



Volume 7 | Issue 10

June/July 2016 | Ramadhaan 1437

# al-qalam

Termly Newsletter

## AAGS Win Award at Houses of Parliament

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Trip to L'oreal  
World Book Day  
Science Week  
Year 10 Work Experience  
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Azhar Academy (عزہ کالج)  
Girls School

# Head Teacher's Message - Mrs R.Adam

*"In the Name of Allah ﷻ the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. All the praises and thanks be to Allah ﷻ, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists). The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. The Only Owner of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help. Guide us to the Straight Way. The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray. (The Qur'an-Surah Al-Fatihah)"*

It is with great pleasure that I share with you our newsletter which is once again filled with interesting articles written by staff and students at Azhar Academy Girls School.

The Summer term was a busy term and we were blessed with spending Ramadaan at school. We held a Ramadaan Conference and Iftaar evening about which you will read in our newsletter.

As we end the term and prepare for the holidays we can truly say it has been an eventful year at AAGS. We underwent Ofsted inspection in April 2016 which went extremely well. Read more about the inspection by visiting our website at [www.aags.org.uk](http://www.aags.org.uk)

During the summer holidays the school toilets will undergo refurbishment. We hope that the girls will be pleased with the new toilets. A big thank you to everyone who helped raise funds for the refurbishment. I hope to share more news about the refurbishment in the new term.

I would also like to thank all staff for their efforts this year and would like to bid farewell to those staff who are leaving us and welcome to our new staff.

Lastly I hope you enjoy reading our newsletter and continue to support the school in its endeavours.

Mrs R. Adam  
Head Teacher





# Citizenship

This term in Citizenship has been an extremely busy one MashaAllaah.

We teamed up with the organisation of MADE (Muslim Action for Development and Environment), based in the London Muslim Centre. You can find out more about them by visiting their website [www.made.ngo](http://www.made.ngo). AAGS got involved with a few projects through MADE, namely the School Link Up Project and the Beacon Award.

Our partner school is Sarah Bonnel Girls School and together a selected group of Year 10 girls went to Stepney Green Farm as volunteers for the afternoon and took part in a workshop. We had a tour of the farm and looked at different ways of re-using waste products.

At the end of December last term a group of Year 10 girls interviewed Stephen Timms MP as part of their Citizenship Controlled Assessment. The feedback from MP and his team was that the girls were very informed about their topics and able to engage as well as respond to questions. It was great to see this level of confidence in our girls. This was again shown when we had MP Lyn Brown visit AAGS in February 2016. She hosted a Q&A session with Year 9 and 10 and was again impressed by the degree and articulate nature of questions. Well done to all who were involved!

Years 9 were lucky enough to visit The Crystal which is home to the world's largest exhibition on the future of cities and the world's most sustainable events venue. The girls travelled by the Emirates Sky ride over the Thames and they seemed to be having a great time judging by the amount of screams as they got on the cable car! It was a very wet day as you can see from the photo so well done to the girls for braving the weather!

At the end of February, Azhar Academy won the Silver Green Up Award from MADE. The awards ceremony took place at the Houses of Parliament and we were very pleased to have taken silver MashaAllaah for the contribution and awareness of environmental projects that AAGS collaborate with.

In March, Year 10 went to the Houses of Parliament for two interactive workshops; one was on Making Laws and the other on Voting Systems and Elections. We were also given a tour of the Palace of Westminster and were shown around the House of Lords. The Commons was a full house due to Prime Minister's Questions and the Budget all happening while we were there!

*continued...*



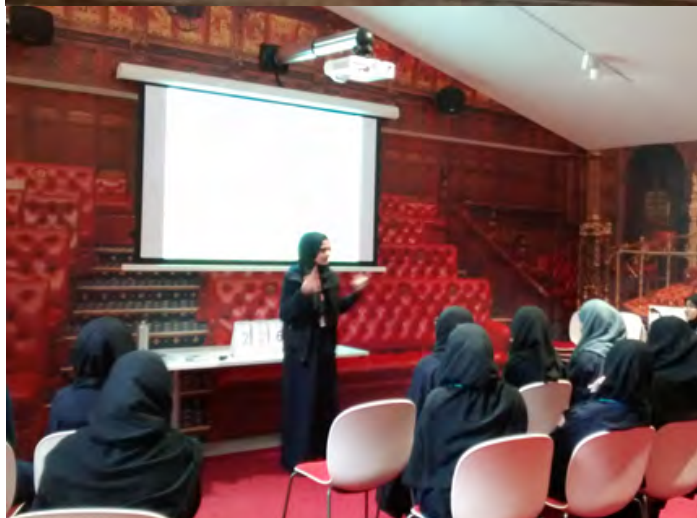


As part of Year 10's controlled assessment, Arooj Khan, Maryam Rashid and Sabah Athar organised a campaign to promote awareness of the impact of forced marriage.

They had already researched their issue and interviewed a few people who were in positions of power and had some knowledge in this area. The girls planned this conference in conjunction with International Women's Day and invited many eminent speakers such as MP Lyn Brown; Commander Mak Chisty (the most senior Muslim Police Commander in the Metropolitan Police); The Sharan Project; a local girls school, Quwwat ul Islam; Tender, the local newspaper; The Newham Recorder and Government speakers from the Forced Marriage Unit (a government initiative).

The students did a fantastic job MashaAllaah, from arranging the whole event, introducing the event, preparing the stalls to overseeing the smooth running of the event.

Many of the invited speakers said they would take on board what they too had acquired from the conference and many of the audience said they had learnt about an issue they had little knowledge of before. This was the purpose of the conference so a remarkable job was done by the girls in organizing such an event, MashaAllaah.



Ms Jabeen  
Citizenship Teacher



# NewVic College Science Taster Day

Selected students from Year 9 were given a great opportunity to attend NewVic College Science Taster Day on Wednesday, 16th March. We used the bus to travel to the college, arriving there at around 1:00 pm to be welcomed by two very friendly staff members, Dionne and Tony. We were taken into a hall where instructions were given; groups were assigned and gift bags were kindly gifted. Another secondary school, Forest Gate Academy also took part which allowed students from both schools to interact and have a chance to work together.

As the groups split to participate in different activities, my group was taken into a classroom to be introduced by a very cheerful teacher. We were given the chance to explore and understand the topic of Binary in depth, using clever methods which allowed us to work in groups, use different equipment such as domino cards and be creative and active in our work.

The class was taught exceptionally well, having students leave the class with a clear understanding of Binary.

After taking a short break to pray and have lunch, where we very kindly fed with

scrumptious cookies and juice, we were taken into another class. During this session, we explored the science of exoplanets, an activity which once again allowed the students to work in a group efficiently. We took part in investigating whether different planets were exoplanets; this was done by using water balloons as planets, a digital machine as a satellite and a torch as the sun. The 'planet' was tied to measure the distance and time between the 'sun' and the 'planet' whilst orbiting. The 'satellite' was used to take information such as the shadow covering the 'planet' by the sun to work out whether the planet was an exoplanet. This experiment was very well organised giving different students a variety of roles that allow us to have the best learning experience. Following the experiment, we were also given a writing task which allowed us to use maths and got us focused and thinking creatively.

The day was a great experience for all students who took part and it increased our chances of attending NewVic College in the future. The staff members were very friendly and made our experience even more fascinating. Thank you for this wonderful experience.

*Aminah Omar- Year 9A*



# The Binary System

Look at this number in binary:

1 0 0 1 1 1





# Team London Young Ambassadors

## The Mayor of London's Volunteer Programme for Schools

At AAGS we have an exciting new project coming up which our Key Stage 3 students will be able to take part in. In association with the Mayor of London's volunteer programme, we will soon be giving some of our eager students the chance to engage in social action in both our own school as well as in our local community.

With the help of Team London our students will be given the opportunity to:

- Attend inspirational presentations, workshops, teaching resources and follow-up support
- Participate in motivating youth summits
- Get recognized for their volunteering efforts through an award scheme, along with schools and young people across London.

Team London Young Ambassadors is delivered in partnership with Free the Children, an international charity that educates, engages and empowers young people to become active local and global citizens. These pupils will act as catalysts to lead projects and inspire other pupils to take action on local community issues.

Some more information regarding Team London:

Since launching in 2013, the programme has engaged 1,000 schools in London, with almost 60,000 young people in London now actively volunteering. Other programme achievements include:

- 237,000 young people engaged
- Over £60,000 raised for local causes
- 98% of teachers said it had a positive impact on behaviour
- 95% of teachers said students were more enthusiastic about learning
- 100% of young people are more considerate of local issues



**MAYOR OF LONDON**





# Our Citizenship Controlled Assessment

As part of our GCSE citizenship short course in year 10, we must complete a Controlled Assessment which makes up 60% of our final grade. We form groups and select an issue, research it, interview people about it and finally run a campaign to make a contribution to that subject.

My group and I choose Forced marriage<sup>4</sup> and its impact as our topic. We did not know much about it, but as the project progressed, we learnt a lot; not just about forced marriage, but also how to accomplish such an overwhelming task. Team work, communication and organisation skills as well as patience and concentration are vital in order to succeed.

As a group we interviewed police officers, charities like The Sharon project and Karma Nirvana and even Mrs Adam, our head teacher. For our action, we hosted a conference on Friday 11th March and many influential persons, including Police Commanders, the FMU, various charities and other organisations, in addition to Azhar and Quwat-ul-Islam students. The event was very successful, alhumdulillah, and we were given an award by The Sharon project for our efforts.

We held a poster designing completion across the school, and the turnout was really amazing. We want to say mashaAllah to Zainab Miah , 8S, for her brilliant entry; her work has been taken by The Sharon project to be used in their upcoming campaigns.

Personally, I found the experience very interesting and beneficial; we achieved things that I wouldn't have thought possible before this assignment. I also came to understand just how much of a difference a few ordinary school girls can make when they put their minds to something. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all of the younger students to really try their best in all of their work, because only then it is worth doing.

Asalaamu alaikum,

**Sabath Athar - Year 10A**

## Organisation

Organisation is a key essential in life, especially if you are currently in school, college, or even higher education. It manages your life and decreases stress immensely. There are many organisation tips, which could help you out and make you a more organised person, and in all honesty, we could all do with being a bit more organised.

Before I give you my four top tips to improve your organisation skills, I want to address a common misconception- organisation doesn't simply mean to be tidy; it means being able to find what you need, when you need it. Now that that is clear, we shall proceed with four golden nuggets to help you get organised:

1. Colour-coding helps to sort out books or folders. You can use decorative tape or even sticky dots to recognize a book. You need to maintain organising and have the correct amount of stationery to do that.
2. Folders are a must. A great way to keep organised is to keep folders and notebooks to make sure you know where everything is and nothing goes missing (which is quite common).
3. Inject your stationery with some colour! Colours code your folders or books. It is very useful if you enjoy adding a bit of colour to something boring. You can use stickers or washi tape. Just stick it on and enjoy.
4. Keeping a planner is so useful and helps you remember things. Keeping your planner neat is also important because if your planner is messy you will not understand it and that defeats the purpose.

