



COWLEY  
ACADEMY

# Head of School UPDATE

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026



Dear parents/carers and students,

We have had another fabulous week at Cowley Academy, with many student opportunities and achievements to celebrate.

Our Year 11 students continue to work extremely hard, and we are encouraging them to complete as much revision as possible to make the most of their remaining time in school. Remember: the more loyalty cards completed, the more prizes can be won for attending the intervention sessions! To further support students with last-minute tips and guidance, we will be holding the Year 11 Exam Success Evening on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 6pm.

Once again this week I have had the pleasure of being invited to sample the dishes prepared by our Year 11 GCSE Food students. The standard of the meals prepared over the last two weeks has been outstanding and I am incredibly proud of the talented young chefs in Year 11 who produced professional quality dishes. Well done to everyone involved.

To help prepare our Year 11 students who have applied to the SLAT Sixth Form, yesterday we arranged a visit to Bourne Academy. With summer exams fast approaching, this visit helped students plan ahead and feel more confident about starting in September. They toured the Academy, visited subject areas, met staff, and heard from former Cowley Academy students who now attend the Sixth Form.

To bring Shakespeare's iconic tragedy of Macbeth to life, we arranged for the whole of Year 10 to watch a live performance on the school stage with a professional production of Macbeth from Quantum Theatre. The theatre company visited both Cowley Academy and Bourne Academy this week, and these mesmerising performances have certainly helped our Year 10 students appreciate this dark tale of vaulting ambition and the toll it takes.



Aspire • Challenge • Achieve

On Thursday, we celebrated World Book Day. Our Key Stage 3 students and staff had the option to come dressed as their favourite book characters - from classics to graphic novels to biographies. We were thrilled by the creativity, imagination, and effort put into the costumes. Throughout the day, students took part in activities including the Masked Reader challenge and booklet tasks. It was wonderful to see so many staff joining in as well - including myself, dressed as Mary Poppins! To reward students, we hosted a 'Best Costume' competition in the Library, with gift vouchers and certificates for the winners. Next week, look out for student photos from World Book Day on our website and social media platforms.

We also welcomed author Tana Mcpherson-Smith who led a group writing workshop with some of our Year 7 students as well as leading a Year 9 assembly where she talked about one of her more recent books. 'There's A Monkey on Your Shoulder' has been hugely popular with teenagers and particularly young people navigating the challenges of life. It was fantastic that we were able to host a published author.



As part of our study of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child in English lessons, last Friday we took a group of Year 8 students to Warner Bros Studio Tour 'The Making of Harry Potter' to help bring their learning to life. The trip gave them the chance to explore how the story is created beyond the page, from theatre production and set design to special effects and film-making. Seeing these elements up close helped them better understand how characters and scenes are developed, and how lighting, sound and staging all work together to create atmosphere. It also opened their eyes to the many different careers involved in the creative industries. During the visit, students walked through well-known sets, looked at original props and costumes, and found out how both practical and digital effects are used to create magical moments. Coming face-to-face with Aragog in the Forbidden Forest was definitely a memorable moment for everyone! The trip was a thoroughly enjoyable and worthwhile experience, supporting classroom work and helping students connect more deeply with the world of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child.



Over the past few months, three teams of students from Years 7, 9, and 11 have taken part in the National Cipher Challenge. Organised by the University of Southampton, this is a prestigious national competition that aims to develop students' problem solving and critical thinking skills. Each week, participants were presented with coded messages to decipher, including challenges released over the Christmas period. Every stage of the competition consists of two parts, A and B, which together form sections of an unfolding story that increases in complexity as the weeks progress. A huge congratulations goes to all three teams who represented the school: The Maths Decrypters, The Crazy 8's and PH2. A special commendation is awarded to The Maths Decrypters (Annamae Peel-Hill, Isaac Malcolm, Ava Horry, Lynda Parker, Elijah Malcolm and Joseph Alles) who, under the strong leadership of captain Annamae, achieved an impressive 694th place out of 4,255 competing teams across the country. All students have shown remarkable commitment, teamwork, and perseverance throughout the competition. We are incredibly proud of their achievements, and preparations are already underway for next year's challenge, which begins in October.


This week has also been National Careers Week. During form time, students in Years 7 to 10 explored a variety of career opportunities such as Sport, Retail, Construction, and Robotics. Staff have also been sharing their own career pathways at the start of lessons to help raise aspirations.

Finally, I would like to inform parents/carers that Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026 is **Comic Relief / Red Nose Day**, and we will be holding our traditional non-uniform day. This year, we are asking students and staff to **wear something red** to show support for the event.

Thank you for your continued support.

Have a lovely weekend.

Kindest regards,



**Mrs Kath Kilby**

Head of School, Cowley Academy

## For the latest news

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- [www.cowleyacademy.org.uk](http://www.cowleyacademy.org.uk)
- [www.instagram.com/CowleyAcademy](https://www.instagram.com/CowleyAcademy)
- [www.facebook.com/CowleyAcademy](https://www.facebook.com/CowleyAcademy)
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