriad of ways.

So, every positive case in a school is a small traumatic event. It disrupts the life and learning, not just of the child who has tested positive – but of around 20 others who must now isolate. School leaders and teachers, instead of focusing on learning or introducing exciting new ideas to encourage reading, spent so much of their time covering for absent teachers who are isolating, completing paperwork and making calls to send another group of pupils home, or checking on many children who are at home because they or a family member has symptoms.

The weekends and holidays bring no real respite, with school leaders expected to continue to identify and notify close contacts of each positive case at the school.

The spectre of COVID-19 has led to hundreds of our students forced to stay away from school and scores of teachers missing from lessons because of their own symptoms or due to their children having been sent home to isolate. It had led to conversations about enjoyment and achievement being replaced by almost daily discussions on disinfection and distancing. Moreover, it has meant cancelled trips, less group work in class and fewer opportunities for our young women to meet people of different backgrounds and perspectives.

This was the stark and depressing reality of COVID-19 in our schools during the first term.

During this second term, the surge in infections has meant almost all of our young people having to study from home. This has placed considerable burdens on parents – juggling work with childcare, trying to secure extra laptops, collecting learning packs from school and having to support the remote learning of their young children at home. It has also made life very difficult for our teachers and support staff who were called on to juggle the teaching of lessons to empty classrooms whilst looking after their own children at home and preparing to introduce COVID testing in our schools.

After so many months of this, there is understandable fatigue and exhaustion.

However, we must remain hopeful, resolute and indefatigable. Our schools may not be the thriving, bustling, joyful places of yesteryear – however, we should all remain passionately determined that they should not become a 'zombie-school', devoid of a higher purpose and something akin to 'baby-sitting' stressed teenagers rather than educating them.

We have no choice – the future of every single one of our young men and women, particularly those with GCSE, BTEC and A Level exams this summer, depends on it.

Whether they secure the places at college and university that their talents and efforts deserve will depend on how well parents, teachers and (most importantly) our children are able to persevere and sustain the belief that there is a better day coming tomorrow despite the challenges and trauma of today.

Relief will surely come (God Willing) – but, for now, we must keep going.

Despite the horror and pain, there is much to be grateful for

When reflecting on the flu pandemic of 1918 that killed 50 million people (the equivalent of 200 million today), historians tell us that people did not like to talk about it afterwards. This was neither because of the devastating death toll, nor the huge economic turmoil the virus wrought. Rather, many of those who escaped the grip of the 'Spanish lady' were ashamed of how they had behaved during the onslaught – callous to their neighbours, mistrusting of their work colleagues, scornful of the advice of their public health officials and faithful to fake cures pushed by opportunist hucksters.

Despite the obvious parallels, and the collective trauma of so many lives cut short, we can be grateful for so much of our response to COVID-19.

During the past year, the full talents and endeavours of our scientists, doctors and nurses in hospitals, civil society, Government and entrepreneurs have been unleashed to vanquish the virus. So many individuals have played a significant role in nursing our nation through this traumatic period. Much quiet heroism has been shown in our hospitals and care homes, as well as by refuse collectors, shop workers, teachers, social workers and the emergency services. Parents have juggled work and childcare; the elderly and vulnerable have resolutely shielded at home; armies of volunteers have provided life-saving support to their neighbours and helped bury our loved ones safely and with grace; and businesses have repurposed themselves to make protective equipment for those on the frontline. We have lauded the efforts of our NHS, sacrificed many of the freedoms we enjoy and looked after the most vulnerable in our communities. Most importantly, we have refused to cower in fear, succumb to the instinct to blame others or tear ourselves apart.

Our hearts grieve and our souls ache for the many beloved we have lost – mothers and fathers,

grandparents and siblings, neighbours and friends – and we pray for those who are bereaved or continue to live with the physical and emotional toll of this virus.

And yet, to our Lord, we are most grateful. Grateful for the many people who have been heroes within our midst. Grateful to live in a time and place in which we do not have to choose between having to work during a pandemic to feed our children and risking our lives with this illness. And, grateful for the vaccine that will be administered over the coming months to deliver us from this darkness. Despite everything, we are still blessed.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the As-Sawt magazine and remember the school in your prayers.

