

Principal's Update

Dear Parents, Carers and Members of the AGS Community,

As we move deeper into the winter term, the pace of school life continues to build with energy, purpose and no shortage of achievement. I am continually impressed by the commitment our students show to both their studies and the wider life of the school at this busy point in the year.

Last week saw the school come together on two particular occasions - Remembrance and Sixth Form Open Evening. On November 11th, a new tradition saw the whole school gather on the school playground for our Act of Remembrance, whilst on November 13th, it was a true pleasure to welcome over a thousand visitors to our Open Evening Event - my particular thanks go to our student ambassadors, without whom, the event would simply not have been possible.

20th November 2025

Areas of focus for KS3 this week include 'kindness' and 'problem solving', whilst students in years 10, 12 and 13 are looking at questions such as 'what is the social model of disability?' as part of Disability History month; please do continue to ask your young person about what they do in form times and assemblies as part of their Personal Development Programme.

As ever, thank you for your continued support of the school. It is a true privilege to lead such a vibrant and hardworking community, and I look forward to sharing further updates with you.

Best wishes,

R Thorpe

Ms Rachel Thorpe
Principal, Alcester Grammar School



Assist
Give
Support



Language SPOTLIGHT



Actualización del director

Queridos padres, tutores y miembros de la comunidad de AGS:

A medida que avanzamos más profundamente en el trimestre de invierno, el ritmo de la vida escolar sigue creciendo con energía, propósito y abundantes logros. Me impresiona continuamente el compromiso que muestran nuestros estudiantes tanto con sus estudios como con la vida más amplia de la escuela en este ajetreado momento del año.

La semana pasada la escuela se unió en dos ocasiones especiales: el Día del Recuerdo y la Jornada de Puertas Abiertas de Bachillerato. El 11 de noviembre, una nueva tradición reunió a toda la escuela en el patio para nuestro Acto del Recuerdo; y el 13 de noviembre fue un verdadero placer recibir a más de mil visitantes en nuestro evento de Puertas Abiertas. Mi agradecimiento especial va para nuestros estudiantes embajadores, sin cuya colaboración el evento simplemente no habría sido posible.



ags Assist
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Spanish

20 de noviembre de 2025

Las áreas de enfoque para KS3 esta semana incluyen la “amabilidad” y la “resolución de problemas”, mientras que los estudiantes de los cursos 10, 12 y 13 están abordando preguntas como “¿qué es el modelo social de la discapacidad?” como parte del Mes de la Historia de la Discapacidad. Les ruego que continúen preguntando a sus hijos e hijas sobre lo que hacen durante las tutorías y las asambleas dentro de su Programa de Desarrollo Personal.

Como siempre, gracias por su continuo apoyo a la escuela. Es un verdadero privilegio dirigir una comunidad tan dinámica y trabajadora, y espero poder compartir con ustedes más novedades.

Mis mejores deseos,



Sra. Rachel Thorpe
Directora, Alcester Grammar School



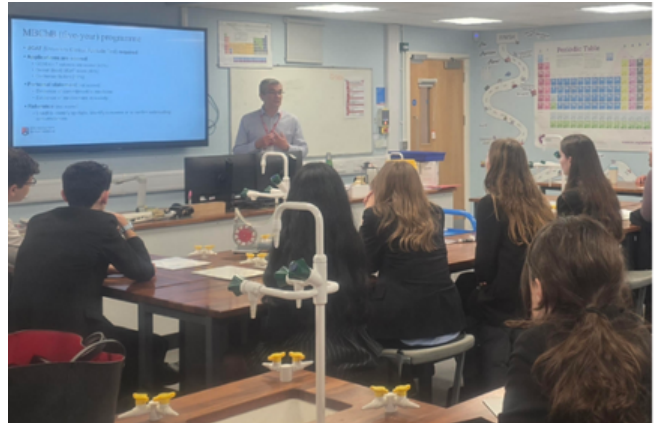
This Fortnight at AGS

Professor Derek Ward from the University of Birmingham Medical School visited our fabulous AGS Medical Society (Medsoc) on 11th November.

He met with both year 12 and 13 potential medics advising on medical applications, interviews and life as a doctor.

We look forward to seeing all their applications next year...

Mr Gill



On Friday 7th November, Alcester Grammar Schools local MP, Manuela Perteghella, took the time to visit our Year 12 and 13 Politics A-level students. During her visit Manuela explained what her role as an MP involves, how she got into politics and the other careers that politics can lead to. The pupils also had the opportunity to ask Manuela questions about local and national issues.

