

OBA NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

BIG NEWS! WE ARE VERY EXCITED
TO ANNOUNCE THAT AN INCREDIBLY
SPECIAL GUEST VISITED
OBA SIXTH FORM THIS TERM
– THE ONE AND ONLY
JOHN BISHOP!



JOHN BISHOP RETURNS TO INSPIRE SIXTH FORM STUDENTS

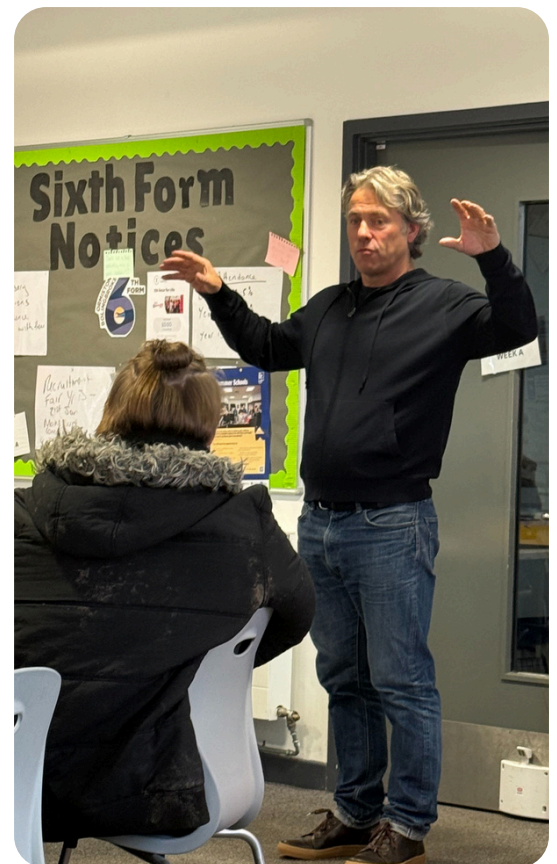
Students in Years 12 and 13 were treated to an unforgettable morning last week when comedian, actor, and presenter John Bishop returned to his roots for a special Q&A session in our sixth form. He spent the morning speaking with A Level Business and Media students about his journey from Runcorn to the national spotlight.

Over the course of the session, he offered fascinating insights into the world of show business — from the realities of breaking into the industry to the challenges of performing in front of thousands. Students quizzed him on his early career, his favourite projects, and the wide range of jobs he held before becoming a household name. He also spoke openly about the importance of resilience, sharing how he learned to push himself even when fear of failure crept in.

The conversation wasn't all work, though. He chatted about football, family life, and the moments that shaped his career, creating a relaxed and inspiring atmosphere that students and staff described as "motivating," "eye-opening," and "brilliantly down-to-earth."

In an exciting finale to the visit, he extended a special invitation to a group of Sixth Form students: a behind-the-scenes experience at MediaCityUK in Manchester next month. Students will have the rare opportunity to explore a working studio and even get a sneak peek at his upcoming TV project.

His visit left a real buzz around the sixth form. Many students walked away feeling newly motivated, encouraged by his honesty about the hard work behind success and the importance of backing yourself even when the path ahead feels uncertain. His visit was a powerful reminder that ambition can grow anywhere — even in the corridors he once walked himself — and that the next big story could start right here.



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Although this has been a short term, it has been packed with many **opportunities** and **achievements** which we must celebrate, including dance, art and our staff!

Let's start by celebrating some amazing attendance...

KEY DATES:

MON 23 FEB – INSET DAY

TUES 24 FEB – Academy reopens for all year groups

TUES 24 FEB – Mock exams begin for Y11 and 13

THURS 26 FEB – Y9 Progress Evening

THURS 5 MAR – World Book Day

MON 9 MAR – British Science Week begins

THURS 12 MAR – Y10 Progress Evening

TUES 17 MAR – Dance Show 7–9pm

WED 18 MAR – Dance Show 7–9pm

FRI 20 MAR – Move It Dance trip to London

MON 23 MAR – Y10 revision week begins

MON 23 MAR – Book Fair will be in school all week

THURS 26 MAR – Y8 Progress Evening

SPRING TERM ATTENDANCE:

