

Open Academy Newsletter 8 December 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

Welcome to this week's newsletter. After the lovely Christmas celebration we had this week, I am inevitably now in Christmas mode.

I will start then by reflecting how much I enjoyed our traditional Christmas celebration on Wednesday night. This tradition goes way back before my time at the Academy however, it has never been better attended – the atrium was completely full.

Mark Pimlott, our awesome Chaplain, had a feeling we might have quite a few attend, so we put out all the spare tables too and even then there was standing room only, which meant there was an brilliant atmosphere.

It was such a pleasure to see how many students were involved this year – so I would like to give a great big thank you to Mrs Morgan-Heart, our music teacher, who not only wrote a couple of the Christmas numbers that were sung on the evening, but who has brought so much talent out in the form of our choir, musicians and soloists. There were some amazing first-time performers and some great old hands and it was so helpful having a real-life accompanist to help us when we stood and sung carols together as an audience. (I should at this point apologise for my voice – what I lack in ability I make up for in volume – however, Christmas carols are forgiving and there were so many people singing my voice was well covered)!

I must also say a huge thank you to Mrs Ormosi, our fantastic drama teacher, who prepared a large cast to deliver a singularly enjoyable take on 'The Little Match Girl'. Showcasing the best of physical theatre and allowing the students and audience to explore their imaginations. The production was a haunting reminder of how we can get so caught up in Christmas that we forget the crucial messages.

We then had a deeply encouraging talk from David Lloyd from Garden Church who reminded us that the Christmas story is about how we can all find the light at this time of year – and for Christians, that that light symbolises Jesus and reminds us that we are never alone. Themes which fit with our recent assemblies on courage and getting through difficult times.

I reflect, however, that we don't just talk about the good news at Christmas. As an Academy we very much put our values in to practice and, as every year, all around the Academy I can see lovely Christmas hampers forming – ready to be donated in our random acts of kindness at the end of term. I know some staff are volunteering to help with a variety of local campaigns and even our senior leadership Secret Santa this year has been used to buy presents not for each other, but for the Norwich Food Bank. Next week will see our slightly belated Christmas jumper day, for Save The Children, where we encourage students to 'Christmas up an old jumper', adding to the sense of joy during Christmas dinner day at the academy. This year we are also supporting the Year 11 prom with a non-uniform day on the last day of term too so yet another example of our community supporting a local cause!

So, having been inspired by Our Christmas celebration and all the generosity that staff, students and parents at the academy show, I think the spirit of Christmas is well and truly up and running here!

I will finish with a quick reminder to Year 11 and 13 parents that there is a study skills evening next week on Wednesday, 13 December and we are keen for as many parents to come as possible to that useful timely event. And finally, to remind all that our consultation on becoming a Church of England Academy is open until the last day of term. Grateful thanks to everyone who has already had their say – we have had over 90 responses now and are keen to get as many as possible – so please do email in with your thoughts as per my letter at the start of the consultation!

Jon Ford
Principal

1. Year 11 and 13 Revision Evening

We would like to invite parents of our Year 11 and 13 students to a GCSE and A level Revision Evening, which will take place at Open Academy on Wednesday, 13 December 2023 from 5.30-6.30 pm. We believe that it is crucial to work together to provide the best possible support for your child, especially during this crucial phase of their education.

The purpose of this event is to provide you with valuable insights into how you can actively support your child's preparation for their upcoming GCSE and A Level exams. We understand that this period can be challenging for both pupils and parents. Therefore, we want to ensure that you have all the tools and information necessary to help your child succeed.

During the revision evening, we will cover the following topics:

1. Understanding the GCSE Exam Structure
2. Managing Stress and Anxiety
3. Creating a Positive Learning Environment
4. Effective Revision Techniques

Our Year 12 students will share valuable strategies and techniques that they used when they went through their GCSE exams earlier this year.

We believe that your active involvement in your child's academic journey is crucial, and this event is an excellent opportunity to equip yourself with the knowledge and resources to provide the support they need. Together, we can help our pupils reach their full potential and achieve success in their GCSE exams.

Mr Fisher
Assistant Principal

2. Choir

A very big "well done" to everyone in the Choir! You have been amazing this term and you sang fantastically well at the Celebration of Christmas. Lots of people said afterwards how great you sounded, so it's not just me who thinks that you're brilliant!! I am so proud of you all.

If students are not in the Choir but like/love singing, why not come along and have a go? We meet every Wednesday 3.00-4.00pm in the music room. You'd be very welcome indeed!

Mrs Morgan-Hart
Teacher

3. Year 7



Well done to the Year 7 girls football team, they were an absolute delight to take to Notre Dame. The girls showed great sportsmanship throughout the afternoon. The girls drew their first game then went on to win the second two games, giving us an overall win for Open.

Well done OA girls!

