

**AUTUMN
2018**

THE LEICESTERSHIRE Virtual School NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Autumn 2018 edition of the Leicestershire Virtual School newsletter.



Many of you will have received congratulations cards and vouchers from the Virtual School, Corporate Parenting and our Assistant Director in Children and Family Services, Sharon Cooke following your summer exams; well done to you all for doing your best at school and I hope you got the results you wanted.

We now have a brand new Virtual School website with a lot of information about what we can do to support you; remember you can also contact us for information and advice about education by emailing us direct at virtualschool@leics.gov.uk

On the website you can also see reports of activities and events that have already taken place and find out what activities we are planning for you in the coming months.

[https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/
leicestershire-virtual-school](https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/leicestershire-virtual-school)

There were loads of events over the summer for all age ranges and there are many more coming up, we hope you will sign up and join in.

For the older ones amongst you, I am pleased to tell you that Leicestershire County Council have agreed to give priority for at least six apprenticeships to children in care and care leavers. This means that if you have told your social worker what type of career you are interested in, there might be an opportunity for you to get onto a paid apprenticeship with the council in an area of interest to you. Talk to your social worker or PA or contact us directly to tell us about your interests and ambitions.

Have a wonderful Christmas and I look forward to hearing about all your successes in 2019.

Tony Barnard, Virtual School Head

In this edition

NEWS, EVENTS, CHRISTMAS RECIPES, PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS

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Participation events

Over the summer we offered workshops at various Leicestershire museums.

Children on the summer scheme thoroughly enjoyed the visit to Bosworth Battlefield. The day included an interactive guided tour of the exhibition centre, an exciting session with John the Archer and concluded with a King Richard III inspired rap battle! Children also presented Bosworth staff with a legacy board representation of a stained glass window, made up of their arts and craft work completed throughout the scheme. It is intended this will now be displayed for visitors to the Heritage Centre.



Stained Glass Legacy Board



Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre



A fun day was spent discovering the inside of a real 1620s Manor House at Donington Le Heath, meeting the housekeeper and getting involved with lavender bag making, butter patting, quill pen writing, dressing up and Tudor dancing.

All the children who visited a museum were sent a certificate for becoming a Heritage Detective. Well done to all those involved and look out for more workshops next year.



Did you know that the Virtual School have now launched a new website with information about schools and Post 16 options? It also has information about forthcoming events.

You can find it at this link;

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/leicestershire-virtual-school>

Take a look and let us know what you think!

In July we ran a five day sailing trip for Year 11 students who have worked hard during their Key Stage 4 courses and who have done particularly well at school.

We took five Year 11 students on the trip and two Year 12 students were invited back as senior members from the previous year. We were also accompanied by a skipper and a mate from the Tall Ships Trust, who spent the week teaching us how to sail as well as helping with activities and meals.



We had fine weather all week with calm seas and lovely views of the coastline but it wasn't always relaxing as there was work to be done! There was plenty of physical effort as we hoisted sails, dropped the anchor and secured ropes, as well as other sailing tasks such as navigating and being at the helm. The group particularly enjoyed the night sail which involved using maps, nautical charts, a protractor and a compass to plan a route, before sailing the course using marker buoys to guide us.

As well as sailing, the young people worked in small groups to plan and cook three meals a day for all 11 people and of course, to clear up afterwards! Other chores included checking the engines and cleaning the boat.

The young people identified their highlights of the trip:

- Night sailing: it made us feel independent
- Seeing all the different places
- Jumping in the sea
- Going to the beach
- Going for a swim
- Crabbing
- Learning new things
- Walking on the beach and feeling the fish at our feet

Well done to all who participated and those who tried something out of their comfort zone! It was a fantastic week.

Year 11 students – you could be invited on the Tall Ships trip next year if you work hard at school!

Book Club News

Look out for your Christmas parcel!

Once again the Letterbox club have kindly agreed to donate a Christmas book to all children who have been receiving Letterbox books this year. Look out for the parcel in December. Ho ho ho!

<https://surveys.leics.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=152472969743>

CURVE Theatre Trips

Save the date!

We are delighted to announce some upcoming theatre trips for our students:

To Kill a Mocking Bird

Saturday 9th Feb at 2:15 pm

For young people aged 14+. We have 15 tickets available.