Mrs Sims



This Fortnight at AGS



String club in action!



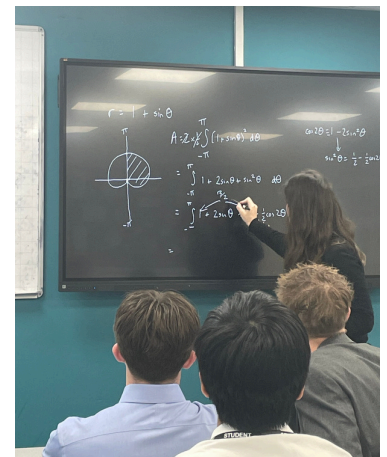
Tutor Time reading



Gold DofE training walk



Sixth Form Open Evening



Year 11 LIFE Sessions



Ready for Life



Chess Club



This Fortnight in Sport

A fantastic night of boys hockey in a 5-way tournament with Shipston and Stratford where we fielded two teams. AGS A won the tournament with AGS B coming second - a great result for the boys and a great evening of hockey.



Congratulations to our Senior Boys and Inter Girls for completing round 2 of the ESSA Cross Country Schools Cup. Our Inter Girls have progressed to the next round which is a huge achievement.

Well done!



Congratulations to our U15 Football team who braved rainy conditions to come 2nd equal in the SW Football tournament. Great all round play communication and teamwork with some impressive goalkeeping from first-timer goalkeeper Ellie W!

This Fortnight in Sport

Congratulations to our Y9 basketball team who came 2nd and 3rd in the South Warwickshire tournament!



Well done to our Y9 netball team who came 5th at their county tournament. The standard was incredibly high and the girls matched most teams goal for goal. Special thanks to Lucy J and Annie G in Y8 for playing up.



Sixth Form basketball



Y7 (pink bibs) and Y8 (blue bibs) netball teams hosted their counterparts from Stratford upon Avon School.

The girls showed great resilience in the face of strong competition!



Year 7 Rugby

Safeguarding Spotlight

One in four people experience a mental health problem every year. Everyone needs help from time to time to deal with the stresses of modern life and the coronavirus pandemic has added an extra source of anxiety to children's lives. It is now more important than ever that we support young people's mental health and help them to develop the resilience and resources to keep themselves mentally healthy.

Everyone has mental health, like physical health, and we all have the ability to manage our mental health. Managing our own lifestyle to promote positive wellbeing is important. To give our students the best chance of achieving and maintaining good mental health, they should:

- Get regular and quality sleep
- Exercise daily (even for just 20 minutes)
- Eat a healthy diet
- Keep hydrated
- Get some sunshine (trickier in the UK at times)
- Keep technology interaction (particularly social media) to a healthy level
- Stop worrying about the things you can't control and focus on the things you can
- Surround yourself with good people and cut toxic people out of your life (This may well be some family and friends)
- Stop comparing yourself to other people, there will always be someone better at certain things and vice versa
- Being thankful for what you do have, rather than the things you don't (We have won the lottery by being born in this country)
- Practise mindfulness and breathing techniques, as they do work

Spotting the signs

As every parent knows, spotting the difference between normal teenage angst and the early signs of a child who needs support is not easy. Remember everyone feels anxious, upset or annoyed at times, these are normal emotions that young people learn to deal with and often experience more intensely than adults.

You know your child better than anyone, trust your instincts. Having a conversation that is not needed won't cause additional distress, however, avoiding a conversation that is necessary could be problematic.

Look out for:

- Significant changes in behaviour
- Ongoing difficulty sleeping
- Withdrawing from social citations
- Not wanting to do things they usually enjoy
- Neglecting themselves or behaviours that put themselves at risk of being hurt

MindEd for Families can be a useful resource <https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people/should-i-be-concerned/>

What we do at AGS

We talk to the students about their stress bucket. The idea of externalising stress through the concept of a bucket being filled by water acting as stress allows them to visualise and understand what they can't see or touch. [The video linked here helps to tell the story.](#)

Please do take the opportunity to talk to your child about their stressors and their healthy taps.

All of our staff are trained to listen, support and signpost students toward help. Our safeguarding team wears green lanyards and students can ask for help at any time through our [online portal](#). A link to this can also be found on Satchel One and this is refreshed and reminded to them every fortnight.

