

# The Ongar Optimum

The Ongar Academy

4 November 2016

Issue 6



## From the Headteacher



Dear reader,

It has been a real pleasure to welcome a new cohort of students for the first term of our second year at the school. We have had many wonderful things to celebrate, but particularly I wanted to feedback to parents the great praise we received from visitors to the school on Open Evening. We had a continuing flow of families through the door and we were inundated with positive comments about the conduct and expertise of our students. They were polite, knowledgeable and very enthusiastic about their school. I was pleased to see Years 7 and 8 lead the way and act as real ambassadors for us. In many local schools, the tours are performed by elder students, but not here. Our students are more than capable of promoting our positive ethos and message.

### Building Progress

Anyone who drops their children to school will have been watching with interest as the steelwork for the new building has been craned into place and the concrete planks for the ceiling and roof are laid down.

It's truly exciting to see the building changing on a daily basis and as we approach Christmas, we should see the tarmac in our new car park and the brickwork starting. Our topping out ceremony took place on the 3 November and we are delighted to report that there are no delays.

### SLT Q&A

Our first SLT Q&A session took place earlier in the term. I felt the session was very successful and that with some small changes, we could aim for an even greater experience next time. Our next session takes place on the 9 November 2016 at 4pm. At each meeting from now on, we aim to consult on one issue of development alongside the usual Q&A.

Our next meeting's consultation point will be circulated nearer the date, but we really want your opinion so please save the date.

### Leaving Staff

We bid farewell to two staff this half term, Miss A Jackson (Music & Art)

and Mr D Chappell (English & Drama) who have now left the school to seek new opportunities elsewhere. We welcome Mr J Venables and Miss L Clark who have now joined the school.

### PTA

Finally, I wanted to pass on my sincere thanks to parents who have helped and assisted in the PTA this term. We ended the half term with the PTA disco which was very successful and a really good way to take us to the break.

The commitment shown has been very welcome as we grow and it's pleasing to see real progress being made towards our first minibus.

If you would like to help or assist with the PTA in any way, please contact [ongarpta@gmail.com](mailto:ongarpta@gmail.com)

I look forward to writing to you again at Christmas.

**David Grant**  
Headteacher

## Inter-house Cross Country

This half term we saw our first full Inter-house event. All students took part in the Inter-house cross-country event on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September. It was The Ongar Academy's first event where both year groups joined together and there was an exciting atmosphere! The students worked extremely hard and ran the course with a lot of effort. The students took great pleasure in supporting their houses and encouraged everyone to put in their best efforts.

	<b>Year 7 Girls</b>	<b>Year 7 Boys</b>	<b>Year 8 Girls</b>	<b>Year 8 Boys</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Amber Dewey Darwin	Oliver Pledge Darwin	Jessie Mayall Darwin	Brandon Baldacci Curie
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Jessica Lee Agnesi	David McCarthy Brunel	Emily Webber Darwin	Frankie Gregory Brunel
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Lottie Towler Agnesi	Stan Pyke Darwin	Chloe Sheahan Darwin	Jack Norman Agnesi

Well done to all the students who took part in the event!

**Miss J Chapman**

Faculty Leader: Arts and PE

## Year 7 Boys Rugby Tournament

Our Year 7 boys took part in a rugby tournament hosted by Ongar Rugby Club at the end of September. The team competed against four other schools and they had an excellent outcome coming 2<sup>nd</sup> overall in the tournament! This was an excellent achievement, especially as it was their first match together! Congratulations to Daniel Woollard, Harvey Amman, Max Bentley, Frankie Smith, Freddie Gibson, Harry Moore, Jesse Carbine, Stanley Pyke, Oliver Pledge and Max Weeks.

**Miss J Chapman**

Faculty Leader: Arts and PE

## House Points Update

**Agnesi 719**

**Brunel 721**

**Curie 745**

**Darwin 730**

With the totals reset to zero at the beginning of this academic year, students have been rapidly accruing Cause for Applauses in lessons, which count towards House Point totals. These, alongside House Points in inter-house activities have been taken into account to calculate which house is top of leader board so far. A huge congratulations to Curie House, who were at the top of the leader board at the time of publication. However the gap is small, so all students should be making sure that they are doing everything they can to make sure their house is in the lead at the next update!

