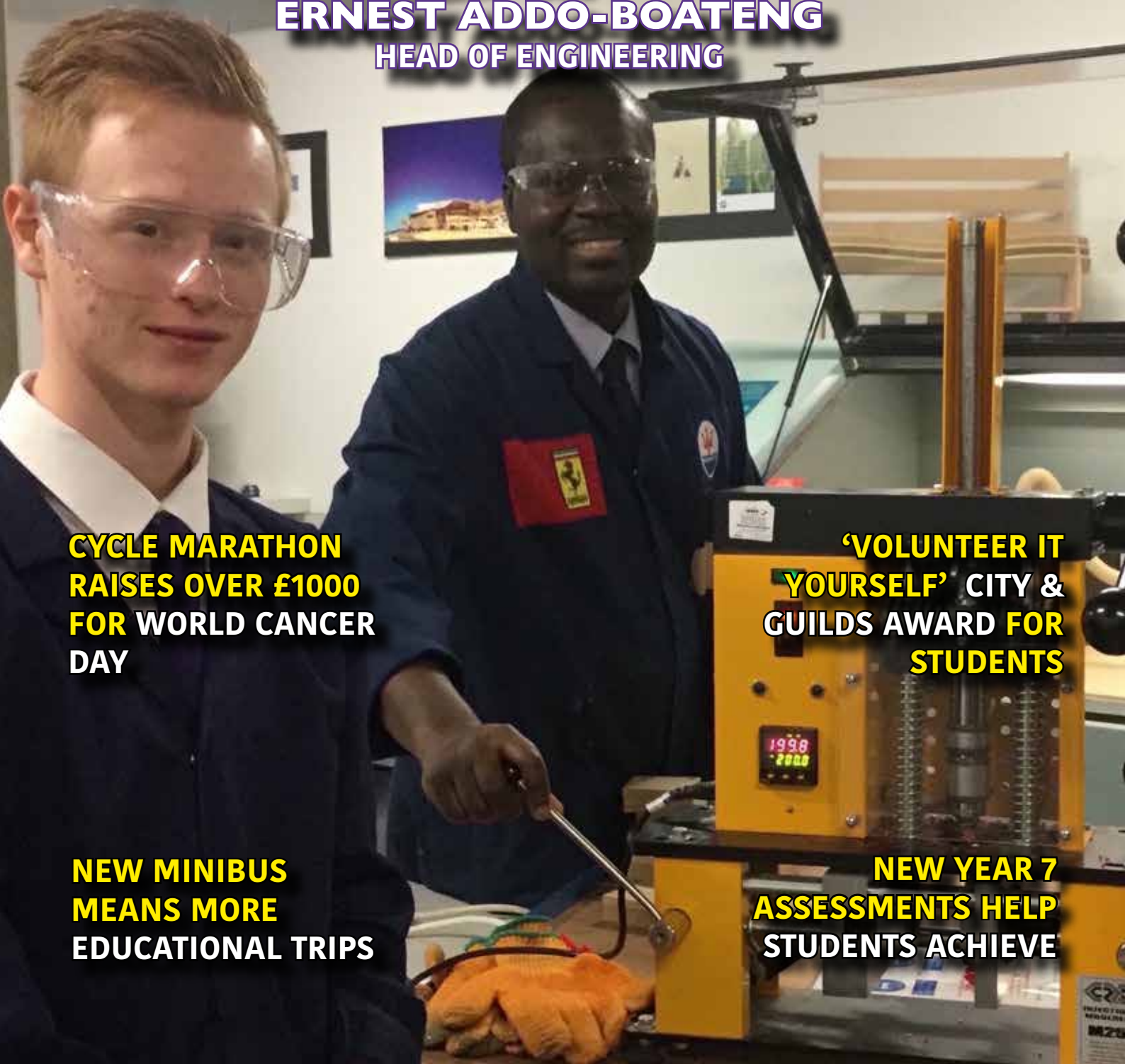


**“ENGINEERING STUDENTS ARE  
SETTING THE GOLD STANDARD  
IN TERMS OF PERFORMANCE”**

SAYS

**ERNEST ADDO-BOATENG**  
HEAD OF ENGINEERING



**CYCLE MARATHON  
RAISES OVER £1000  
FOR WORLD CANCER  
DAY**

**‘VOLUNTEER IT  
YOURSELF’ CITY &  
GUILDS AWARD FOR  
STUDENTS**

**NEW MINIBUS  
MEANS MORE  
EDUCATIONAL TRIPS**

**NEW YEAR 7  
ASSESSMENTS HELP  
STUDENTS ACHIEVE**

# PRINCIPAL'S VIEWPOINT

## “Working tirelessly in preparation for their examinations”



As spring starts to (just) shine through and the days stretch out that little bit longer we have been extremely busy at Grace. Year 11 and Year 13 are working tirelessly in preparation for their examinations with the guidance and support of all staff at the Academy. There are numerous revision sessions taking place which will continue up until the examinations. I would like to

thank staff and parents for their support.

We have had yet again some amazing academic, art and sports based achievements with our students showing they are amongst the best around. We are especially pleased that some of our Year 10 students gained their ‘Volunteer It Yourself’ award in employability skills with City & Guilds. We have been looking forward to some exciting events, including the recent educational and cultural trip for Sixth Form students to Rome. Our footballers will be visiting Eindhoven in Holland in November, while there is an extra-special ski trip planned to Andorra in February 2018. We are also extremely pleased to announce that the Academy has been given the opportunity to have a Master Class Rugby session with Jonny Wilkinson. Twenty lucky Academy rugby stars will spend the day with Johnny and go through a full training session with him.

On an Academic note, we have changed our assessments for Year 7s to support and encourage them to achieve their end of year targets. This is an extremely busy time of the year for everyone and we once again strive to equal the level of outcomes we achieved last year. With your continued support and the hard work of students and staff, we feel confident we can once again ensure that our students have the best opportunities to be successful. As I write we are just preparing the final agreements for the work on the new Academy roof. This is a huge project which involves 6 months of work. We have ensured that no disruption will occur to the learning or operation of the Academy. This is an incredibly exciting opportunity for us and will enhance once again the learning environment at the Academy. I will be sending detailed plans out shortly and a full model will be available to view in reception. May I thank you for your continued support of the Academy and the shared values of the Grace Way.

