ARCO ACADEMY

Autumn 1 Newsletter

Celebrating learning, enrichment, progress and next steps

- Learning
- Enrichment
- Progress
- Next Steps



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Welcome from our CEO

Dear Parents, carers, and family,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this edition of the Arco Academy newsletter.

Since joining Arco Academy as CEO in September, I have been delighted to get to know our students, meet colleagues and begin building relationships with families and our wider community. It has been encouraging to see the commitment of our staff and the many ways in which they work to support our students' learning, wellbeing and personal development.

At Arco Academy, we believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to succeed, develop confidence and discover their potential. Our approach brings together academic learning, sport, therapuetic support and personal development to create an environment in which students feel safe, valued and appropriately challenged. We want every student to recognise their strengths, overcome barriers to learning and develop the knowledge, skills and resilience they need for the future.

As a school, we are committed to continually improving the quality of education and support we provide. We want our students to achieve well academically, develop positive relationships and leave Arco with a strong sense of purpose and ambition. Working in partnership with parents and carers is central to achieving these goals. Your insights, support and engagement are invaluable, and I look forward to strengthening these relationships as we move forward together.

I hope everyone has settled in well in what we anticipate to becoming a very successful year at Arco. The term has been extra special with the recent appointments of two new Advisory Board Members who would be contributing their invaluable experience to support Arco to achieve its mission.

Over the coming months, we will continue to focus on raising aspirations, enriching learning experiences and ensuring that every student could make meaningful progress. Through our shared commitment, we can help our young people build a positive future and fulfil their potential.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. I look forward to working with you and celebrating our students' achievements throughout the academic year.

With best wishes,

Dr Jeffery Quaye OBE, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

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Principal's Word

As we come to the end of my first term as Principal of Arco Academy, I would like to thank our families and the wider community for the warm welcome and support shown to the school. It has been a pleasure getting to know our community, and I have been struck by the strong sense of belonging that exists across it.

This term, our students have worked exceptionally hard to achieve their personal goals and have consistently demonstrated the values within our Wheel of Culture. They have represented themselves and the school with maturity, respect and pride, both in school and within the wider community.

We look forward to building on these successes next term through a range of enrichment opportunities and educational visits.

Thank you for your continued support. I wish all our students, families and community partners a restful break and look forward to another successful term ahead.

Chelsey Leighton, Principal

Welcome to our Autumn Term 1 newsletter.

This term, our students have developed knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects, engaged in meaningful learning and prepared themselves for the next stage of their academic journey. Through dedicated teaching and curious minds, they have explored new ideas, building understanding and confidence every day.

From strengthening mathematical reasoning and expressing ideas through creative writing, to investigating scientific concepts, exploring cultural identity and learning how to stay safe, our students have shown curiosity, resilience and commitment in all they do.



Our Wheel of Culture

- High Standards
- Personal Responsibility
- Integrity
- Professionalism

These values guide everything we do.

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MEET OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Our New Advisory Board Members

We are delighted to welcome two new Advisory Board Members who will be contributing their invaluable experience to support Arco Academy to achieve its mission.



Venisha Sawyers-Rhoden

Safeguarding Lead

Experienced safeguarding leader specialising in child protection, inclusion, wellbeing and multi-agency support for vulnerable learners



Klaudia Ferrando

Curriculum and Teaching Lead

Education specialist in teaching improvement, quality assurance and professional development, championing evidence-led practice and equal opportunities for all learners

Our New Academy Ambassadors

We are also delighted to welcome our new Academy Ambassadors, who will be working with Arco Academy to support our students and promote positive opportunities.



Christine Ohuruogu, MBE

400m Olympic Champion



Nkechi Simms

British Actress

The Difference Our Team Makes

Our Advisory Board Members and Academy Ambassados bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and networks that will help us to continue raising aspirations, enriching learning experiences and creating positive futures for our students.



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Safeguarding and Student Wellbeing



At Arco Academy, the safety, wellbeing and happiness of our students are at the heart of everything we do.

We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where every student feels valued, listened to and able to thrive. Our safeguarding team works closely with students, families and external partners to ensure that appropriate support is in place whenever it is needed.

Our Safeguarding Approach

We take a proactive and whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that all students are supported to feel safe, respected and confident both in school and in the wider community.



Student Support

Our pastoral and wellbeing support helps students to develop resilience, build positive relationships and access the right support when they need it.



How We Keep Students Safe

We have a range of measures and practices in place, including:

- A dedicated safeguarding team
- Clear policies and procedures
- Regular staff training
- A culture of openness and respect
- Working with external agencies and support services
- Providing a safe and inclusive learning environment

Support and Guidance

If you have any safeguarding concerns or would like to discuss support for your child, please contact our safeguarding team.



We are here to listen and help.

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Safeguarding, Online Safety and Community Support



As we approach the half-term break, we would like to remind all students and families of the importance of staying safe, both in the community and online.