Victoria – A Ballet

Saturday 6th April at 2:30pm

For young people aged 13+. We have 15 tickets available

Tickets are on a first come, first served basis!

If you are interested, please contact Aby or Kerry by email on virtualschool@leics.gov.uk

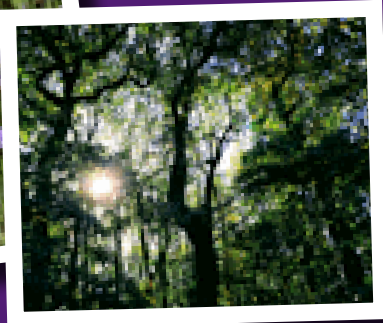


Photo Competition

Thank you to everyone who entered our competition. We received lots of amazing pictures and it was so difficult to choose the best!

We can now confirm we have chosen the winning entries. The winners will receive a £20 voucher and a copy of the calendar.

Here is a selection of some the winning pictures:



This autumn saw the return of Beacon Voices, Leicestershire's very own children in care choir which started again in October.

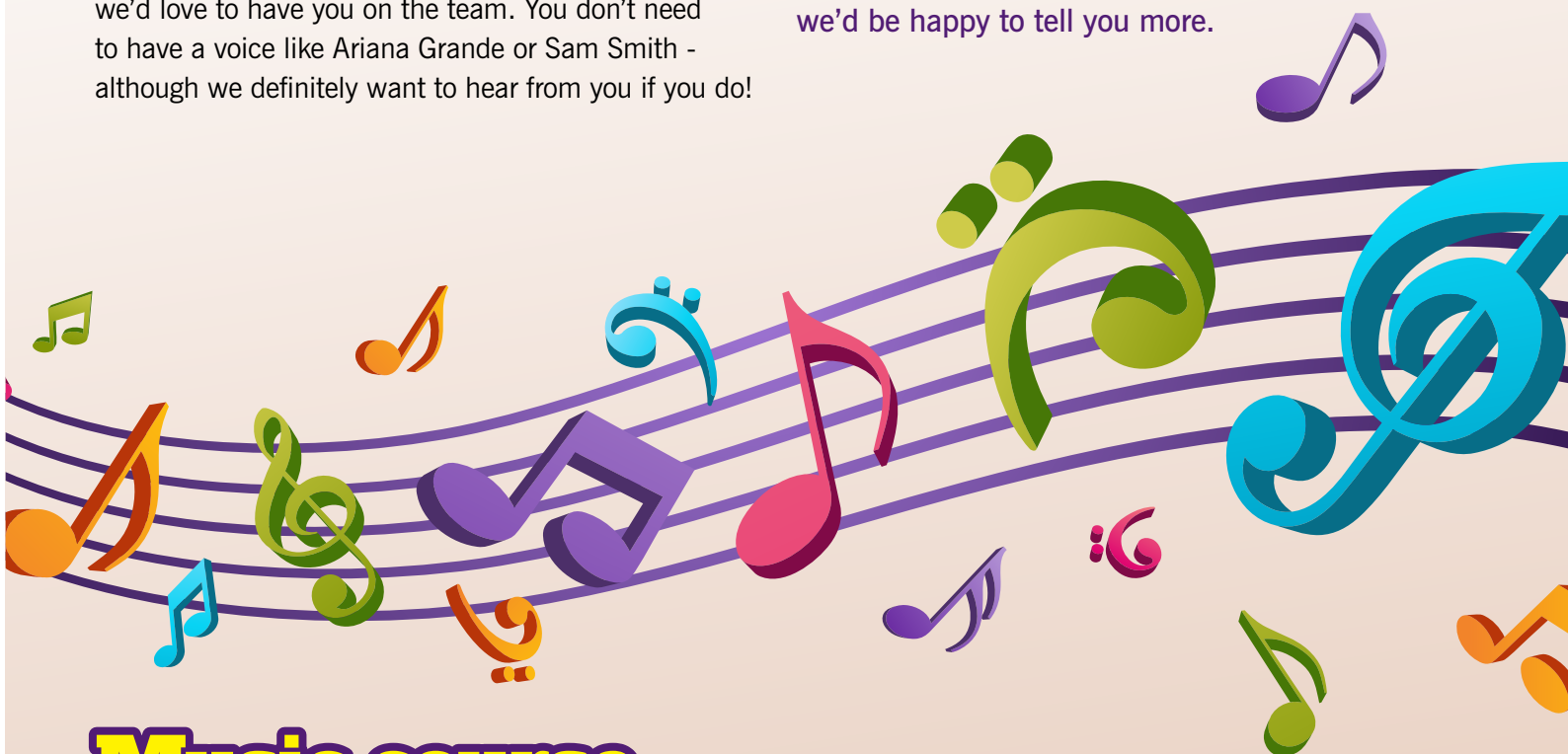


The choir is open to Leicestershire children and young people in care aged from 7 to 18. We've performed at Leicester Cathedral, Voice in a Million at the Wembley Arena and at the annual Celebration of Achievement Awards. We've even made 2 music videos!

We are currently looking for new members. If you love music and singing and want to make new friends then we'd love to have you on the team. You don't need to have a voice like Ariana Grande or Sam Smith - although we definitely want to hear from you if you do!

Rehearsals are every week during term time (sometimes more often leading up to a big performance), typically on a Monday from 5pm- 7pm.

If you think this is something you'd like to be part of, please contact Aby Cusmaan at corporate.parenting@leics.gov.uk to request more information or call us on 0116 3057570 and we'd be happy to tell you more.



Music course

This summer, the Virtual School supported 8 young people aged 12-16 to take part in a music project with Pedestrian, a Leicester-based charity delivering workshops in music, art and media.

We started off the week by putting together a team agreement. Then we listened to a local beatboxer before sharing our interests and adding them to a beatboxing track. The group then developed a theme for the music and song writing they wanted to develop. After a vote, they decided they would explore the theme 'Old to New' for the album that they would work on together throughout the week. They also looked at art work to inspire the music and lyric writing as well as using a recording studio and the Logic music programme to put together tracks.

Throughout the week, the group took part in mindfulness activities and games involving learning rhythm and how to use instruments.

