



## Anti-Bullying Week 2016

### Inspirational Athlete Comes to Westbourne

To coincide with Anti-Bullying Week 2016, **Deji Tobais** spent the day talking to students about his athletics career and the setbacks he faced growing up in Luton. Deji is a 24-year old British sprinter who runs both the 100m and 200m and he is currently ranked 35<sup>th</sup> in the country.



Of particular interest to students were the challenges Deji faced at school trying to combine his school work with his daily athletics training and how he handled bullying growing up. As a baby Deji contracted meningitis, a potentially life-threatening infection. He survived and made a full recovery but was left deaf in one ear.

Students learned how Deji became involved in athletics at the age of ten, after a big falling out with his Dad over his passion for playing youth football. As a child Deji was always fast but, by his own admission, he lacked the stamina required to maintain his pace for an entire match. One day his Dad persuaded him to go along to his local athletics track in Luton where there happened to be a heptathlon event taking place. Deji entered and won six out of seven events and so began his journey to athletics success. As an international athlete representing Great Britain, Deji travels all over the world to compete at international level.

Deji talked in detail about the setbacks and injuries he has faced and overcome in his athletics career and how his passion for athletics gave him the confidence to put a stop to bullying. After each presentation, students in years 7 to 10 had an opportunity to question Deji about all manner of things such as his fitness regime, what he studied at university, which famous athletes he had met and what advice he could give to younger athletes who want to follow their dreams to compete at a professional level.

We are grateful to Deji for spending the day with us and for sharing his inspirational life experiences and wisdom with our young people. Deji was clearly at ease with a series of teenage audiences and his warmth and openness is to be commended. Students were very appreciative of what Deji had to say and they were able to relate to him in many ways.