



I have had a wonderful first term as Headmaster of this very special school. A personal highlight for me was Dame Janet Suzman's visit, closely followed by the Shakespeare Festival at Curve. Both of these new experiences for girls in Years 4-13 epitomise the way I would like to see the school progress. New opportunities and experiences for the girls are a great way for them to develop in confidence and grow into women who will be able to make their way in the world. May I wish all of you a very restful, peaceful and happy Christmas. **Mr Alan Whelpdale, Headmaster.**

## Dame Janet Suzman Visits School

Dame Janet Suzman, one of Britain's most distinguished actresses, and now a very successful director, visited Leicester High School for Girls on Wednesday 13 November. She was Guest of Honour

at a private lunch in school, and then she worked with drama students in Year 11 and the Sixth Form, using scenes from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'The Crucible'. The day was a wonderful experience for all who met Dame Janet. The Year 6s' welcome banner was photographed by her, and she particularly enjoyed the Choir singing 'There's Nothing Like a Dame'. Headmaster Mr Alan Whelpdale, who has worked with Dame Janet before at a previous school, approached her again when he took up his post at Leicester High last half term. He said, 'I am thrilled that she visited Leicester High; we are indebted to her.' Year 11 girls compiled a commemorative book of Dame Janet's career as a thank-you gift to her. Mrs Jo Rose, Head of Drama, said, 'I have learnt more in one day with Dame Janet than I did during my entire degree; she was completely inspirational.' Laura Bateman and Olivia Mellor, who starred in the Shakespeare Festival at Curve on Friday 15 November (see below), said, 'She was very keen to share her knowledge and was very focussed on us. We felt that we were her equals and she was very down-to-earth.' Dame Janet said that what she had enjoyed most was 'teaching young actresses who are so keen to learn and who do not have egos'.



## Curve Shakespeare Festival

Twenty nine girls, from Years 4-13, performed in the Shakespeare Schools Festival at Curve Theatre in November. The 314 strong audience members (the largest in this year's festival) were treated to a blast from the past of their school days, with Mrs Rose setting the play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in a school. *Theseus* and *Hippolyta* were the Head and Deputy Head; *Titania* and *Oberon* were the Head Girl and Boy and *The Mechanicals* were the 'Scientific Loafers' (the name given to the naughty 'skivers'!). The fight between *Hermia* and *Helena* was impressively staged, using a combination of stylised movement and choreography. The girls, as always, rose to the challenge and the acting was outstanding and complimented the language of Shakespeare. Mrs Rose said, 'After several long days of rehearsals followed by a very well received performance at Curve Theatre, I can only say what a journey we have been on! I am so proud of our girls and how far they have travelled from those early team building games and text exploring weeks! All that is left to say is:

*'If we shadows have offended, Think but this and all is mended, That you have but slumber'd here While these visions did appear. And this weak and idle theme, No more yielding but a dream!'*



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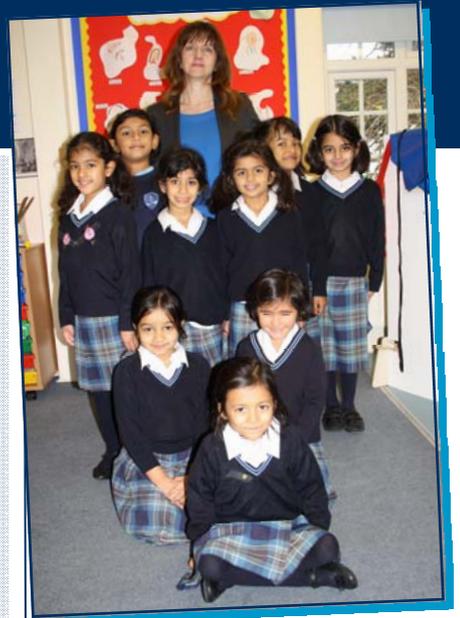
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# Junior

## JUNIOR ACTRESSES SHINE IN NATIVITY



**W**ith the arrival of a new script and an accompanying CD of music, it could only mean one thing...it was time for the Nativity, 'A Midwife Crisis'! Casting and rehearsals started after half-term and it wasn't long before a new round of Nativity songs were being practised in earnest. The girls worked tirelessly to learn their lines, so much so that they were rehearsing without scripts within a matter of days! While some teachers were working with the girls on their stage directions and delivery of lines, others were scrabbling around in the art room digging out props and costumes. Halos were made, wings 'glittered', the stage constructed and the music and lights all tested; a real hive of activity! In the blink of an eye it was time for the real thing. The girls performed with real professionalism, and each performance was greeted with laughter, applause, and even a few happy tears! Congratulations to the girls for all their hard work and for giving everyone a wonderful start to the festive season; a real team effort by all involved!



