

Dame Alice Owen's School newsletter



Letter from the Head

Hannah Nemko

Dear All,

As the autumn term draws to a close, it is natural to reflect on what an extraordinary four months it has been for the school. Many of us had assumed, wrongly, we would be back to normal school by September – as a SLT we certainly did

not expect to be spending our evenings and weekends 'tracking and tracing' within 'bubbles'. In fact, we have had to learn a whole new vocabulary: 'blended learning', 'remote offer' and the dreaded 'CAG' being terms that had not even existed in school until recently.

The newsletter is therefore a little slimmer than usual with fewer extra-curricular opportunities for students due to the limitations imposed on us, not least due to the additional lockdown we have undergone this half term.

I can only thank our amazing students for the responsible way in which they have dealt with the 'new normal' and sing the praises of our incredible (and exhausted!) staff who have worked to keep teaching and learning as exciting and relevant as possible whilst students have been in school or at home, often teaching both at the same time.

All we can hope now is that the vaccine is rolled out quickly and that some sense of normality can resume. Until then, I would also like to thank you, the parent body, for your support during these difficult times and hope that you continue to help us keep the school community safe by helping your young people adhere to the national guidelines over the break and so limit the chance of spreading the virus around the school on their return.

Wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Hannah Nemko



Issue highlights...

Lower school house art competition [page 6](#)



Sports successes and class highlights [page 10](#)



OSA auction, events and news [page 11](#)



COVID-19 – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We know that many students may wish to meet up with each other over the school holiday. For your safety, the safety of your family and their own safety, please ensure that the relevant **COVID rules** are adhered to throughout the festive period:

- Maintain a safe distance of 2 metres from other people
- Wear a face and nose covering where it may be difficult to maintain a safe distance
- Practice more regular hand washing
- Try to avoid touching your face
- Sneeze into a tissue and remember to 'catch in, bin it, kill it'. Use the crook of your arm if you do not have a tissue to cough or sneeze into

Please **do not** send your child back to school if any of the following apply:

- They have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- They, any members of your household, or any close contacts (including extended family or friends they have seen or people in 'bubbles' they have been with at holiday activities /sports clubs) have tested positive for COVID-19
- They haven't completed the full isolation period requested

Self-isolating is one of the most important things we can all do to help stop the spread of the virus.

What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID 19 after the end of term?

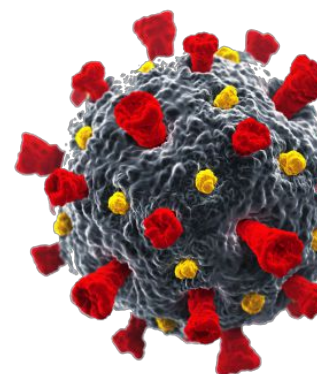
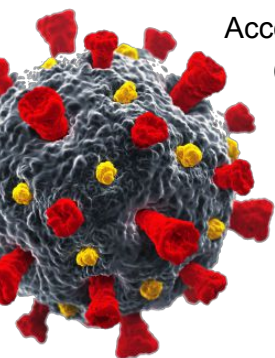
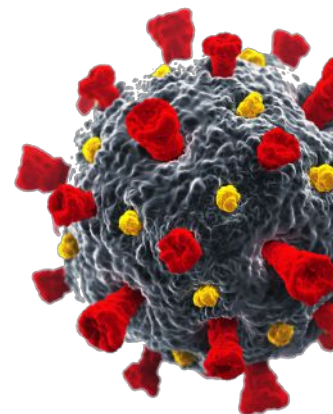
According to government guidelines, where a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, **the school should not be contacted**. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.

If your child tests positive **within** 48 hours of attending school please notify the school by emailing attendance@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk and head@damealicolowens.herts.sch.uk with notification of:

- the date of the positive test result,
- the date your child first started showing symptoms and
- the date that they were last in school.

The school will then contact you for any further information required.

If you receive notification from school that your child has been identified as a contact of a positive case, you must ensure that they isolate for 10 days from the date of that contact.