**Darren Gelder, Executive Principal, Grace Academy**

## ACADEMY UP-DATES

### WORLD BOOK DAY



Staff celebrated World Book Day with students by dressing as their favourite book character.

### SUMMER ACTIVITIES LIVERPOOL TRIP

Date: Tuesday 18 April

Departure: 8.30am

Return: 9pm

Hours in Liverpool: 6 hours

Price: £11 per person

Why not visit the Albert Docks or the famous Cavern Club?

(Additional admissions apply)

### BARRY ISLAND TRIP

Date: Thursday 20 April

Departure: 8am

Return: 8.30pm

Hours in Barry: 6 hours

Price: £11 per person

Enjoy Sun, Sea and Sand on Barry

For more information call Maxine Bromley on:

0121 329 4600

or email:

[maxinebromley@graceacademy.org.uk](mailto:maxinebromley@graceacademy.org.uk)

# THE STUDENT VOICE

ELLA ZIZZI, YEAR 10

CAITLIN WESSON, YEAR 10

## STUDENT SURVEYS

“At the end of the day, school is there for students to learn things so we want to feel comfortable in our school environment so we can learn better and enjoy being here,” said Ella Zizzi, Year 10, after sharing her views in one of our regular Student Surveys. “In my opinion, one of the best things the school does is to pick out students and reward them during assembly with Grace points for good performance or attendance. When you have lots of Grace points, you get further rewarded with trips such as roller skating or ice skating and you know you’ve worked for it.” Talking about the reasons behind the student surveys, Matt Spina, Assistant Principal for Ethos and Student Life, said, “It’s really important to hear the views of students. We can have a perception of things but we need to validate this by hearing what the students have to say about how things are going. When we have focussed on making improvements in the past, it’s been good to see the results confirmed through the survey responses we receive from the students.”

Ella said, “I know my voice is heard and I’ve done a lot of surveys on different topics. The school does listen to feedback and we are regularly asked to make suggestions and rate events out of ten and then school leaders respond by making changes to improve things. For example, we were listened to in terms of our fundraising ideas and chose the superheroes theme for our fundraising week for Cancer Research UK.”

