



### CONSIDERATE STUDENTS COOK FOR THE HOMELESS



A group of students from Year 8 and Year 10 stayed late after school to prepare hot meals which they later delivered and handed out to the homeless in Swindon town centre.

The group of students gave up their time to prepare and cook pasta dishes which they boxed up and delivered, with Christmas puddings and cream which had also been donated.

Year 10 student Ella, who went with staff to the Wyvern Theatre car park to help serve the meals, said: "it's nice

to know that there is something we can do to help, and make sure that people get a hot meal."

This is the second time that students at Nova have supported the charity Alternative Angels; it follows the very successful Reverse Advent Calendar that was collected at Christmas.

Well done Ella, Ellis, Polly-Anna, Jamie, Tegan, Antwan, Phoebe, Katie, Louise, Alix, Pyper, Jessica, Emma, and Grace.



*"I'm very proud, they showed great maturity in volunteering to help others and they all took the task very seriously. When we took Ella, Pollyanna and Ellis to help hand out the food, we were all very moved by how grateful everyone was, and it was really worthwhile knowing that we helped to make a difference that day."*

**Mrs Moore,**  
Food Technology teacher



## PARLIAMENT TRIP

31 Year 9 students visited the Houses of Parliament where they had a tour of the palace, went into the House of Lords and watched parliament in session from the public gallery at the House of Commons. After the tour, the students took part in a workshop and were visited by MP Justin Tomlinson, MP for North Swindon, when they had a unique opportunity to ask him questions about a number of political issues that affect young people, including tuition fees and public transport.

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*"I had a great day. It was a fantastic experience to be able to see the Houses of Parliament; the building itself was amazing and so much bigger than I expected."*

Darcy, Year 9

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## HOME STUDY AT NOVA: WHY DO WE SET SO MUCH QUIZZING?

It will not have escaped your notice that a large proportion of your child's home study involves them writing quizzes (or the answers to quizzes that have been given to them) and testing themselves on quizzes they've written before. This article is to reassure you that this is a good idea!

People will always debate the desired outcomes of compulsory education but I'm sure all will agree that we want young people to learn the skills that equip them for further academic study, training and careers. However, perhaps counterintuitively, the best way to develop skills is *not* to simply practice skills without a clear context. Decades of research in learning psychology and cognitive science have shown that skills are *never* without a clear context: you cannot demonstrate skills without knowing things first. The best problem-solvers are those with the best knowledge of the problem.

Another example: imagination. Developing a good imagination might be one goal for education. It is no coincidence that those with the best imaginations are those who have read the most books or seen the most art. This is because coming up with ideas (demonstrating imagination) requires knowledge first. Another way of putting it is: to think well, you need knowledge to think *about*.

Therefore, although the long-term aims for education are, rightly, to develop sophisticated academic skills, this cannot be done without first mastering large amounts of knowledge. This is why there is so much quizzing.

Memorising powerful knowledge (the key facts, definitions and concepts) in each subject gives students the necessary mental structures to do difficult things with that knowledge (including coming up with original ideas!). The research in learning psychology and cognitive science shows us something else: among the very best way to memorise knowledge is to be tested on it. Reading it over and over is less effective; making notes on it is less effective; attempting research on a topic is far less effective... so we set the effective method for home study. The effort of trying to recall knowledge, using the humble quiz, and checking if you knew the answer, is incredibly simple but incredibly powerful.

So we make no apology for favouring quizzing in home study, because it really works!

Phil Wilson  
Assistant Principal

## ETHAN BRAVES THE SHAVE

The whole school watched as Year 9 Ethan raised £346.25 for MacMillan Cancer Care by taking part in their "Brave the Shave" initiative in school at the end of term.

Ethan's mum contacted Mr Wells to ask whether she could shave Ethan's head in school on the last day of term for the charity. Staff and students gathered in the atrium at lunchtime and cheered them on, with the support of Ethan's friend Xander who helped out by acting as MC and briefly taking charge of the clippers.

Well done Ethan!

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*"It was a truly wonderful experience for both Ethan and myself to see such support. We are grateful to the children of Nova for their donations."*

**Mrs Costello,**  
Ethan's mum

*"I'm happy that I've been able to raise so much money for such a really good cause and I'd encourage others to do it."*

**Ethan**

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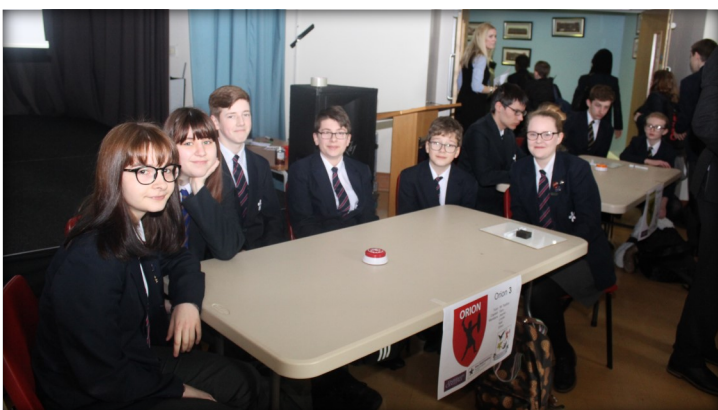
## UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE



The whole school took part in the University Challenge competition this term, with teams of mixed year groups competing against each other. In the tutor group round, teams were given two minutes to answer as many questions as they could. The top scoring team in each tutor group went through to the house final in the theatre.

Following what turned out to be a very difficult set of questions in the final round, Orion 3 came out as Nova's University Challenge Champions.

Congratulations to the team of Jasmin, Sam, Louise, Niall and Ethan on their win! All the teams had some impressive knowledge between them, and it was interesting to watch them answer some extremely difficult questions under pressure.





## CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Congratulations to Year 10 Samuel (Cygnus) who claimed the title of 2019 Nova Chess Champion with a very impressive score of six wins from seven games. Jacob (Cygnus 2) finished second with a very creditable five wins, half a point ahead of Oriol (Pegasus 4) in third. Oriol also claimed the best-newcomer prize for the highest score of a Year 7 student, narrowly edging out Theo (Orion 6) in a nail-biting tie-breaker.

Almost 30 students took part in this year's competition, which was held as part of the Delancey School's UK Chess Challenge, with over 1,200 schools and 40,000 students taking part this year. Several Nova students will now go on to compete in the regional finals and we wish them the very best of luck!



### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### May

Thursday 9th Year 8 girls'  
immunisations

Monday 27th—Friday 31st Half  
term

A full calendar of events and more  
information can be found at  
[www.novahreodacademy.org.uk](http://www.novahreodacademy.org.uk)



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**YEAR 5**  
**OPEN MORNINGS**  
Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June  
Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June  
Please register at 01793 528800 or at  
[www.novahreodacademy.co.uk](http://www.novahreodacademy.co.uk)

**OPEN EVENING**  
Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September from 6.00pm

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