

Open Academy Newsletter 3 November 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

Welcome to this week's newsletter. I hope you all had a restful break and are shaking off the seasonal bugs that were around at the end of half term.

I will start with a reminder that the deadline for nominations for people to become parent Governors is approaching fast. You will need to have submitted nomination papers as per the attached letter sent out last week by, at the latest Tuesday, 7 November. Depending upon the number of nominees there may then need to be a ballot if there are more nominees than places.

Just to explore a little more the role of governors, I thought it might be useful to describe how governors help my senior leadership team and I conduct quality assurance on the experience of students at the Academy.

This week for instance, one of our current parent governors came in to conduct a student voice panel for what we call 'faculty review'. Faculty reviews happen in the Autumn term and again in the Spring term and are our 'deep dives' into the experience of students in the classroom. We start with a discussion with the faculty heads on their curriculum, why we will see what we see and what we should we expect in lessons. We then formally observe lessons, often in pairs or with the faculty team and have conversations with the staff member and students on the lesson and the experience generally. We then look at samples of students' assessment folders and we hold student voice panels, where between 8-10 students bring samples of their work and have an in-depth discussion as to what their experience is like in lessons.

When our parent governor came in this week, she spent an hour with a group of students discussing (in this week's case) English. The head of English was present to record notes and the students had time and encouragement to explore how they felt about their English lessons, what helps, what hinders and how they feel about the work. As student voice is incredibly important to our understanding of how well we are doing, having governors collect the students' opinions first hand is invaluable as it encourages students to be honest and open.

Once all of the information is collated together – what the work looks like, student voice, lesson observations and curriculum evaluations, a brief report is made by the faculty leader, which ends with a small number of priority areas for the team to work on. I report a summary of all these reviews back to Governors Standards Committee and, as they have been involved in the collection of the information, they can be confident that we are working on the right areas.

We don't just review faculties though – we also look at SEND, 6th Form, boys' performance and pupil premium performance. So, governors really do get to see the full range of activities in school!

Beyond faculty reviews there is a wide range of activities governors get involved in, from disciplinary panels to specialist areas such as safeguarding, often being linked to specific Academy functions and senior staff. It really is varied and interesting work!

Starting to write this, I just wanted to encourage people to consider the upcoming parent governor election, but as I have been writing, it strikes me that I have not publicly thanked all our governors for all the amazing work they do, up to and including our Chair of Governors Nick Plater who is a brilliant 'critical friend' to me challenging and supporting as required.

I will therefore take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all our governors, a crucial part of our recent successes and triumphs – we could not have done it without them!

Jon Ford
Principal

1. Duke of Edinburgh Awards



The Silver Duke of Edinburgh group have organised a fundraising event for Cancer Research which will take place next Friday, 10 November (3.15-4.00pm).

Students are invited to throw wet sponges at staff as they complete an obstacle relay race £2, or spectate £1. This will take place on the school field. Payments can be made via ParentPay for participation and spectating. Students can also **pay on the gate for spectating but NOT participating** due to logistics.

Mrs Pearsall (Teacher and DofE Coordinator)

2. Literacy

As an English department we are at the point in the year where we have started to test the students' reading ages in Years 7-9. This is to ensure that we can best support them in lessons and with their independent reading. Your child will be given their reading age in class over the next week as well as a colour which determines which books they should be choosing from our library to ensure an appropriate challenge.

Please ask your child what colour they have been allocated and ask to see their library book from school, if they have one. If they are reading a book from home and are unsure if it's the right level, ask them to speak with their English teacher who will be able to offer guidance.

Having a strong reading age really helps students achieve in all of their subjects and here at the Open we wish to support your child to not only be reading regularly, but also to be enjoying and accessing the books they are choosing.

If you have any queries about reading within school, please do not hesitate to contact me (Mrs Clayton) at joanne.clayton@open-academy.org.uk

Mrs Clayton (Teacher)

3. Year 7

It is great to see all the Year 7s back after their first half term. I hope you all had a lovely time and happy to be back in the academy. It was Halloween on Tuesday and I enjoyed hearing what a great time many of the Year 7s had celebrating it. I also enjoyed some compliments for my Pumpkin sports sock.

I would like to say a massive congratulations and introduce you to the Year 7 student council.

Head Girl - Tilly B

Deputy Head Girl – Bianca M

Head Boy – Stefan C

Deputy Head Boy - Jack S-H

2 Ambassadors/Inclusion reps – Jack S-H and Bianca M

2 Open Voice/charity reps - Sarah O and Hattie A

2 Sports leaders – Isaac H and Ashanti G

Tutors are now collecting any unwanted food for their hamper so if you have anything spare, please allow your child bring items appropriate to go into the hamper.

We have several uniform items that we have lent out that we need returning please.

Congratulations to our top achievers: Ashanti G, Theo L, Pheobe B, Ellie-Mae B, Sarah O, Pheobe-May A, Marley S, Kaylen A, Ameera J and Tilly B.