I hope you found my tips useful, and more importantly, they help you be the organised person you always wished you could be.

**Sabah Jamil - Year 8S**





## Sisterhood: United We Stand, Divided We Fall

As a girl (or woman, should you prefer), you are part of one of the largest communities on this earth. A community is "a group of people... having a particular characteristic in common." In case you haven't caught on yet, the community that this is directed at is the female one. However, this article, in particular, isn't here to relay your part as a member of the international women's community. Rather, I aim to write about a community on a much smaller scale- our school.

The Sisterhood Day was organized by the Tarbiyyah mentors. It's not uncommon that teachers will try their utmost best to get a class to create camaraderie between themselves. Nevertheless, as many would argue, the teachers, regardless of how hard they try, couldn't fully understand the problems faced by this generation unless they experience it themselves.

The Sisterhood Day had a few simple but extremely powerful messages to preach:

- 1) RESPECT each other, even if you have little in common.
- 2) Try to see the BEST in each other, because it will make both you and your sister feel better.
- 3) Your APPEARANCE doesn't define you. Don't let "body-shaming" bring you down.
- 4) WORK TOGETHER as it is the foundation of a better society.

Therefore, short sisterhood workshops ran through the morning to spread these messages across. The workshops consisted of activities, such as team building through racing and choosing a good quality of your fellow peer and speeches on female empowerment in today's day and age and the importance of loving our own physical appearance.

These activities and speeches were created in the hope of instilling a sense of togetherness in the younger years. The substructure of humanity relies on our ability to get along with one another. By simply having respect for, and not scorning at one another, we are assisting in creating a legacy for women across the globe. "United we stand, divided we fall" is quite a cliché phrase. A phrase used by US senators and UN representatives, alike. Is it overused? Yes, to some degree. Is it irrelevant? No, not at all. The cause for the repetition of such a fundamental statement is simple- we repeat it because we are trying to get a message across. We repeat it to emphasise a message. We repeat it because it is vital in society that we stand together, or else we will fall apart.

**Zainab Haque - Year 11A**

# Dragon's Den Reflection

For the past month, 8G class has been working on a Dragon's Den project. In this assignment, we had to create a persuasive pitch about a unique product that we would design. This task gave us the opportunity to input different skills such as negotiation and organisation. We were split up into two main groups - the design team and the advertisement team. After a lot of discussions and suggestions, my team decided to create a non-artificial face cream: Cierga.

My favourite aspect of this project was writing down the advert, as I was able to use dramatic entrances, exaggeration and quirky facial expressions to attract the judges' attention. For example, I randomly appeared out of the corner of the hall and I immediately felt everyone's eyes on me. This tells me that acting skills are vital, during presenting my pitches.

On the other hand, I disliked the fact that it took three days to choose the name of our product and decide what our creation should be. Examples of what the category should be were food, skin care, technology and cosmetics. If we used our time management well, we could have spent quality time to work on the financial issues or to add more information onto our PowerPoint presentation.

What strategies did we implement? My group's project was based on teamwork. In order to get our pitch perfected and to be of quality standard, we needed cooperation and maximum effort from everyone, including our group leader. As well as this, our tasks were divided up for different people. For example, Radhia and I were part of the advertisement team, with Rufaidah as our leader and Nimrah and Alima worked on the design team. The main group leader was Sabeedah, who guided us when we had any difficulties and helped to

prepare our presentation. As a result of our team effort, our pitch was taken to a journalist (of the Newham Recorder), who snapped some pictures of our product.

However, we have encountered difficulties, such as deciding what the product should be and the finance. We took three days deciding what the product should be, whilst all of the other groups already started planning their pitch for the judges. I was beginning to think that we would not finish our project in time for the judges.

Throughout this project, I learnt that I need to be organised, when planning a speech or a pitch. In this way, I could make a schedule based on what I need to do each day leading up to my deadline. This would prevent me from doing anything for an excessive amount of time. I also learnt that persuasion skills are vital when delivering a pitch. For example, "Do you really want to have to put up with greasy hair?" is an effective rhetorical question. By doing so, I could use language techniques to convince the judges that my ideas should be taken into consideration.

If I could redo this project, I would expand our advertisement and try to fit in as much useful information as possible. For instance, I could add some information about the unique selling point. This would show the judges why our product stands out from the rest.

I learnt that rushing never helps to make your work effective and of high standard. For instance, if the PowerPoint presentation was only three slides long with information that isn't useful, then your pitch would seem dull and not of good quality. Nevertheless, if your slides were colourful and full of useful and carefully researched information, then your pitch would seem clear and efficient.

*Jumana Hussain - Year 8G*

# Dragon's Den Reflection

For the past 4 weeks Year 8G have been working on a creative assignment called 'Dragon's Den'. This project gave us the opportunity to use our imagination skills to create a unique product and choose our own groups. The target audience was mainly teenagers. The reason why it was mainly for teenagers was because teenagers often care about the way they look and they want to have clear and flawless skin. During this process we had to think of a name and design a logo for our product.

My favourite part of the project was team work and helping each other out. This helped build my confidence. Also the best part of the project was picking the name and designing the logo with Nimrah. It was very difficult, if we wanted our invention to be unique and distinctive.

In addition to that, I enjoyed doing this assignment because it was very creative. However, we did have a few issues with the school printers and sometimes our group ended up wasting a lot of valuable time, which interfered with our presentation.

The strategy we used to complete our project was to divide different parts and assign them to smaller groups within the group. The separate groups were in charge of designing and advertising. Nimrah and I were in the design team and Rufaidah, Jumanah as well as Radhia were in the advertisement team along with Sabeedah who was our group leader.

Then, we chose the name and by doing that we looked up unique product names. After that, we designed the logo by using a website called 'Pic Monkey'. Next, the advertisement team prepared their speech that they were going to present to the judges. Lastly, we created a PowerPoint that illustrated the finance and investment.

Meanwhile, from this project I learnt the hardships and difficulties of designing a logo and how to persuade people.

If I were to redo this project, there are a few things that I would do differently. For instance, I would not waste time. Apart from that, I would make the logo better. Also, I would actually make my product (cream) from scratch instead of combining a mixture of a variety of creams.

Therefore, the personal discoveries (life lessons) I learnt about myself was that I am a bit more confident now and I know that when you do an assignment as a group, you can get a lot done together. In addition to that, I learnt which websites are good to use for projects and creative tasks.

***Alima Khanum – Year 8G***



# Dragon's Den Reflection

For this project, we were all assigned into groups to create our own product aimed for teenagers. My group invented a cream called 'CIERGA' for people interested in making their skin look its best.

My most favourite part of this project was working together as a team with all my friends. I really enjoyed this as everyone in our team got along well. I think this was really helpful because it helped us work in a calm environment and no one was putting too much pressure on each other. This was also good as we all helped each other make our product a success. One thing that I disliked about the project was that the printer would often break down and the computers were very slow. This affected the time that we took to complete our work. We would often have to continue our work at home and finish it using our own resources. Apart from that, some websites were blocked and most of the images weren't too clear.

We split our group into smaller groups in order to get the work done faster. We would often separate to work on our own parts of the project then everyone would join the larger group at the end of the lesson and put everything together. At this point we would all give each other feedback and see where we could improve.

I felt that my leadership abilities have improved during this project. I have also become better in my organisation and persuasion skills. I have also learned more about pitching a product and what the judges expected from us.

If we could do this project again, I think we should keep the power point presentation as it would look more professional and the judges could refer to it if we talked a little too fast during the demonstration. In retrospect we tried our best.

During the past few weeks we have been working on a project called Dragons' Den. This project gave us the opportunity to choose our own groups and create our own brand new product, designed for teenagers. In our daily lives we have noticed that teenagers are much pressurised in the society and are very conscious of their beauty. Therefore our group agreed on creating an all-new skin cream for all types for teenagers.

My favourite part of the project was working together with my friends and putting all our ideas into one project. This ensured our product to be a success as we were all cooperating with each other.

As we were working in groups we used many strategies, such as teamwork, to help complete our project before its due date. We also split ourselves further into smaller groups of twos and threes, so that we were able to complete different jobs. Some of us were part of the advertisement team whilst others were part of the design team. We also had a finance team to help with the product cost.

During this project, my role was part of the advertisement as well as the finance team. I learnt that being part of the advertisement team takes a lot of courage as there were three judges that we had to present our product to.

If I were to do this project again, I would keep track of time and complete my task earlier than the deadline so that I may help others in my group. This would also allow our group to make any changes to perfect our project.

During this project I discovered that my friends and I actually work well together and get our work completed on time. I also learnt that keeping track of time is very important, so that we can make any last minute changes.



## Science Fair Review

On 16th March 2016, a Science fair took place at AAGS.

Students were chosen to present their projects to the whole of KS3 and guests from other schools. The Science Department put a lot of effort into preparing goody bags, prizes and a few biology based cakes like lungs, brains and cells. The ideas for the chosen projects were very interesting. A few examples were “Does smell affect taste?” and “Do white candles burn faster than coloured candles?”

I think this Science fair was very successful and I think this event should happen more than once a year. I personally think it was a very interactive programme.

## Science Week

During the science week that took place on 15th March 2016, 8S was supposed to take part in a balloon race. As we were the first class to experience this once in a lifetime opportunity, we had to prepare and sort out the equipment for it. Unfortunately, we didn't get to participate in the balloon race, but the good news is another class benefitted from our misfortune. Every cloud has a silver lining, after all.

One experiment that we did manage to carry out was the coffee experiment. The experiment examined the effects of coffee on the human body, before and after. We learnt that not only is coffee a tasty refreshment (once you add a gallon of sugar and milk), but it also stimulates energy. Who knew?

What I really wanted to know was the reason why hyperactivity occurs when drinking a good mug of coffee. Unfortunately, we could not further delve into this topic due to the sudden shrill of the bell.

A few girls in each year group participated in a nail-biting science quiz. The finalists were promised Segway's (according to a fellow Muslimah attendee at AAGS) but that is yet to be discovered, inshallah.

On Wednesday, the qualifiers of the science fair had a chance to show their knowledge on the researched topic of their choice. From homemade toothpaste, burning scents, coloured candles to Skittles immersed in vinegar, oil and water, students' ideas were endless!

Many students fashioned homemade cakes that were skilfully and elegantly sculpted into interesting organs and body parts that were certainly the show-stoppers of the day. Despite this, many failed to purchase such delicate and delightful bakes, due to the timing of the bake sale after a tiring and exhausting day at school and the thrilling science exhibition.

All in all, the awe-inspiring science week was a complete success. Like many of my peers, I feel motivated for next year and have learnt a lot more about science.

May Allah grant us other efficacious and fruitful activities on science week in the many years to come, Inshallah.

*Suhayfa Syed Mohamed- Year 8S*

# WORLD BOOK DAY



## World Book Day at Azhar Academy

World Book Day was a wonderful day for the whole school.

It was a day that broke away from the monotony of school uniform and allowed us to see everybody in a different light (and costume, of course). Furthermore, it was delightful to see the teachers getting involved and wearing imaginative costumes and guessing which characters they were and from which book. Many pupils tried their best to dress up as characters from a book and some exceptional students even made props to make their costumes as realistic as possible.