DAOS named *The Sunday Times* Southeast State Secondary School of the Decade

We are honoured to announce that Dame Alice Owen's School has been named *The Sunday Times* Southeast State Secondary School of the Decade by *Parent Power*, *The Sunday Times Schools Guide*, published in *The Sunday Times* and online November 29.

We were delighted to have been chosen as *The Sunday Times* School of the Year in 2016, but this is quite something else!

Nick Rodrigues, deputy editor of *Parent Power*, said: "Dame Alice Owen's School has been in our top 40 seven times in the last ten years and is always the highest-ranked school in the Southeast that is not fully selective. To be placed where it does, annually, with a largely comprehensive intake is outstanding. In 2016, *The Sunday Times* named it the State Secondary of the Year, the only non-grammar school to win the accolade since 1999, and in 2018 it was named the Southeast State Secondary of the Year.

"No one is left behind, the school actively takes pupils from where they are and helps them to get better thanks to its experienced staff who teach across the ability range. Furthermore, nurture groups, homework clubs and maths and English breakfast clubs have been established to help boost students' confidence and skills. Other enrichment activities – from visiting lecturers to maths and science competitions – also develop confidence and intellectual curiosity.

"Staff and pupils are thriving under Hannah Nemko's leadership, clearly demonstrated by the 28 students who are attending Oxbridge this year. Dame Alice Owen's School's sustained excellence has made it the clear choice as *The Sunday Times* Southeast State Secondary School of the Decade."

We are and remain incredibly proud of our fantastic staff who never shy away from going the extra mile to encourage, support and inspire our young people. We share this award with the students who, in return, inspire the staff with their curiosity, commitment to their studies and determination to succeed as well as with

their parents and carers who support both their young people and the school in their endeavours. We would particularly like to thank our governing body and Trustee for their support for their ongoing, unwavering support, most especially over these last, difficult, months.

It is my pleasure to share this award in the memory of our beloved Dr Davison who played such a large part in making the school the success it is today.

We look forward to celebrating many more successes together in the years ahead.

Hannah Nemko



George Frampton's 1897 statue of Dame Alice Owen, who founded the school in 1613.

Dame Alice Owen's School motto: 'The Owen's Way'

O – Opportunity for All

W – Window to the World

E – Excellence in Everything

N – Never Stop Learning

S – Supportive Community

Dr Alan Davison – Another Man for all Seasons

A personal reflection by Mr Dodd

After being taken to see *A Man For All Seasons* by my Catholic primary school, I only realised many years after what a great film it is and what the title meant. Alan Davison, whose recent passing still resounds in all of us, was certainly such a man; seasons may change but he was steadfast in his desire to help students and staff achieve their best.





Mention of seasons will remind Owenians of what it took for Alan to announce a 'snow day'; I often quipped that it was just prior to seeing polar bears wandering the school grounds. However, joking apart, this characteristic reflects Alan's commitment to education and his appreciation of the value it adds to our lives.

It would be self-indulgent to describe my interview day in the summer of 2007 when Alan offered me the job of teaching Sociology. However, when I said at the end of the process, "I'd just like to think it over tonight then confirm my decision tomorrow", Alan gave a typical reply with a twinkly smile, "Yes, of course. See you in September!" You just could not turn down such a head teacher.

