

FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

# Big Ideas for Bright Minds

# 2022

## For Students 14–19

MORE ABLE AND AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME

[WWW.THRIVINGMINDS.ORG](http://WWW.THRIVINGMINDS.ORG)



# About



## What to expect on the day

More able students have a special educational need which is now widely recognised. This need is for high level intellectual input which Academy Learning provides through world class “thinking days” at which students engage with a wide range of topics and a balanced academic programme aimed at stimulating thought beyond the constraints of the curriculum.

Asking the right questions is important. The great thinker, Socrates, was called the midwife of people's thoughts because he asked the right questions and helped people give birth to new ideas. Would we have known that the earth revolves around the sun if it hadn't been for the inquisitive minds of people like Copernicus and Galileo? Would we have known that light holds energy? This interactive study day will ask students to consider some fundamental questions and offer intellectual frameworks for developing their own ideas.

The focus is upon topics which can be approached from many different disciplines so that students begin to see connections between different areas of study and the bigger picture. The content is fast paced and differentiated to meet the needs of highly able learners with a focus on important and enduring concepts. There is no duplication of traditional school topics, and students benefit from a university style of learning in which their knowledge is broadened and their critical abilities up-graded with new thinking tools. All sessions are designed to stimulate student interest with further resources available on the Academy website for follow up independent learning.



‘A mind, once stretched  
by a new idea never  
regains its original  
dimensions



# Programme

## JUSTICE, TRUTH AND BEAUTY

JULIE ARLISS

Justice, truth and beauty all please and attract us. Beauty is always a reason to attend to a thing that possesses it, but what is it? Is it just a brain thing? Are our judgments of beauty, whether a beautiful person, a piece of music or an object, real or subjective? This session will introduce students to theories of beauty (aesthetics), justice and truth, and use contemporary examples to explore the complexity of our judgements. The difficulties of living in a society where beauty has become almost an ethical ideal will also be examined. Contemporary examples will be used to illuminate the complexity of the issues and how this impacts on the way we think about other areas of human knowledge.

## ROCK IN 11 DIMENSIONS: WHERE PHYSICS AND GUITARS COLLIDE

DR MARK LEWNEY

This mind-expanding and ear-stimulating lecture will address some of the biggest ideas in contemporary science. The Rock Doctor, Dr Mark Lewney will use his skill with a rock guitar to explore the physics of sound; show how string vibrations might answer questions about the Big Bang; and, how the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) – the biggest experiment ever built – might let us peek into extra dimensions. With hands on demonstrations, mind-bending animations and expert guitar playing, this lecture will get the audience thinking in multiple dimensions. It will also share the wonder and excitement of how innovative experiments, all using the LHC at CERN, will give us a glimpse of what the universe was like in its first trillionth of a second, and may even help us discover the origins and nature of matter.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

DR CHRISTOPHER O'NEILL

Contrary to popular belief, outstanding achievement in everything and anything from maths to marathons, classics to clarinet, from footie to physics does not ultimately depend upon innate intelligence or ability. There are a number of important factors leading to outstanding achievement which, unlike your genetic profile, are entirely under your control. This session will examine the hard evidence of what really produces a life of outstanding achievement. A fascinating interactive examination of what really makes a difference.

## OXBRIDGE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EXAMINED

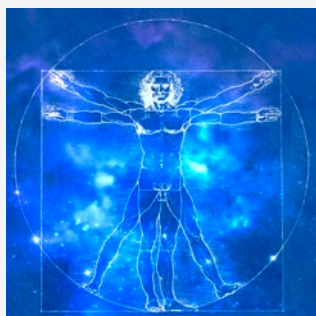
JULIE ARLISS

At Oxford University, one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the world, admission interview questions are designed to give candidates a chance to show their real ability and potential - which means seeing if a candidate can think laterally, and apply their thinking to new ideas, and different contexts. Interviews are not about reciting what you already know, rather, they give candidates a chance to show their real ability and potential. There is no 'right' answer to many of the questions: the focus is on how well you can think. This session will provide students with essential Oxbridge standard thinking tools, and ideas for developing high-level lateral thinking skills. A number of thorny questions will be examined as test cases.

## THE BIG DEBATE

This house believes that it isn't OK to make comments about another persons' body.

This debate will incorporate a number of relevant issues such whether the act of commenting on a person's physical appearance is just a basic human freedom, or, as it is sometimes claimed, an act of appearance discrimination. Body image anxiety is widespread and created by a culture where there is pressure to meet a certain ideal 'look', so is it better to say nothing at all? This is an opportunity for students to contribute to this highly relevant debate topic. What do you think and can you persuade others to agree with you? An opportunity for persuasive speech and creative thinking on your feet.