*Hamid Patel*

(Mufti) Hamid Patel

Chair of the Local Governing Body, TIGHS

## Pride, Prejudice and Portraits

By Maryam Wadiwala, 13B7

'Pictures of perfection, as you know, make me sick and wicked.' - Jane Austen

The conventional portrait of Jane Austen is an idealised version of her. Contemporary illustrators have dulled her otherwise striking eyes and nose shape and dispersed the image over endless publications. By way of celebration of Austen as Britain's first great female novelist, the Bank of England has of late introduced the new ten-pound note - with marked efforts altering her facial features to 'soften' her appearance.

For most people, this paired with the big house in the background - Godmersham (where she in fact did not live) - captures the spirit of the novelist's life, but in reality, it is a false construction. Jane Austen is a quintessential figure within

literature, most famously being known for having authored the seminal novel 'Pride and Prejudice', yet her biography has been captured most inaccurately on a note that will circulate more than her books ever will.

The note is based on a water colouring illustrated by her sister Cassandra and was described to 'not favour' Jane by those who knew her. For the very image to then be rallied around and altered to become milder and sweeter does great injustice to a writer so widely celebrated, with her novels being translated into thirty-five languages, as well a multitude of adaptations and re-imaginings.

It is difficult to accept the bigotry over her looks that has caused her to become almost as faceless as the days she wrote under a pseudonym. Only referring to herself as 'A Lady' under her first published novel Sense and Sensibility, Jane adapted a mysterious alias, much like the Bronte sisters. Having never been publicly acknowledged as a writer



within her lifetime, it is fascinating to consider how amused Austen would have been at the public reverence of her novels within the both the western and global canons today.

Even so, the refinement process of Austen's portraits would undoubtedly be insulting, particularly after she so distinctly expressed her hatred for 'pictures of perfection.' It is almost ironic that a society so proud of what Austen represents could be so prejudiced towards who she truly was.





## Inspire and Aspire Event: Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders

By Munira Khanjra, 12B3

The annual Inspire and Aspire Seminar was undoubtedly a thrilling and insightful event, with guests sharing their life experiences and tips for success. Year 13 students at Tauheedul Girls were inspired to aim higher after invaluable contributions from influential guest speakers, **Raysa Farah** and **Ilyas Munshi**.

The students had the pleasure of meeting Ms. Farah, the proud owner of LK Verdant florist, a brand renowned internationally for its flawless quality and creativity. Her successful luxury business has seen a recent collaboration with Vogue Weddings, and her bespoke flower arrangements have been supplied to eager customers worldwide. The motivation behind pursuing her childhood passion for flowers, despite attaining a rewardable career in the NHS that she loved, left many students awestruck by how she turned her ultimate dream of being a florist into a reality.



Upon hearing the success story, **Year 13 student, Aaliyah Gorgi, exclaimed: "The LK Verdant presentation was incredibly motivating! It taught me that no matter what path life takes you on, never give up on your dreams."**

Ilyas Munshi, Commercial Director of the Euro Garages group, highlighted the proactive measures fundamental in adapting to such a challenging time in which businesses have been subjected to unfortunate closures. One such example was of KFC swiftly and initiatively offering delivery services ever since the first national lockdown. The breakdown of how enormously complex business chains have replanned, realigned, and transformed their service fronts was an excellent demonstration for the girls on the topic of resilience



and success, scaffolding the qualities of leadership within eager minds.

**Ms. Rizwana Patel, teacher of A Level Sociology, remarked: "The guest speakers' advice provided students with a better understanding of navigating their future careers. Most notably, it has motivated learners to aim higher in all life aspects."**

Tauheedul Girls' students would like to thank the guest speakers who, through their insightful advice, have inspired learners to unravel their potential and shape their journey!



## 'A Smooth Sea Never Made a Skilled Sailor'

By Hana Ali, 11M3

**The currents of life lap gently on the coasts of our minds - until they are not so gentle anymore. Yes, as much as we are all reluctant to admit, life is not as smooth sailing as we expected. And although it is different icebergs that we must confront, we all come together in our odyssey across the vast ocean: many of us have barely scratched the surface.**

We must come to terms with the fact that it is inevitable – this ocean that is the hardships faced by all in society will always reside before us, and is something that we must cross time and time again. However, amidst the cacophony of crashing waves, **it is vital that we do not lose sight of the most salient thing: ourselves.** After all, there is no such thing as a captain-less boat. We steer our lives successfully most of the time; yet, it is inevitable that the turbulence masked by the smooth waters will uprear sometimes. The question is how to deal with these storms, especially when whatever we choose to do defines us in innumerable ways.