## GALLANT YEAR 10 BOYS PRAISED

Ten of our Year 10 boys have been presented with a gift and card by ASDA representative, Mrs Danks, as recognition of their outstanding demonstration of good citizenship. A member of the public contacted the Academy to say they had witnessed a group of our students helping an elderly gentleman after he fell on the crossing near ASDA Chelmsley Wood.

Tom Cozens, Year 10, said: “It felt good to help because I felt responsible. If it was your own grandad you would help them so, even if it’s a stranger, you should still care about them and help them.”

# NEWS

## STUDENTS IN 6-HOUR CYCLE MARATHON FOR WORLD CANCER DAY

Determined students have raised over £1,000 for Cancer Research UK in a week of fundraising activities in the run up to World Cancer Day. They raised £400 by taking part in a continuous six-hour sponsored bike ride, while others raised more funds by selling cakes, unity bands and superhero key rings they made themselves. Summer-Marie Yates, a Year 8 student, said, "I raised £72 just with the cycle ride and I really enjoyed doing it. My mum had a skin cancer test last year and I'd like to help more people by raising money to help save lives. I'm doing a sponsored run tomorrow to raise more money." Paula Young, spokesperson for Cancer Research UK in Birmingham, added, "It's great to see the children coming together to make a difference for World Cancer Day and we'd like to thank them for their sterling efforts."

## YEAR 7 PERSONALISED LEARNING



**Assessment in Year 7 at Grace Academy has changed this year with a**

**greater focus on what students can and cannot achieve.** This has been used to ensure that by the end of each academic year students are well prepared to take the next step in all of their subjects. Students have been working towards "I can

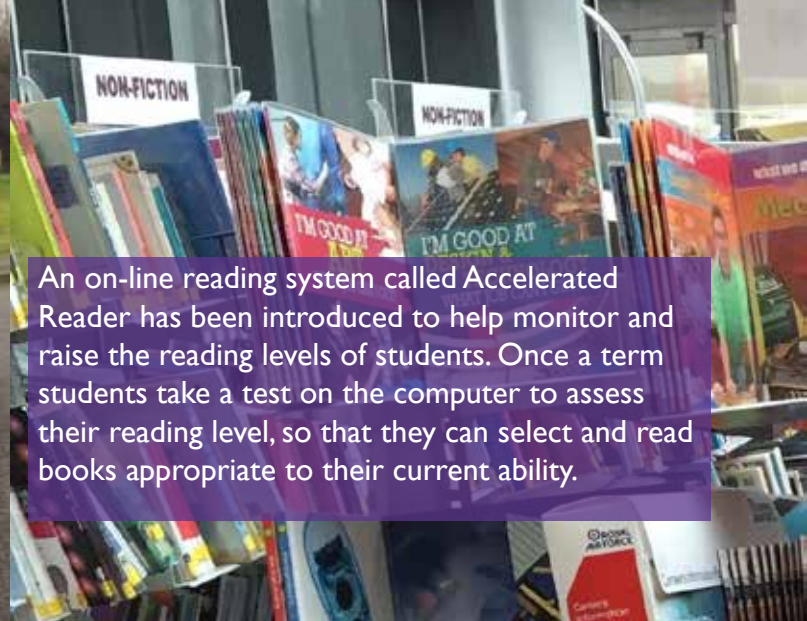
statements" which outline key tasks that students need to master if they are to reach their target grade by the end of Year 11. The next stage in this process will give parents/carers the opportunity to play a greater role in the progress of their children in key subjects. In-depth subject reports in Maths and English will be sent home for Year 7 students over the coming months which will outline key areas of learning that students have excelled in and areas where they need to make further progress.

## NEW MINIBUS



Grace Academy has invested over £20,000 in a new minibus to take students on educational trips outside school. The Minibus Lite has wheelchair access and can be driven by anyone with a driving license as it is under 3.5 tons. Students in wheelchairs will now be able to travel with their friends on more educational trips.

## RAISING READING LEVELS



An on-line reading system called Accelerated Reader has been introduced to help monitor and raise the reading levels of students. Once a term students take a test on the computer to assess their reading level, so that they can select and read books appropriate to their current ability.