If AGS can be of support to you please contact us at DSL@alcestergs.com



Top tips to support

Be there to listen

Regularly ask how they're doing so they get used to talking about their feelings and know there's always someone to listen if they want it. Find out how to create a space where they will open up.

[How to start a conversation with your child](#)

Support them through difficulties

Pay attention to their emotions and behaviour, and try to help them work through difficulties. It's not always easy when faced with challenging behaviour, but try to help them understand what they're feeling and why.

[Help with difficult behaviour and emotions](#)

Stay involved in their life

Show interest in their life and the things important to them. It not only helps them value who they are but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.

Encourage their interests

Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team help connect us with others and are important ways we can all help our mental health. Support and encourage them to explore their interests, whatever they are.

Take what they say seriously

Listening to and valuing what they say, without judging their feelings, in turn makes them feel valued. Consider how to help them process and work through their emotions in a more constructive way.

[The Anna Freud Centre support guide](#)

Build positive routines

We know it still may not be easy, but try to reintroduce structure around regular routines, healthy eating and exercise. A good night's sleep is also really important – try to get them back into routines that fit with school or college.

[Sleep tips for children](#)



House News



Alder



Birch



Hawthorn



Oak



Willow

The House System has had an incredibly busy and exciting time recently, with a raft of new competitions for 2025.

World Kindness Day Celebration

We celebrated World Kindness Day in style on Thursday 13th November! To encourage positive actions and community spirit, we offered double DHB points for all authentic acts of kindness observed throughout the day. It was wonderful to see so many students going above and beyond to support their peers and staff.

Keep spreading the kindness!

House Representatives Meeting

Our first official half-termly meeting of all House representatives was held last week. It was a motivating session for everyone involved to be together, celebrate the recent successes of the House system, and share ideas. Following the joint meeting, House reps met within their separate Houses to begin planning and shaping the upcoming House assemblies and develop future outreach projects. Such student leadership is key to the House system's success!

Science Photography Competition

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that this year's Science Photography Competition will be opening in just a few weeks! Start planning your shots now—the theme for 2025 is **Weather!** This is a brilliant opportunity to combine creativity with scientific observation.

Science Fascinating Fact Competition

We had a fantastic amount of entries for the Science Fascinating Fact of the Half-Term competition, demonstrating a real enthusiasm for discovery! The following students won plenty of valuable House points for their respective Houses:

Year 7 - Devanshi K, Jessica D, James K

Year 8 - Phoebe O

Year 9 - Sayona S

Year 10 - Isaac S

Year 11 - Jamie H

Year 12 - Ryley J

Year 13 - Seb G

House Festive Poetry Competition

While it may be a little early to start feeling fully festive, the House Festive Poetry competition has certainly started the process. After much deliberation, the following students were declared winners, and their wonderful poems will be read aloud at the upcoming Carol Service and during the Celebration Assembly:

- 1st Place: "The Final Gift" by Freya B (Birch)
- 2nd Place: "A Christmas Sonnet" by Reuben J (Alder)
- 3rd Place: "Diwali poem" by Navya D (Alder)

Well done to everyone who has participated so far. Keep an eye on the House noticeboards and listen to announcements for the next round of exciting House events!

We look forward to seeing you all in House assemblies next week! **Mrs Bremner-Smith**

Biocraft Competition 2025

Participants created a biology-inspired 3D artwork from recycled, or other, materials.

Entries were judged on:

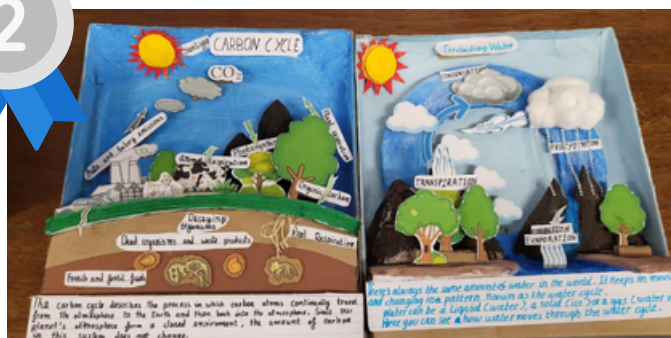
- Variety of materials used
- Variety of creative skills used
- Aesthetic quality of the piece
- Originality of the piece
- How well the piece captures the biological basis of the subject matter

Congratulations to all entrants and to our winners, who will now have their creations entered into a national competition!

