

HAMMERSMITH

Academy

HAMMERSMITH ACADEMY

# ALUMNI. *Magazine*

MARCH 2026

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ALUMNI NEWS • GET INVOLVED • AND MORE!

# Welcome



Over the past year, we have seen the successful launch of Hammersmith Academy's Alumni Network, and it has been fantastic to watch it grow into a vibrant and supportive community. Now that the network is firmly established, we are already seeing the positive impact it is having, not only in reconnecting former students, but in inspiring and supporting those currently at the Academy.

One of the highlights this year has been hosting our first Alumni Careers Breakfast, focused on careers in technology. The level of engagement from students was incredible. They valued the opportunity to speak with alumni who once sat in the same classrooms and are now progressing in their careers. The event showcased the breadth of the tech sector, from software engineering and online safety to customer operations and degree apprenticeships, helping students see that there are many different routes into successful careers.

We have also continued to strengthen our apprenticeship insight programme. During the first week of February, we welcomed an alumnus back to speak to our Year 7 students about his degree apprenticeship at GRAHAM. Hearing directly from alumni about balancing work and study, and taking part in an open question and answer session, helps make these pathways feel real and accessible from an early age.

It has been equally rewarding to see alumni from different year groups reconnecting with one another and returning to the Academy, in some cases for the first time since leaving. Moments like these highlight the strength of our alumni community and the lasting connections formed here.

As the network continues to grow, I am genuinely excited about what lies ahead. Thank you to everyone who has already given their time, energy and experience. Your involvement is making a meaningful difference to our students, and I look forward to building on this momentum together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Frederick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lucy Frederick  
Alumni Coordinator

# STAYING IN TOUCH

At Hammersmith Academy, we take immense pride in the achievements of our alumni, whose journeys beyond our school gates continue to inspire aspiration across our community. In this section, we are delighted to showcase the accomplishments of our former students, catching up with them as they progress through their careers, personal endeavours, and contributions to society.

Staying connected with our alumni is not only a way to celebrate individual success but also an important part of our shared heritage. By maintaining strong links with the Academy, alumni can build professional networks, reconnect with peers, and see how former classmates are thriving in their chosen fields. Just as importantly, these connections allow alumni to support the next generation of students through mentorship, guidance, and insight into life beyond school.

We warmly encourage all alumni to stay in touch and remain part of this vibrant community. Whether you are looking to reconnect, expand your network, or contribute to the development of current and future students, there is a valued place for you within the Hammersmith Academy alumni network. To join us, simply scan the QR code. ■



**NEDAL HARRIS**  
HA 2014-2016

*Architect*

## **NEDAL HARRIS**

**What does real-world success mean to you now and how did Hammersmith Academy help you understand or achieve it?**

Real-world success, to me, means doing work that feels meaningful, staying curious, and continuing to grow both professionally and personally. Hammersmith Academy played a huge part in shaping that mindset. The school encouraged me to explore my strengths, recognise my potential, and set ambitious goals to help me move forward with confidence.

**What did the Academy teach you about ambition and perseverance?**

HA taught me that ambition isn't just about having big goals — it's about planning, committing, and breaking those goals down into manageable steps. I also learned to see setbacks as opportunities to improve rather than failures. That mindset has been invaluable in a demanding field like architecture, where resilience and persistence are essential.

**What experiences at HA made you feel 'ahead of the game' when you started university or work?**

Being used to presenting ideas,

working with digital tools, and managing long-term projects made a huge difference. While others were still adjusting to independent study and feedback, I felt confident taking initiative and refining my work. Those skills gave me a strong foundation from the start.

**How did Hammersmith Academy help you explore different careers and discover what success could look like for you?**

Before HA, I only had a vague idea of what architecture actually involved. The school introduced us to a wide range of industries and showed us that success can look very different for everyone. Through opportunities at HA, I developed a much clearer understanding of architecture as a career and the different pathways into the profession.