Best attendance:

Form:

1st: **7NPE**

2nd: **7DCY**

3rd: **8IMY**

4th: **11CGN**

5th: **11NRL/AHH**

House:

1st: **Ursa**

2nd: **Pegasus**

3rd: **Orion**

4th: **Draco**

Most improved:

Year group: **Year 10**



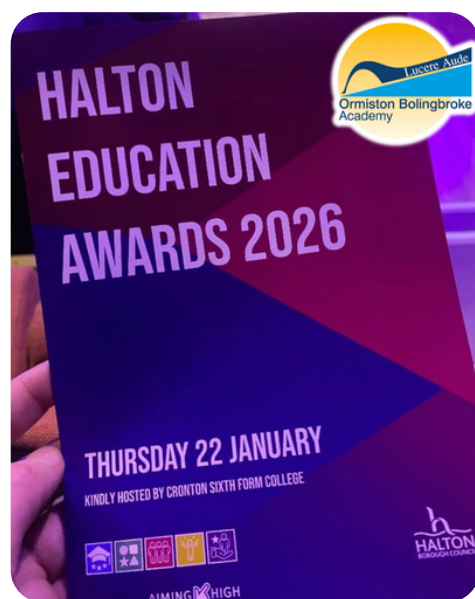
ATTENDANCE
MATTERS



HALTON EDUCATION AWARDS

In other exciting news, our wonderful **SEND team** were nominated for Team of the Year and invited to attend the Halton Education Awards.

The nomination was made by one of our parents and we were all delighted that our SEND team's dedication had been acknowledged in this way.



Our wonderful teaching assistant, **Mrs Miller**, said: "The Education Awards was a wonderful night celebrating our fantastic local education services, which awarded pupils, teachers and support staff for their excellence, dedication, and contributions within the Halton community.

We enjoyed some fantastic performances from students from different schools such as Halton Performing Arts Network Choir, The Grange Band and a Cranton Sixth Form drama piece from the show Legally Blonde.

Our SEND Team were nominated and shortlisted for Team Of The Year, but unfortunately were pipped to the post by a primary school. It was still a great night and a proud achievement to be able to be a part of it."

DOT-ART

Also this term, **Year 9 students** had the opportunity to enter a Dot-Art competition. Entries could be based on any theme and through any medium and, as you can see, many chose photographs. Have a look at some of these truly impressive entries which will all be submitted to the Dot-Art judges. Mrs Norton has also chosen her personal favourite and runner up which will be announced on our social media platforms. Congratulations to everyone who participated!



OAT DANCE COMPETITION

More competitions! We are also enormously proud to announce that OBA hosted and took part in the OAT Northwest Dance competition where our dancers competed against other schools from across the trust. Categories included key stage 3 groups, soloists and key stage 4 groups. We are over the moon to announce that OBA won the KS4 group category. Well done team OBA! We are so proud of you all!

A huge well done to **Daisy James** too who represented the school in the soloist section. Daisy and our Key Stage 4 dancers will now compete in the semi-finals. Watch this space!

Also, look out for tickets going on sale soon for our annual dance show on the 17th and 18th of March.

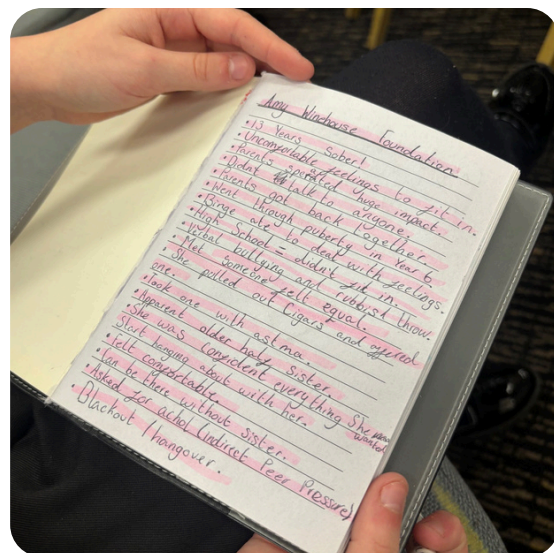


SAFER SCHOOLS AMBASSADORS

Also this term, some of our students attended an event as Safer Schools Ambassadors, focusing on tackling current issues in Halton, alongside broader themes around safety, wellbeing, and positive peer influence. The event aimed to bring together ambassadors from education settings across Halton to collaborate, create, and champion key messages they can take back into their schools.