Winning Entries...



Isaac - Year 7



Siddheswar and Sarveshwar- Year 7



James - Year 7



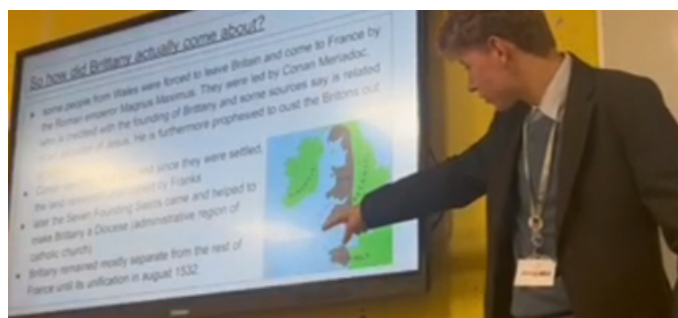
LangSoc News

Recently in LangSoc, our members have carried out small individual research projects (IRPs) on topics of their choice. For the first few weeks of this half term, these are being presented during our LangSoc sessions. We decided to launch this in order to develop students' research skills in preparation for their IRPs in their language A-Levels, to build their confidence with public speaking, and as a way for everyone to see what others are interested in.

Topics chosen include...

- Why isn't there a universal language?
- The development of Romance languages
- Language in animals
- The language, mythology and history of Brittany

Riana T & Blair F



LangSoc runs twice a week:

- Wednesday lunchtime in LA5 for Y7, 8 and 9 with Lily P and Gracie B
- Thursday lunchtime in LA4 for Y10, 11 and 12

These presentations are open to the whole school so please come along!

Jonathan Stroud Author Visit - Friday 5th December 2025

We're excited to announce that acclaimed author, Jonathan Stroud, will be visiting the school on 5th December 2025 as part of the Stratford Literary Festival to speak to Years 7 & 8.

Many of our students will have read Jonathan Stroud's books and he is well known for his Lockwood & Co and Bartimaeus books. This is a wonderful opportunity for Years 7 & 8 to hear from Jonathan about his writing process & the inspiration behind his books. Hopefully, it will energise students to try their own creative writing and also to read some Jonathan Stroud books that are available in the library!

Jonathan will also be doing a book signing at lunchtime for Years 7,8 & 9. Students in these year groups are able to pre-order a copy of "Lockwood & Co; The Screaming Staircase" with the deadline for pre-orders Thursday 20th November 2025. Or alternatively students may bring in their own copy to be signed.

This is a really special & unique opportunity and we can't wait to meet and hear from Jonathan!



Stratford Literary Festival

Author Event
Friday 5th December

Jonathan Stroud
Lockwood & Co

Jonathan Stroud is the author of three internationally bestselling series: the award-winning *Bartimaeus* books, which have been published in 36 languages; the critically acclaimed *Lockwood & Co.*, which has been turned into a No. 1 hit Netflix series; and the adventures of the outlaws *Scarlett and Browne*. His other novels include *Buried Fire*, *The Leap*, *The Last Siege* and *Heroes of the Valley*.

Jonathan will sign books on the day, so don't miss out and pre-order now!

You can pre-order the books through your school - Lockwood & Co.: £8.99
(Unfortunately we cannot accept cheques).

Stratford Sharing Stories
stratlitfest.co.uk

Exams Notice

Well done to years 11 and 13 on completing your first set of mocks!

Year 12 mocks will take place from Thursday 11th December until Friday 19th December.

The timetable will be available shortly and pupils will be informed when this is available to view on their AGS Portal.



Thank you

Mrs Silcox - Exams Officer

Celebrating AGS

Please use [this form](#) to share with us the efforts or achievements of a student at AGS outside of school.

We will ensure that over time their achievement is recognised in some way - whether this is in a chat with their form tutor, an email from the leadership team or a post on [Bluesky](#) etc.

Sixth Form Admissions – Subject Sampling Evening

Subject Sampling Evening is an important part of the application process for Sixth Form. All year 11 students wishing to apply for Sixth Form should apply to be part of this event which takes place on Thursday 5th February 2026.

Existing Year 11 AGS students: You should have received an email with a link to register. *You do not need to scan the QR code*

External applicants: Please scan the QR code or [click here](#) to register.