# CULTURAL VISIT TO ROME EDUCATES STUDENTS

# NEWS

**“The trip to Rome has been an experience that we will never forget. The sites were incredible and we were lucky enough to share it with our friends. Words can’t do this trip justice as every single moment was as enjoyable as the next,” said students.**

Eighteen students from Years 12 and 13 got the chance to be immersed in the history and culture of this historic city, visiting Roman temples and learning more about Rome’s history as the centre of religion for thousands of years. Teacher Kirsty Barlow said, “The trip gave our students a taste of being in a cosmopolitan city, quite a different experience from being in Birmingham, and offered an educational insight into the lives of other people that are different to our own. Their behaviour was impeccable”

## EXPLORING OUR KEY VALUES TO MAKE POSITIVE CITIZENS

**Indie pop band, BrightLine, part of the Message Trust, joined other guests to host our Ethos Week and spark conversations about key social issues.**

Ethos Week is a great way for students to explore and engage with the Academy’s shared key values of Grace, Respect, Integrity, Potential, and Excellence. BrightLine regularly visits schools across the country to address topics ranging from bullying, self-esteem and racism, to some of life’s big questions such as whether God exists and

what faith is. Band member Daniel Eduardo explained, “Many young people don’t know who they are, or recognise the potential in their lives and the lives of others. We want to bring a different message that every person is unique ... every young person has amazing potential.”



## A MAGICAL HARRY POTTER NIGHT!

**Avid readers got together for a magical night of crafts, potion-stirring, and fantastic beast hunting to celebrate the enchanted world of Harry Potter.**

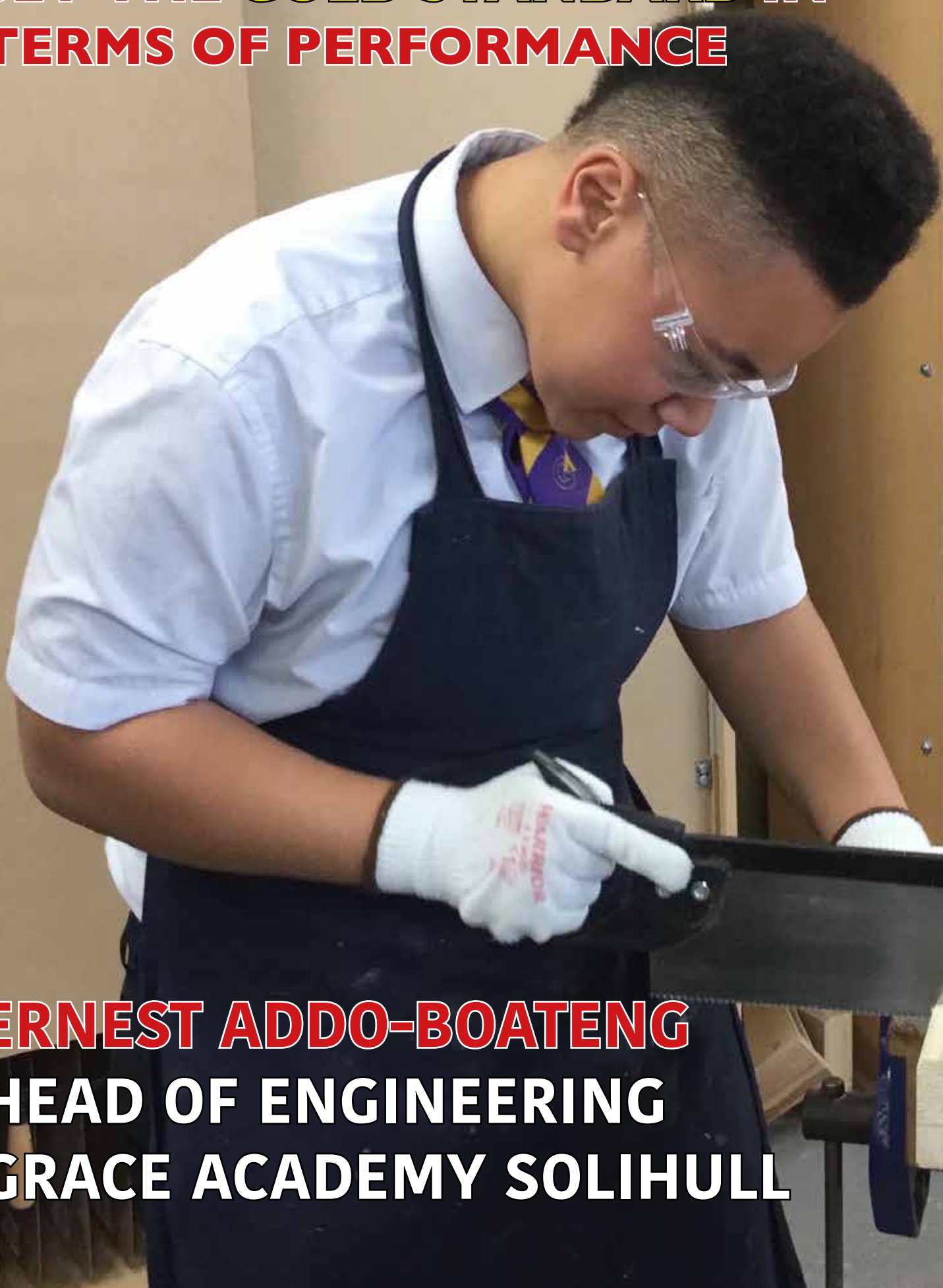
Librarian Ashley Connolly said, “Harry Potter books have been around for a long time, but it’s great to encourage another generation to embrace the stories and enjoy them too.”