Primarily, we can consider ourselves to belong to three homes: **the Earth, our body and our minds.** To care for and nurture these three entities can be arduous, but with the right guidance and knowledge, we should be well equipped to gain advantageous positions in our voyage.

The Earth – its large grasp encompassing our surroundings, our homes and our physical places of comfort. How can we expect our minds to be cleansed when the world around us is going up in flames? In order to navigate our world, it is up to us to **become more aware**, whether that be through watching the daily news or going old-school and reading a newspaper. After all, the first step to change is to know change is needed.

The body – one key element in conquering these vicious waves you may face as a 'sailor', and sometimes the most neglected of our three homes. It is up to us to build a silent voice in the back of our minds that reminds us to eat well, get a full eight hours of sleep

and take time off from life by practising self-care. In addition to this, **remember to slow down** – your boat does not have to go full speed ahead all the time; have a hot drink to relax and make a conscious effort to pay attention and spend more time with family and friends – your body will be thankful for some stillness every once in a while.

**The mind – the indefinite captain of the ship.** We have a world of endless, inspirational literature at our disposal, something which many of us are guilty of ignoring and undermining time after time. All that modern gadgetry can sometimes do more harm than good - so get back to the basics and lose yourself in books. If you seek to exercise your creativity, pick up writing. Write every day. Unpick that ball of wool that is your thoughts, allow your mind to wander and observe. The world flows far beyond the realms of social media; by finding comfort in literature and writing, you will find yourself calmer and at ease with the chopping waves, and this may provide the serenity missing from much of modern life.

And finally, be thankful. As cliché as it sounds, **gratitude itself turns the tide.**







## Reading to the Rescue

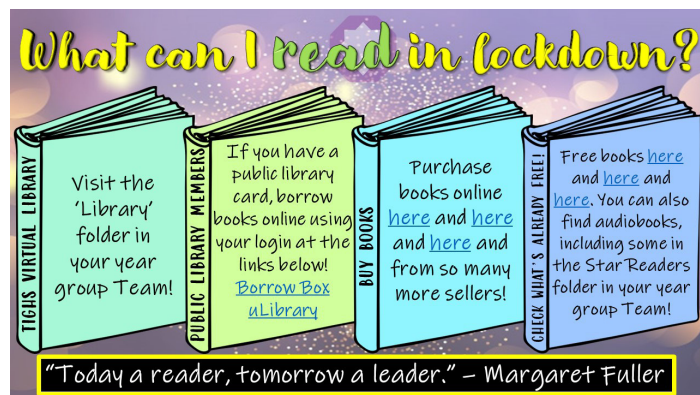
By Amina Iqbal, 13B5



**Language:** convey logic and emotion, communicate and create, combine the forces of grammatical and lexical competence; this is the tool that makes the world go round. The 6,500 languages spoken today reflect the diverging nature of language, evolving to fit distinct cultural and geographical spheres. From the pictorial grandeur of Egyptian hieroglyphics to the diverse origins of the English language, humanity's unique form of communication is engrained in our collective identity. So, what's Tauheedul Girls done this term to herald reading?

As the physical library footfall was forced to go low, the remote operation of a 'slip and collect' service went high. All form rooms were kitted with 'book ordering' supplies, leading to the delivery of their books right to learners' tables. Such unprecedented and convenient access to books has meant that even learners who view spending lunchtime in the library as a sacrilegious use of freedom suddenly find themselves lost in their latest read. Even as the school finds itself almost empty of pupils, reading remains at the forefront with several 'remote' reading strategies including the use of audiobooks promoted and provided for learners at home.

Various Star Readers book clubs are another opportunity for students to engage in literary discussion. In addition to



this, updated displays exhibiting students' reading choices have been put up in classrooms, to celebrate and share their interests and inspire others ahead of the awards ceremony in July. Year 13 student, Sanaa Rizvan, remarked, *"I appreciate the range of books I've been invited to explore by the challenge. Reading allows me to step into the incredible lives of complete strangers, losing myself in gripping plots and pausing to appreciate the incredible eloquence of authors."*

And it's not all about English! Organised by the Modern Foreign Languages Department (MFL), the **#LoveLanguages** event in February will promote a range of activities encouraging students to find a deeper appreciation for foreign languages. Aiming to ignite curiosity as well as intercultural awareness of the localities where the target languages are spoken, an MFL Reading List will be released, comprising of an array of short stories, classic novels and non-fiction texts. These texts can be accessed through the remote library system, which has seen more borrowers than ever before, proving to be an astounding success.