**Editor**

## STEM Club

This half term in STEM we have been designing and making egg parachutes. We made our own parachutes in groups to try and stop the eggs from breaking when dropping them down the stairs. Over the course of this half term we have focussed on different STEM areas.

For the Science week of STEM we investigated the forces that would affect our parachute. We then drew a forces storyboard which involved all of the forces involved when a parachute falls. Our plan was to get our parachute to reach terminal velocity.



During our Technology week we used Adobe Fireworks to design a 3D parachute. Engineering week involved making the parachutes and in Maths week we tested weights to see if our parachute should be able to hold an egg.

Isabel's Dad was a former student of The Ongar Comprehensive, the previous school on the site and when she told him about the egg challenge, he said that he remembered making one when he was at school. He said that it was for a Design Technology project involving Meccano.

You are probably wondering how on earth a lump of metal can protect an egg? The machine uses gravity and a system of weights to protect the egg from smashing.

On week five we put our parachutes to the test! After many rounds (as our parachutes kept many of our eggs safe) some eggs started to break and there were only two parachutes left in the running. In the final round it was Amelie and Shannon who took the first STEM club trophy!

Do you think you could make something better? If so, come to STEM club for our new challenge next half term.

**Isabel Joyce 8A, Abigail Collins 8A and Alicia Print 8C**



## Primary Visit

On the 22 September Willow Class (Year 5) from Chipping Ongar Primary school visited The Ongar Academy for a Science lesson. These students have been studying properties of materials and investigating how these change.

All students had the opportunity to make slime – a favourite activity of our Year 8 students during Science week. Students were challenged to consider whether slime was a solid, liquid or gas. The term viscosity was introduced and students investigated how the viscosity of the slime changed as its temperature was increased.

The second activity involved setting up and using a Bunsen burner safely. All students then handled exploding soap bubbles, demonstrating chemical and energy changes.



We thoroughly enjoyed working with Chipping Ongar Primary School and we look forward to more opportunities to liaise with our local community throughout the year.

**Miss J Box**  
Assistant Headteacher

## The Dora Love Prize 2016-7

Late last academic year The Ongar Academy received an invitation from The University of Essex to participate in The Dora Love Prize in September. The Prize is named in honour of Dora Rabinowitz Love, a Jewish survivor of Stutthof concentration camp and a 2010 University of Essex Honorary Graduate, who died in 2011.

Students would mainly be competing against students older than themselves as the Holocaust is not normally addressed in History lessons until Year 9, and this competition was open to Years 7 to 10, so a select group of Year 8 students were chosen to represent the school in this challenging endeavour.

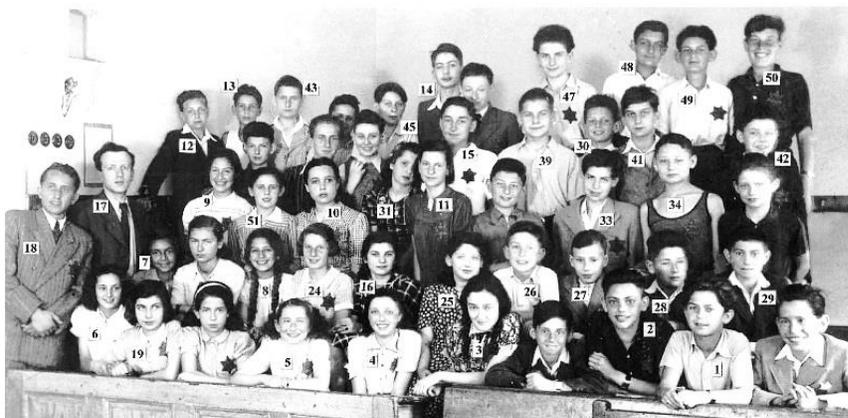
On the 22 September 2016 Miss Luckie accompanied Daisy Braithwaite, Summer Cracknell, Ethan Dean, Megan Epstein-Knights, Oscar Fry, Jessica Hunt, Chloe Moffatt, Ella Newitt, Kirsty Norfolk and Oscar Smyth and Emma-Louise Tonge to the Chelmsford Campus of the university for their induction day.

Students were asked to undertake a project over the following two months, expressing that which was most important to Dora Love: linking the history of the Holocaust with our present day lives, and speaking up against hatred wherever it occurs, never forgetting the ultimate consequence of seemingly small acts of discrimination and developing a sense of personal responsibility.