I am ecstatic that our school decided to take part in this event because World Book Day is a celebration! It is a celebration of authors, illustrators, and books and most importantly it is a celebration of reading. In fact, it is the biggest celebration of its kind, designated by UNESCO as a worldwide celebration of books and reading, and marked in over 100 countries all over the world.

It was exciting to see other people's costumes in assembly and to admire and appreciate the lengths of effort they went to in order to stand out and make everybody really impressed to look at their costumes.

After all world book day is to appreciate all authors and illustrators for the amazing books they produce for us to read. But let's not forget, we also appreciated getting £1 vouchers to spend for World Book Day on a book of our choice. Happy reading!

*Sabah Jamil- Year 8S*

On 10th March 2016 students at Azhar Academy Girls School dressed up for World Book Day. There were so many characters such as The Cat in the Hat, Little Red Riding Hood and Gangster Granny. There were many more more marvellous characters as well.

Teachers at AAGS also got dressed up for the day and looked amazing. Miss Borg was Anna from 'Frozen' and Miss Hira was Cleopatra.

Everyone who made the effort to dress up looked fantastic and I would like to say well done for the hard work of all those involved who make this day so wonderful.

*Ayesha*





## World Book Day continued...

On Thursday 10th March, Azhar Academy participated in World Book Day. Students and teachers had the opportunity to dress up as iconic book characters. I was extremely excited as I waited in eagerness for the day to arrive as I was looking forward to seeing all the teachers dress up.

On the day it was wonderful to see the effort that everyone had made. Fellow students had dressed up as many different characters: Red Riding Hood, Queen of Hearts, Alice from Alice in Wonderland, Pirates and Iron Man.

At Form Time we had the opportunity to change into our costumes. We then went up to the hall for the costume parade. There was an atmosphere of anticipation as we waited for all the teachers to walk down the hall. It was amazing to see the effort the teachers had made. The cheers in the hall was deafening as we watched the teachers walk down.

Thereafter, each year group was called out to parade down the hall. Everyone's costume was brilliant.

Overall World Book Day was extremely fun and I am really looking forward to seeing what everyone will dress up as next year.

*Maryam Raza- Year 9G*

## Shakespeare Globe Theatre

Recently, Year 9s were given the opportunity to visit Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. It was a great opportunity which we all enjoyed. Our trip included a workshop on acting, which specified on expressing emotions through our speech and gestures. It was very lively and entertaining. We also did other engaging activities and experienced what it was like to attend a show at the theatre.

During the drama workshop, we were given a certain section from the play Romeo and Juliet and acted it out in pairs. From this I learnt how to engage the audience through the way I say the dialogue (for instance, the tone) and body gestures. In my opinion, this was the most entertaining part of the trip! Earlier, we were shown around the theatre and had an interesting insight on what it was like to watch a show that was contextualised in Shakespeare's time.

Overall, I found the trip to be very beneficial. The staff were also welcoming and delightful. The atmosphere was enjoyable and exceeded our expectations. We were grateful to be given the opportunity to experience such a phenomenal trip!

*Zainab Abdulalim - Year 9G*





# 7G Merit Treat

A few weeks ago, our class, 7G, had the pleasure of being spoilt to a delicious dessert treat to celebrate our hard work in earning the highest number of merits from the entire school during the first term. There were many delectable treats for us to enjoy and savour from, including waffles, milkshakes, doughnuts, cupcakes, cookies and much more!

In addition, we had the excitement of dressing up in our favourite fancy attire which made us even more thrilled. Here are some of our views: Fariha said, "The milkshakes were very nice, the cakes were too but I felt sick afterwards because I ate so much."

Nahida stated, "The dessert treat was very delightful and it passed all my expectations because I thought it was just going to be a few biscuits and milkshakes."

Hafizah exclaimed, "I think I got diabetes!" The other year groups looked certainly jealous by the way they were staring at us, hoping to taste some of our delicious food! Overall it was a great experience for us to enjoy ourselves and it was a memorable start to our life at secondary school.

Special thanks to Apa Anila and some of the year 9 girls for their hard work and effort to make this treat unforgettable; we really appreciated it.

*Hafizah Firdaus and Aisha Yunus Jasat –  
Year 7G*



# Trip to the BBC Studio

Selected students from our school were given the chance to go to the BBC studio. As I was one of the students selected I had great fun seeing the inside of where they broadcast the news.

The journey was quite long but at the end it was worth it. When we arrived, we saw many other students that were selected to represent their schools. We looked into a site called Mixital; it was a site where individuals can let their creativity side glow.

Mixital had many different uses. One of the things that you can do on the site is create your own scene from a soap opera or produce an inspirational speech using different backgrounds of your choice.

I found that this trip very effective when it came to socialising with other schools. We had the opportunity to express our ideas with other students and hear their point of views too.

We were taken on a tour around the building and it was wonderful to see what was happening behind the scenes. As representatives, we were given the task to become the reporters of our school. Altogether, it was an entertaining and engaging experience.

Trips such as this one build our confidence for the future!

**Zaynab Khatun - Year 9 A**

On 7th March 2016, seven students from Year 9 were pleasantly surprised with the news that they had to plan, film and produce the BBC school report.

*continued...*

I happened to be one of those students, and so due to our excitement we frantically planned the short video, giving each other important roles to play and different pieces of information to gather.

The next day, Esha came in prepared with her camera and tripod and we immediately began filming after break. We interviewed two students from Year 9 as well as a member of staff. We also recorded a few voice overs and started to record ourselves, however, that was not so easily achieved. We found at times that our surroundings were too noisy and we had to change locations a few times. Nevertheless, we still used this as a learning process and got better each time.

We used the last two lessons to finish off filming and when it was done, we all let out a cheer and began packing up. We still had the editing to do but that was to be done the next day and we were all too tired to do any more.

I can sincerely say that this entire experience was really just a rollercoaster of emotions- at some points I was exhausted and at others I was ecstatic. The relief I felt when all was done and dusted cannot be described, nevertheless, I would not mind doing it all over again. This was a great opportunity and I'm glad I took it. Through this experience I've learnt a lot more about what happens behind the scenes, and honestly, it's a lot more than what you think.

**Ayesha Muhsina Siddiqah-Year 9G**





## A trip to the L'oreal Headquarters - UK and Ireland

5 students from Year 8 were chosen to go to the L'Oreal headquarters of UK and Ireland as part of science week.

When I first heard about the trip, I was thrilled. I considered myself to be very fortunate as not everybody had been given such an amazing opportunity. I really thought it was a fantastic possibility and a rare one for me. My level of excitement was high and I definitely was not disappointed. From the building, to everything we experienced, it was an excellent, once-in-a-lifetime trip.

We were taken for a tour of the building and I was dazzled by its complex structure and design. The building was hi-tech and very well layout; all the different departments had a different theme and the atmosphere was very stimulating and welcoming.

We were taken to L'Oreal's large salon and were able to see the staff at work. The member of staff at the headquarters spoke to us about their jobs at there and also told us about the science behind their creations and the work that goes behind everyday products that we use.

We also got to meet the CEO of L'Oreal UK and Ireland, which was exciting. We were taught about the science of hair and this was followed by a marketing activity, where each group was to create an advertisement for their own shampoo. This was very fun and it got us all to think and participate.

We were also provided with food and were given a goody bag at the end of our day and I have to say it was a remarkable experience.

This trip really inspired me to continue working hard in science due to all the advantages and benefits of science that were discussed. Overall, a very big thank you to the science department and the L'Oreal HQ for having us!

***Baasima Khalid Patel - Year 8***

On Thursday, 12th May Year 9 students were selected to go on a trip to L'Oreal to learn about motors and magnets. I found the trip very enjoyable from the beginning right till the end. First of all, we were split into groups and our first task was to make magnets. We used nails, metal rods and magnet filings. After we all made the magnets, we tried it out using them to pick up the nails. If the nails stuck to the magnet then we were successful in making our very own magnet.

Our second activity was to make a motor. We used crocodile clips, wires and batteries. I found this very interesting and really appreciated it. However, despite it being enjoyable I could not but find it quite tricky and confusing but soon after many tries I succeeded in making a motor.

To end the day we all played the periodic table game. All we had to do was hit the element name we heard- simple and easy. Overall, the L'Oreal trip was fun.

***Zakiya Tasnim - Year 9G***

On our trip to L’Oreal, we experimented with shampoo and how to make our own. In the first activity various pairs had different shampoos and we were taught how to obtain the pH. Majority of the shampoos were neutral or just below neutral.

Then, we discussed the characteristic of a good shampoo and what we hoped for it to achieve, for example, to make hair shiny, less dry and get rid of lice.

Next, we had to find out how thick or thin our shampoo was. To do this we had to pour some shampoo into a funnel and let it drop into a measuring cylinder until it came up to 5ml. Everyone did the same and kept track of how long it took to reach 5ml. The longest time was around 5 minutes! However it depended on how much we poured into the funnel- the more you add, the faster it will drip due to the pressure of mass. As a class, we then compared the shampoos and what might have happened if we did the test several times.

After having our lunch we had the opportunity to make our own shampoos. First we made it in pairs then we did it individually. We looked at different options of colors and scents. The colors were green, pink, red, lilac, yellow and blue. After that we tested the pH to make sure it was safe for our skin. Then we put it in little bottles to take home.

#### ***Ayesha Ahmed – Year 8A***

Year 7A went to L’Oreal on 25th May 2016. We went on the bus and the train. Our workshop was called Colourful Chemistry.

We entered the laboratory and put on our lab coats and gloves. A member of L’Oreal staff explained about primary colours and secondary colours.

One of the activities was to make two different dyes. The dyes were made out of pomegranate. We sat as a table of four, so the opposite pair made their dye out of the pith (the yellow bit on the pomegranate and the skin.) We made ours out of the seeds.

To make the dye using seeds, we needed a small beaker with some vinegar inside. Then we dipped strips of cloth in it. We did this to soak the cloth so it can absorb the dye.

Next, we placed that aside and peeled out the pomegranate and separated it (the seeds and the pith). Then, we gave the pith to the opposite pair.

After that, we placed the seeds in a big beaker and put hot and cold water into it. Before doing this, we put the acidic strips of cloth into the mixture and stirred it with a stirring rod.

The staff put it on a hot plate over lunch. We looked at light and colours and they put a presentation on the ceiling. During lunch time, we were allowed to look around. I really appreciated the periodic table game.

After lunch, we took our big beakers with the seeds, water and cloth on our tables and we used tongs to take out the strips. They were beautifully dyed light, dark and hot pink. Then the staff put the strips into the oven to dry them quicker.

Next, we moved onto chromatography. As we had done it at school already, we moved straight into it. We got filter paper and cut it in the middle. Then, we got a beaker and placed water into it. We had to check if the paper was touching it. After that, we placed a dot on the paper (about 2cm above) and placed it in the water. Gradually it started to move upwards and different colours started to spread. The final result looked amazing.

Right at the end, we had to do a survey about the activities. I had so much pleasure taking part in the workshop and I hope to go again for another visit. I highly recommend it to other students.