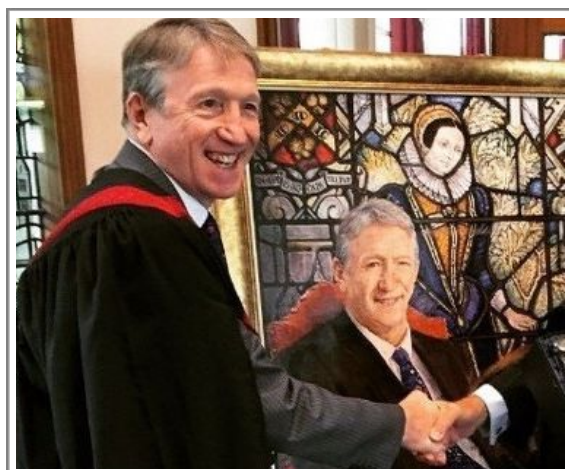
Alan's unique qualities were immediately obvious when I saw the timings of our school day. At my previous school, I recall a meeting where staff expressed their alarm about too many students being late for lessons. Eventually I made the point that it was inevitable students would be 'late' if one lesson ended at the same time that the next one started. I suggested a five-minute interval to allow movement between lessons. The Head replied mockingly "What a ridiculous idea!" Yet on starting at Owen's, I noted the movement break between lessons that Alan set up soon after his arrival in 2005.

Countless others also remember Alan's special qualities. In what became a virtual tribute page on Facebook, the comment above was one of hundreds that voiced their sadness.

What shocking & sad news.

I remember Dr Davison was one of the few who sat and had lunch with the students. Speaks volumes about his nature. A good man who'll be missed by many x   3

On a much more significant scale, many of us wonder if anyone other than Alan could have achieved the tremendous task of staging our 400th anniversary concert at a packed Royal Albert Hall in 2013. Some years later (usually around 5pm!) I occasionally noticed Alan with an electric guitar in his hands chatting to one of the guitar teachers. Little did I realise that this was preparation for his guest appearance on the Soul Band's special night at the Cadogan Hall as part of his farewell to the school.



Although it will be of little consolation to Alan's family at this time, I cannot be the only person who will inevitably think much more about him because of his tragic and untimely passing.

Alan will live on in our minds. Certainly, he has been in my thoughts in recent months and, as sad as I have been, part of me celebrates the fact that I have a wonderful role model to guide me through the rest of my own life. I am sure that he is now indelibly inscribed into the minds of all who knew him.

Alan, Sir, may you rest in peace. Be assured you will not be forgotten.

NEWS FROM THE MATHS DEPARTMENT

Year 11 pupil wins prize in MEI's Desmos Art competition

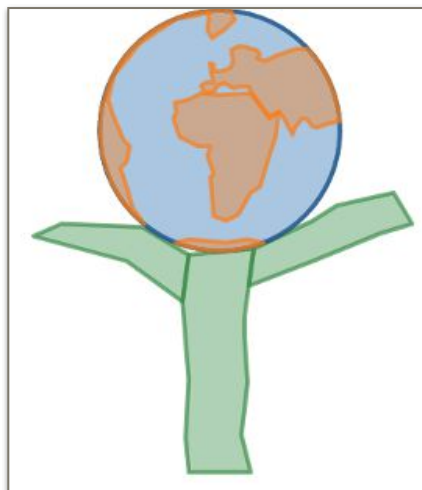
MEI (Mathematics in Education and Industry) runs a yearly [Desmos Art](#) competition where pupils across the United Kingdom are challenged to create a piece of art on Desmos, a free graphing software.

This year's theme was 'The Environment' and it was judged by MEI's Desmos Lecturers. We are incredibly proud of our entries this year, and Year

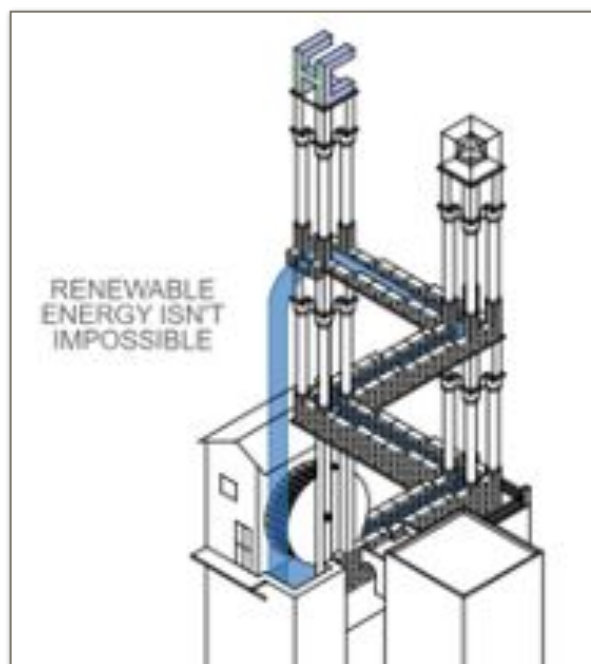
11 student Henry Chandler was awarded a prize for his fantastic animated graph inspired by M. C. Escher's *Waterfall*, which portrays the paradox of renewable energy.