During the day students attended lectures and took part in creative exercises where they learned about the Holocaust, as well as modern day persecution of minority groups. One of the most interesting of these was a drama exercise that Kirsty and Emma took part in, where they were given some idea of what it might have felt like to have been imprisoned in a concentration camp. All students agreed that one of the most thought provoking parts of the day was a talk from Frank Bright, a Holocaust survivor who was able to talk to them directly about his experience and that of his classmates, many of whom perished in camps during World War Two.

The Humanities Faculty has been incredibly impressed both in the way that these students represented the school on the day, and in the planning of their project so far, displaying both maturity and sensitivity in their intellectual curiosity the past and how it relates to today's issues. We look forward to seeing how their project develops and hope that their hard work will enable them to allow them to present to a wider audience at Lakeside in the New Year if their project is successful.

**Mrs H Hedges**  
Faculty Leader: Humanities



## Recommended Reading

In this new section of The Ongar Optimum, members of staff will be sharing their love of literature with our readers and suggesting books that they themselves have enjoyed. Mrs Hingston starts us off with a review of one of her favourite recent reads.

### The Lake House by Kate Morton

#### **A missing child...**

June 1933, and the Edevane family's country house, *Loeanneth*, is polished and gleaming, ready for the much-anticipated Midsummer Eve party. Alice Edevane, sixteen years old and a budding writer, is especially excited. Not only has she worked out the perfect twist for her novel, she's also fallen helplessly in love with someone she shouldn't. But by the time midnight strikes and fireworks light up the night skies, the Edevane family will have suffered a loss so great that they leave *Loeanneth* forever.

#### **An abandoned house...**

Seventy years later, after a particularly troubling case Sadie Sparrow is sent on an enforced break from her job with the Metropolitan Police. Sadie retreats to her beloved grandfather's cottage in Cornwall but soon finds herself at a loose end. Until one day, she stumbles upon an abandoned house surrounded by overgrown gardens and dense woods, and learns the story of a baby boy who disappeared without a trace.

#### **An unsolved mystery...**

Meanwhile, in the attic writing room of her elegant Hampstead home, the formidable Alice Edevane, now an old lady, leads a life as neatly plotted as the bestselling detective novels she writes. Until a young police detective starts asking questions about her family's past, seeking to resurrect the complex tangle of secrets Alice has spent her life trying to escape...

This is the fifth novel from Morton that I have ecstatically waited to be released, become a blissfully obsessive recluse whilst enjoying it and then had the inevitable dichotomy of both wanting to reach but also wanting to avoid the end, as then the thrill will be over.

Moreton's trademark style is present again in this novel; to immerse you entirely in three separate time periods which all inevitably interweave like a fine tapestry. The three narrative threads quickly make the characters dance off of the page and into one's imagination so that I found I would often be thinking out plotlines, conspiracy theories or possible resolutions frequently throughout my day. Often, I was drawn back to the reality of being by the pool on holiday this summer with the call of, "Can't you put that book down now!" from my self-named 'book-widow' or in other words, husband!

The real joy of reading any Moreton book is that the characters do not remain as characters, they become real people who you invest in and care about, feeling almost like they are old friends that you can't bear to leave and not meet with again as the story draws to a conclusion. One of the unique inclusions of this novel, in comparison to Moreton's other four, is that for the first time she has included a whodunit style 'murder' that must be solved. This for me is what sets this novel apart from the rest and causes it to usurp my previous fervent favourite, *The House at Riverton*. The twists and turns in this book literally had me gasping out loud in public, being brought to tears on various occasions throughout extremely harrowing and vivid scenes.

A key pleasure of the novel is Morton's realistic and honest take on the aftermath of the First World War, which wiped out countless thousands of young men and left survivors like Anthony Edevane traumatized shells. Her other theme is family relationships, particularly some characters' experiences of motherhood.

Elements such as this give this mystery novel the rare component of tender-heartedness; it is Morton's compassion for her characters that will keep you reading.

A quotation from the novel itself serves well to sum up the experience that reading this novel will bring you, "*May your past be a pleasant memory, your future filled with delight and mystery, your now a glorious moment, that fills your life with deep contentment.*" This novel brought me deep contentment and every page was indeed deliciously glorious. In truth, I almost wish that I had not discovered this novel at all yet as then I would be in the position of being able to rediscover and relive it all over again.