## Fun at Conkers



**W**hat a magical day Years F-2 spent at Conkers! All the girls had a fabulous time making robin collages, listening to a story read by Santa's Chief Elf, playing on an amazing adventure playground *and* riding on an elf train. The highlight of the day, however, was being led by the elf along a beautifully lit trail towards the snowy, Narnia-like enchanted forest to meet Father Christmas. As they approached Santa's wooden hut, the girls were welcomed by Mrs Christmas, who let them sit in his sack-laden sleigh before visiting the twinkly-eyed man himself. Santa waited cosily by his fire for the girls to arrive, then merrily asked each girl what she would like for Christmas before handing her a beautifully wrapped present. Inspired by the winter wonderland, one girl excitedly asked for snow! At the end of the day, we thought about another question Santa had asked the girls. 'Have you been good?' Well Santa, we can proudly say that on this trip all the girls were exceptionally good and were a credit to Leicester High!



## A Special Christingle

**T**his year's Christingle celebrated the theme of friendship with Year 4 girls performing a short piece of drama at St. Mary's Church. Year 5 girls performed a dance, carefully choreographed by Mrs Hague, to represent the creation of the Christingle orange. This was enhanced by the girls dressing in orange, red and colours associated with the four seasons, to perform. The magical part of this service was the moment when the candles were all lit. The lights were dimmed, and the Junior Choir sang, 'When Love Shone Down'. All proceeds from the candle-lit Christmas Lunch at school and the Christingle Service will be donated to the Children's Society which brings light into many young people's lives.



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## Gardening Club

**I**n November, the Gardening Club visited Hawgrips Garden Centre where, under the auspices of Jonathan Sutton, they learnt about plants which could be incorporated into an outdoor winter basket arrangement. The girls then had a wonderful time planting their own colourful and overflowing baskets. Also this term, using onions grown at school, together with other vegetables, the Gardening Club measured, chopped, mixed and stirred their way to making a delicious pot of chutney to take home and sample.

## Hello Mrs Horler!

**Meet our new Class 1 teacher**

**How have you settled in to life at Leicester High?** I have never settled so quickly into a school before! The staff and girls are so friendly and supportive. I feel as though I have been here for much longer than just one term. **Tell us a little about yourself...** I am originally from Wales, and am very patriotic. I have 4 children, so I am busy both at school and at home. I love listening to any type of music, including rock and musicals. I also enjoy singing and dancing along, although my children don't always appreciate this! **Which subject/s do you enjoy teaching the most?** I have always loved science, and used to work as a research pharmacologist in the pharmaceutical industry. I particularly enjoy teaching science, because children are naturally curious about the world around them. They are especially motivated when the lessons are practical and they are required to make predictions and explain their results. **What impresses you about the Junior Department?** Being a small department, the staff know the children very well, and communication is exceptional. The girls are confident because the teachers are so caring and the atmosphere is warm and calm, yet also vibrant. **What have you enjoyed the most so far?** I particularly enjoyed my involvement in the Nativity performance. The songs were really catchy, and all the girls worked so hard, really pulling it out of the bag at the end. **What are you looking forward to in the future?** I am looking forward to starting the topic Toys with Year 1 next term. I still love toys, and will enjoy sharing memories of my own childhood toys with the girls. I am also looking forward to creating more opportunities to liaise with staff and students from the Senior School, as I feel that working with the older girls really inspires the Juniors.

# Senior

## Debating.....Competition.....News

This half term, Fatema Bhogadia, Zara Bukhari, Ayesha Aziz and Ayesha Bhatti participated in the English Speaking Union's Debating competition hosted by LHS. The girls debated on: "THB that football team supporters' clubs should lobby against the signing of players with a history of discriminatory or violent behaviour" and "THB that developing states should prioritise improving the economic conditions of their poorest citizens over environmental concerns". Both teams showed an excellent understanding of the format and structure of the debate. Unfortunately they did not succeed to the next round; however, both teams found it a valuable experience.



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## LHS Bake Off

The Bake Off was part of the House Event day on 16 December, which was a great success. Houses com-



peted in a quiz using a 'wheel of fortune', and the finalists in the Bake Off, from Years 7-12, cooked all morning. The cakes were judged by old girl Shivi Ramoutar, Masterchef final 7 contestant, and Chef Andy, see left. They chose the top 3: Years 12, 9 and 7, and the rankings will be announced during the last assembly of the term. They took great care choosing the final 3, marking them for taste, decoration and overall idea. The first prize will be Mary Berry's latest cook book, and Waitrose in Oadby have kindly donated second and third prizes. Our thanks to Shivi, Chef Andy, and Manisha Taylor at Waitrose for all of their help and generosity.



Year 6 were very happy to decorate the Christmas Tree for the first time, starting a new tradition at school.