JazakAllaahu khayran to the Science Department for organising this amazing and wonderful trip.

#### ***Kulsum Vali – Year 7A***



## A trip to the L'oreal Headquarters - UK and Ireland - Continued...

The L'Oréal Young Scientist Centre is an astonishing experience for all ages. Luckily, our class, 7G, got the unique, once in a lifetime opportunity to explore the amazing science of colour.

For a day, we became scientists by carrying out creative experiments. By the end of this encouraging trip, our passion for science grew. We had access to advanced technology and learnt the science of chromatography.

As some of my fellow students said, it was definitely a metamorphic experience and given the chance, we would all love to go again.

A glimpse of our visit can be seen in photos.

*Maryam Dedat - Year 7G*



On 10th May 2016, Year 9 students went to the Royal Institution of Science where the L'Oréal Young Scientist Centre is situated. The workshop was entitled Magnets and Motors, exploring how magnetism plays a big role in the world of electromagnets and electricity.

We participated in many small activities which aimed to explore the laws of magnetism and magnetic fields using bar magnets and iron nails in addition to using very strong magnets in an set called the Gaussian gun. This works like a Newton's cradle and we took part in a race where we used the strong magnetic balls to find whose set up would shoot the ball the farthest. We won special Royal Institution cups.

Moreover, we were given the unique opportunity to create our own electromagnets using coils of wire and a battery; this awesome yet simple arrangement made us realise how amazing the laws of magnetism are.

Overall, we were inspired and the session broadened our imagination. This encouraged us to delve into science further, gaining deeper understanding and to consider future science-based careers. In the end, we appreciated our science lessons more, making us more enthusiastic scientists.

*Year 9 Students*





## Forced Marriages - Conference

On 11th March 2016, as part of my citizenship controlled assessment, Maryam, Sabah and I held a conference regarding raising awareness about the many cases of forced marriages that take place in Britain today.

The objective of the conference was to educate our local community about forced marriages and the impact they can have and have had on many young individuals. We also wanted to educate people on how they can help support victims and survivors as well as prevent forced marriages taking place.

We also hoped to remove the stereo typical image of Muslim Asians being forced into marriage as I am sure most people assume that forced marriages take place in Asian communities. However this is not true. In fact forced marriages are also practised within the Irish traveling community. This is just one example why we believed that this conference was vital to be held.

With the help of the Sharan project we were able to organise what can only be described as a successful day. The charity also helped us to invite many influential members of our community and government authorities. For example we had Lyn Brown, our local MP welcome our guests and speakers as well as listen to our opinions about forced marriages.

We also had Commander Mak Chisty one of the few Muslim commanders based in Scotland yard discuss how a few generations back, not having a say about who you get married to was seen completely normal, especially for the higher class citizens in Britain. He also discussed how forced marriage was not accepted in Islam which overruled cultures and traditions.

Sophie Lott from the governments forced marriage unit offered a very insightful presentation on the protection orders you can take if you are in risk of being forced to marry. She also explained the negative impacts forced marriages have had on many individuals, for example, depression and even suicide.

We also ran an exciting competition which gave AAGs students the opportunity to design a poster or display to help raise awareness about forced marriage. Our lucky winner Zainab Miah received a beautiful necklace; it is a silver teardrop awarded to us by the lovely people of the Sharan Project.

Amongst all of the fantastic speakers we had on the day, we also had the honour of hosting 56 girls from Quwwatul Islam Girls School in our audience. We also experienced the opportunity of having our event published in the Newham Recorder.

There were also many exciting stalls holding different campaigns. One of my favourite examples was the pledge cards our visitors were requested to sign which read: I disagree with forced marriage because ...” And they were asked to fill the card in and then take a picture.

The day was a great success and I feel myself fortunate to have been able to work with such amazing and talented people. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Polly Harrar, the founder of The Sharan Project and her enthusiastic team as well as all of our lovely guests and speakers for making the day so special. I for one have learnt a lot from this experience and I hope it was just as beneficial and memorable for everyone else who attended.

*Arooj Khan- Year 10A*



# The Science Fair

On Wednesday, 16th March, a fascinating event took place at Azhar Academy Girls School. Year 7, 8 and 9 presented their science projects to the whole school. They did this as part of National Science Week. The fair encapsulated their passion for science.

The science fair ran throughout the day in the prayer hall. Two finalists were selected from each class to compete in the competition.

Students gathered all their equipment- some from the school lab and some that they got from home and by the end of break, each stall was beautifully presented. Whilst setting up, the girls keenly glanced around to see who they were going up against. Competition was fierce.

Finally it was show time!

Students from all classes came up (to visit the fair) during allocated times. Students had a tremendous time doing the wonderful experiments, quizzes and earning prizes. The teachers were also encouraged to look around and learn something new.

Hours seemed like minutes as we relished interacting with other scientists. However, we wondered how we would get everything done in such a short space of time, but thankfully Ms Iqbal (the coordinator of the science fair) gave us time to eat out lunch and pray our salah. During this break, we were able to clear our spaces and re-set our experiments. We were informed that headteachers (and some students) would visit the fair at 1:15 pm. They would have an opportunity to examine the fantastic projects we had produced. Moreover, they would also judge our presentations and explanations.

As the eventful day came to an end, teachers instructed students to clear their stalls. During the tidying up which was happening upstairs, a few girls were selling tantalising bakes on the ground floor. There were many fantastic bakes done by pupils in all year groups. There were many different bakes such as: the eye, the lungs and even the periodic table!

To conclude, the entire day was fabulous- a lot of knowledge to gain, experiments to take part in and prizes to win.

*Umara Kashif- Year 8S*

## Royal Observatory of Greenwich

Year 7 students visited the Royal Observatory and had an amazing time.

When we arrived at the observatory, the two classes were split into two groups to partake in different activities. One group first went to the planetarium whilst the other group participated in a maths workshop.

When we reached the Planetarium, we were greeted by an Astrologer. The show was really interesting as we learnt about the North Star, constellations and the star signs. We also learnt about our galaxy, the Milky Way. We loved the show as it was really interactive and fun. We also saw the phases of the moon. After the show we had lunch.

Just before my group went to the maths workshop, we entered the gift shop.

After the gift shop, we went to the maths workshop and learnt formulae to work out how long it would take a particular vehicle at an exact speed to get to a specific planet. We also learnt about how to do the power of a number.

*Aziza, Summayyah and Nafeesah – Year 7*



# Citizenship

Our last term in Citizenship has flown by. We had exams, controlled assessments; end of year tests, workshops, trips, debates and of course the historic Referendum!

The girls have worked very hard this year, MashaAllaah, and in recognition of this hard work I am showcasing some of the girls work below. They have written about what aspect of Citizenship they found most enjoyable this year.

## Year 10 - Trip to Houses of Parliament

A few months ago we were sent on a trip to the Houses of Parliament, where we took part in a tour and a Making Laws workshop.

It was very enjoyable being able to visit the House of Commons and House of Lords in person. We were introduced to both Houses and their structures; they had many benches on either side for MP's from constituencies in the House of Commons and also a grand chair for the Speaker of the House, who handles the debates and ensures everyone has a chance to speak. Construction for The Houses of Parliament started in 1835 with the building being opened in 1859. The building is still maintained properly and thoroughly with many old fashioned wallpapers, engravings and portraits of the monarchs from before us.

The Making Laws workshop we took part in also helped us understand the procedures that Parliament goes through in order to establish new laws.

The class was split into two teams, where we decided on laws to be passed and took them through stages to be established. I found it fun and very interactive which contributed to my understanding of the topic. It is great to know that I have been to the Houses of Parliament now because this is where the laws that govern the country are written.

*Shair Bano – Year 10A*

## Year 9 - Political Parties

In Citizenship this year, we learnt a lot about the society that surrounds us locally, nationally and worldwide. We studied about different organisations and what roles they play. From these, I was really interested in learning about how the government is formed and the different political parties that fight for the leading position to govern the country.

Every five years we see these political parties passionately expressing their political views on television, the radio and on the internet. Studying about them helped me come to the conclusion that the Conservative Party is traditionally more considerate towards the upper class' views whereas the Labour Party is more supportive of the working class.

If we understand what these parties' aims are then we know which one suits our opinions ensuring that we vote effectively (that is when we turn 18), to benefit from them. Therefore learning about politics is very important as their policies have a great impact on our life.

*Maimoonah Wadiwala – Year 9G  
continued...*



## Year 9 - The European Union Referendum

This year in Citizenship we covered a variety of interesting subjects. However from these topics the one that caught our attention the most was learning about the EU Referendum. In this topic we discovered the role of Britain as part of the EU and we acknowledged the reason why the EU was created. The EU is important because it is a group of countries coming together to help resolve all conflicts due to the destruction of the First World War. We also learnt the advantages of being in the EU; freedom of goods; freedom of capital; freedom of service and freedom of labour. This is all beneficial in Citizenship and links to it because it is about politics and environment and describes how to tackle local, national and international problems.

*Zaynab Khatun & Huda Ahmed Year 9A*

## Year 9 - Human Rights

Throughout this year in Citizenship, we have learned many interesting topics. However we enjoyed the topic Human Rights the most. Learning about human rights is important and beneficial for us now and in the future. We learned about the many rights that a person has such as: right to live, have shelter, food, and of course right to education.

Human rights play a big role in the society as it ensures that everyone has the same rights and responsibilities and people can be taken to court for breaching human rights. Human rights give people their legal right to have their say and state their opinion such as have freedom of speech. As well as that, human rights show that people are being remembered, even if they live in the poorest countries.

Moreover it gives many a feeling of security which is very important in this world.

I would like to carry on learning many topics in Citizenship as it was very interesting and engaging and relevant to our daily lives.

*Maryam Haskic and Samirah Rahman –  
Year 9A*

## Year 8 - Migration

One of the topics we learnt a lot about this year is migration and how it is changing the world we live in. It does have an impact on our community and us. Migration is when people move permanently from one place to another. It can be within the same country (internal) or across another national boundaries (international).

We learnt about push and pull factors leading to migration. A push factor is something that forces a person to leave their country whereas a pull factor is when a person migrates due to some sort of attraction such as better-paid jobs or a stronger law and order system. Usually, there are multiple reasons as to why people migrate. Areas such as Redbridge, Newham and Tower Hamlets have high numbers of migrants and that is why learning about migration is useful as it gives us an understanding of the community around us.

*Syeda Nabiha Rufaidah 8G and Salihah  
Sajjad – Year 8S*

## Year 8 - Stereotypes

In the topic 'Stereotypes', we learnt that the media can portray certain types of people, depending on their race, religion, beliefs or opinions in a certain way.

In this topic, we were set a task to watch a Disney princess movie. Despite being fun and enjoyable homework, we had to identify the different stereotypes portrayed within the movie. An example was 'Cinderella' in which there were several stereotypes including 'women have to look their best for a man' and 'stepmothers are cruel'!