Other novels by Kate Morton:

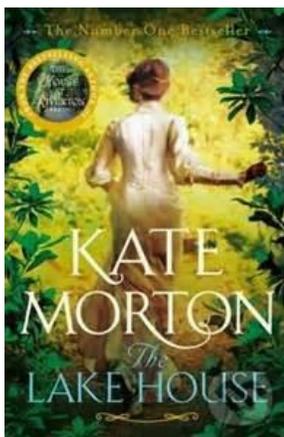
**The House at Riverton** (2007)

**The Forgotten Garden** (2008)

**The Distant Hours** (2010)

**The Secret Keeper** (2012)

**The Lake House** (2015)



**Mrs R Hingston**  
Assistant Headteacher

## The History of Halloween

At the end of last half term many of our students celebrated the break by dressing up at the Halloween disco. But did you know that dressing up in Halloween costumes is really a very recent tradition that developed in the twentieth century?

The first store bought Halloween costumes were not available before the 1930s. The modern Halloween holiday is loosely based on the old Celtic holiday, Samhain, when the veil between the "real" world and the spirit world was considered to be very thin. There is little wonder why Halloween costumes have a creepy and spooky, or even downright frightening appearance!

One of the most popular costumes at Halloween is that of a witch, however, if you travelled back in history to Essex 370 years ago, being accused of being a witch was no joke! Matthew Hopkins, the self-styled 'Witchfinder General', moved to Essex in his mid-twenties, making his name and fortune by 'proving' men and women of being witches, using methods including sleep deprivation and the threat of piercing so called 'Devil's marks' with a three inch needle. This half term Year 7 will study crime and punishment in History, including the treatment of witches, and then they should all be able to tell you exactly why you would not choose to be dressed and tried as a witch, but if you want a teaser – ask a Year 8 student what happened to witches in the Middle Ages!



References

1. <http://www.trueghosttales.com/history-halloween-costumes.php>
2. <https://www.howitworksdaily.com/halloween-history-the-spellbinding-tale-of-essexs-witchfinder-general/>

**Mrs H Hedges**  
Faculty Leader: Humanities

## Ongar-Cerizay Twinning

On the 26 September, the whole school was privileged to welcome Mr Keith Tate, a former local primary school Headteacher, to talk to us about Ongar-Cerizay. You may have noticed the signs as you enter Ongar stating that our twin town is Cerizay. This small town of about 4,500 people is situated in the centre-west of France, in the Deux-Sèvres department of the Poitou-Charentes region, about 300km from Paris.

Cerizay was badly damaged in WW2, being a stronghold of The Resistance, as Mr Tate told us. These days, it has 2 secondary schools who are eager to establish closer links with us over time, links they once had with our predecessor school in Ongar. In fact, it was a teacher of English there who first set the ball rolling for the twinning. This Anglo-French link has now been running for over 30 years, with alternating annual visits in the springtime - including a banquet in France hosted by the Mayor! Mr Tate told us of the Ongar group's visits and the hospitality of his French hosts, leaving some leaflets with us for further information.

### **Ms H Hodson**

Subject Leader: Spanish

## Meet the Trustees

### Graham Player

I have worked in Banking, Industry, and as a Social Worker, before spending 30+ years in full-time teaching. Most of my teaching career was spent in Primary Education, but I have also worked in Secondary Education up to 16. I have run a nursery, worked in an exclusion unit and also in an assessment centre. For the last 20 years of my full-time employment, I was a Senior Manager in two Primary Schools, with the final 15 years as a Headteacher, again in two schools, in East London. I was a member of my Borough's Education Strategic Planning Committee and also part of their New Teacher Recruitment Team. I have been involved in the design, build and opening of a new Primary School, after 'merging' two schools. I am currently a part-time Education Consultant. I am on the full board of trustees and sit on the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