## Badminton Success AGAIN!



On Thursday 28 November, 28 girls from Years 8 to 13 took part in the annual Louise Lester Badminton Doubles Tournament. After two hours of fiercely contested matches, Roshni Kotecha/Claire Zhang and Hannah Prashad/Alice Boyd played for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> position, with Roshni and Claire winning 21-11. In an equally exciting match, Susannah Wang/Morgan Williams and Nina Patel/Aditi Pandey played for the top spots, with Susannah and Morgan finally winning 21-13. It was lovely to have so many girls from across the age groups involved and all enjoying playing badminton. Congratulations to all who took part. In other news, all the badminton squads have been working hard and shown fantastic commitment to the 7.30am training sessions. We have already seen some great results in the Center Parcs Competition in the U14 and U16 age groups. The first matches were

against schools in the Leicester City area and played over two evenings. The U16 squad beat Judgemeadow, Sir Jonathon North, Moat Community College, English Martyrs, Babington and Crownhills, winning all 30 games. The U14 squad played Crownhills, English Martyrs, Sir Jonathon North, Judgemeadow and Sathya-Sai, winning 24 out of 25 matches! Both teams now go onto the second round of the competition in February, competing against the winners of all the areas in Leicestershire.

## GALLERY



Left to Right: German Christmas Market; Fineshade; Carol Service & Twycross Zoo.

# Sixth

## Teaching Girls Body Confidence

On Friday 18 October, Year 12 girls listened to inspirational speaker Natasha Devon talk about body image and self-esteem in a presentation entitled: 'Love the Skin You're In.' This was her second visit to the school, as her first visit last year proved to be so popular with the girls. Natasha, a popular face on TV and an authority on body image issues, is Co-Director of the charity *Body Gossip*, and has worked with TV Body Confidence guru, Gok Wan. The talk was part of a programme of 'Enrichment' for Year 12, encompassing lessons, practical skill sessions and speakers which prepare the girls for life after school. 1 in 10 people under the age of 25 suffer from an eating disorder, and 70% of girls between 11 and 19 cite their relationship with their body image as their number one worry. Natasha, who speaks from personal experience about eating disorders, says: "The misery which accompanies a lack of self-esteem can permeate every area of a young person's life, rendering them incapable of achieving their potential." Her bubbly and down-to-earth character scored a hit with the girls, who said she 'was inspirational', and 'spoke to us personally'. There was lots of discussion and the talk was one of the 'best they had ever had'.



## DEBATING NEWS

In November two LHS Senior debating teams entered the Warwick Schools Debating Competition. Ayesha Girach and Sorcha Whyte and Zahraa Scott and Zahraa Desai were part of approximately 50 teams that entered the competition. They debated on a several short - preparation motions including



'THW pay MP's the living wage' and 'THW not subsidise the rebuilding of communities in disaster prone areas'. The girls presented compelling arguments and steadily improved their performances throughout the day, with both teams coming first in at least one of their debates!



## THE OXBRIDGE Programme

Six girls are aiming for 'dreaming spires' this year, and we wish them the very best of luck. They have been working very hard to prepare for this gruelling process, and to offer an insight to parents, we interviewed one of them about how it was all going so far. **How**

**has the whole Oxbridge application process been for you?** Overall, pretty nerve-wracking. However, it is a brilliant opportunity. If I get an offer, I could go arguably to the best university in the world; if I don't, then the application process itself has been invaluable preparation for future interviews and application processes for jobs etc. **What appeals to you about the Oxbridge course in particular?** I think the tutorial system is invaluable as it allows you really to communicate with others who are passionate about your subject rather than simply being present in a lecture hall. **How were the mock interviews at Uppingham School?** Upon arrival we enjoyed a great lunch and talked to fellow candidates from several different schools; it was a relief to see just how 'normal' everyone was. We then had a brief talk about Oxbridge interviews and some general dos and don'ts before a somewhat anxious wait for the allocated interview time. We were to prepare as we would for the real thing and were interviewed by specialist teachers from the various schools. The experience certainly highlighted areas of my personal statement and general knowledge to improve. However, I feel the progression of questions from the simple and gradually becoming more complex to stretch me to the limit is a true reflection of what the real thing will be like. **How has LHS helped?** The variety of speakers invited into school for enrichment lessons, extra sessions, Curious club etc has allowed me to tackle both the interview and stress involved in the application, whilst keeping up-to-date with the latest scientific developments.

## GALLERY

Top to bottom: Gold DofE Ceremony; Charity Quiz night; Voice Coach talk; craft sessions in Enrichment & Children in Need.



## PREFECTS SECURE ARTS SPONSORSHIP FROM GHC



The prefects have signed a sponsorship agreement with local company GHC Wealth Management, on Horsefair Street, Leicester. Mr Martin Vaughan, pictured left, signed the deal with the prefects earlier in the term. The sponsorship deal extends across seven Arts events over the year, and includes the introduction of two new Expressive Arts Awards at the Senior and Junior Prize Giving ceremonies. In return GHC have agreed to contribute a significant sum to the prefects' charity, 'beatED', which help to support people with eating disorders. This means that the prefects' contribution to the charity at the end of the year will be higher than previously hoped for, which is an excellent achievement. Our thanks to Mr Vaughan and GHC for their support.

## INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR SCHOOL?

Entrance Exam & Assessment Day: Saturday 18 January 2014

To register please call Mrs Harbage on 0116 270 5338