Students in KS3 can share their MFL reading joy by joining online book clubs, contributing their opinions and critiques of texts by writing book reviews and getting creative with elaborate bookmark designs. Ms. Carrington, head of the Languages Department, commented, *"I hope that the MFL team have introduced students to some wonderful, new and lifelong literary friends this year!"*

Indeed, reading is no solitary activity. Tahir Ben Jelloun, an author, captures this perfectly: *'La bibliothèque est une chambre d'amis.'* That is, *'The library is a room of friends.'*

# AS-SAWT

# The Voice



## Run and Games: Sports Sprint on!

By Amina Kamaluddin, 10T4

Racing forward and tackling hurdles head on, the PE department remains unstoppable in their drive to keep Tauheedul Girls on its feet, with an array of thrilling opportunities to get students involved.



First up, a chance for Year 8 students to captain the call to fitness. *"Newly qualified ambassadors have begun to influence PE offered at Tauheedul, as they promote leading a healthy lifestyle,"* describes Mrs Mulla, teacher of PE. The inspiration for this project came from an online training session with Jade Windley, a British tennis player who has competed at Wimbledon. The ambassadors engaged in planning a festival as well as various sports clubs for other students to benefit from. Gleaning motivation from the inspiring sportswoman provided students with the encouragement to work on their respective fitness journeys and developing ideas to support others around them too.

Over the course of this term, exercise classes have also been offered to KS4 students to improve their fitness as exam season draws near, allowing for healthy bodies to accompany healthy minds. The most impressive aspect of this unmissable chance is that students can access all the classes from the comfort of their own homes, allowing all students to take part despite the lockdown.

An essential reminder on the topic of sports and fitness is that there's more to it than simply hopping on a treadmill and going for a run. Year 7 and 8 students took on the challenge of designing an original recipe inspired by Team GB, as part of Aldi's *'Taste Kitchen Challenge'*. With judges demanding carefully selected ingredients, complementary flavours, enticing presentation and, of course, a healthy integration of fruit and vegetables, the students were

stretched to exhibit their culinary skills and artistic flair alongside their understanding of how food functions in the fitness world.



And lastly – the Duke of Edinburgh Award is back! Enter a fresh cohort of Year 10s, beginning their arduous but rewarding journey for the renowned accomplishment. The training process remains unfailingly formidable: a multitude of tasks such as reading maps, mastering the use of special equipment, choosing practical food items, shouldering those infamous backpacks and even putting up the notoriously difficult tents, a necessary struggle faced by all. Yet, the greatest physical challenge is still to come – the expedition, where students will test their mettle in the outside world, a challenge which shall hopefully take place in this new year. Meanwhile, they will continue to carry on with their training this term, building their skills for the expedition ahead.

Whilst many of us grudge the idea of having to break a sweat, the benefits of keeping fit to both our physical and mental health is undeniable. You have a duty to take care of your body: what's stopping you now?