Our school representatives, **Maisy, William and Jacob**, were outstanding with their contribution, behaviour and attitude, lots of agencies commented on how fabulous our young people presented! In fact, the event organiser emailed school with this comment: *"The students from OBA were the talk of the town! They were the youngest students there and by far made the most impact! They asked intelligent questions and offered valuable contributions which greased the wheels for the other delegates. I, and many other attendees were genuinely blown away by their confidence, attitudes and enthusiasm. They were the most talked about group - you should be very proud of all 3 of them."*

We hope to take this forward with producing pod casts, educational resources and cascading the important message of keeping safe in our community. **Well done to Maisy, William and Oliver - daring to shine, as always!**



YEAR 9 OPTIONS EVENING

To support **Year 9 students** further in the options process, we held an Options Evening for the first time. Students, parents and carers came along to hear Mr Oakes' presentation about the options available and how the process works. Teachers were then on-hand to answer questions and offer advice. Our sixth form team also provided information about post-16 pathways. Thank you to everyone who attended - we hope you found it useful.

Please contact Mr Oakes if you could not attend and require help.
(m.oakes@ob-ac.co.uk)



UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER TRIP

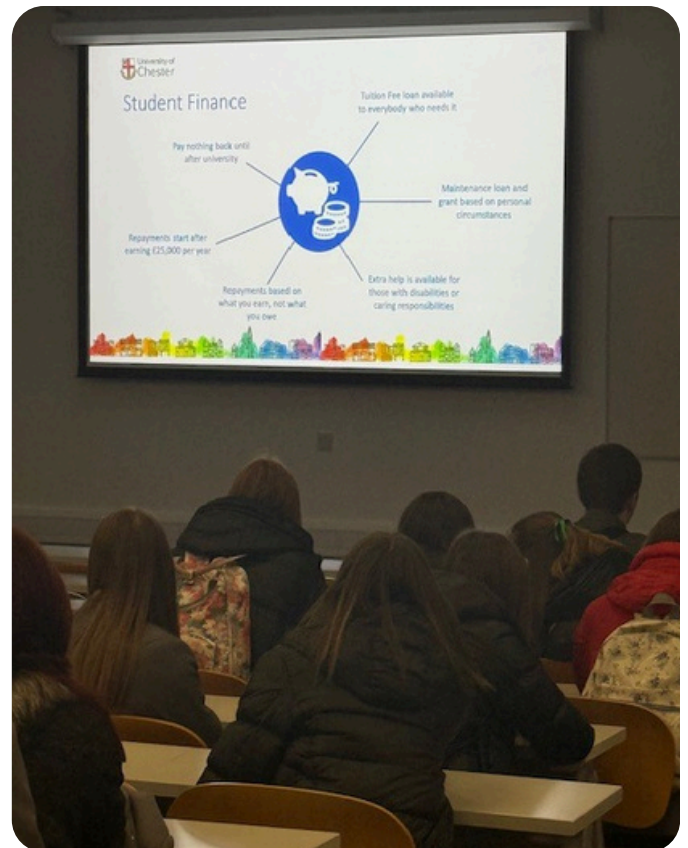
Also on the topic of careers, **Year 10 students** enjoyed an inspiring and eye-opening visit to the University of Chester this term, taking part in a full campus tour and a series of workshops designed to introduce them to life after sixth form.

The day began with a guided walk around the university's facilities, including lecture theatres, study spaces, and social areas. Students had the chance to see what day-to-day life looks like for undergraduates and ask questions about courses, accommodation, and the wider student community.