Another notable entry was from Hannah Senior in Year 7, who drew a fantastic representation of the Earth using intervals in the software.

Well done to all who took part, we look forward to seeing your entries for next year's competition!



Hannah Senior, year 7



Henry Chandler, Year 11

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY



Congratulations to Mrs Shelia Compton, Dame Alice Owen's esteemed school librarian, who retired this term after nearly 22 years of service. We wish her a very long and happy retirement!

NEWS FROM THE ART DEPARTMENT

Years 7 & 8 spread positivity with care home postcards



Lower school students submitted some fantastic entries in the House Art Competition. We felt after the difficult year we all have had, it would be a nice idea to spread a little positivity and create some art in response to 2020.

Students were encouraged to create postcards celebrating how the pandemic had brought communities together and how many people had embraced and found solace in the arts during the lockdown.

We loved looking at the entries as they came into the department, students rose to the challenge and submitted positive postcard messages both as text and visual art pieces.

Year 7 and 8 classes then wrote personalised messages on the reverse of the postcards to over 70 staff and 40 residents at Cuffley Manor Care home, again spreading a little positivity.



Well done to all our prize winners:

1st Prize went to Daniel Goryachev (Goswell) for his celebration of our NHS heroes.

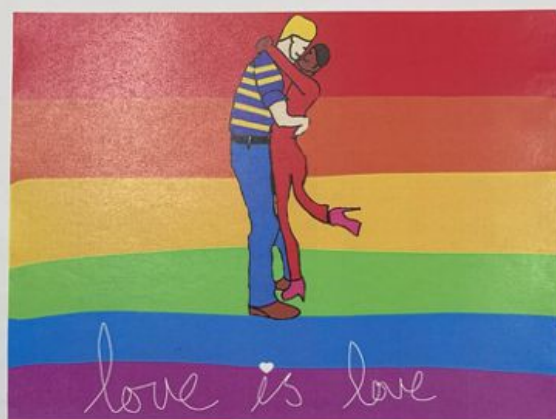
2nd Prize winner: Sami Menezes (Hermitage) for his socially conscious positive message.

3rd Prize winner: Evelyn Freeman (Isledon) with her positive postcard looking ahead to a possible vaccine and special recognition goes to Matilde Di Gerlando's original and creative design.

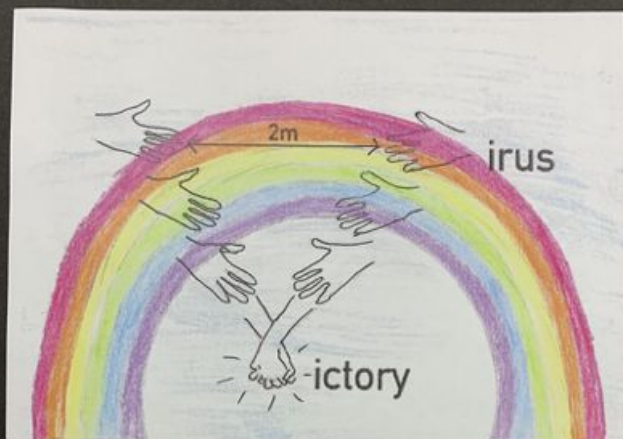
Thank you to all who entered and all who wrote such thoughtful messages to those at Cuffley Manor.