After identifying these small hidden messages, we learnt that we shouldn't believe everything we see or read. It just goes to show how the media can portray people in a positive or negative way and make them believe it, and then assume a certain characteristic for a certain group. If one group or person commits a bad action it does not necessarily mean that the whole community is as such.

*continued...*

Overall, this topic ties in with Citizenship as it helps us recognise how small common things like children's movies can have a big impact on us today. It has made us realise that we may believe and assume lots of things that are not true; the media have just made it look like what you believe is correct by applying it in small unnoticeable things.

***Zeynab Miah and Sabah Jamil – Year 8S***

## **Year 9 - The EU Referendum**

In Citizenship, Year 9 has covered many topics. Our personal favourite, however, was about the EU Referendum, with the motion 'Should the UK leave the EU?' We enjoyed this topic and thought it was important to learn about because it was a current issue and would affect us all.

Before the main lesson, we were assigned homework to research about the topic. Then in class, we held a debate regarding the question. We split into two groups- those in favour of staying and those for leaving. There were many arguments posed by both sides and we had a lively debate!

This debate was beneficial because everyone gained a broader understanding of the topic. Unfortunately, 14 year olds cannot vote, which is not fair because I think we knew more than many people who voted actually knew about the referendum!

***Samiha Ishrat and Niha Khanom – Year 9G***

## **Year 8 - The EU Referendum Debate**

During Citizenship, year groups 8-10 have been learning about 'Brexit' and the 'EU Referendum.' We covered topics regarding immigration, security, law and sovereignty and workers/women's rights, etc.

This proved to be beneficial as it allowed us to learn and understand in further depth the outcomes of what happens to Britain if we leave the EU or whether we stay.

In order to share the knowledge that we gained, we held a debate for the whole school. It was in this debate that two sides, consisting of chosen students from Year 8-10, decided to argue 'for' or 'against' Brexit. The whole school, including teachers, managed to witness this debate and ask questions at the end based on the topics mentioned. It allowed the school to come together and share their opinions and use their voices. Those who took part in the debate argued for their points and rebutted others on their claims. It was very enjoyable to take part in, and even more enjoyable to watch. The vote that took place in the end showed that 65% of the students and staff voted to remain within the EU. It's events like these that allow us to realise that we have a say and we are responsible enough to vote on what we think will not only benefit us but our society and our country as well.

***Anjuma Begum - Year 8A***

## **Whole School EU Referendum Debate and Vote**

At the end of the year the whole school took part in a panel debate and vote. I was really pleased to see the girls so engaged with this activity and so informed. The debate was enthusiastic, informed and very colourful! I would like to say a very heartfelt thank you to all the girls who were involved, from Year 10s who decorated the polling booth and ballot box and organised the voting, to Years 8, 9 and 10 who took part in the heated debate. We could really see the passion that this debate created and it informed many students and staff alike of the issues surrounding the Referendum. In the end, 65% voted to remain in the EU. This was not reflected the next day when 52% of the UK decided to leave the EU. On the Friday morning we watched events unfold in real time and the girls were really informed about the implications for both staying and leaving the EU. It was really an amazing feeling to be sharing these historic, seismic and momentous changes to the political landscape of the UK, with Azhar Academy Girls. InshAllaah whatever Allah has planned is best for us all and Allah is the best of Planners.

***Mrs Zaidi  
Citizenship Teacher and Curriculum Lead***



# Lesson Study Reflection

Lesson study is a collaborative process in which teachers engage in sustained, intellectually rigorous study of what they teach and how they teach it. Over the course of several weeks or months, a team of teachers plan a classroom lesson jointly. One team member teaches the lesson to a classroom of students while the other teammates observe. The teachers discuss the success of the lesson based on the students' understanding and make revisions.

In our case, three teachers made up the core lesson study team and participated in every step of the lesson study process. My team meets weekly during a commonly scheduled planning period to discuss and plan the lessons.

Looking back over the lesson study process, I feel pretty satisfied. The thing that I remember and liked the most were the discussions about the lessons and the discussions about the best outcomes we could expect from our students. I find these kinds of interactions to be very stimulating. Besides, the most worthwhile component of our lesson study project was the observation piece. I would have to say that being provided the opportunity to truly focus on and observe a single student in the learning process was priceless. (Initially I found it frustrating to spend what I felt at the time to be too much time deciding upon a topic for this lesson study project.)

The project has reminded me of the value of collaboration and teamwork in education and how little we are encouraged and provided the structure and opportunity to work together. I have become well aware of the benefits of team planning.

This was only reinforced through this process. I think the most valuable new things that I learned is there is value to devoting time to developing one quality lesson as a team rather than working in isolation or being overwhelmed by the amount of content we are expected to cover, even if collaboration is more time consuming. I have a better understanding of the group dynamic in a classroom from a student's perspective as a result of the observations I performed during the lesson study process.

The best learning happened during debriefs following the research lessons, which turned out to be less about the lesson and more about good teaching skills. I think the lesson I taught was just a vehicle for what I was to learn. For instance, during the first debrief I became convinced that I should have the students to try the questions first before I explain them.

I enjoyed hearing the unique perspectives of my peers on points I had overlooked or not considered. Teaching is often an isolating experience and it was wonderful to see other techniques, strategies, and abilities, and then have an opportunity to share and reflect. I'm sure that being involved in this project has improved my teaching practice and I thoroughly enjoyed the collaboration that our team had.

Finally, there is no doubt that the lesson study has the potential to be a highly rewarding professional improvement programme. It allows teachers to connect with research and then implement best practices, reflect, and then improve upon it. It builds communication and collaboration between peer teachers who, oftentimes, are isolated. It also allows for lesson review and improvement by assessing the student reaction, reception, and mastery of the lesson.



# The White-Tailed Eagle

The white-tailed eagle is the largest UK bird of prey. It has brown body plumage with a conspicuously pale head and neck which can be almost white in older birds, and the tail feathers of adults are white.

In flight it has massive long, broad wings with 'fingered' ends. Its head protrudes and it has a short, wedge-shaped tail. It went extinct in the UK during the early 20th century, due to illegal killing, and the present population has been reintroduced. The white-tailed eagle could be found in huge numbers across the globe, before humans started to pollute its wetland habits with insecticides and other chemical sprays.

The population of the bird in the Middle East is the least of them all. The bird flies across distances and several geographical locations in search of its food -fish. However, feeding on poisoned fish has led to the bird laying thin-shelled or infertile eggs that could be easily broken apart. The nesting places, on the other hand, have also been destroyed by modern forestry techniques. Though the bird was completely extinct in Britain during the 1900s, it still exists in Scotland after it was reintroduced in the year, 1975. The white-tailed eagle — also called the sea eagle, erne, and white-tailed sea-eagle — is a large bird of prey in the Accipitridae family which includes other raptors such as hawks, kites, and harriers

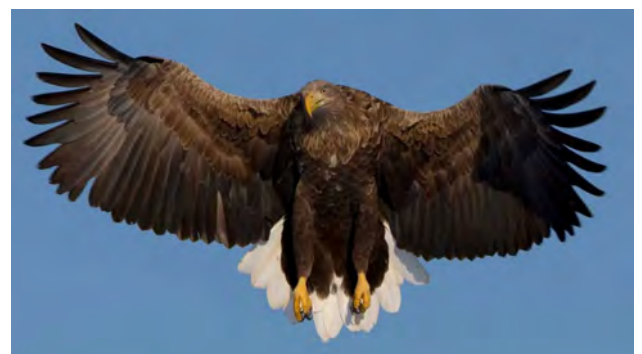
This impressive bird is the largest European eagle, with huge club-ended wings which make the bright white tail seem small. The head and beak are large and protrude forward, giving the eagle a vulture-like appearance.

The feathers are mottled shades of brown, with pale areas on both the upper wing and the under wing. Above the tail, the feathers are reddish-brown, and pale stripes run down to the tip of the tail. Inhabiting large, open expanses of lake, coast or river valley in temperate regions, it prefers to be close to undisturbed cliffs or open stands of large trees for nesting.

The largest populations of the white-tailed eagle are found in Norway and Russia, with important populations also found in south-west Greenland, Denmark, Sweden, Poland and Germany. Small numbers can be found in the rest of Europe, the Middle East, China, India and Mongolia. It became extinct in Britain in 1916 following excessive shooting, but was reintroduced from 1975 to the Island of Rum in the Inner Hebrides of Scotland. It can now be found scattered along the west coast of Scotland.

*Taybah Altaf and Hafsa Ali – Year 7A*

<b>Key Facts</b>	Current IUCN Red List category	Least Concern
	Family	Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles)
	Species name author	(Linnaeus, 1758)
	Population size	20000-49999 mature individuals
	Population trend	Increasing
	Distribution size (breeding/resident)	2,760,000 km <sup>2</sup>
	Country endemic?	No







# Experience

## Year 10 Work Experience

Our whole year group were offered a dream of a lifetime opportunity- to stay off school for two whole weeks and go to work! We were all very excited and got to work on searching for placements. Most of us chose schools or pharmacies. Some chose dentists and surgeries; others went for something more retail oriented. It all depended on our plans for the future and our dream careers. We had already established the choices but wanted that extra experience to remove any doubts in mind.

At first we all found it very daunting, and we were a little nervous, however we tried our level best to drain those negative thoughts out and strongly represent Azhar Academy in all our assignments and make great impressions. My placement was at a local nursery. I was pretty familiar with the managers, but still found settling in difficult. I focused on this very much especially trying to work with the children. Doing this would help me make a final decision. I feel that I benefitted from this placement a lot and will now definitely go into teaching.

I did many things in the nursery like helping the children helping identify different shapes and count the pieces, or play with the toy animals and ask them to make the noises these animals make. Teaching them something they did not know has inspired me to do more.

My friend went to a dentist surgery, and watched many procedures that she found fun and interesting, but wanted to do more physical things. However, this was not possible yet!

In conclusion, all of you enjoyed our work experience and had the choice to make valid options for ourselves, thanks to the opportunity given to us in these two weeks.

*Shair Bano – Year 10A*

### My Work Experience at Barclays

I had an option between Barclays Bank and Al-Rayyan. It was a tough choice but I went with Barclays as it was closer to home but also a new environment. Knowing that I was going out of an Islamic environment was a little nerve-racking but it was all about the real world and getting an experience. I was told by a teacher that not everywhere I go will be an Islamic environment, so this was my actual chance of getting a taste of the real world and what work life was going to be like.

# Experience [ik's]

knowledge or skill  
learned

On my first day, I was very nervous as I wasn't sure if I would be the only 'hijaabi' there, or even the only Muslim girl. Alhamdulillah when I got there, that wasn't the case. I walked into the bank and went to a member of staff. I was shown around and everyone welcomed me with smiles and they all gave off positive vibes. Throughout my week everyone would keep checking up on me and make sure I would eat proper food and would buy me lunch. Also, as the manager was very understanding; he would give me fifteen minutes extra to pray salaah.

The staff at the bank showed a lot of respect towards the way I dressed and didn't treat me any different. I made friends with all the people that worked there including the security guard and the bullion man who would come daily to collect the money from the bank. He worked for the G4S Company and would come at 11:30 am without fail.