Online Safety

Many young people will spend additional time online during the holidays. Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Talk regularly with their child about their online activity, including gaming, social media and messaging apps.
- Check privacy settings and parental controls on devices and apps.
- Remind young people never to share personal information, passwords or their location online.
- Encourage children to speak to a trusted adult if they experience anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Community Safety

- Ensure your child knows where they are going, who they are with and how to contact you if plans change.
- Remind young people to be aware of their surroundings when travelling independently and when using public transport.
- Encourage safe and respectful behaviour within the community.

Holiday Activities and Family Support

There are a range of free and low-cost activities available for children and young people this half-term across Lewisham, Croydon, Southwark, Lambeth and Wandsworth. Families may be eligible for Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programmes, which offer sports, arts, enrichment activities and healthy meals during the school holidays

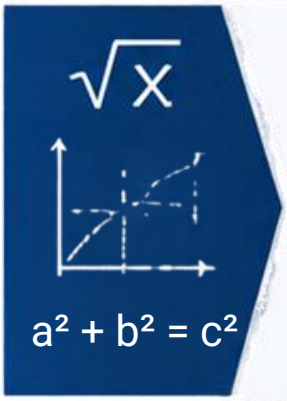
We encourage parents and carers to check their local council websites for details of holiday clubs, family events and support services available in their area.

We wish all of our students and families a safe, enjoyable and restful half-term break and look forward to welcoming everyone back for the start of Term 2.

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Curriculum Highlights





MATHEMATICS

Years 7 and 8 explored algebraic function machines and representing operations algebraically.

Year 9 studied place value, percentages, area and volume, building numerical fluency and applying methods to practical problems.

Years 10 and 11 focused on exam practice, number (Highest Common Factor, Lowest Common Multiples, Fractions) and Algebraic manipulation



ENGLISH

KS3 explored persuasive writing, poetry and biographies, learning to construct arguments, analyse poetic techniques and understand people's life stories.

KS4 developed creative writing through horror writing and the "show, not tell" technique, using language and detail to create atmosphere and suspense.

These topics help students experiment with language, develop their writing styles and become more confident readers and writers.



SCIENCE

Years 7 and 8 studied animal and plant cells, cell structures and how functions support life.

Year 9 explored reproduction and the biological processes involved in producing offspring.

Years 10 and 11 studied genetic inheritance, how characteristics pass from parents to offspring, and how genes contribute to variation.

Students are strengthening scientific vocabulary and applying biological concepts to explain the world around them.



CORE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Health and fitness, boxing, football, basketball and badminton. Developing physical wellbeing, coordination, control, discipline, ball control, passing, tactical awareness, teamwork, dribbling, shooting, agility, hand-eye coordination, racket skills and collaborative play.

Students are encouraged to challenge themselves and practise respect, communication and positive sportsmanship.

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LEARNING TODAY, LEADING TOMORROW

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Year 9 at St George the Martyr Church

Year 9 students visited St George the Martyr Church in Borough as part of their Religious Studies study of Christianity.

They explored a Christian place of worship first-hand, observed the church's historic interior and features, and connected classroom learning with a real-world religious setting.

The visit helped students develop curiosity, reflection and appreciation of Christian traditions, places of worship and the role faith plays in people's lives.

PSHE: Knife Crime Awareness

The whole school visited Finsbury Library for a knife crime awareness workshop with the Ben Kinsella Trust.

Students considered an important issue affecting young people and communities, explored personal safety and the consequences of knife crime, and reflected on making positive, informed decisions.

Arco Academy recognises the importance of equipping students with the knowledge and confidence to navigate real-world challenges and contribute positively to their communities.

In pictures





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NEWSLETTER

Black History Month:

Celebrating Identity, Culture and Contributions

Students explored Black history, culture, identity and the contributions of Black individuals to British society through discussion, poetry, creative writing and reflection.



Why Black History Month is recognised

We explored why Black History Month is recognised and how it celebrates the achievements, experiences and contributions of Black people throughout history.

The significance of the Stephen Lawrence case

We examined the Stephen Lawrence case and its significance in British history, focusing on racism, equality, justice and the ongoing need to challenge discrimination.

Benjamin Zephaniah's poetry

We explored Benjamin Zephaniah's poetry and his ideas about society, identity, culture and social justice.

Identity and being Black and British

We discussed identity and what it means to be Black and British, including belonging, heritage, culture and the different experiences that shape us.

Antonia Jade King's poetry

We explored Antonia Jade King's poetry about Black hair and identity, culture, pride and the power of self-expression.

What shapes our identity

We reflected on how family, culture, background and memories influence our identity and how we see others.