## Apocalyptic Gory to Optimistic Glory: Book Review of Charlie Higson's 'The Enemy'

By Arhama Farhan, 11M3

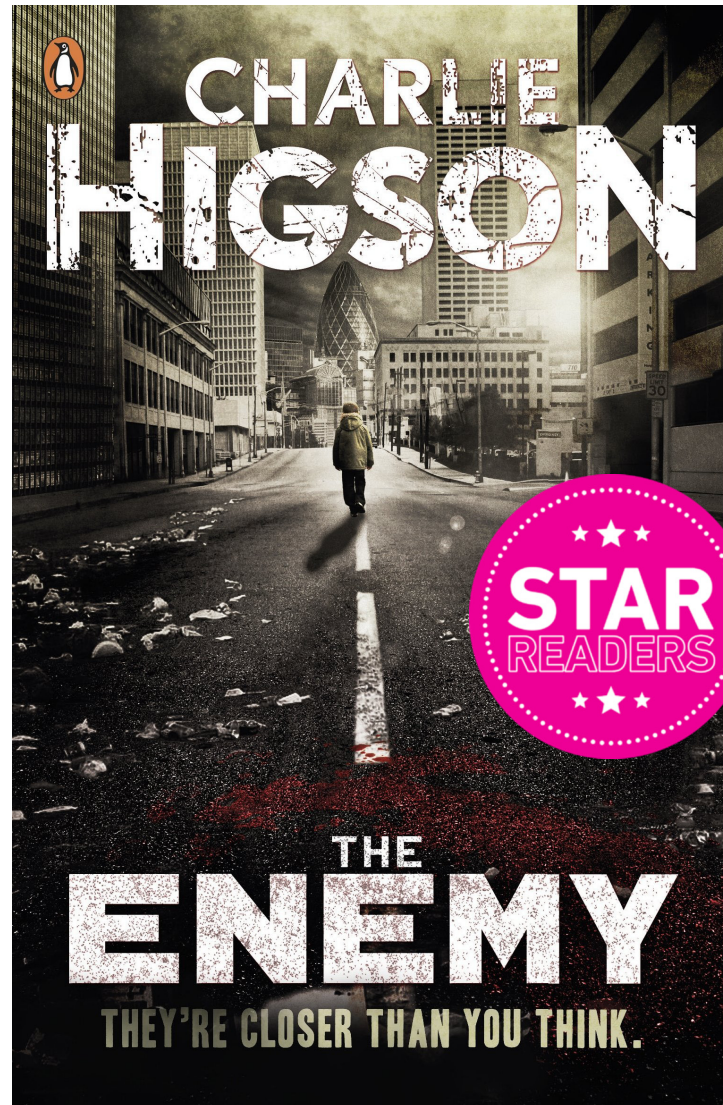
Adults away and children left unattended. Every child's dream is summarised in these few words. 'The Enemy' by Charlie Higson encompasses this notion with realism and a universal driving force - survival.

The novel's plot is introduced in a flurry of action as a young child is ambushed by a diseased mob of people. The premise of the book hinges around this disease, an ailment transforming all those above the age of 14 into zombies who resort to a gory method of survival: eating children. As gruesome as it sounds, it is the only means for such creatures to survive, an unpleasant fact of life which leers in the face of future generations. Through the use of vivid imagery nourished with wracking fear, Higson remarkably brings to life his dystopian tale, locking his readers into a world that feels hideously real.

Higson slips us into the ranks of the Holloway Crew, a group of young people who escape from their supermarket base with their neighbouring rivals. They head towards Buckingham Palace, situated on the other side of London, where tantalizing rumours circulate: security and lifetime supplies of daily necessities. The children's longing for such pleasures builds their motivation and moulds them into mature, strong characters, morphing from bullies into loyal crew mates, introverted bookworms into fearless leaders and ordinary children into skilled fighters who all long for freedom. 'These boys were survivors. The will to live was stronger than any other feelings.' With such an incentive, their characters grow and change alongside their hope, with the desperate pursuit of survival darkening their worlds.

Undergoing many trials and tribulations, the children finally arrive at their destination to the crushing discovery that their expectations were set a little too high. Friendships were tested, lives betted upon and freedom snatched. Bolstered, however, by the initial desire to survive, the children reorganise to break through and search for a new beginning back outside the walls of the gilded prison.

Admittedly, the novel could be perceived as merely a piece of children's fiction, with the traumas and hardships far removed from the real world. However, it is irrefutable



that Higson builds upon a base of universal relevance – friendship, the fight for safety and the simple human desire to stay alive. Exploring relatable struggles alongside the dystopic fantasy he creates, Higson's writing thrills with a quiver of adrenaline, constantly pushing his characters and readers forward with the promise of hope.

In conclusion, the cacophony of such an action-packed book silences itself with the intense emotions it provokes, proving that any novel can provide valuable lessons if you consider the societal, emotional and human implications of these fictional worlds enough.



## AS-SAWT

## The Voice



### The Crème de la Crème - The Best Linguists at TIGHS

By Faiqa Murtaza, 9S1

*"The man who does not know other languages, unless he is a man of genius, necessarily has deficiencies in his ideas."* - Victor Hugo, French novelist and poet.

A proud advocate for the Romantic movement in the 18th – 19th century, Victor Hugo is best known for his play 'Les Misérables', which has gained worldwide critical acclaim and has been adapted numerous times to Broadway productions, West End musicals and Hollywood films. Hugo expounds the importance of being multilingual and why it should be common in society.