1st Place Winner
Daniel Goryachev
Year 7: Goswell



2nd Place Winner
Sami Menezes
Year 7: Hermitage



3rd Place Winner
Evelyn Freeman
Year 8: Isledon



Prize for Most
Original and Exciting Card:
Matilde Di Gerlando
Year 7.

NEWS FROM THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Year 13 musicians' Live @5 event proves great success

Covid-19 presented us with the challenge, or we could call it an opportunity, to reinvent the extra-curricular offer for the term. The amazing wealth of musicians at Owen's enabled us to put together, within each year group, a range of ensembles: choirs, orchestras, bands and chamber groups. Each week the department resounded, at every possible extra-curricular opportunity, with the sound of ensembles rehearsing and preparing their repertoire. It has been wonderful to see how the new configurations have brought opportunities to the musicians to try out new possibilities and to take up different roles.

Our series of Live@5 livestreams were kicked off on Thursday 5th November, appropriately, by our most senior musicians, the Year 13s.

Performed in the Edward Guinness Hall, with the Year 13 musicians themselves and Owen's staff members providing the live audience, these performances were live streamed on a private YouTube Channel. In the hall we all felt the thrill as the house lights went down, stage lights on, and the Year 10 and Year 12 Tech Crew (led by alumnus Sam Levy and overseen by Mr Pickering) gave us the countdown into each item as we went live 'on air'.

The Year 13 Orchestra opened the evening with a polished and thrilling rendition of the *Overture to the Magic Flute* by Mozart, Directed by James Widden. This was followed by a deeply moving account of *O' Danny Boy*, arranged by Bob Chilcott, and performed by the Year 13 vocal quintet, accompanied by pianist, Johnny Rugg. Led by Katrina Makepeace-Lott, this group was able to direct themselves and took the stage alone, working as a (socially distanced) chamber ensemble.

Up Next: Year 13 Vocal Quintet
 Director - Katrina Makepeace-Lott
 'O Danny Boy' - Arr. Bob Chilcott

Gregoire Denjean Doraly Gill Honey Millard-Clothier Sam Royden Tanvi Sofat

Accompanist:
 Jonny Rugg

The poster features a red background with silhouettes of various musical instruments and a microphone. The text is in white and yellow.

The Year 13 Jazz Ensemble, directed by Lance Kelly, got all our toes tapping with their renditions of *Corner Pocket* by Freddie Green and *Caravan* by Duke Ellington. Following this, Doraly Gill took to the stage alone and filled the hall with her authoritative interpretation of *Marcia* from Benjamin Britten's Cello Suite No. 1. This was followed by Maxim Lavrov (piano) and Jacob Bavetta's (double bass) self-directed and accomplished performance of *My Funny Valentine* by Rogers and Hart.

Up Next: Year 13 Concert Band
 'Toccata in D minor' - Bach arr. Ray Farr
 'The Final Countdown' - Joey Tempest

Trumpet: Jonny Rugg, Evelyn Leddy, Luke Bird
Trombone / Euphonium: Ruby Richards, Jacob Bavetta
Saxophone: Megan Boulton, Hannah Woolton, Pia Okuma-Chin
Flute: Melanie Cheung, Sajni Shah, Maya O'Neill, Annie Clarke
Clarinet: Eleanor Vincent, Katie Turner
Oboe: Maggie Hallam
Drums: Tom Brook
Bass: Anna Hennesbry, Maxim Lavrov

The poster features a red background with silhouettes of various musical instruments and a microphone. The text is in white and yellow.

The evening was brought to a rousing end by the Year 13 Concert Band, directed by Lance Kelly, performing *Tocatta in D minor* by J.S. Bach, arranged by Ray Farr, and *The Final Countdown* by Joey Tempest.

Making use of specialised broadcasting software, the Tech Crew were able to put our performances together into a very professional video that has now had over 470 views on [YouTube](#).

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who made the evening possible, including the Tech Crew, Mr Adam Levy for his IT assistance, Mr Pickering for overseeing the Tech Crew, Sam Levy and Maz Bryden for all of their help and advice.