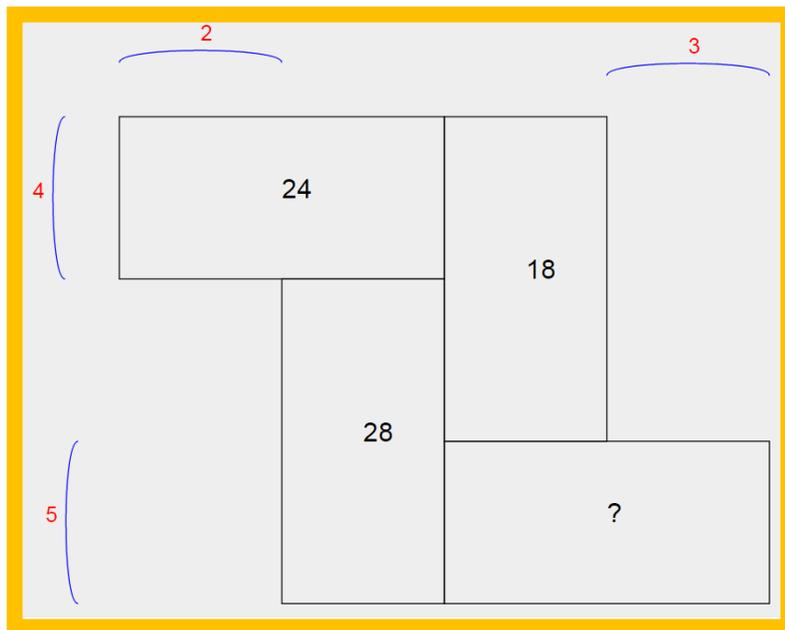
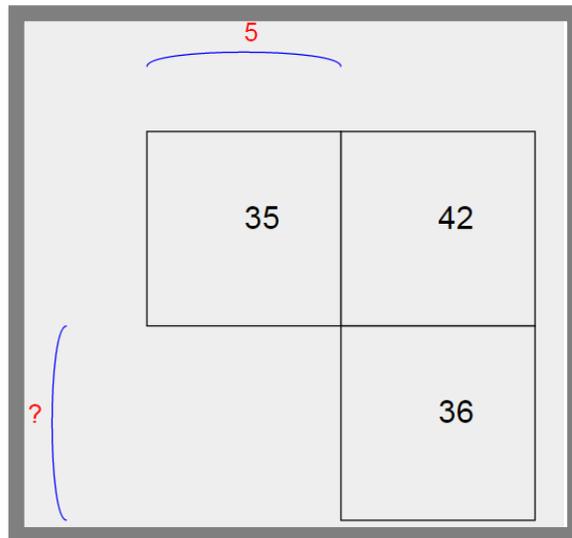
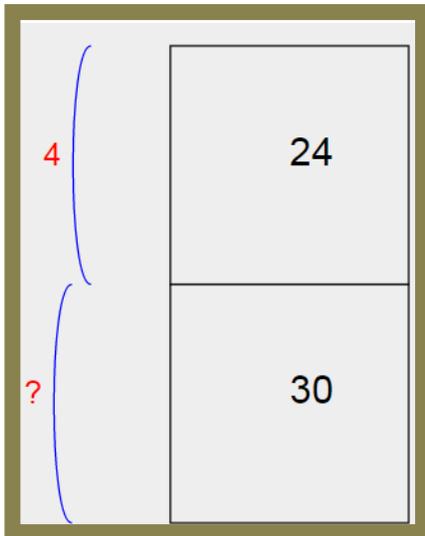
### Blane Judd

I have a strong track record in learning and development as a mentor coach and as a qualified verifier for both City and Guilds and the Institute of Leadership and Management. I have led the development of a number of vocational qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks in the engineering and construction sectors. I have led change in a number of complex organisations placing them at the forefront of their sector and I have worked with major blue-chip engineering businesses advising on strategy and people development. Most recently I successfully led the campaign to place the UK technician skills shortage at the top of the political and engineering sectors agenda. My experience has been gained through the Utilities, Construction and Building Services sectors and I currently lead the innovative development of LVDC networks in buildings, which I instigated. Most recently I chaired the round table discussion at the European Conference on Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience to critical acclaim. I am the Chair of the Education Committee and sit on the full board.



**On behalf of the Trustees**

## Maths Puzzle – Area Maze



Website -

[www.areamaze.com](http://www.areamaze.com)

Area Maze is the creation of Naoki Inaba, one of the world's most prolific inventors of logic puzzles. The puzzle is to find the missing value, which is denoted by a question mark. The only mathematics you need to know is:

**Area of a rectangle = length x width**

Have a go at the Bronze, Silver and Gold questions and have a try at solving the puzzles.

**Mrs R Bolwerk**

Subject Leader: Mathematics

Helpful tips:

- Mazes are not drawn to scale. Put your rulers away
- All mazes can be solved without using decimals or fractions. This does NOT mean that all box sides and areas must be whole numbers

## Darkness – A Halloween Story

“Come on George it’s time to go trick and treating.”