The Year 7 French Spelling Bee took

place over the last half-term. Many eager and hopeful Year 7s queued outside the designated classrooms, waiting to be tested by **Ms. Carrington, Head of the Languages Department**. The task set was to memorise 50 words in the first stage. This allows students to take part in a class 'spell off' to see which skilful students can cope with the more challenging task of stage two:



learning 100 words for next half-term, a task which will push students to their

language-learning limits.

**Ms. Carrington** provided some insight into the importance of this competition and its wider benefits. When asked about the importance of learning a second language, she extolled all the benefits: *"Where do I start? It improves communication skills and literacy, it widens your vocabulary in your native language, increases chances of being employed or getting accepted into university. Lastly, it opens your eyes to the big, wide world in all its variety."*

**Ms. Carrington also provided tips for learning French, suggesting that, "Little and often is best... Practice when new knowledge is fresh in your mind."**

Ms. Carrington congratulates Maariyah Hameed, Zunaira Patel, Aisha Ismail and Syeda Shifa Bukhari on their success in the competition: *"Well done on making it past stage one. We wish you the best of luck for the remainder of the competition!"*

### Murder by Degrees

By Haleema Ougradar, 10T3

**Whodunnit? This was the question on every student's lips the night of the fateful murder of the watchman at the Sparkly Gems' Jewellers. Stolen by a mathematical genius, a valuable delivery of jewellery including lavish sapphires, rubies and diamonds disappeared into what seemed to be thin air. The next step was for the precocious mathematics students of Year 7 and Year 8 to conduct an investigation, led by Inspector Pymworthy, who, as of yet, had no leads to follow.**

Hoping to get the best out of the detectives, the school served up a lavish lunch to fuel the students prior to their significant role in the investigation. Allying with their other associates, the task of solving this murder and finding the perpetrator became sufficiently easier.

Research and evidence diligently recorded on the suspect sheet, the detectives expertly narrowed it down to an inside job - it was clear that one of the employees had committed the crime, as only they were aware which safe the jewels were in. However, forensic tests had produced no fingerprints or DNA matches, and the gun was nowhere to be found. The trail was getting cold.

Inspector Pymworthy (or rather, Inspector Dimworthy, as the students had dubbed him) had no chance, but found himself a stroke of luck when the overconfident murderer decided to reveal clues regarding his crime. The Inspector received five emails from someone at the jewellers, informing him that they had knowledge they could afford to share. These emails were vague and incredibly cryptic, leaving the Inspector mystified. Each of the clues provided would eliminate one suspect, leaving the elusive culprit remaining.

After learning of a police reward for the first team to successfully name the convict with evidence, the student detectives were doubly determined to proceed with the investigation. This year, the prize for each member of the winning team was an ornate wooden box with their names engraved onto the lid in delicate calligraphy.

Practising exceptional judgement, teamwork and problem-solving skills, the winning team managed to retrieve the stolen jewels, as well as cornering the criminal who now sees a lifetime behind bars – not the luxurious lifestyle in Cambodia they envisioned.

*"Case closed! It was a lot of fun, and although we were not the winning team, we managed to find most of the clues because our team worked well together. Hopefully, we can do this again next year!"* - **Khalisah Ahmed, Year 8.**



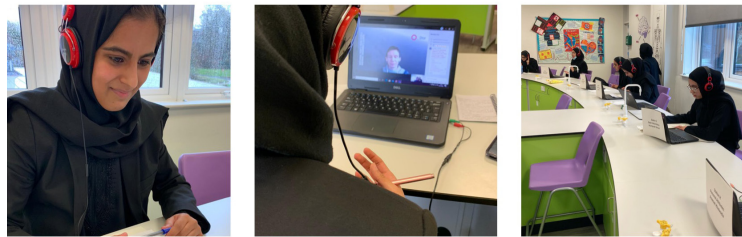


## Stepping into the Future

By Lubna Shah, 13B6

It may seem impossible to prepare for anything in such unpredictable times, but Year 13 students at Tauheedul have been meticulously tweaking personal statements, rehearsing for their hand-wringingly formal interviews, and digging up GCSE results since May 2020, to prepare for the next step in their lives: university.