**Did you make any professional connections through HA that helped shape your path?**

Yes — through work experience and events arranged by the school, I met people who offered advice and shared opportunities. My work experience placement during Sixth Form is still the architectural practice I work in today, and I am fortunate enough to now be a director there. That experience had a huge impact on my career direction and progression.

**Can you recall a time HA helped you take a practical step towards your goal?**

During Sixth Form, I received a lot of support with my personal statement for architecture and preparing my portfolio. Teachers and the Careers Team gave detailed feedback that strengthened my application and helped me secure university offers — something that many students don't receive much guidance on elsewhere.

**How did HA's teachers and mentors help you turn ambition into achievement?**

Teachers at HA genuinely believed in my potential and consistently pushed me to refine my work and aim higher. Their encouragement helped me turn vague ambitions into clear, achievable goals — such as applying to architecture school and committing to the Part 1 and Part 2 pathway.

**What did you learn from the diversity and community at HA that helps you today?**

The diversity at HA taught me how to communicate effectively with people from all backgrounds. That's a crucial skill in architecture, where collaboration, empathy and understanding different perspectives are essential. It made me open-minded and comfortable working in diverse teams, which I rely on daily in practice. ■



**Be a feature!**

We'd love to hear your story - Whether you're climbing the career ladder, pursuing your passions, or making a difference in your community, share your journey with us and inspire others.

Get in touch to be featured in the next edition of the Alumni Magazine:  
[alumni@hammersmithacademy.org](mailto:alumni@hammersmithacademy.org)

# CAREERS BREAKFAST



On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January, we were thrilled to welcome eight Hammersmith Academy alumni back to school for our first ever Alumni Careers Breakfast, centred on careers in technology. It marks the start of an exciting new series, with more Career Breakfast events planned over the coming months across a range of different sectors.

The morning gave our Sixth Form students the opportunity to speak directly with alumni who are building careers in tech. Over breakfast, conversations flowed from **degree apprenticeships** and **university pathways to first jobs, career progression** and everything in between. It was a relaxed setting that allowed students to ask honest questions and receive practical advice from people who were sitting in the same classrooms not that long ago.

One of the biggest takeaways for students was realising that there is not a standard entry path into the industry. As one student put it, "It gave me confidence that there is not just one route into tech." Another shared, "I did not realise there was so much more to the tech industry than just data analyst roles. It opened my eyes to different career paths I had not considered before."

Speaking to degree apprentices was particularly reassuring for many students. "Talking to people who studied the same subjects as me made the next steps feel achievable," one student explained. Others valued the practical guidance around applications and progression. "It was helpful hearing how to increase your chances of getting a degree apprenticeship," another said. "The 'what I would do in your shoes' advice made everything feel more real."

Moments like this really bring to life the idea that you have to see it to be it. Hearing first hand experiences from alumni who are now progressing in their careers helps students picture their own futures more clearly and believe that those goals are within reach.

Most of all, it was fantastic to see alumni back at the Academy, sharing their journeys so openly and generously. The conversations not only inspired students, they strengthened the connection between past and present. The energy in the room showed exactly what our alumni network can be at its best: supportive, ambitious and committed to helping the next generation take confident steps towards their career goals. ■

## ALUMNI PROFESSIONALS

We are extremely grateful to the alumni who generously gave up their time to support this event:

- **Utku Aydin (HA 2014–2016)** – Software Engineer (Back-End) at Tyl by NatWest, working with C# and Azure microservices.
- **Hassane Benzellat (HA 2022–2024)** – Business Management Apprentice at Kepler Interactive, studying for a Business Management degree at London South Bank University.
- **Rania Fundi (HA 2022–2024)** – Desktop Apprentice in End User Services at King's College London.
- **Florent Haxhiu (HA 2015–2020)** – Software Engineer at Allwyn, with expertise in Python, C, Rust and Go.
- **Samia Hoque (HA 2014–2021)** – Technology Delivery Associate and Degree Apprentice at Accenture.
- **Tiffany Possi Nyabeu (HA 2017–2024)** – Online Safety Policy Apprentice at Ofcom.
- **Sonny Priske (HA 2013–2015)** – IBX Customer Operations V at Equinix, specialising in fibre optic technology.
- **Ayat Saeed (HA 2013–2015)** – Ad Review Lead Level II at Snap Inc.



