

The *Open* Way

COURAGE IN EVERY STEP, FAITH IN EVERY JOURNEY

“Take courage”

MATTHEW 14:27

25 SEPTEMBER 2026

Dear Families,

It has been a busy and happy week at Open Academy. Today our students voted for their Head Students, our netball teams have been winning, and we have been thinking together about Harvest and what it means to give.

This Week's Focus: Harvest – Seeds of Generosity

This week, Mr Bradshaw has led our Collective Worship on Harvest. Harvest is a time to say thank you for all that we have. It is also a time to remember that not everyone has enough, and that we are called to share generously with people in need in our local community.

Our scripture

“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12:24)

A single seed on its own stays small. But when it is planted and given away, it grows into many more. Jesus used this picture to show us that giving leads to abundance. When we share our time, kindness or belongings, the good we do grows far beyond what we can see.

Our value: Respect

Our school value this week has been Respect. Respect is not just about good manners. It means seeing that every person matters, including those who are struggling or going without. Showing respect can be as simple as noticing someone who needs help, and choosing to give generously. Why not talk at home this weekend about the things you are thankful for, and one small way your family could share with others?

Head Student Elections: Democracy in Action

Today, students across the school have voted for our Head Students for this year. Candidates showed real courage in putting themselves forward. We are very proud of every one of them. Thank you to Mr Dilley for leading the process so well.

Learning about British values

Voting is about more than choosing a leader. It gives our students real experience of democracy, which is one of the fundamental British values that we teach at Open Academy. By taking part, students have learned that:

- everyone's voice counts, and every vote matters;
- we can make our own choices freely and fairly (individual liberty);
- elections have rules, and we all follow them (the rule of law);
- we can disagree about who to vote for and still treat each other with respect.

That last point links closely to our value of Respect. We will share the results with you soon.

Sports News: Netball Success

It has been a fantastic start to the season for our netball teams. Well done to all our players, and thank you to Mrs Power.

Under 16s (Years 10 and 11)

Our Under 16 team were undefeated at their local tournament on 17 September. They won all four of their games, against Thorpe, Jane Austen, and Sprowston A and B.

Under 14s (Years 8 and 9)

Our Under 14 team were also undefeated at their tournament on 22 September. They won three games and drew one, against Hellesdon A and B, Hewett and Taverham.

Want to join in?

Netball practice runs every Thursday after school, and any girls who would like to come along are very welcome. There are more tournaments for all age groups until March – see the dates below.

Around Open Academy

Year 7: settling in well

Our Year 7 students have settled in really well. They know the high expectations we have of them, and they have learned their routines and the structure of the day. Many have told staff that they love life at secondary school, and we are so proud of them. A few reminders for Year 7 families:

- Lockers can be booked through the Arbor app. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs Wilkinson, our Operations Manager.
- Most clubs will be starting in the next few weeks. Subject teachers will tell students more, and there will be posters around the school.
- Any questions about Year 7 Camp in July 2027 can go to Miss Luter.

Year 10: stepping up to lead

A big thank you to Ella and Alessia in Year 10, who led the group during a PE cover lesson. Mrs Joyce told us they were amazing: they organised the warm-up, set up the basketball games and led the whole lesson. This is exactly the kind of leadership and respect for others that we love to see.

Phone Pouches: A Reminder

All students must bring their phone pouch to school every day, as part of their equipment. If your child's pouch has been lost or damaged, you can buy a new one directly from the manufacturer.

Replacement phone pouches link

open-academy.org.uk/parentcarers/uniform-and-equipment

Dates for Your Diary

Coming up

Every Thursday: netball practice after school – all girls welcome.

Monday 28 September: Under 15 (Year 10) netball tournament.

Tuesday 6 October: Year 8 netball tournament.

Thursday 8 October: Year 6 Open Evening. If your child would like to volunteer as a tour guide or subject helper, please ask them to see Mr Richardson for a permission letter.

Chaplain's Reflection

Just a few thoughts to share with you today on what has been our theme for the last few weeks: the storms of life. Let us go back to the story of when Jesus was out with the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. He was asleep in the stern of the boat when a dangerous storm arose. The disciples, terrified and in fear of their lives, woke Jesus up in a panic. The Bible then says that Jesus got up, rebuked the storm, and calmed it immediately.

Jesus then turned to the disciples and said, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" The disciples had been with Jesus a long time. They had seen him raise the dead, open blind eyes and deaf ears, and cause the paralysed to walk again.

They had seen him do countless miracles, and after all that they had seen, they still had fear and doubt. All they had to do was look back and remind themselves of the miracles they had seen, and the fear they had just experienced would have been diminished.

There is encouragement here for all of us. When the storms of life appear, we need to look back and remember the storms from the past that we have come through and overcome, saying to ourselves: I have come through this before, I can do it again. Victory then, victory now.

In closing, looking at past victories can give you the courage and faith to get through your current storms. Our heavenly Father is always in the boat of life with us, and is only a prayer away. Take courage, do not fear.

God bless you all.

Mark Pimlott

Chaplain

Thank you, as always, for your support. Like the single grain of wheat, small acts of kindness and generosity can grow into something wonderful. I hope you and your families have a restful and happy weekend.

Mr Dan Bagshaw

Principal