Sadly, the national lockdown, followed by the large numbers of isolating Owen's students, meant that all the remaining Live@5 events, along with the Year 7 year group performance, have had to be postponed to next term. We look forward to being able to share with you more of the students' ensemble performances, compositions and arrangements.

Thank you to all our musicians for the comradeship and thrill of bringing live music-making back to the department this term. We wish you and your families a very happy holidays.

Year 8 enjoy some festive music making with ukuleles



This half term, with thanks to a generous donation from the OSA, all of our Year 8 pupils have had the chance to start learning the ukulele in their music lessons, with whole class sessions led by Ms Jenkins, Mr Smith and Mr Marshall.

In just four weeks, pupils have already learned to play lots of different chord combinations and melody lines, with strumming patterns and finger-picking all included!

It's been fantastic to hear how much they've achieved and to have had lots of fun playing and performing together. We're looking forward to developing our skills further in the Spring Term too.

Hopefully, if Father Christmas happens to deliver a ukulele to your household this holiday time, you'll be able to share in the magic too!

NEWS FROM THE PE DEPARTMENT

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CALL UPS

Congratulations to Rajan Shukla, Year 13 (right), who after a series of regional trials has been selected as part of the England Hockey phase two U18 squad. This involves the top 60 players in the country and will hopefully lead to an international tournament later in the year. Well done Rajan!

A special mention and congratulations to Luca Gunter (below right) in Year 11 who has been selected to attend the Under 16 England Football camp being held at St George's Park in December.

Well done to Aimi Weightman in Year 11 who competed in an Open Cross Country competition on the 31st October and beat the current National Champion. Fingers crossed for some races for Aimi to compete in. Well done Aimi!



YEAR 11 NETBALL

It has been fantastic to see so many of the Year 11 girls attend Netball training on a Friday lunchtime. With over 20 girls attending practice, it has allowed skills to be refined and the development of their game plan in the hope that the New Year may bring along fixtures for the girls to be able to play. The girls have also enabled the GCSE students to be able to film the matches played in school and shown great comradeship for one another.

YEAR 10 NETBALL

The Year 10 Netball team have continued to show their passion for the sport and desire to play. The girls have worked hard to develop their skills and work on tactical play. The girls are clearly missing playing fixtures and we hope that the New Year will bring the chance of playing Netball fixtures again.

YEAR 7 – 11 FOOTBALL

We have continued where possible to run practices and internal matches. The turnout has been fantastic in all five year groups and we hope to continue this after Christmas.

A SPECIAL MENTION AND A SAD GOODBYE

It is with a heavy heart that after 15 years at Dame Alice Owen's School, Mr Gamester is leaving at the end of this academic term. Mr Gamester has been a fantastic Director of Sport and achieved so much in his time at the school, whether that be as a Head of Year or Director of Sport. His enthusiastic nature, ability to wear shorts (no matter the weather) and the time he dedicates to each student will be sorely missed.

We wish you all the best of luck at your new school Brentwood as Director of Sport and look forward to seeing you on Saturday morning fixtures.

NEWS FROM THE OSA

Auction – At the time of going to press, there was only a few hours before the first OSA Auction ended. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of so many of the School community donating some fantastic items as well as pledging money. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. A full report on this very successful fund-raiser will be circulated in the next Newsletter.

Nearly New Uniform Sale – The OSA arranged this in the Main Hall on October 17th, adhering to strict Social Distancing rules and guidelines, where an impressive display of excellent quality items were available at very cheap prices. The event raised over £600.



It was tricky to set up and a good number of OSA volunteers made sure that we had the manpower to provide this welcome service during these difficult times.

Thank you to the Committee Members; Bev, Geoff, Pank, Lavita, Kate, and Darren for all their help. Also many thanks to volunteers: Stephen Mankovskyi, Zafar Aziz and Raman Subberwal who all gave their time freely to help.