Congratulations to Challenge ATH for having the best attendance and Destiny TTH for winning the tutor challenge.

Teacher praises this week:

Demarco W for helping with PE equipment making the lesson run efficiently.

Hayden P - great effort and enthusiasm in his PE lesson

Jack S - fantastic coaching and recall in Basketball.

Ashanti G for her excellent detective skills in English, a proper Sherlock Holmes - Mr Edwards

I can't single any of them out as they've all been awesome so just an overall praise from me to 7Maths2 for showing a consistently great attitude and smashing their maths – Mr Bradshaw

My whole PE group have been working super hard in health-related fitness. Really proud of them all and the effort they have been putting in every lesson – Miss Whitwood

Mr Lambert (Head of Year 7)

Mrs Roe (Assistant Head of Year 7)

4. Year 8

Year 8 have had a great start back to the term with the first meeting of our new Year 8 leadership team. I'd like to congratulate the students below for being chosen to represent their year group in our school council:

Head Students: Charlee-Mae M and Freddie M

Deputy Head Students: Misha P and Ruby P

Charity Reps: Kelsie-Rose B and Festus A

Sports Leaders: Jess T and Leo C

Ambassadors: Ella S, Ewan C & Ellie H

Mr Hawkins and I can't wait to see how you grow into roles and make a real impact to the Year group and the school as a whole.

Our Top 5 LEARNT achievers this week are:

Taylor N	29
Ben S	29
Chakib L	26
Jensen O	25
Thomas W	25

Keep up the good work!

Mrs Clayton (Head of Year 8)

Mr Hawkins (Assistant Head of Year 8)

5. Year 9

Shout outs:

For Martina in German.

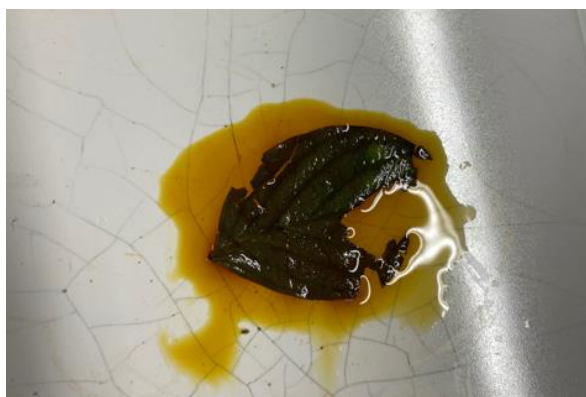
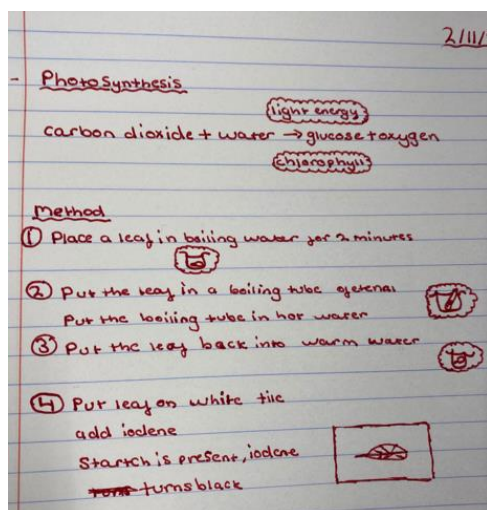
9P been have fantastic in Art.

Chloe S, Mya PG, Caitilyn P, Mavrick G, big effort this week in maths.

Top Achievement points this week:

Jason J, Max S, Luke S, Kieran S, Kiera P, Kaitlin W, Ayo T, Jayce B, Annalee R, Oliver N, Ryan B, Deacon B, Kayden SH, Ollie L, Brandon S, AJ B, Martine V, Henry O, Rusne B, Riley B, Dylain B, Rianna A, Reece Y and Kate S.

Mrs Power observed some great science work yesterday:



The academy takes pride in the appearance of its students and we are grateful for the continued co-operation of parents in maintaining standards. If further clarification is required, please see the link to the uniform page on the website:

<https://www.open-academy.org.uk/parent/uniform/>

Please contact the year team if there is a genuine reason a student is not in uniform.

Mrs Power (Head of Year 9)

Mrs Edwards (Temporary Assistant Head of Year 9)

6. Year 10

The pastoral team are specifically trained to deal with student well-being and support to enable students access their education to their full potential. We understand that sometimes students get upset and need to speak to pastoral staff however, unless there is a serious safety concern, students should not be coming out of lessons and missing their education. There are just over 100 students in the year group and 3 year team staff, this is a higher ratio than in many schools, but there will be pinch points and students need to be aware that not all issues require immediate attention. Students can write their names on the sign-up sheet and we will speak with them asap. We will deal with all student concerns in an appropriate timeframe, but students must attend their lessons. Please speak with your child about the importance of attending all lessons and appropriate timing.

Just a reminder that we expect students to be wearing their uniform correctly and this includes their blazer. If they are hot in a lesson, they can ask the teacher if they can remove it, but it is expected that it will be worn at all other times.

