

Open Academy Newsletter – 10 May 2024

Dear parents, carers and students.

Welcome to our newsletter this week.

So, all of a sudden it feels like not only has spring sprung, but summer is trying to start, all in the course of one week, which at the very least is good news for the Duke of Edinburgh expedition that has been out in the wilds of the Norfolk/Suffolk border this week, more about that and hopefully with photos next week.

This week I thought I would just share a little about where we are at with our Christian ethos. As you know we are waiting to hear from the Secretary of State for Education regarding our application to become a Church of England Academy. I know things move slowly in government, but I am a little impatient. On the plus side however, we had a fantastic visit from the new Bishop of Thetford - Bishop Ian Bishop, who spent a joyful couple of hours listening to staff and students, praying with us and encouraging us. He said some incredibly positive things about what he saw here and promised he would do all he could to help our application along which was most encouraging. In fact, the whole visit was inspiring in that it was really obvious how much he cared for the experience the students were getting and his genuine interest in what they had to say.

We were able to tell the Bishop about our new venture on a Wednesday evening after school, the Open House that Mr Pimlott has started. I missed the first week as I was recovering from being ill and, to be honest as we set budgets for next year, it has been a tough week since then. In the midst of the challenges though, I thought, actually it might be good to go along to Open House myself. It was the best decision of the week! Half an hour of encouragement and positivity with a great group of students, Mr Pimlott and a couple of volunteers from Soul Church, and a joyful positive experience all round. Having had to pass up the chance of going and meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace on Wednesday evening as I'm still not 100% recovered health wise, things were feeling pretty tough during the day Wednesday, but Open house really cheered me up.

The visit to Lambeth Palace was a reception to encourage headteachers to adopt a series of 6 lessons from the Church of England Education team called The Difference Program. After a small amount of training, staff deliver this innovative series of lessons, to help and support students to, amongst other things, respect alternative views than their own and in a nut shell, disagree well. In these times where it appears the media and certainly the internet are driving us to take ever more polarised views on everything, I am pleased that we have a push back towards getting along with each other. So, although I didn't get the visit, I am hoping we will be starting to introduce The Difference Program with at least one year group before the end of the year.

The Difference program will go hand in hand with another initiative we hope to be involved in next year, as we are hoping to become a school of meditation. The School of Contemplative Life are looking to work with a dozen trusts to introduce 'Meditation in the Christian Tradition' into schools and I am very keen to get us involved. Having started meditating twice daily over 3 years ago, I find it incredibly helpful to get me through a stressful day, and I know that a simple practice to still negative thoughts could be an absolute game changer for some to support good mental health. Watch this space as I hope to have good news about that in the coming months, for now I just reflect on the joy to be had in Open Ark for Open House with our Chaplain and our students. I'm sure I could not have had a better evening in Lambeth Palace with the Archbishop of Canterbury!

Please do enjoy the rest of the newsletter.

Jon Ford
Principal

1. Literary Festival



Our Literary Festival this week has been absolutely fantastic!

On Tuesday some Year 8s and 9s went on a trip to Kett's Books in Wymondham. We got to look around their beautiful bookshop, had an interesting talk in their meeting room upstairs, the students got to have some hands-on experience with actually working in the shop and then everyone got to pick out a book to bring home with them. It was a lovely day and the shop staff were very impressed with the students, saying that they were a credit to the school.

On Wednesday the author A M Howell visited the school to give a talk to the Year 7 students. She spoke about where she gets the inspiration for her historical fiction and mystery books, which was really interesting! We also had some fab questions from the students at the end, my favourite being "Are you rich?" (Unfortunately not!).

And finally, on Thursday the author Molly Morris visited to give a talk to the Year 9 students. This was followed by a creative writing workshop in the library for 27 students, where they were tasked with coming up with a story idea in the genre of Magical Realism. We had some really wonderful creations and some of the students were even brave enough to share theirs with the rest of the group, which was lovely.

Mrs Rogers
Librarian

2. German Trip

Could any parents who still have outstanding passports / forms / payments, please let us know as soon as possible? Thank you.