## CITY & GUILDS AWARD

After creating benches on the City & Guilds Carpentry course with other students Libbi Lynch, Year 10, said, “The VIY project helped me to develop lots of new skills.”



**ENGINEERING STUDENTS  
SET THE GOLD STANDARD IN  
TERMS OF PERFORMANCE**



**ERNEST ADDO-BOATENG  
HEAD OF ENGINEERING  
GRACE ACADEMY SOLIHULL**

## ERNEST ADDO-BOATENG COVER STORY

**E**ngineering students are setting the gold standard in terms of performance, as 100% of Year 13s passed their A Level Engineering at pass to distinction grades in 2015/16. One of the Year 13s has gone on to study engineering at university and three are doing engineering apprenticeships.

In Product Design, 72.2% of students achieved A\* to C grades, while over 53% achieved pass to distinction grades in Food Technology. Taking a practical approach to Engineering, the department has taken the manufacturing route which means students get involved in making products and then writing about them. Grace Academy's investment in state-of-the-art equipment has allowed students to do a variety of projects that are 'hands-on', encouraging them to enjoy the subject and want to stay on and pass their exams. Among the latest technological gadgets we have are a 3-D printer, CNC Lathe, CNC Router, injection-moulding machine, casting machine, vacuum former, and specialist engineering hand tools.

Explaining the qualities needed in an engineer, Ernest Addo-Boateng, Head of Engineering, said, "A great engineer doesn't give up when something breaks, but investigates and finds out how to get things fixed – they are someone who perseveres. Engineering is not just about getting your hands dirty, it's about solving problems. Engineering is everywhere, in the food we eat, creating cars, solving problems, tackling climate change, and sustainable food supplies. You can do many different roles with an engineering qualification such as design, development, research, and management of engineering projects and people. With engineering you can be part of the creative process, always challenging yourself, and it's fun." There are also more girls going into engineering and Ernest said, "There is a government scheme to encourage more girls into engineering with access to funding and, in terms of apprenticeships, girls are at the top of the wanted list. Engineering now is all about critical thinking so it's not just a subject for men – it encompasses everyone."

Year 10s were recently invited to take part in a workshop run by Cospa to make benches for the outside areas of the Academy, and all those students involved received a City & Guilds qualification after the one-day course. Organised by Anne-Marie Boyle, Head of Year 10, the students developed key skills during the project including resilience, perseverance, managing materials, construction and teamwork. The department also runs a Frame Academy which is all about collecting bikes that have been thrown away, taking them apart, and using engineering tools to make sure they are working again by mending gears and brakes, and changing tires. After ensuring the bikes are roadworthy, the students then get to take the bikes they have been working on home.