Mr Lambert - Head of Year 7

Mrs Roe - Assistant Head of Year 7

4. Year 10

The PPE1s are now finished for most students. Those who have missed any will be given the opportunity to complete them. We are so proud of how the year group have risen to the challenge of their first PPEs. They have shown dedication, hard work and resilience. Some of the results have been given to students by their teachers. There have been some amazing results with students commenting to the year team how proud of themselves they are. We are proud of you all too!!!.

Top achievers this week Larisa M, Oskar C, Lucy-Rose B, Keira B, Chelsea B and Riley B. Well done to you all.

We also had the pleasure of seeing Madison G and Katy S perform in the carol service on Wednesday evening, what a lovely evening it was getting us into the festive spirit.

A general reminder, hoodies should not be worn round school, leggings are also not allowed. We have access to school jumpers if a student is cold and needs to borrow one. Students will receive a detention after school if they do not wear correct uniform.

Mrs Lamb runs a Hub after school on Tuesdays for students who require support with homework or who are unable to complete it at home. We know some students have not been completing homework, those students will need to attend Hub in the new year.

We hope you have a restful weekend after a busy couple of weeks with exams.

Mrs Pearsall and Miss Whitwood - Heads of Year 10

Mrs Lamb - Assistant Head of Year 10

5. Year 11

Each week gone is another closer to the beginning of the exam period. Each week coming is another opportunity to make progress in learning. The more time learning in lessons can only help students to achieve their potential in what will be a historic time in their lives.

On Wednesday, 13 December we will be having a revision evening for the year group. This will be a chance for you and your son/daughter to come and hear about the importance of revision and get some free revision supplies, plus talk to the heads of each faculty. This will begin at 5.30 and last until 6.30.

Last week you were asked if possible to complete a short questionnaire for the Year 11 review. Thank you to those who have contributed their feedback. A summary will follow next week.

Learnt Points: For this week the total amount of learnt points achieved so far is an amazing 254. Well done everyone.

The following students have had a great week and filled with achieved:

Rakan A, Prestion B, Maddison L, Ebon G, Xylia S, Aukse J, Caitlin A, Billy B, Rosie C and Lucy NW. Fantastic effort from these students. Keep it up.

Positive Praise:

- A fantastic effort from those Year 11 students who stepped up and took part in the Christmas Carol evening on Wednesday. It can be difficult to perform in front of so many people but you did yourselves proud. Well done.
- Ben C and Lucy E for continued excellence in English.

- Star C, Hollie S, Lilly B, Leo W, Izaak T and Joel W – showing a fantastic attitude to learning in History. Keep on pushing.
- Consistently outstanding presentation in Art from Emily J C, Lucy W and Lily T.

Thank you for your continued support and determination to support the learning of your child at Open.

Mr Pickup and Mr Walters - Head of Year 11

Mrs Smith - Assistant Head of Year 11

6. Chaplain's Update



Christmas Hampers 'Random Acts of Kindness'

This year we are giving out Christmas Hampers as random acts of kindness to our community again. Students are aware of this in school but we would appreciate your support in this too. Below is an item list of goods that can be donated for the hampers so please feel free to send items into the academy with your child. Please note, it is very important that we stick to the hamper list. Perishable good vouchers can be given as well as donations. Perishable food vouchers can be purchased at local butchers etc. The last day for donations will be Thursday, 14 December. Thank you so much in advance for your generosity.

Christmas Hampers.

what to bring

- Perishable Food Vouchers
- Stuffing
- Shloer/Red or White
- Custard
- Savoury Snacks
- Tin Of Chocolates
- Biscuit/Shortbread Tin/ Packets
- Christmas Crackers
- Christmas Cake
- Christmas Pudding
- Mince Pies
- Cranberry Sauce
- Gravy Granules
- Crisps
- Tinned fruit/Peas/Potatoes



A Celebration of Christmas thank you

Just wanted to say a big thank you to all who came on Wednesday night to A Celebration of Christmas. I'm sure you will agree we had a fantastic time singing carols, watching performances and soaking up the Christmassy atmosphere. It was so wonderful to see you all there and our community at its best gathered

together. A special thank you to all the students that took part and to Mrs Morgan-Hart, Mrs Ormosi and all staff for all their hard work too.

This Week's Reflection

The Christmas story mentions several times, **“do not be afraid”**. It was said by the Angel visiting Mary and the same to Joseph when the angel said, **“do not be afraid”** to take Mary as your wife. The shepherds on the hillsides tending their sheep heard it too. At every announcement made or heard during this time, **“do not be afraid”** was said. The result of every scary announcement made was hope and light being born. Jesus came to this earth.

Just recently we may have heard an announcement in our lives. It may have been negative news or has caused problems to arise and because of this, fear has crept in. I want to encourage you that with every announcement that comes, the words **“do not be afraid”** come with it. It's just that. Whatever you are going through, **“do not be afraid”**, just like in the story of Christmas, hope will arise and the light will shine again.

I pray the hope and light of Jesus will bring you peace. **Do not be afraid.**

Mark Pimlott - Chaplain