The girl came out of the shadows in a pair of trousers and a t-shirt her face was slim and her hair was a glowing blonde.

“Why aren’t you wearing a costume?” asked the girl’s mother.

“I am too old for it!” replied the girl.

“Well if you don’t wear a costume bad things will happen to you!”  
“I don’t care!” whispered the girl, arms crossed being miserable as usual. She stomped to the door of the house where for a moment she stopped and shuddered.

“Trick or Treat!” shouted her little brother standing at the front door of their house. He wore an orange pumpkin suit, his face was plump and was painted orange.

“First of all you go to other people’s houses and secondly it’s trick or treat and -and -and I am going back to the house this is boring.”

She ran back in the house and jumped on her bed. She had better things to do like finishing her favourite book. She closed the book and placed it on the table which lay next to her bed. Her eyes suddenly felt heavy her eyelids started to droop. Her eyes closed and she fell into a deep sleep which would give her nightmares for the rest of her life...

A scream echoed through her mind and a twirling siren hypnotised her mind. She fell into a swirl, her hair blew behind and she fell on the floor with a big BANG. “Where am I?”

She walked through a deserted wood with big black twigs that scratched her skin to the bone. She scarpared out of the forest and caught her dressing gown on the pointy death defying twigs. The girl screamed as a shudder filled her soul she fell to the ground as the wind blew her back it felt as if she was being picked up by her mum, just in a vile tone.

“HELP!” she screamed. It then felt as if her mouth was being forced closed. She screamed, but little did she know there was no one human around for miles... She was sucked into a hole which would make you dizzy just looking at it, she looked up an enormous tarantula stood above her it’s hairy legs touched her face and it chased after her, she screamed at the top of her lungs. The spider then disappeared POOF!

Her head span around and a dizziness filled her head she woke up to a scream in her room and what stood before her was something that made the hairs on her arms stand up....

**Nicole Saye 8C**

## PEACE

International Peace Day is a day where we can spend time thinking about one day when the whole world is at peace hopefully. International Peace Day is also to help people in countries who don’t have all the opportunities that we do like equal rights to men and women and a good education for all.



I think that International Peace Day is a good idea as it is a day for thinking about when there is peace and people are getting on with no war. Hopefully one day in the future there will always be peace, but to get there we are going to do it in steps so that it is more accomplishable in the future.

**Molly Gilroy 8C**

## Meet the Teacher!

This issue the News Team interviewed Miss Luckie, Geography Subject Leader.

**News Team: What is your favourite subject RS or Geography?**

Miss Luckie: I prefer Geography but I still enjoy teaching RS.

**NT: Why do you like Geography?**

Miss Luckie: I like Geography because it's always changing, it's current and it is amazing.

**NT: If you could change your job what would it be?**

Miss Luckie: I would want to become a dancer.

**NT: What are your hobbies?**

Miss Luckie: I love running.

**NT: Do you have any pets?**

Miss Luckie: I have a cat called Dolly.

**NT: Who is your hero?**

Miss Luckie: My hero is David Attenborough because he is really intelligent and has travelled the world.

**NT: What did you want to be when you were younger?**

Miss Luckie: I have always wanted to become a teacher but when I was younger I also wanted to become a dancer.

**NT: What's your favourite colour?**

Miss Luckie: My favourite colour is Green.

**NT: What do you like about your job?**

Miss Luckie: I love working with young people, every day is different and I enjoy helping people learn.

**NT: Why did you want to become a teacher?**

Miss Luckie: I wanted to become a teacher because I really enjoyed school and when you're teaching you're always learning.

**NT: What is your favourite country you have been to?**

Miss Luckie: I am lucky to have been to a lot of countries, but my favourite is the USA, particularly Hawaii and New York.

**NT: Do you have a favourite Sport?**

Miss Luckie: My favourite sports are rounders and netball.

**NT: What is your favourite book?**

Miss Luckie: My favourite book is Harry Potter.

**NT: What is your favourite song?**

Miss Luckie: I love all music as the music is always changing.

**NT: If you could live anywhere in the world where would you live?**

Miss Luckie: I would love to live in New York.

**Which form is your favourite?**

Miss Luckie: My favourite form is 8 Agnesi of course, they're my form!