## Want to give back?

Are you an alum who wants to make a difference? Whether it's through mentoring, delivering a talk, offering career advice, or sharing your story, your support can inspire and guide the next generation of Hammersmith Academy students.

To get involved, contact the Alumni Office at:  
[alumni@hammersmithacademy.org](mailto:alumni@hammersmithacademy.org)

We'd love to hear from you!

# JOIN US AT THE NEXT BREAKFAST

As we continue to grow our Career Breakfast programme, we would love to hear from more alumni who might be interested in getting involved. Whether you are just starting out in your career or are more established, your insight and experience could have a real impact on our students.

This session will explore careers across the public sector as well as roles centred on people and communication, including areas such as human resources, public relations and wider organisational

leadership. It is an opportunity for students to hear directly from alumni working in these fields and to gain a clearer understanding of the different pathways available.

If you would like to be part of this event, or support a future breakfast, please get in touch with the Alumni Office at [alumni@hammersmithacademy.org](mailto:alumni@hammersmithacademy.org).

Sharing your journey could be exactly what a student needs to help them see what is possible and take their next step with confidence. ■

## Next Careers Breakfast

*'Public Service, People and Communications'*

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026

8-9am

# APPRENTICESHIP WEEK



During the first week of February, as part of our Apprenticeship Insight programme, we were pleased to welcome Naeem Malek (pictured left with Ms Ferrell) back to Hammersmith Academy to speak to our Year 7 students.

Each year, we run a series of apprenticeship focused events ahead of National Apprenticeship Week to help students better understand the different pathways available to them. A key part of the week is hearing directly from apprentices themselves, and Naeem did exactly that.

Now completing a degree apprenticeship at GRAHAM,

Naeem shared why he chose this route and what it is really like to combine work and study. Speaking to Year 7 meant starting from the basics and clearly explaining how apprenticeships work, how they differ from the traditional university route, and what employers look for in young people.

Students also took part in a lively question and answer session, where they asked about balancing work with studying, what a typical day looks like, and what skills are most important in the workplace. His honest and relatable responses helped break down misconceptions and made the apprenticeship pathway feel far more accessible.

For many Year 7 students, life beyond school can feel distant and difficult to picture. Hearing from someone who once sat in the same classrooms helps make those future options feel real and achievable. Naeem's visit showed students that there are multiple routes into successful careers and that apprenticeships offer a valuable mix of practical experience and academic learning.

We are very grateful to Naeem for giving his time and sharing his journey so openly. Opportunities like this play an important role in helping our students start thinking early about their futures and the skills they are building every day.

## Support a fellow alumni

After returning to the Academy to speak to our Year 7 students during Apprenticeship Insight Week, Naeem Malek is now taking on a different kind of challenge — the **London Marathon**.

This April, Naeem will be running in aid of Make-A-Wish Foundation UK, with a fundraising target of £3000. The charity grants life changing wishes for children with critical illnesses, and Naeem is already making great progress towards his goal.

Balancing marathon training alongside a degree apprenticeship is no easy task, but if his recent visit to HA showed us anything, it is that he is not afraid of a challenge.

If you would like to support Naeem and help him reach the finish line in more ways than one, you can donate via his official page for the 2026 TCS London Marathon: <https://2026tcslondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pi/naeem-malek>

We will be cheering him on every step of the way! ■

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## Hammersmith Academy Alumni


25 Cathnor Road, London W12 9JD


T: 020 8222 6000


E: [alumni@hammersmithacademy.org](mailto:alumni@hammersmithacademy.org)


W: [hammersmithacademy.org](http://hammersmithacademy.org)

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