A highlight of the trip was an engaging session on university life, led by university ambassadors who shared honest insights into balancing academic work, part-time jobs, and social activities. Their experiences helped demystify the transition from sixth form to higher education and encouraged Year 10s to start thinking about their own future pathways.

The visit concluded with a practical workshop on student finance. Staff explained how tuition fees and maintenance loans work, reassured students about repayment, and emphasised that financial support is available to ensure university is accessible to everyone.

Overall, the trip gave Year 10 a valuable glimpse into the opportunities that higher education can offer, leaving many feeling motivated and excited about the possibilities ahead.



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SUPPORTING SAFE USE OF AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly woven into young people's digital lives. It can offer some educational benefits and day-to-day assistance; however, it also raises concerns about misinformation, privacy, fairness, and safety. This guide provides parents and educators with practical strategies to support young people to navigate AI tools responsibly, and to use them safely and with discernment.

1 DEMYSTIFY WHAT AI REALLY IS

Children encounter AI in most online places, including games, streaming platforms, and school tools. Explain that AI uses patterns from past data to make decisions, but it doesn't think or feel like humans. Use age-appropriate examples, like how recommendations on YouTube or Netflix work, to build understanding and prevent false beliefs about AI being all-knowing or alive.

2 TALK ABOUT RISKS OF MISINFORMATION

AI can create convincing false information, including deepfake videos, photos, and fake 'facts'. Encourage children to think critically about what they see and read. Teach them to double-check information using reliable sources, to look at images and videos carefully, and to ask an adult if something doesn't seem right.

3 DISCUSS DATA AND PRIVACY

Explain that AI systems learn by analysing lots of data, sometimes including personal information. Help young people to be mindful of what they share online and why protecting personal data matters. Model good habits like reading app permissions together or reviewing what's collected by voice assistants like Alexa or Siri.

4 ENCOURAGE CREATIVE USE OF AI

Support children, when using AI tools, to explore ideas, make art, or build projects. This fosters confidence, imagination, and independent thinking. When children use AI creatively, rather than just passively consuming it, they are more likely to stay engaged and make thoughtful choices.

5 USE AGE-APPROPRIATE AI TOOLS

Not all AI platforms are suitable for children. Choose tools designed for education or creativity, with clear safety policies. Review terms of use and privacy settings, and help children use them in age-appropriate ways. For example, some chatbot tools mimic conversation but should only be used with guidance and boundaries in place.

6 USE AI TOGETHER

Exploring AI tools together can help adults understand how they work and spot potential issues. Try co-writing a story with an AI writing assistant or experimenting with an AI art tool. This encourages curiosity, helps you stay informed about the latest AI tools, and allows you to reinforce safe and respectful use while modelling critical thinking.

7 SET BOUNDARIES FOR AI USE

Establish when, where, and how AI tools can be used, just as you would with any digital technology. For example, you might agree not to use AI tools to complete school assignments without permission, or to avoid unsupervised use of voice assistants. Consistent boundaries help manage overuse and misuse.

8 WATCH FOR OVERRELIANCE

Some AI tools, like homework help apps, may be tempting shortcuts. Encourage children to use AI to support their thinking, not replace it. Celebrate effort and process over perfect answers. Reinforce that mistakes are part of learning and that relying too heavily on AI can limit real understanding.

9 TEACH DIGITAL ETHICS AND LITERACY

Help children explore how AI works, where it might be biased, and why ethical thinking matters. Building digital literacy alongside ethical awareness ensures children engage with AI critically, not just conveniently. Help young people to understand that not all people use AI for legitimate purposes; some use it for malicious reasons. Encourage questions about fairness, representation, and who benefits from certain tools; talk about algorithms, echo chambers, and the impact of automation on daily life.

10 STAY CURIOUS AND INVOLVED

AI is developing rapidly, and staying informed helps you support the young people in your care. Follow trusted sources for updates and keep the conversation going. If a child brings up a new AI trend or tool, take the opportunity to learn about it together. Showing interest builds trust and strengthens digital resilience.

Meet Our Expert

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#WakeUpWednesday®

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