The group worked really well together and by the end of the week, had produced an album of 5 tracks with rapping, poems, music and lyrics. Some young people designed an album cover and made plans to showcase their performance to carers, social workers and Virtual School staff.

On the day of their performance at Curve Theatre, the young people's nerves were eased by taking part in some relaxation time and meditation. As the afternoon continued, the young people showcased the tracks they had created throughout the week to carers, social workers and other professionals. There were even live performances by two of our brave performers!

YEAR 7 TRIP

On Sunday 14th October some young people who have just started secondary school came to a Virtual School activity day at Beaumanor Hall.

This gave them the opportunity to meet Virtual School youth workers and share their ideas about future participation events, PEP meetings and transition from primary to secondary school.

Despite the very wet weather, the group threw themselves into the day's activities, something new and challenging. During the morning they tried climbing, the zip wire and quick jump.

In the afternoon young people and staff worked together to complete a challenge! They had to build a bridge that would withstand everyone's weight to cross the brook.

Every member of the group behaved brilliantly throughout the day. They supported each other, made some new friends and didn't let the wet weather dampen their spirits. Well done!



Christmas Recipe 1

Cheese Stars

Ingredients:

320g puff pastry sheet

Mugful of grated cheese (we mixed 60g cheddar with 25g parmesan but just cheddar is fine or any other combination of cheeses you like)

Flour, for dusting

2 tbsp milk

Toppings of your choice (optional) - we used poppy seeds, dried oregano and sesame seeds

Method:

Unroll the pastry and sprinkle most of the cheese over one half of the sheet. Fold the pastry in half to cover the cheese and seal it in.

Dust your rolling pin and work surface with a little flour and put your pastry sheet on it. Roll it out until doubled in size.

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 and line two baking sheets with baking parchment.

Using cookie cutters, cut the pastry into shapes and put them on the prepared baking sheets. (Put the cutters on the dough close together so that less pastry is wasted.



You can fold the trimmings back on themselves and re-roll to cut out more shapes.)

Brush the shapes with milk and add a pinch of cheese and a sprinkling of your chosen topping, if using.

Bake in the oven for 10-12 mins or until risen and golden, then transfer to a serving plate. You can keep any left overs in an airtight container for 3 days.