Year 9 creative poetry inspired by Dean Atta

I Come From

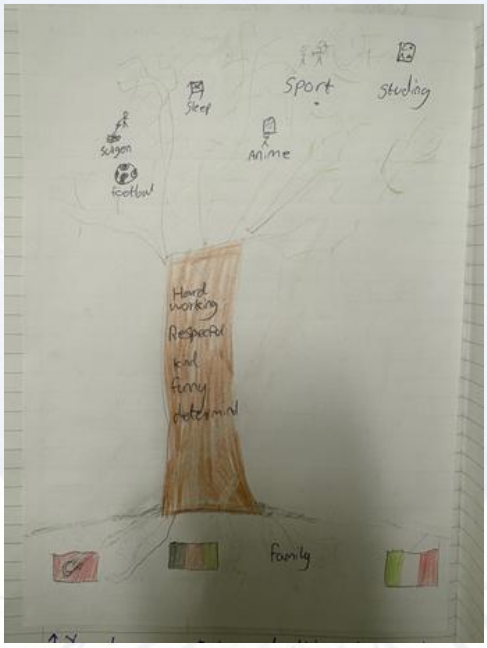
I come from my Xbox, from my monitor and my PC.
I come from a clean and supportive home.
I come from the money plant.
I come from basketball.
I come from rap.
I come from the sounds of birds chirping
from the countryside in Serbia.
I come from knocking eggs on Easter
and Christmas celebrated twice.
I come from "Never put your hands on a woman"
and "Behave yourself properly."
I come from Belgrade and Serbia,
from čevapi and sarma.

This poem, inspired by Dean Atta's "I Come From", reflects interests, family life, cultural traditions and belonging. It shows how everyday interests, family values, traditions and cultural roots contribute to identity.

This work developed cultural awareness, engagement with historical and contemporary issues, creative expression, appreciation of different perspectives, and a commitment to equality, respect and inclusion.

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Celebrating Our Identities and Looking to the Future



Family and Cultural Heritage

A student's identity tree: celebrating personal interests, values, family and cultural roots.

Celebrating Our Identities: A Student Identity Tree

The branches show interests such as sport, studying, anime, football and sleep; the trunk shows qualities including hard-working, respectful, kind, funny and determined; and the roots reflect family and cultural heritage.

Identity is shaped by many influences. Students were encouraged to recognise what makes them unique and appreciate the diverse identities within the school community.

Careers Update

As Year 11 students begin planning next steps beyond school, Keelah Bangura will support applications for college, sixth form, apprenticeships and employment, helping students prepare and make informed decisions about future pathways.

During Term 2, Arco Academy will explore opportunities to work with external careers advisers who can provide independent careers guidance.

Students will take part in careers workshops to develop employability skills, raise aspirations and gain insight into further education, training and career opportunities.

Arco Academy looks forward to supporting students as they prepare for their next stage of education and employment.



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PREPARING FOR THE NEXT STEP

Year 11 Mock Exams



Our Year 11 students have been working hard this term in preparation for their upcoming mock exams. These exams are an important opportunity for students to practise their knowledge, build confidence and identify areas for development ahead of their final GCSEs.

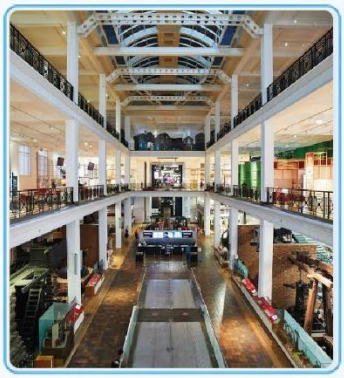
Teachers are supporting students with revision, exam techniques and wellbeing to help them prepare and feel confident.

How Students Can Prepare

1. Attend all lessons and intervention sessions
2. Use revision resources and past papers
3. Keep a revision timetable
4. Look after their wellbeing, including sleep and nutrition
5. Seek support from teachers whenever needed

Upcoming Trips and Visits

We have one confirmed trip for the coming months. This visit will give our students the opportunity to explore new places, develop their knowledge and experience learning beyond the classroom.



TUESDAY
10th November 2026

Science Museum

Our students will be visiting the Science Museum for an exciting day of discovery, where they will explore interactive exhibits, expand their knowledge and bring their learning to life.

More Information to Follow

We are currently exploring additional trips and visits for later in the academic year. Further details will be shared with students and families once confirmed.

Enrichment and Next Steps

As we look ahead to the next term, we will continue to provide a wide range of enrichment opportunities, educational visits and experiences that support our students' personal development, wellbeing and future aspirations.



Thank you

Thank you to our students, staff, families and wider community for your continued support this term. We look forward to another exciting term ahead.

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IMPORTANT DATES UNTIL CHRISTMAS

Monday 2 November:	Autumn Term 2 begins: Year 11 mock examinations begin
Tuesday 3 November:	Year 11 interventions begin and continue weekly Tuesdays to Thursdays, focusing on Maths, English and Science.
Tuesday 10 November:	Whole-School Trip to the Science Museum.
Thursday 12 November:	Open Evening and Sixth Form Information Evening.
Friday 13 November:	Sixth Form application process begins.
Monday 16–Friday 20 November:	Anti-bullying Week.
Thursday 10 December:	Year 11 Parents' Evening, 16:30–20:00;
Monday 14–Friday 18 December:	Online Safety / Acceptable Use Week.
Monday 21 December–Sunday 3 January:	Christmas break.

Families should check school communications for updates, especially where an event is marked 'to be confirmed'.

¡ LOOKING AHEAD

It has been an engaging term at Arco Academy, with students developing their academic skills, exploring important social issues, celebrating cultural identity and benefiting from opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. We encourage all students to remain focused, embrace new challenges and take pride in their progress as we continue on our learning journey in the next half term. Together, we continue to empower students to be the best version of themselves. Thank you for being part of our learning community.