Congratulations to the following students for gaining the most achievement points this week: Maizi Y, Olivia C, Brandon P, Keira B and Steven E.

Well done to Layla D and Joe Y who did some outstanding work in physics this week - Mrs Molloy

Well done to Jamie D for great attitude and effort in German - Mrs McEvoy

Mrs Pearsall and Miss Whitwood (Heads of Year 10)

Mrs Lamb (Assistant Head of Year 10)

7. Careers

We will be holding a parent information evening for Year 10 work experience (WEX) on Wednesday, 22 November (6.00-7.00pm). This is open to both parents/carers and Year 10 students. During the evening we will explain how the Year 10 WEX week (8-12 July 2024) runs and how students can best prepare for it. I will give a short presentation explaining how we support students in their search for a placement followed by an opportunity to ask questions and talk to the Year 10 team and Mr Ward, Vice Principal. Supporting paperwork will be sent out to all families prior to the evening with more details and guidance.

Dr Davies (Careers Coordinator)

8. Year 11

A great first week back for Year 11 after half term. Students across the year group are showing a fantastic level of grit and determination. This is shown in the high attendance to Hub sessions, the wonderful amount of achievement points being awarded and the low amount of behaviour points for the few making the wrong decisions. If we keep it up it should be an amazing year ahead filled with lots of positivity and progress.

For just the first week back (4 days when writing) the total amount of learnt points achieved so far is an amazing 384.

The following students have had a great week and achieved the most LEARNT points:

Billy B, Caitlin A, Michaela B, Scarlet B, Emily Jane C, Sienna H, Kai M, Mayling T, Dylan A, Jake T and Sienna B. Fantastic effort from these students. Keep it up.

Positive praise:

Massive well done to the Year 11 drama students who performed for their unit 1 performance exam.

Fantastic work to 11 business for their work this week designing their promotional campaigns.

Really excellent effort in Art from the following students- Lacey F, Lily T, Sienna B, Kai M, Ebon G, Andrew C, Megan C, Michaela B, Emily JC, Star C, Lucy W and Scarlet B.

Year 11 Health and Social Care group. They are currently sitting their component 2 PSA and are working really hard. It takes a lot of resilience and perseverance to complete all of the work needed for the qualification. Keep going everyone.

Evie G for fantastic homework in science.

Big congratulations to Year 11s who won their second game of the season beating Hellesdon 4-3 with the winner from Ashton T being the last kick of the game.

Seven more months to go before the exam season hits and a reminder that every moment in school is only going to be beneficial to each student's learning. The more they are here, the better chance they will have in the months ahead. If there is ever anything else that you feel your son/daughter needs to support them in their learning please get in touch with the year team. We will do everything we can to support our year group through what can be a stressful time.

Finally, a thank you from us to you, for your continued support and determination to get your child into school.

Mr Pickup (Head of Year 11)
Mrs Smith (Assistant Head of Year 11)

9. 6th Form

Year 12 PPE1 exams will be taking place week beginning 11 December. A timetable will be sent to students soon. Students should speak to their teachers so that they know what content will be in the papers. Year 13 PPE will be taking place in January.

Maths and English GCSE resit exams are taking place over the next week or so. Dates are as follows:
Maths: Wednesday, 8 November, Friday, 10 November, Monday, 13 November (all 9.00am start)
English: Tuesday, 7 November, Thursday, 9 November (all 9.00am start)

Mrs Molloy (Head of 6th Form)

10. Chaplain's Reflection



There are many times during the day that we look in a mirror. When we are getting ready for the day, when we are out driving and many times more. A mirror will always reflect back what's in it.

Have you ever when looking in a mirror given yourself a good talking to? Even with a mouth full of toothpaste? I want to encourage you to talk to yourself. This may sound daft, but it's good practice. We may not always have people around us to encourage us so it's good to look in the mirror and tell yourself "you can do this, you are wonderful, you can make it" and any other phrase you can think of to encourage yourself.

The Bible talks about something similar and says that David (as in the "David and Goliath" David) encouraged **himself** in God. At that time David had no one else around him to lift him up.

We may find ourselves in a similar situation, so I want to encourage you to speak to yourself. Whenever you find yourself in the reflection of a mirror, encourage yourself.

At home my wife has written on several mirrors in our house, Bible verses or encouraging quotes. One in particular written on the mirror in our lounge says, God's grace and favour surrounds us like a shield. We see this encouragement reflected at us at the start of every day and it builds strength and courage in our family.

In closing, if you are up for it, write something encouraging on your mirrors today, and in its reflection tell yourself that you are awesome, **because you are.**

You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Mark Pimlott (Chaplain)

THE
MATTHEW
PROJECT

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New Live Chat for 13-19 year olds

**Safe space for you to ask
questions about drugs, alcohol,
or support**



16:00 - 19:00, Mon - Thur

http://



matthewprojectyoungpeople.org