The deadline to apply for subject sampling is Friday 12th December 2025



ags ALCESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL
SIXTH FORM

SUBJECT SAMPLING EVENING
THURSDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2026
4:30-8:30PM

A large, friendly sixth form community built upon decency, ambition and a thirst for learning

SCAN HERE TO REGISTER

  www.alcestergs.com  01789 762 494  sixthform@alcestergs.com

 Birmingham Road, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5ED



**AGS CHRISTMAS
CONCERT 2025**
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3RD

6:30PM START
TICKETS VIA EVOLVE
AGS THEATRE
REFRESHMENTS AND RAFFLE
DOORS OPEN 6:00PM

AGS MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Between now
and Christmas

**Arden
Foodbank**
Together with Trussell

Oak House communication and
Outreach project

**FOOD TIN
COLLECTION
FOR ARDEN
FOOD BANK**

You can HELP

ONLY Soups and stews,
Canned or dried beans, Canned
fish, meats, canned vegetables

Please bring any donations
to the 7 to 11 hub



**Got your
period?**
We've got you.

**Free Pads, Tampons,
Menstrual Cups**
at the 7 to 11 Hub

TAKE WHAT YOU NEED, WHEN YOU NEED IT.

Support at the 7-11 Hub

We want to ensure that every student feels comfortable and supported while at school. If you ever need sanitary products, please remember that our 7to11 Hub is always stocked and ready for you. Simply visit the Hub and speak confidentially with either Mrs. Varaich or Miss Lawson. We are here to provide discreet support and ensure you have what you need. Your well-being and comfort are important to us!

**HELP US PUT AN END
TO PERIOD POVERTY:**



Minerva Mill

*Christmas
Fayre*

Friday 28th November
11am - 6pm

Supporting
The Trussell Trust & Shakespeare Hospice



MEDAL DESIGN HOUSE COMPETITION



The race is on to get creative and design a new medal for the Shakespeare Marathon and Half-Marathon 2026.

Design criteria must include:

- Size: will be about 70-90mm in diameter and does not need to be round – the shape can vary as necessary – and can include up to eight colours.
- The theme should reflect the town of Stratford, the marathon or Shakespeare.
- The race name - the Shakespeare Marathon and Half-Marathon – will need to be included in the design along with the Rotary logo and RunThrough logo.

All designs will be sent to the Stratford herald competition, with a chance of becoming the overall winning design. Also, one of these designs will be chosen as our AGS winner, winning a prize from the DT department and vital house points!

The overall winning design will be chosen by RunThrough Events who will get the design made into medals to be used for the actual race - the winner will receive the medal and £50 in vouchers

COMPLETE YOUR DESIGN ON A TUESDAY LUNCHTIME IN DT01 ON THE 11TH AND 18TH NOVEMBER

**ALL ENTRIES TO MR DICKINSON BY MONDAY 24TH NOVEMBER:
M.DICKINSON@ALCESTERGS.COM**



FOR MORE INFORMATION
[HTTPS://WWW.STRATFORD-HERALD.COM/NEWS/WARWICKSHIRE-CHILDREN-UNDER-STARTER-S-ORDERS-WITH-MARATHON-M-9438037/](https://www.stratford-herald.com/news/warwickshire-children-under-starter-s-orders-with-marathon-m-9438037/)

We teach —
LAMDA
— Exams & Qualifications

Available to
all students

Unlock Your Potential with LAMDA Lessons at AGS

Develop communication,
confidence, and clarity through
engaging 1:1 lessons in school.

Speaking In Public, Verse & Prose,
Acting and more.

Gain extra qualifications through
recognised LAMDA exams. Higher
grades award valuable UCAS points
which can help with University
applications and enhance your
opportunities.

speakingmatters121@gmail.com

LIMITED PLACES



2025/26 Term Dates

Autumn Term

Term begins: Wednesday 3rd September 2025 - Years 7 and 12 only
Thursday 4th September 2025 - All students return
Half Term: Monday 20th October to Friday 31st October 2025
Term ends: Friday 19th December 2025

Spring Term

Term begins: Tuesday 6th January 2026
Half Term: Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February 2026
Term ends: Friday 27th March 2026

Summer Term

Term begins: Monday 13th April 2026
Half Term: Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May 2026
Term ends: Friday 17th July 2026

Inset Days (No school for students)

Monday 1st September 2025
Tuesday 2nd September 2025
Monday 5th January 2026
Friday 6th February 2026
Friday 22nd May 2026
Monday 20th July 2026