**More imaginative lessons and an inspiring learning environment have motivated students to take a whole new view of PE, encouraging them to take on leadership responsibilities outside the Academy, and improving their performance in external competitions.**

**A**mong the new, non-traditional sports on offer are volleyball, dodge ball and general fitness, and a host of new extra-curricular clubs for different year groups are now available. These include football teams for girls and boys, in-door athletics, badminton, rowing, netball teams, trampolining, and a basketball club run by the Birmingham A's. We aim to give students a range of opportunities to experience things they would not normally take part in. This includes taking GCSE students on a two-day orienteering course as well as putting them through qualifications in sports such as mountain biking, cycling and Gaelic football to make sure they gain a good score for the practical element of their GCSE. Charlie Lee, Head of PE, explained, "The whole aim is to give students a varied curriculum where they have new opportunities to do things they have not experienced before. With two new members of staff, Blaine Wakeman and Jake Upton, we have been able to widen our extra-curricular provision, and it's great to be working with such a dedicated, enthusiastic team which has created a real buzz among students in the department.

"There is a much greater interaction with the students within PE now with many choosing to be involved within the department in their own time. As well as students' attendance in extra-curricular clubs improving, we are now running a Leadership Academy for the second year running aimed at students from Year 9. Working with Unity, part of Solihull Council, the students have been taking their leadership qualifications and, so far, have achieved qualifications in first aid, in-door athletics, tri-golf at The Belfry, and courses in tennis and hockey are planned." Under the scheme, the Academy's young leaders have been selected to lead in athletics events and a team of students has just returned from leading at local school competitions in North Solihull Sports Centre. They will also be running a tri-golf tournament soon for primary schools, as well as helping at the Level 3 School Games.

There are a variety of extra-special trips planned such as the ski trip to Andorra in February 2018 when 55 students will learn how to ski and enjoy an evening programme of bowling, swimming, and entertainment nights. The PE department is also taking 35 student footballers to Eindhoven in Holland in November this year to join a professional development programme, working with coaches to develop their skills and take part in one fixture against a Dutch team while they are there.







Blaine Wakeman added, “A more engaging PE curriculum has ensured the majority of students are achieving their expected levels of performance in PE and we expect to see further improvement in the coming year. Our priority is to make sure that no students are going under the radar and that all students are taking part in the sport that is right for them.”

**“IMAGINATIVE LESSONS AND  
ENGAGING CURRICULUM”**

# COMMUNITY HUB

## LOCAL BEAVERS COMPLETE DIGITAL CITIZEN BADGE AT GRACE ACADEMY

Denise Makepeace, Beaver Leader, 1st Chelmsley Wood Scout Group, said, "Thank you so much for a wonderful evening at Grace Academy. The IT session was fantastic. The Beavers were focused and engaged in the tasks they were set. They all enjoyed it so much and were so excited to tell their parents and even their teachers all about it. Your facilities were exceptional and without this opportunity the Beavers would not have gained their Digital Citizen Badge. Following this visit, Mr Gelder, the Principal, graced us with his presence down at our Scout Hut to present the well-earned Digital Citizen Badges to our Beavers. They were so excited and Mr Gelder congratulated each and every one on their achievement with the badge and a firm scouters handshake."

## WORKSHOPS TO TACKLE AND DISCUSS KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

After completing some workshops with Interserve as part of their Community Apprentice Programme, Ashley Baker, Year 10, said, "Participating in The Community Apprentice Project has been an invaluable experience so far.

Working with the mentors from Interserve has helped us to develop our action plans further. It has given our teams lots of confidence." Anne-Marie

Boyle, Head of Year 10, explained, "Being involved in The Community Apprentice project has provided the opportunity for some of our Year 10 students to discuss and debate pressing issues in their communities and it has encouraged them to look at what young people in Birmingham can do to tackle these issues. It is helping them to develop skills that they will be able to transfer to both higher education and the workplace."

## HELPING THE HOMELESS IN BIRMINGHAM

Kind-hearted staff from Grace Academy have joined other volunteers to help the homeless in Birmingham.

The charitable Grace Academy team joined other volunteers from 'Let's Feed Brum', a charity which aims to help tackle homelessness in Birmingham, by giving out food, drink, clothing and other essentials to those in need.