Being the only person wearing a hijab and abaya was not a challenge as I thought it would be. I was asked on various occasions by different people why I wore the hijab and abaya. I said it was part of my religion to wear a hijab and abaya and also that was the way I represent my school.

The school had also gained much fame whilst I was there because I was always told the school must be excellent judging by the way I presented myself to customers and my customer service was outstanding; all this included my manners, attitude and behaviour. For example, during my first week I had three customers giving my manager positive feedback, which was also another optimistic aspect of my experience. I felt pleased knowing that customers appreciated the way I helped them.

My work experience was an unforgettable experience. All the staff and friendly regular customers I made friends with made my experience memorable as they taught me much about the job and also gave me excellent advice for life, not forgetting the security guard Bonnie and the bullion man. No doubt the two weeks I had at Barclays were my two golden weeks so far. I have never had so much fun and learning at the same time. This truly was an experience that would stay with me for life.

*Zainab Gani - Year 10G*







# Removing History From History

I often find students complaining about how much content they have to memorise for History. “What’s the point of it?”, “Nobody’s going to ask me about when Hitler came to power in the real world,” “How bad will my result be if I don’t write facts in my answers?” It’s true! You may never get asked about Hitler’s rise to power in the real world, you may have a ‘Delete All’ button somewhere which you will conveniently press the day you emerge awake from the History exam and erase it all out.

However, let’s offer another perspective. Let’s detach the term history from the context of 20th century Europe and Asia which we study. Let’s just look at the word itself: history!

Everything has a history. Every object, every sound, every speck, every soul has a history. How long has it been around for? What has it been through? What are all those marks on that old, rusty chair from? When was the last time it rained? When was the last time it snowed? In fact, while you are reading this, your last few seconds have indeed become history.

While strolling down a “historic” building in the city last weekend, I came across something “historic”-a fragment of the Berlin Wall from the time of its demolition in 1989 (fingers crossed about getting that date right). The brick stands embedded in a park opposite a towering statue of US President Ronald Reagan, who was credited with the end of the Cold War.

As I photographed the brick with my phone, I noticed the marks on it. Suddenly, I began to visualise the time the wall was broken down and what it may have meant for dozens of families who had got separated because of it. The joy, the excitement, the pride of having a unified country again after decades of separation and turmoil!

I walked a few steps down and came across a memorial to commemorate those British citizens who had died in September 11, 2001 attacks. That image too led to a rush of memories.

History is ever changing. It is sometimes presented fully, sometimes partially, sometimes joyously, and sometimes painfully. It is through the failures and mistakes of the past that we learn what not to do in future. Sometimes we learn from mistakes, sometimes we don’t.

There is always an element of emotion to everything we study. Sometimes it may be glaring at us while other times it may escape us. It is this emotion that we should be after; it is the lesson and message from every event that we should take away and preserve and protect with us. Dates will eventually become mere numbers after the exams, but the actions of key figures, their implications on people and the ability to visualise times gone by somehow will always offer context to ever-evolving times today and beyond.

*Yamna Maqbool  
History Teacher KS4*



# My Experiences in Year 7

My name is Kulsum. I have just completed Year 7 at Azhar Academy Girls School. It wasn't as hard as I thought it would be, although there were some ups and down. I'm going to give you some advice on how to survive Year 7.

First, let's conquer homework! No one likes homework, but you are going to have to do it, and if you don't, you'll get a referral. (You get one if you don't do your homework, mess about, etc.) So my advice is to do your homework and don't do it in school (because the teacher will know) even if you don't want to do it.

Some of my friends, they really love to talk and they don't listen to teachers. (I am very chatty too!) And I feel really sad for the teachers because they all put in effort into teaching you. So please listen to them and respect them, and if you work well, behave well, do outstanding work and homework, you get merits.

Half way through year 7, the school started to change the merit award system. You would get personalised books, a box of chocolates, a gift voucher, a desert treat depending on how many merits you have, and if your class has the most merits you will go somewhere or get a

treat. (My class got to go to a really fun park and everyone really enjoyed it!)

Tests! You have it every 6 weeks, but depending on your teacher you may have it after every topic. If you pay attention in class you will be fine. If you are doing Alimah, Islamic Studies or Hifz, then make sure you learn everything. Your tests will be hard, but revise and you will be all right.

These are some tips that I can share with you so and I hope you have a wonderful time in year 7!

*Kulsum Vali – Year 7A*





## Maths Feast Challenge Experience

On 9th March, Langdon Park School hosted the 2016 Maths Feast Challenge and a few girls from Year 10A were selected to attend on behalf of our school. This group consisted of Safa Waseem, Mahak Polani, Jiniya Al Mamun and I.

It was a very unfamiliar experience as most of us had not attended an event such as this before. However, it was Mahak's second time competing, so she advised us about what to expect, and how the competition was organised. There were 21 other schools competing against us; some from neighbouring boroughs whilst others from as far as North East London.

We were all seated on separate tables in a huge room and as we were not permitted to work with our own teacher, a different teacher had to invigilate us, so Ms Taha moved to an opposing group.

The students taking part looked formidable because only the best were sent to the challenge, and it seemed as though we were no match. Despite this, the atmosphere was quite relaxed and laid back, until the quiz commenced and we were obliged to complete many different mathematical challenges that needed intuition and team working skills.

We were combatted with maths questions that we had never seen before and we needed to be able to work against the clock to solve the problems.

The experience was very beneficial as we were put outside our comfort zone to work with new as well as unknown people and it required the ability to think fast. Time management was also very important.

Overall I personally learnt so much from the challenge and I would love to attend again.

*Sameeah Sandford – Year 10A*

## UK Maths Trust Challenge

On 16th March, Azhar Academy Girls School participated in the UK Maths Trust (UKMT) Team Challenge Regional Final. Two students from Year 9, Aliyah and Samiha, and two from Year 8, Hannah and Maryam, were selected to take part in the competition.

The event was held at Bow School. It took a while to arrive at the venue but I'm sure we could all agree that it was worth it. The challenge consisted of 4 complex rounds: the group competition in which the students had to successfully solve 10 questions of varying type and difficulty in a time of 45 minutes and Cross number which was similar to a crossword but with numerical answers in a time of 40 minutes.

After our lunch we did the mini relay, where teams competed against the clock to correctly answer a series of 4 questions alternating between the 2 teams (one year 8 and one year 9). There were 4 mini relays, each 8 minutes long. The last, and arguably the most challenging and most chaotic round, was the relay race; teams split off into pairs on opposite ends of the room and pairs took it in turns to answer questions. This round involved lots of running around the room (sometimes bumping into each other) at a fast pace as well as mathematics, as you tried to solve your questions, in order to give the other pair theirs.

We came 11th out of 24 teams from both state and private schools from all over London. Thanks to Ms Aslam for organising the trip. The day was very successful and although we didn't win, the girls enjoyed themselves and will benefit from the experience for future lessons.





## The House Pole

A colossal, 11 metre pole with beautiful engravings, the house pole is a long pole that was originally implanted in front of the Goose or Bear houses. Year 8 had the amazing opportunity to see these fascinating artefacts.

House poles were created to represent a mythical event in the history of the clan's ancestors. Made in Canada out of red cedar wood, the awe-inspiring pieces of historical architecture created quite a crowd in the British Museum because of its unbelievable height and exquisite engravings.

The particular house pole in the museum featured a chief holding a hat, walking stick, a sea monster; a shaman holding two rattles made of puffin beaks and a sea monster between the tails of a killer whale! Although it may be hard to imagine, year 8 experienced the real thing! We were so lucky!

Zeynab Miah from 8S says "everyone should have a chance to see it; it's amazing!"

Truly the spectacular artefact greatly intrigued us and was one of the best!

To conclude, the House Pole was an interesting artefact to view and motivated us to learn more about history.

***Zeynab Miah, Sabah Jamil, Umara Kashif  
and Nusra Sajeel – Year 9***



## Chinese Tangrams

Year 8 went on a trip to The British Museum to complete some mathematical tricky activities and work. One of these activities was called Chinese Tangrams. A tangram (literally means: "seven boards of skill") is a dissection puzzle consisting of seven flat shapes, called tans, which are put together to form shapes. The objective of the puzzle is to form a specific shape (given only an outline or silhouette) using all seven pieces, which cannot overlap.

It is reputed to have been made in China and then carried over to Europe by trading ships in the early 19th century. It became very popular in Europe for a time, and then again during World War I. It is one of the most popular dissection puzzles in the world. Our group were confused with this activity because we didn't understand it at first, however, still managed to complete the task and ended with a full understanding on how to form and play with Chinese Tangrams.

All in all, the game itself is simple and easy once you get the hang of it!

Here is an example; can you guess what it is?







# Inter-Faith Games 2016

Recently Azhar Academy had the pleasure of taking part in the Inter-Faith Games 2016. We had two days of fantastic competitions and the opportunity to meet people from other faith based schools.

I had the privilege of assisting, supporting and coaching selected Year 7 & Year 8 students at the interfaith games.

The football tournament was a day full of cheering, laughing and encouraging each other to keep playing well. The girls showed excellent sportsmanship towards the other teams and MashaAllaah it was amazing to know they have a humble attitude towards winning.

The team reached the finals by working very hard and playing enthusiastically. Azhar Academy came second and Sabaad (7G), Nahida (7G), Rufaydah (8G), Nusra Sajeel (8S), Zeynab Miah (8S), Mawaa (8S) and Anjuma (8A) all played by showing their excellent skills and team work. Overall, it was a great opportunity and we all had fun.

I also had the privilege of coaching and chaperoning our netball team on the last day of the competition. Suhayfa (8S), Hafsa Ali (7A), Umara (8S), Fathima.B (7A), Hafiza (7G), Fathima Ali, Baasima (8G), Summaya Taj (8S), Madiha (8A) and Anjuma (8A) did Azhar proud by becoming the netball champions by winning all their games. Although they did not have the opportunity to train together, this did not show on the day.

The team worked very well together by communicating with one another, passing and moving and really supporting each other through this exciting experience. These ladies behaved like true champions with fair play, passion and enthusiasm. Well done girls and I hope you do the same next year!

Overall I am very pleased with how the Azhar Academy girls have taken to the PE lessons and physical challenges, especially Year 10 students who have been working through Boot Camp routines all year – well done!

***Ms Randeep & Ms Hirra  
Physical Education Teachers***





# London Knowledge Quiz

At AAGS, the last week of the spring term meant Geography week for our Key Stage 3 students. To bring this week to an exciting start, we held a competition, which two representatives from each form class took part in, to try and win a place in the prestigious London Knowledge Quiz.

Last year our students managed to reach round 2 and take the top spot in the entire borough

(<http://london.cityknowledgequiz.co.uk/leaderboard/>)

- something for our 2016 team to aspire towards Inshallah.

Our six winners will be going head to head next term with other schools in London in the Mayor's official London Knowledge Quiz.

## What is the London Knowledge Quiz?

The London Knowledge Quiz offers primary and secondary school pupils across London the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of their city's history, geography and culture as they compete with schools across the capital to win the Mayor's Award for London Knowledge. The quiz is a fun, engaging way for the whole school to get involved in learning about London, bringing to life their curriculum by exploring how it connects to the city they live in.