Very special thanks go to Caroline Pattison for ensuring that the items were sorted by size and were suitable wearable quality. She was certainly pleased to clear her front room after a number of days of sorting! She was also the first to arrive and last to leave at the sale.



Easy Fund Raising – Shopping online via the Easy Fund Raising website is a great way to make money for the school without any extra cost to yourself.

Please remember to use [easyfundraising](https://www.easyfundraising.com) when you do your Christmas shopping this year.

Over 4,300 shops and sites will donate to OSA – Owens School Association –

for FREE when you use [easyfundraising](https://www.easyfundraising.com) to shop with them. This means you can raise donations for us when you buy anything from decorations and festive food shopping to gifts like toys, jewellery, tech, experiences and more!

These donations really help us and all you have to do is use easyfundraising when you're ordering the things you'll be buying anyway. See this [link](#).

Refreshments – This has currently been suspended but if you would like to get involved in the future please email Sharon on refreshments@theosa.org.uk.

Book Covers – We are glad to announce that due to unprecedented demand the OSA have SOLD OUT of book covers for now. But please do email us and we will order more when we get suitable numbers.

Match Funding – If you are employed by a company that is able to offer matched funding and are able to help Owen's School Association in this way please matchfunding@theosa.org.uk.

200 Club – The OSA operate a Lottery style 200 club with two £50 prizes drawn per month, often with an extra draw taking place in December. Annual membership is £12 per number. For further details please contact Deepika via 200club@theOSA.org.uk.

School Uniform – Good quality previously owned school uniform is available throughout the year by contacting Caroline Pattison. School uniform will be available to purchase at Parents' Evenings. All items are carefully displayed and priced reasonably. Payment can be made by cash or cheque (payable to Owen's School Association). Of course, all funds raised go back to the school. Stock is made up of donations and uncollected items of lost property stored in the school office at the end of each academic year.



Donations of **good quality** items can be put in the red wheelie bin in the school entrance hall or handed in to the school office, in a suitable bag labelled for the attention of Caroline Pattison 'OSA Nearly New'.

OSA Website – www.theosa.org.uk. The website has just had a great revamp and the OSA continues to add content and make improvements. We welcome your feedback – if you have any comments, suggestions or can help in any way please get in touch at contact@theosa.org.uk.

Facebook – Don't forget to follow us on [Facebook](#).

OSA AGM and Committee – These are currently held on Zoom on an ad hoc basis. If you would like to join the OSA committee you would be most welcome, please email: contact@theosa.org.uk



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Below are a number of charities that provide help and advice if you have something you want to chat through or if you are concerned about your or someone else's mental health.



THE MIX – ESSENTIAL SUPPORT FOR UNDER 25s

Free information and support for under 25s in the UK. We offer advice about sex, relationships, drugs, mental health, money, housing, jobs and anything else you may want to talk about – no topic is out of bounds.

We provide a free, confidential support service offering help through phone, text, web, social and counselling.

Whether it be through our articles and video content online or our phone, email, peer to peer and counselling services – The Mix puts the control in your hands.

For further information and help making pupils aware of The Mix, email: info@themix.org.uk



SHOUT

Shout is the UK's first free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. We offer in-the-moment help for times when life gets overwhelming and you need immediate support.

- If you need urgent help **Text Shout** to **85258**
- All texts are answered by trained and supervised Crisis Volunteers.
- It is confidential and free on the major UK networks and won't show up on your phone bill

For further information and help making pupils aware of Shout go to: www.giveusashout.org/resources/



YOUNG MINDS

Young Minds are leading the fight for a future where all young minds are supported and empowered, whatever the challenges.

For further information and to learn more about Young Minds' online resources go to <https://youngminds.org.uk> or email: ymentquiries@youngminds.org.uk



CHILDLINE

You can talk to Childline about anything. No problem is too big or too small. Call free on **0800 1111** or get in touch online at childline.org.uk. However you choose to contact Childline you're in control. It's confidential and you don't have to give your name if you don't want to.