Mr Blanchflower
Teacher

3. Year 7

Hope everyone enjoyed the long weekend, we have had another lovely week with the great weather. Please remind your child to make sure they bring a water bottle now the temperature is warming up. On drinks another reminder that only water can be brought into the Academy, anything else will be confiscated.

We have Year 7 parents evening on Tuesday, 18 June.

Year 7 camp are having a parent meeting on 22 May at 6pm for Miss Whitwood to go through the full plan for that week

We understand that it can be difficult to get hold of us at times with me teaching and Mrs Roe supporting students and being in time out at times, below is mine and Mrs Roe email address if you are trying to contact us but cannot through by phone. There was an issue in the academy last week with emails but should all be ok from now on.

sean.lambert@open-academy.org.uk
rachel.roe@open-academy.org.uk

I took four Year 7s and four Year 8s to UEA to compete in a cricket softball festival. We were unable to get a victory, but they showed great improvement through it as well as great attitude and effort. We will be starting a cricket club after half term.



A big thank you to Ryan and Tori in 6th Form that ran a scheme where Year 7s could earn a golden star if they showed great effort and attitude in class, they were able to use those stars last Friday to purchase a range of different things from stationary to fidget toys.



Congratulations to Inspiration for the best attendance this week.

Teacher praise:

Izzy W - Excellent notes made for revision to help her remember how to do different methods in maths.

Harrison A - Continuous outstanding effort made in every maths lesson.

The top 10 achievers this week are, Ella-Mai P, Sarah O, Teja M, Sabine L, Rowan S, Alessia P, Elliot C, Riley L, Evie P and Ellie-Mae B.

Mr Lambert (Head of Year 7)
Mrs Roe (Assistant Head of Year 7)

4. Year 8

With the weather getting warmer it has been great to see so many Year 8s with water bottles with them. We don't necessarily have a supply of plastic cups for students to use in school, so please ensure your child comes to school with a water bottle of their own this means they can keep cool and hydrated in the warmer conditions. We are not at summer uniform time yet, so students do still need to be bringing a blazer to school, if it is especially hot in classrooms students can ask to remove their blazers if they are hot.

Our Top LEARNT achievers this week are:

Chakib L	90
Freddie M	80
Callum E	75
Callum J	70
Tom W	70

Congratulations - keep up the good work!

A special shout out from Miss Hawthorne:

Dre B, Callum G, Leo C and Conner P who worked excellently in drama today using their bodies as props. Their creativity was brilliant when playing a warm up game and they created some wonderful physical theatre still images.

Mrs Clayton (Head of Year 8)

Mr Hawkins (Assistant Head of Year 8)

5. Year 9

As part of our literary festival, Year 9 have been involved in talks and workshops this week. Thank you to Mrs Roberts and Mrs Rogers for organising the events.

We have teamed up with Kett's Bookshop who have provided us with a link for the students to purchase the book that the author on Thursday talked about. We'll then be sent the books and can distribute them within school. Here is the link:

<https://wymondham-community-bookshop.sumupstore.com/products>

Students of the week:

Nikta G, Brandon S, Zena A, and Ada A.

Top achievers this week:

Hannah S, Samuel O, Jason J, Ayo T, Kieran S, Ross B, Ryan B and Martina V.

Top achievers this half term:

Erica JJ, Harry B, Ayo T, Samuel O, Riley W, Rianna A, Noam M, Oliver N and Brandon S.

Mrs Power (Head of Year 9)

Mrs Edwards (Assistant Head of Year 9)

6. Year 10

What a lovely week it has been, an extra day off with bank holiday Monday and some gorgeous weather.

Mrs Pearsall and Miss Whitwood have the pleasure of taking 10 Year 10 students on a practice Silver Duke of Edinburgh award expedition from Thursday to Saturday. Mr Coyne has also accompanied them on the

<https://www.open-academy.org.uk/our-academy/news/newsletters/>

trip. I hope they have their sun cream and plenty of water. A review and some pictures will be in next week's newsletter.