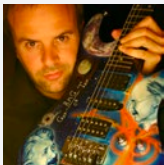
# Speakers



**Julie Arliss** — A Farmington Scholar at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, Julie Arliss is a highly accomplished teacher and author. Julie Arliss is a well-known international educator of gifted students with a gift for making the complex simple, and the simple complex. She is committed to the provision of world-class extension activities for these students, to extend their reach well beyond the curriculum to new areas of knowledge. She is on the examining team for Cambridge International Examinations and founder of Academy Learning.



**Dr. Christopher O'Neill** — Dr O'Neill is a fellow of Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford and is a polymathic thinker. He is a psychologist, registered psychotherapist and trained counsellor. He initiated the large-scale MYRIAD research project in Oxford University investigating resilience and well-being in young people. He has forty years' experience of working with students and staff in schools and is an exceptional educator.



**Dr Mark Lewney** — Dr Mark Lewney is a professional physicist who uses the science of electric guitars to explore the nature of reality and string theory. He has appeared on BBC's Newsnight and on BBC's Xchange as well as on the Money programme and Radio 4. He is an experienced educator and lectures across the UK. Mark has been on a national UK school tour, on behalf of the Institute of Physics, featured in the Guardian and Physics World and also gave a talk at the Tokyo International Science Festival. Mark is a popular speaker on Academy Conferences UK highly able programmes.

*"A cross between Einstein and Jimi Hendrix"* – Times Higher Education Supplement



**"I'm really sad. This was my last year at these conferences. I've learned so much and it has meant everything. I'm going to Oxford Uni, and hope its like this."**

#### WHY ATTEND?

- University Masterclass
- Inspired thinking
- Search for knowledge
- Challenge beliefs
- Gain foundational ideas
- Engage the thinker within
- Share ideas with like-minded people
- Meet world-class thinkers



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SNAPCHAT  
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# Booking



## ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

Arrival from 09.30. The programme begins promptly at 10.00 and concludes at 15.15. Note: times for London conference as follows: 10.00 arrival; 10.30 start; 15.45 finish.

**Students** — £35 per person (£30 early bird before 7 October 2022). We have access to sponsorship for students wishing to attend but for whom the cost is a significant challenge for their families. Please contact us for further details.

**Staff** — A fixed fee of £35 (£30 before 7 October). Free staff place per 12 students. Unaccompanied teachers attending for CPD £195.



“Academy Conferences gifted and talented is not like anything else. It’s a brain frying day of mind stretching talks and everyone there really wants to engage and think.”



**BOOK YOUR PLACES ONLINE AT:**  
**THRIVINGMINDS.ORG**

# Booking

## London

### Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> November

London Bloomsbury Baptist Church,  
Shaftesbury Avenue

[View Map](#)

## Oxford

### Thu 24<sup>th</sup> November

Oxford Town Hall,  
St. Aldates

[View Map](#)

## HOW TO BOOK

Bookings are made online at [www.thrivingminds.org](http://www.thrivingminds.org) where you have the choice to pay or request an invoice.

Or print and complete the booking form below and send a cheque made out to Academy Conferences. Send to:

Academy Conferences  
37 Fore Street  
Sidmouth  
Devon EX10 8AQ



‘This is always an  
inspiring exciting day.  
We come every year and  
wouldn’t miss it.’

## GIFTED AND TALENTED 2022 BOOKING FORM

☐ London (23<sup>rd</sup> November) ☐ Oxford (24<sup>th</sup> November)

Name

No of students

School name

Number of teachers

Address

Post code

Telephone

Email

☐ Cheque enclosed (payable to Academy Conferences) £\_\_\_\_\_

☐ I accept the terms and conditions [found here](#)

Please inform us of access requirements.

Academy Learning reserves the right to make alterations to the programme.



# Sharing Guide



When our events are approaching, we are excited to start spreading the word on social media.

Schools like yours make our events memorable, offering students in your community a chance to connect with like-minded people and explore new ideas. To help us to reach as many students as possible, please use this easy guide to encourage others to get involved.

**1** Follow Academy Learning on social media and tag us in your posts.



FACEBOOK  
AC.Learning.FB



TWITTER  
AC\_Learning\_



INSTAGRAM  
ac\_learning\_



SNAPCHAT  
aconferences

**2** Use these hashtags to connect your post to the event and conversation.

#GiftedAndTalented22

#ThrivingMinds

#P4C

## Example Post

Our students are looking forward to this exciting day with Julie Arliss Dr O'Neill and Mark Lewney. They are keen to find out what science teaches us about how to become outstanding and keen to hear how string theory can be taught using an electric guitar! [@AC\\_Learning\\_](#) [#GiftedAndTalented22](#) [#ThrivingMinds](#) [#P4C](#)



“We love this opportunity to give our students university style learning with brilliant speakers and so many new ideas.”

## GO THE EXTRA MILE!

- Share pre-event behind the scenes posts showing students preparing for the event e.g. practicing a BIG debate or studying a subject from our sessions.
- Share the event in your Facebook groups and Twitter chats.
- If possible, share your school's photographs from our past conferences.
- Share your testimonials about our conferences and online learning platform.



**Academy Conferences PTY**

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