Christmas Recipe 2

Snowball Dippers

Make a batch of these to dip in warm milk or hot chocolate or give as a stocking present!

Ingredients:

150g bar dark chocolate or milk chocolate, broken into chunks

10 fat white marshmallows

White hundreds and thousands

Milk, to serve

10 lollipops or cake pop sticks, to serve

Method:

Bring a pan of water to a simmer over a low heat. Put the chocolate in a heatproof bowl and sit it on top of the pan, making sure that the water doesn't touch the bottom of the bowl, and gently melt the chocolate.

Push a lollipop or cake pop stick into each marshmallow. Check the chocolate is melted completely by giving it a stir, then scrape it into a smaller bowl. Tip the white sprinkles into another small bowl. Put a wire rack next to the bowl of chocolate and a sheet of baking parchment next to the bowl of sprinkles.

Holding the end of a stick, dip a marshmallow into the chocolate so that it is completely coated. Lift it out, but hold it over the bowl to allow the extra chocolate to drip back in, then put it on the wire rack. Dunk the marshmallows, one by one, then line them up on the wire rack in the order that you dunked them.

Pick up the first marshmallow you dunked and dip into the sprinkles to completely coat. Sit the snowball marshmallow on the baking parchment. Continue to dip and coat the marshmallows, working along the line so that you cover them in sprinkles in the same order that you dunked them in chocolate. When all the marshmallows are covered, leave them on the baking parchment until they are set.

You can now wrap the marshmallows in cellophane and tie with ribbons if you're giving them as a present. Alternatively, if you want to enjoy them right away, warm 1 mug of milk – in a microwave or saucepan – per snowball. Use your snowball as a stirrer in each mug of milk and keep stirring until all the sprinkles, chocolate and most of the marshmallow have melted. Check the milk is not too hot, then drink up. If you want to store these or save some for later you can keep for up to 2 weeks in cellophane bags.



Christmas jokes

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Tinsilitis!

How do snowmen get around?

They ride icicles!

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?

A Christmas quacker!

Maths Inspiration Show

On Thursday 15th November the Virtual School took young people to see the Maths Inspiration Show at The New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham. Maths Inspiration is a national programme of interactive maths lecture shows for teenagers aged 14 – 17. The show gives young people the chance to experience the UK's most inspiring maths speakers live in theatres, presenting mathematics in the context of exciting, real-world applications.

After settling into our seats, the show got underway with the first guest speaker, Rob Eastway, talking about the underrated “back of the envelope” maths technique. Some people think maths is all about getting a precise answer. But there’s a vital type of maths - impure maths if you like - which is done “on the back of an envelope”, and where the answer is only a rough approximation. Demonstrating how to do these rough calculations, he showed us how this type of maths can help with anything from calculating how much you owe after a dinner with your friends, to landing your dream job.

Next up was Aoife Hunt who showed how professional consultants use GCSE and AS Level maths to understand the movement of crowds – whether at Wembley Stadium, Glastonbury or Heathrow Airport. Using volunteers from the audience, she showed the young people the unlikely connection between crowd flow and quadratic equations, and how computer games are being built to predict what people will do in an emergency.

To round up the show, Colin Wright gave a highly entertaining talk. He demonstrated how spotting patterns can help in a surprising number of situations, including showcasing his juggling skills to show that patterns aren’t always as predictable as they seem. The show finished with a Q&A session in which each



speaker talked about how they got into maths. They were honest in saying that they were not always good at maths but they focused on the parts of maths they enjoyed and made a living from it.

After a spot of lunch, we continued on to our next venue which was the National Sea Life Centre. As it wasn’t far away, we decided to walk there. It was a pleasant walk on a clear, sunny winter’s day that took us through the lovely cobbled streets along the canal overlooking all the boats dotted on the water.

As we got to The Sea Life Centre, we managed to see the penguins being fed and we even got to pet a starfish! We made our way along the aquarium seeing some of the various fish, turtles and sharks that inhabit our oceans, and read up about some of the unusual sea creatures and those that are vulnerable to hunting, fishing and habitat loss. One of the young people on the trip said they had never seen anything like this before and loved the experience. Overall it was a great way to end the day.