We are seeing Year 11 starting their GCSEs this week. This time next year it will be our year group who will be starting their GCSEs, this seems daunting and a little overwhelming. Year 10s have their second round of PPEs from 17 June 2024 for two weeks. In tutor and lessons teacher have been sharing some tips, motivation, and encouragement to help with the exams and come out on top. Including Make a Revision Plan, Use Active Learning Technique, Take Care of Your Physical and Mental Health. The results from these exams may be required for applications for colleges, 6th form places or apprenticeships, so the results do matter. Please support your child in their revision, with the right mindset and strategies - there is nothing a student cannot overcome and be capable of achieving their goals.

If your child is not clear on their next steps post 16 please ask them to speak to the year team and we can arrange a careers meeting with Dr Davies or a careers guidance advisor from Norfolk County Council.

Hub sessions run after school on a Tuesday 3pm – 4pm for Year 10 by Mrs Lamb. Students attending have found this very helpful to get course work completed or complete homework with support. Students who have this on their timetable should be attending every week. If you feel your child would benefit from the sessions and is not on their timetable, please ask them to speak to the year team.

As a year group, students have received an amazing 1530 achievement points. Top achievers this week: Tyler H, Alex P, Leah S, Mohammed S, Isabelle T and Chelsea B. Amazing, keep up the great work.

The majority of the year group are in correct uniform. Although the weather has got warmer they are still required to have their blazers, be in correct footwear, skirt/trousers etc. If for any reason your child isn't in correct uniform please let the year team know the reason why. We may also be able to assist if new items are required.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Mrs Pearsall and Miss Whitwood (Heads of Year 10)

Mrs Lamb (Assistant Head of Year 10)

7. Year 11

The exams have begun. This is the historical time in our students lives where they get to show off all the fantastic knowledge they have gained from 5 years at Open. Although a very stressful time, the more students are able to enjoy this historic educational feat, the better they may perform. We as a year team have been supporting all students in their endeavours as much as possible. So far with just a few exams completed the year group is performing admirably. Some might say better than the last Year 11 students to sit their exams a year ago. Please remember and remind students that they have to get to their exams on time (morning ones start at 9:00, afternoon ones start at 13:00). Also, students need to have full correct uniform to sit their exams, this is set by the government and not Open Academy. If you are unsure please get in contact with the Year Team. Final notice, if a student who is entered for an exam who does not sit the exam, the entrance fee for that exam will be passed on to the student/family to pay. This could be around £200.

Prom tickets are now on sale and can be purchased via parent pay. They cost £30 each. Once bought students can collect their ticket from the year office. Remember the date for prom is the Friday, 21 June.

Learnt points: For this week the total amount of learnt points achieved is an amazing 61. Well done everyone and a great show of positive learning.

The following students have had a great week filled with achievement:

Xhesika D, Ariya R, Mayling T, Rosie C, Chloe D, Lewis R, Ruby T, Rakan A, Maddison L and Jake T.

Positive praise:

Well done to Gemma S and Norah W for their fantastic effort in German.

Big shout out to the whole year group for a fantastic start to their exams. They were all in this morning for their first core exam.

Wonderful attitude to learning being shown by the vast majority, really making the most of all their time in school to fill in any gaps in their learning or recall past knowledge.

It is only with your help that each student will make the most of their time at Open. Thank you for your continued support of the learning of your son/daughter, it shows itself every day.

Mr Pickup (Head of Year 11)

Mrs Smith (Assistant Head of Year 11)

8. Chaplain's Update

Care for the Family

Please see below a link to a really supportive website dealing with family issues and family life amongst other things:

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/support-for-you/family-life/parent-support/>

Thought for the Week



I just wanted to encourage you with the above quote. Sometimes life gets hard, worrying, busy and hectic and sometimes the doing good part begins to diminish when we experience these seasons. Please don't grow weary of, or give up, doing good as blessings will always come back to you somehow or another. It is impossible for them not to. Doing good is the fuel and the power we need to overcome and flourish.

You all are in my thoughts and prayers for strength and all that you need today. God bless you all.

Mark