School teams compete over two online rounds to gain a place at the live final on 5th July 2016, hosted at the Museum of London by Michael Absalom.

There are questions on everything from history to popular culture. Schools across London compete against one another in an online quiz, written by the Museum of London, with the highest scoring schools from each London borough, qualifying for the second online round. The six finalists then go head to head in the quiz finals at the Museum of London in July 2016.



# Creative Writing

The Year 7s have had their creative juices flowing this term and producing some enthralling stories for the 'Creative Writing' unit. They have looked closely at a range of writing tools such as hooks, symbolism and pathetic fallacy and weaved these ideas into their stories. We are delighted to share extracts from their work!

## Sunburnt

Dawn was breaking. This was bad news. Vlad was rapidly sprinting through the dark gloomy woods. Far away in the horizon the sun was rising. Vlad was professionally dodging trees, jumping over over-grown roots and ducking branches like he did every day. His black velvet cape was fluttering in a trail behind him. The sun!

*Aziza Miah - Year 7A*

Shrieks. Blood. Running. A green eyed girl. Sirens. People. Wailing. Body on the floor. Panting. Gasping. Need to get away. Chased. Hunted. What's happening? Falling. Hurting. And a hooded man....

"Well, well, well if it isn't little Miss William Clementine William..."

I shot out of bed panicking for breath. Relief coursed through me. Another one, What a delight. I mean who wouldn't want to have nightmares every day!

Exhaling in frustration, I massaged the bridge of my nose. I sagged back on the bed, my legs sprawled over the mattress, and flinched at the unanticipated bright light of my phone. 5:45! I groaned throwing my head back on the pillow. My eyes fluttered close.

*Nusrat Hussain - Year 7A*

I could not stand it a moment longer. It felt like I was being engulfed in misery, guilt, humiliation and all the other bad emotions in the world, as the accusing glare of the wildlife around me penetrated my skin, burning holes into my body. I felt physically sick. My heart felt like it was ablaze, slowly but steadily burning into cinders and ashes. With each step I took, another fragment of my broken soul flew out of me and shot into the darkness, lost forever.

As I ran, I felt the cracked glass that was my life, finally shatter into a million tiny pieces. The guilt was eating me alive. This was too much for me to handle. So that's when I decided.

*Nureeya Khan - Year 7G*

But her worries didn't end there. For minutes later, she heard a shriek, a screech and a piercing shout. Her eyes raised ahead as she saw an illuminating light. She stumbled as she got up but she knew she could do it. She tripped, she fell, she tumbled. But she knew this couldn't be her destiny, her end.

*Aisha Jasat - Year 7G*



## *My Hijab is My Gem*

“

I cover my head with my modest hijab-  
I cover my body with my very own jilbab!

They pull me down but I get back up-  
You see fashion doesn't really make me snap!

I like to dress but choose my unique style-  
Don't need any cloth like a huge mountain pile!

I am not ashamed, why should I?  
To be modest is important, don't you agree?

The hijab reminds boys and girls to lower their gaze-  
Allah helps us; He truly is worthy of so much praise!

To worship Allah, there's so many ways-  
Modest clothing is just one of many we do all day!

Exposing your beauty doesn't make you the best-  
Beauty comes from within; so cover your hair and chest!

Don't believe the people who say you're oppressed-  
Tell them that this life is nothing but a huge test!

I love my hijab and think it's only fair-  
If I follow the Quran in what I choose to wear!

So tell the doubters and repeat to them-  
My choice is hijab and it is MY gem!

”

**By Amina Haskic – Year 8G**



# The Journey of my Hifz Studies

I began my Hifz Studies 5 years ago when I arrived at AAGS in Year 7. Initially, I was extremely nervous as I thought that Hifz would be terribly hard, but as I progressed and memorised more and more, I slowly began to realise that the amount of Qur'an I learnt was based only on the mind-set that I had. Therefore, I have compiled a list of a few things that I believe are essential when memorising the Qur'an:

- Intention – Allah judges us all on our intentions, so remember that the reason for memorising the Qur'an is not for your parents' sake or your teachers praise; it is however, solely for Allah's pleasure and reward. He alone knows of your true intention and will reward you accordingly.
- Have faith – Ultimately, your memorisation of Qur'an is your means of attaining Jannah, Insha'Allah; it is important to pray to Allah to receive blessings and mercy to help you along this journey.
- Patience – Memorising Qur'an can be hard and you might face some struggles and at times you may even want to give up. However, you must remain patient, as you are the only person who can ultimately push yourself to carry on. *"Hence, indeed, We made this Qur'an easy to remember, then is there anyone to remember it?"* (Al-Qamar 54:17).

- Teachers- Another key thing to remember is that your teachers are not there to hinder you, but to be that extra push to ensure you memorise to the best of your ability. Along my journey, I have had many wonderful teachers all of whom have helped me to reach my full potential and I would not have come this far without their encouragement and support.

Throughout this experience, I have strived to keep these points in mind and they helped me whenever I stumbled or reached a road block. Whilst studying Hifz, I have witnessed some of my classmates complete the Qur'an and this has further inspired me to keep on working hard to do the same. Not many people have been given this opportunity, to be one of the preservers of the Qur'an, and I feel immensely grateful that Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala has favoured me in this way.

My Hifz is now a constant reminder for me to persevere in whatever I do. The journey is not yet over as I still have some portions left, but I know that even when the memorising is over, the preserving is not. I pray that Allah accepts all of our efforts and helps us to fulfil our duty towards preserving the glorious Qur'an, ameen.

*Azra Ahmed*





## صرف صغير

(Pronounced: 'Sarf-e-Sagheer')

2nd year A- Aalimah Studies have been working on the topic of the **صرف صغير**

Alhamdulillah, to help them remember, they have been compiling short stories for each chapter which was set up as a competition. The class voted a winner for the best written story for each chapter and the winners received a prize for their hard work.

Well done to Shanu Mawaz (8A), Aasiya Islam (8S), Arnika Choudhury (8A) and Anjuma Begum (8A) for their exceptional effort. I would also like to say a very big well done to the whole class for their efforts and enthusiasm throughout. May Allah grant you all eternal success, ameen.

*Apa Aasma*

**صغير صرف** (Pronounced: Sarf -e- Sagheer) is a summary of an Arabic root word made with the first word of each paradigm. Each paradigm is a main scale (باب) which consists of: مجهول, مضى مجهول, اسم فاعل, مصدر, مضارع معروف, ماضى معروف, مجهول, فعلا تفضييل, اسم آلة, اسم ظرف, نهى, امر, اسم مفعول, مصدر, مضارع

I know (العلم) that Musa A.S split the sea.  
I remember Sulayman A.S when I listen (السمع) to the breeze through the trees.  
I praise (الحمد) Allah S.W.T and give witness (الشهادة) that he is my Lord,  
and I understand (الفهم) that Khalid R.A was his unsheathed sword.

*Anjuma Begum - Year 8A*





*Ramadan Kareem*

# Ramadan at AAGS

As everyone is aware, we have just spent the whole month of Ramadan in school, during which many of the students were doing our GCSEs and mock exams. However, Ramadan had not been as much of a struggle as we had all thought due to the school's help.

To ease Ramadan for not only the students but the teachers, the school rearranged everyone's timetables and allotted new timings. Unlike our usual early mornings at 7.30 am we began at 9.30 am. Our dismissal times were also shortened to 3.30 am. The late mornings were made to accommodate our new sleeping patterns due to sehri.

To ensure that we were all able to gain the utmost blessings in the month of Ramadan, teachers dispensed a portion of time for students to recite Quran. As we are all aware, reciting one letter of the Quran is equal to tenfold in blessing and the school helps us to try and achieve maximum benefits.

As all of our deeds are multiplied in the holy month of Ramadan, the school placed charity boxes for the National Zakat Foundation around the building, for donations. In order to raise more money a tuck shop was opened specifically to sell Islamic books and gifts.

All the monies raised will be contributed towards charity and will count as sadaqah jariyah. Many of the gifts sold at the shop were created and made by students during lessons. For example, the Year 10 class crafted canvases with du'as and Islamic quotes.

In addition to all of these facilities that the school arranged, students and teachers were given 30 minutes to recite Surah Kahf in congregation on Friday before dismissal. Reciting Surah Kahf on Jumma has been narrated by the Prophet (S.A.W.) to have many benefits and virtues, the most common hadith being "Whoever reads Surah al Kahf on Jumma, he is immune for 8 days from all fitnah that will happen. When the Dajjal comes out, he will be immune to him."

Although we were obliged to stay in school for the duration of Ramadan, the school were able to facilitate to the needs of the fasting people and enable them to achieve the maximum blessings in the holy month of Ramadan.

***Jiniya Al-Mamun – Year 10A***



# Iftaari Gathering 2016

Alhamdulillah by the grace of Allah (SWT), Azhar Academy Girls School held their annual conference on the 4th June 2016. There were spiritual speeches delivered by our inspirational Aalimahs, whose aim was to allow us realise the beauty, mercy and blessings of this blessed month; help us change ourselves for the better and motivate us to revive our relationship with Allah. Alhamdulillah, our students had partaken in the programme sharing with us beautiful nasheeds and a short play on being grateful. Two year 9 students all rendered us to reflect on the importance of loving our beloved prophet (saw).

“The turn-out was amazing; the atmosphere was full of love and spirituality. Pleased to know that the school is out there to help us climb.”- Year 8 student

“I was very nervous about taking part in the conference programme, however this was a motivating and encouraging choice to boost our confidence- a good opportunity for us all,” quoted a student.

“The event was well organised and spiritually thought provoking.”- Guest

Azhar Academy Girls School also held our Annual Iftar event on the 2nd July 2016. It was a spiritual and successful event that hosted approximately 200 people. The purpose of the programme was to help everyone bid farewell to the month of mercy and forgiveness, Ramadhaan, in a productive manner, reminding us to recognise that our good deeds must continue throughout the rest of the year as this is merely the beginning of the end.

This beautiful occasion included spiritual talks and heart stirring nasheeds from various sisters. After the programme, Azhar Academy was proud to hold an auction encouraging sisters to gain reward by giving generously towards the path of Allah. The programme ended with delicious food. Throughout the short period, our Year 10 students also held a fundraising campaign to raise for various charity organisations such as Islamic Relief.

“I really enjoyed being involved in these kind of events this year. Many of my peers took part in them; it was really fun! Looking forward to next year.” - quote from a student.

*Year 10 Aalimaah Students*



*"Surely actions are according to their intentions"*

This was the very first hadith that we were taught. Throughout our 5 years at Azhar Academy our teachers constantly reminded us of this hadith and emphasised its importance in everything that we did, until it became deeply embedded in our hearts and minds.

The journey throughout our Aalimah studies has been the most enlightening experience of our lives but it hasn't been without its challenges. The biggest challenge came from attempting to balance both our Aalimah and school subjects, and although it was grueling at times, we persevered and have come out on the other side, alhamdulillah.