Like every momentous transition in life, preparing for university may appear daunting, but as always, the Tauheedul staff have been at hand, helping students with every worry and query. Ms. Fahima Patel, our fantastic Careers Education Tutor, has made the process much smoother for students: clarifying the ins and outs of UCAS Track, arranging mock interviews for all who request them, explaining how to budget for university life, encouraging attendance to virtual open days to help students become acclimatised to university life and much, much more.



**Hazra Patel, one Year 13 student currently in the process of preparing for university, spoke of her experience and the help she received: “Tutorials (led by Ms. Fahima Patel) have especially helped me in my preparation for university - I have received great advice on how to create a competitive application as well as explanations on every minute detail of the process. They have been invaluable!”**

Moving on to a new stage in life is always difficult, especially when everything is as unstable and complicated as it has been the past year. However, the hard work and steadfast diligence of Tauheedul students in their preparation shows us that we can still rely on our faith in Our Lord, the spirit of dedication and the support of our school and community to continue achieving and making the most of our lives.



IGHS Amina Modan



**Ms. Shaaheeda Patel, manager of the admissions process, commented on the preparations, stating, “This has been an exceptional year for students applying for university. Students were able to stay connected with teachers for personal statement support from May onwards, and our university partners were also much more accessible through online platforms, allowing for fantastic input from top universities such as Oxford and Cambridge.”**

Of course, we must acknowledge the unique struggles faced by students applying in such a tumultuous time. With education policy in flux, students have faced an exceptionally uncertain year, unsure of how grades will be awarded - a key aspect of gaining access to university places. However, the sixth form has remained a rock in students' lives, encouraging them to remain steadfast with their learning, helping students retain a level of normalcy and continue progression - support which will surely make the transition to university much smoother.





## The Perplexing Plastic Problem: A Virtual Parliamentary Event

By Noorulanne Younis, 13B6

In early November, I was lucky enough to represent the Eco-Schools initiative in a virtual event which brought together a panel of experts and cross-party MPs to discuss the true solutions to plastic pollution.

Propositions panned across the board. **Broadcaster and writer, Lucy Siegle**, called for the adoption of a circular economy in which plastics never become waste, promoting a more effective method of recycling plastics, whilst **Director of External Affairs and Sustainability at Suntory Beverage, Michelle Norman**, highlighted the need for competitively priced plastic-free products. **Award-winning environmental engineer, Yuyun Ismawati**, proposed a ban on outsourced recycling and **Director of the Marine Institute at the University of Plymouth, Professor Richard Thompson OBE**, suggested increased funding in plastic alternative research to move science towards the solutions we need.

Eagerly listening to the suggestions in a sea of Parliamentarians was the **Environment Secretary, George Eustice**. As one of five youth panellists, I had the opportunity to ask the Secretary of State a single question – is the Government prepared to introduce fiscal measures such as a plastic tax, if targets are not met? After a momentary pause, he highlighted that whilst fiscal measures have been successful in some areas, he remains hopeful that measures in the Environment Bill, such as the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme, will drive a change in manufacturer behaviour, eliminating the need for greater taxation.

Although the meeting ended prematurely, the concluding remarks by **MP Kevin Hollinrake** reminded us all that there

is no silver bullet solution to the plastic pollution problem – ultimately, prevention is better than a cure. The key, which all panel members highlighted at the beginning of their pitches, is to turn the plastic tap off at the source.

**Teacher of Humanities, Mrs Aga, who oversaw the event, commented:** *"We were delighted to have been chosen to represent the Eco-Schools initiative after achieving the Green Flag status as a school. The event was a valuable platform for young people to learn and ask questions to experts about the plastic crisis. Noorulanne made us very proud."*



## Key Dates

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February  
Half-Term Holiday (1 week)  
Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February  
School Re-opens  
Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March  
Half-Term Holiday (2 weeks)

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April  
School Re-opens  
Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April  
Ramadhaan Begins  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May  
May Day Holiday

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May  
Eid ul Fitr Holiday Begins (2 Days)  
Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May  
Full Year Exams Begin  
Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May  
Half-Term Holiday (1 week)



Tauheedul Girls



**SERVICE**

Being a responsible citizen  
in our community



**TEAMWORK**

Working together  
for excellence



**AMBITION**

Aspiring to be  
our best



**RESPECT**

Treating others as we  
wish to be treated



Part of Star