# BULLETIN BOARD

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### APRIL

Year 7 Easter Experience – Tuesday 4  
Year 8 Easter Experience – Thursday 6  
Family Film Night – Thursday 6  
End of Term – Friday 7  
Half term - Monday 10 – Friday 21  
Start of term - Monday 24  
PTFA Meeting – Wednesday 26  
Year 9 Options Evening – Thursday 27

### MAY

Year 9 Values Day – Thursday 4  
Family Cooking Event – Wednesday 10  
Family Film Night – Thursday 25  
Half term - Monday 29 – Friday 2

### JUNE

Start of term - Monday 5  
PTFA Meeting – Wednesday 7  
Family Cooking Event – Wednesday 28



@GASolihull

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK:  
GRACE ACADEMY SOLIHULL

[www.graceacademy.org.uk](http://www.graceacademy.org.uk)

## WHY NOT JOIN THE PTFA?

Help us to strengthen home school links by joining the Parents, Teachers, Friends Association. Steven Cooke said, "I wanted to be more involved in what my son Ethan was doing and to be able to influence certain aspects of his education."

Call Matt Spina for more information  
on: 0121 329 4625  
or email:  
[MattSpina@graceacademy.org.uk](mailto:MattSpina@graceacademy.org.uk)

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Solihull Child Services Duty and Referral Team:

0121 788 4316

Child Exploitation and

Online Protection (CEOP):

0870 000 3344

In an emergency call the Police:

999

Childline:

0800 1111

Police non-emergency: 101

NSPCC:

0808 800 5000

To report a concern:

[help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Women's Aid:

0808 800 0028

Helping Hands Food

Parcels:

0121 711 7311

[familycentre@renewalcc.com](mailto:familycentre@renewalcc.com)

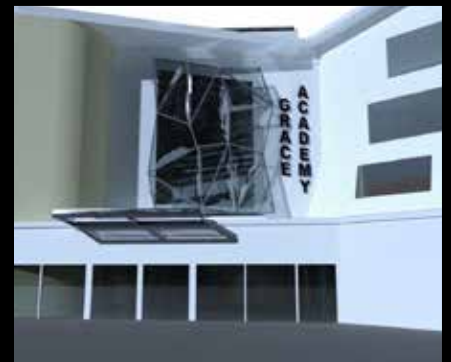
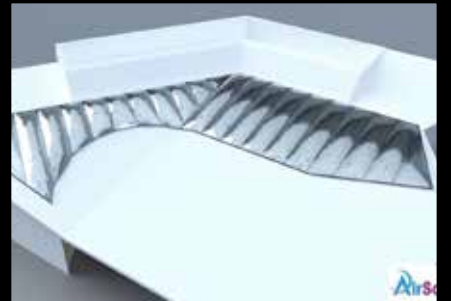
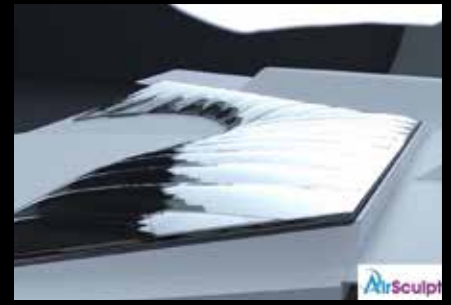
Registered in England as a limited company no: 4967658. Registered office:  
The Pavilion, Manor Drive, Coleshill B46 1DL

# A NEW ROOF!

In a bid to further improve the learning environment for students, Grace Academy is planning to increase the natural light roof space by 50% over the atrium after securing capital funds from the Education Funding Agency.

The funds will be used to make necessary repairs to some parts of the roof, and also enhance the main atrium with a new roof light, as well as developing a funky design for the front entrance using ETFE so it stands out from the crowd. ETFE is a construction material that has been used in projects such as the Eden Project, the Beijing Olympic Aquatics Centre (the Watercube) and in the new concourse at Birmingham Gateway, the Birmingham New Street Station redevelopment.

Birmingham-based project management consultancy, Mace Ltd, was appointed to work with the school to develop the new designs and work will start during the summer holidays. There will be no disruption to the day-to-day running of the Academy while the project is underway.



## MAKING BENCHES FOR THE ACADEMY AND ACHIEVING A CITY & GUILDS AWARD

Look out for the benches made by the Academy's students to achieve a City & Guilds Carpentry qualification. Students made the benches in just one day and they will be put on the Eco site and in front of the Academy. On the course they learned how to work as a team, demonstrating resilience, perseverance, and skills in design and managing materials. Katherine Thomas, Year 10, said, "We used tools including a bench hook, hand saw and drill. My favourite part of the day was working as a team to complete the bench." A BIG THANKYOU to Wickes for supplying the materials and expertise on the day!