Another major challenge was trying to remember everything that we had been taught and then implementing it throughout every step of our journey. The amount of pressure we were under, to pass our end of year exams, was also very wearying but we can all firmly agree that it was worth it.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincerest gratitude and thanks to all of our Apas, who have been a means of us being blessed with sacred knowledge and have helped us to improve our akhlaaq (character) along the way. JazakAllahu Khayran for all the time and effort that you have put in, the revision guides, the support, the extra hours you gave us- all towards helping us to become the best versions of ourselves that we could be.

The decision to continue Aalimah into sixth year was an easy one to make. As seeking knowledge is obligatory in Islam, we all decided that finishing our Aalimah course would be worth the effort, although difficulties may still lie ahead.

The next two years will be our biggest challenge yet, but we pray that Allah will keep us sincere in our intentions and accept all our efforts, whilst allowing us to become a means of spreading beneficial knowledge to others as well, Ameen.

***5th Year Aalimah Students***



# The Power of Dua – Ustadha Sumiyya Iqbal

This topic is one of much importance inside and outside Ramadan, it is our lifeline with Allah, our communication with our Lord, our phone line to Allah, some of us make the call long and the others short. Some of us decide to dial the number more frequently and others rarely. Either way we are guaranteed a reply. This is Dua. In this article we will be discussing how we can make our Dua's more powerful.

## What is Dua?

Dua is a noble, spiritual form of worship which allows the creation to appreciate the majesty of the creator. It is one of the greatest acts of worship. It is your connection with Allah, brings you closer to him. This is because the worshipper turns to his lord in his time of need, when all other types of help have been despaired of, he turns to Allah to gain his peace and serenity, which he could not find from anywhere else. He raises his hands humiliated before his Lord, in state of fear, submitting himself to the will of Allah, desiring rewards, asking for forgiveness. With the best of hopes from Allah the Lord of all the Lords, the king of all the kings!

## What are the virtues of Dua?

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

*And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you."*

Allah Ta'lah says in the Qur'an to call upon him and he will answer us. Which kind of ruler or king in this world wants his people to keep knocking at his door consistently and ask for things? He probably get imprisoned for disturbing the king too much. But our Allah is kind and merciful he always has his doors open for us. He loves it when we ask him and not just once, but Allah loves it when his believers ask – so ask, ask and ask again. Do not lose hope!

Keep asking!

Allah will accept your Dua's if you are not hasty in one of three ways:

1. They will get accepted straight away
2. Allah will give you something in return eg. He will save you from an affliction or hardship
3. On the day of Judgement it will be turned into a mountains of rewards

• Allah is close to the one who makes Dua – one method of getting closer to Allah

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

*And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.*

• Dua is a sign of humility – a person lowers himself and asks from this creator!

• Dua repels Allah's anger – The Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Verily the person who does not ask Allah, Allah gets angry at him" (Tirmidhi). One who abandons Dua has abandoned worship, their communication line with Allah.

• Dua is the only act that can change your predestination - Not only will it repel a misfortune that might come your way but it can also change a current calamity or something that is going to happen to you.

*continued...*



The Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Whoever the door of Dua has been opened for, then all the doors of mercy have been opened for him. And nothing is more pleasing to Allah, that he be asked of the things that are granted than good health. Dua is of benefit to matters that have occurred and that are yet to occur. So I advise you, O servants of Allah to make Dua."

- Dua make you feel more positive and happier – you give all your worries to Allah and he will sort it out.

## How should we be making Dua?

1. Start by praising Allah with his great names
2. Salutations upon the Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)  
The Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was once sitting in the mosque and a man came and prayed two rakahs and then he said: "Oh Allah forgive me and have mercy on me!" The Prophet Muhammad (My Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "You have been hasty oh worshipper! When you finish your prayer sit down and praise Allah with that praise he is worthy of, and pray upon me, then state your Dua."
3. Raise your hands – Also important that the palms face upwards – in a begging style!

The Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Indeed Allah is shy and beneficent. He is shy when His servant raises his hands up to him (in Dua) to return them empty, disappointed!" (Ahmed) Subhanallah!

4. Face the Qiblah
5. To be in the state of Wudhu
6. To cry – if you can't cry, make a crying face
7. To expect the best from Allah – not half heartedly
8. To complain only To Allah
9. To start making Dua with one's self then others.
10. To pray for all Muslims

## What time should we make dua?

Dua should be made in times of hardship and ease. It is not the habit of the true believers to make Dua just in times of hardship – but ease also. The Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever wishes that Allah responds to his Dua at times of hardship, let him increase his Dua at times of ease" (Tirmidhi)

- Dua in the last third of the night – Time of Tahajjud – Allah comes down to the lowest heaven and asks "Who is asking me so that I can give him, who is asking for my forgiveness so that I can forgive him?". This is the Closest you can be to Allah

- When it is raining – Allah's mercy is flowing
- In prostration – This is the most humble position anyone could be in because the believer lowers his face (the most noble part of our body) to the floor just for the sake of Allah.
- After obligatory prayers
- An hour on Friday. The Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "On Friday, there is an hour during which if any Muslim is standing in front of Allah in prayer, and asking Allah for something good he will be granted his request" (Bukhari) – Strong opinion that it is between Asr and Maghrib prayer.
- When one is fasting
- When travelling
- The one who remembers Allah constantly
- The Dua for a person in his absence – the angel says – And to you be the same.

## Which Dua should I read?

- Personal Dua in any language that is easy for you – Allah understands all.
  - Masnoon (recommended) Duas from Sunnah
  - Duas compiled by scholars for certain things
  - Rabannas from the Quran
- Any form of Dua is accepted from Allah, just ask Allah, never give up hope and only turn to him to satisfy your needs and you will be showered with his blessings.

# Zamzam Bottle Apprentice Challenge



At AAGS the spirit of competition is always in the air and it was with that same spirit and enthusiasm that our Year 10 Islamic Studies students readily took on the challenge to design, create and pitch a brand new label for a Zamzam bottle. The label had to incorporate the history of the sacred well of Zamzam in Makkah as well as advertise the benefits of Zamzam itself.

Using what they had been learning in their stories of the prophets lessons, each of the four teams immersed themselves into the competition, coming up with fantastic presentations for their labels.

A big well done to all of the students for their hard work and an even bigger well done to the winning team, who pitched a well thought out and unique design (displayed below), a reflection of their superb effort and hard work. Each of the winners received a certificate and prize for their success.

Students of the winning team:

Fatima Khan, Samah Raja, Sumaiya Raja Mohamed, Sumaiya Soni



Winning design:

**ZAMZAM water: The Power Drink**

One of the miracles of Zamzam water is its ability to satisfy both thirst and hunger. One of the Companions of the Prophet S.A.W said that before Islam, the water was called "Shabba'ah" or satisfying. It was filling and helped them nourish their families. Zam Zam emerged from beneath the feet of prophet Ismail A.S in Makkah.

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thank

you

teacher

# Teacher Appreciation

Azhar Academy has a wonderful Aalimah Department as well as curriculum subjects. The staffs at this school are kind and fair; they are always very helpful in terms of work.

One day we were asked to write a letter of appreciation to our teachers. I thought this is a really good way of expressing our gratitude to all our teachers.

Teachers inspire us to think differently about the world and they set us on the path to where we are today. I'm not certain I would have had the same opportunities and skills that I have now had it not been for great teachers throughout my primary and secondary education.

The teachers at this school have boundless energy for working together to help students succeed. This passion and can-do attitude reminded me why it is so important that we show teachers how thankful we are for all that they are doing.

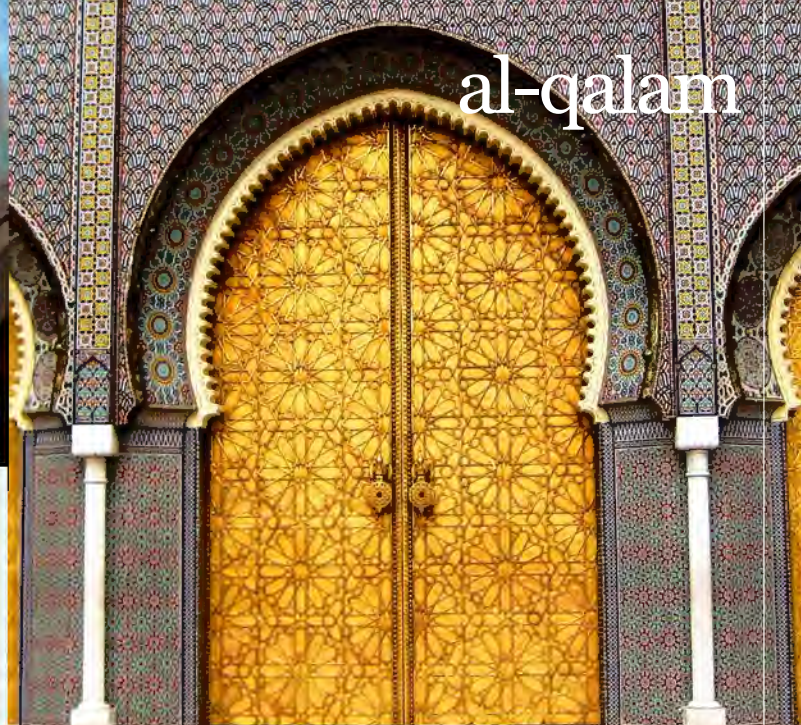
**Maryam Dedat- Year 7G**

*To all teachers,*

*Thank you for helping me with my studies and answering all my questions. I am very grateful.*

**- (7G student)**





## Message – Aalimah/Islamic Studies & Hifz

Alhamdulillah it has been a very productive term for our Aalimah, Islamic and Hifz Studies students. Their dedication and hard work is reflected in their mid-year exam results, in which 85% of our students gained an overall pass mark.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big well done to all and in particular to the following girls for achieving an overall grade of A\*:

- Aisha Yunus Jasat (1st Year B)
- Samiha Ishrat (3rd Year)
- Maimoonah Wadiwala (3rd Year)

InshaAllah, all of our students will continue to work hard to achieve their very best in all aspects of their studies.

May Allah (SWT) fill the hearts of our students with light, sincerity and true understanding as well as open for them the doors of His knowledge and mercy. Ameen.

***Apa Roshan Master***  
***Head of Aalimah, Islamic & Hifz Studies***

## Aalimah Results 2016

The long awaited event had finally arrived. We were all gathered in the library anticipating our results; there were knuckles cracking, sweaty palms and students fidgeting with their clothes.

At last it started. The results began to be announced and the ranks were listed and presented with gifts. We were then sent downstairs to our classroom, which would either make us or break us as we would know our individual results.

We were all seated eagerly as our teacher, Apa Shabana, slowly stepped into the room with a grin on her face. She then happily announced that all the 4th years, consisting of 10A and 10G, had passed.

We all let out a sigh of relief and let out a cry of happiness as our worries were over and our prayers had been accepted. All those sleepless nights, the coffee and coke, the chocolates we ate as stress relief, all the efforts had paid off. Alhamdulillah- and again, Allah has proven his verse, that "verily Allah does not waste the efforts of His believers."

***Aalimah Students 2016***





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Girls School