

## Open Academy Newsletter – 6 September 2024

Dear parents, carers and students

Welcome back to all and welcome to new parents to our parent and student newsletter.

As always, we hope you will find it to be filled with important information, celebration and opportunities.

Today we are celebrating, as we have officially become one of the first academies in the country to be re-designated as a Church of England School! Thank you so much to the hundreds of people who responded to surveys and consultations regarding this and with the overwhelming (95+%) in favour, we were very hopeful it would happen.

It was a real shock in November 2022 when Ofsted downgraded us due to a safeguarding technicality, the academy came within a week of being re-brokered to a community school trust with a very different ethos. Obviously, we were delighted when Ofsted returned within 6 months to both validate our safeguarding procedures and regrade the academy as GOOD in all categories. However, we were shocked that we could have lost our distinctly Christian ethos due to one negative judgement from the inspectors. It turned out that, although we were always intended to be a Christian school, without the designation as a Church of England School, that status could be easily lost.

At the time, staff, students and parents alike were concerned about what the change in provider might do to the academy's inclusive approach, so when we began a consultation to be re-designated a Church of England school to protect its ethos and values, we were not at all surprised at the positive outcome and for that we are so grateful.

We have become a beacon of success in inclusive education precisely because we are totally driven by our strong Christian values. We see every child as a blessing and work hard to ensure that students of all faiths and none, are welcomed and supported to success.

So, it is with absolute joy that I can confirm that, yes we are now a Church Of England School, and that there will be no change at all in our ethos, admissions or even our name – we will carry on being the strongly Christian, all faiths and none, inclusive school that we always have been! Thank you.

Now I would love to finish on that high note this week, however I feel I must apologise for the technical problems we have been having. Changing student information management system from SIMS to Arbor and at the same time changing phone and internet provider, all to save money, has meant an absolute perfect IT storm. Not to mention Arbor itself having start of term problems. Please accept my apologies for our communication and organisation problems. All will be sorted by the middle of the next week I have been told.

Further to the technical issues we have been experiencing with Arbor, our new management information system, we have had to delay the rollout of the parental app. As soon as the issues are resolved we will send further communication about this including how to register, please look out for this information and register your child when prompted. Unfortunately, we have had to further delay introducing the changes for payment of school meals. Can we ask that you continue to top up the account for your child's lunch through the current ParentPay platform, until further notice. We are aiming to get the links to access the ParentPay platform for Year 7 and other new students out to parents early next week, we are so sorry for the delays and any inconvenience caused.

Finally, this week I would just like to share that we have a smaller senior leadership team this year and I have cut down to 4 days per week. I am delighted, however, to confirm Miss Wenlock as being Principal on Fridays from now on as she replaces Mr Ward as our full time Vice Principal. Whilst there is much change I am hoping we will very much be back to business as usual from next week!

Now please read on for more news and year specific updates.

Jon Ford  
Principal

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

## 1. Year 7

Wow, what a fantastic start to the first year at Open Academy. I am truly impressed by the dedication, enthusiasm and resilience already being shown by all those who make up this wonderful group of young learners. I know there have been difficulties, challenges and barriers already, but nothing has been able to stop the relentless onslaught of progress and positivity in the first 3 days. Hopefully very soon the technical issues the school is facing will be rectified.

**Learnt Points:** These are awarded by members of staff for 5 different reasons; active listening, engaging fully with the learning, giving great feedback by answering questions, being respectful to all, being present and ready for learning and working as a team. For the last 3 days the total amount of learnt points achieved is an amazing 563. This is fantastic and shows a wonderful start to the term. Well done everyone and a great show of positive learning.

**Positive Praise:** Each week I ask members of staff to share any positivity they have witnessed from the year group, below is what they have said:

Mia Marie C being a great team player for giving out resources in maths.

Ethan F, Jools D, Lily L - A really positive attitude to the start of a new school and willingness to give everything a go.

7HRD - A superb first guided reading lesson. All the students in this class behaved well and showed enthusiasm. What a fantastic start - Miss Roberts

7P have made an outstanding start in geography. All students arrived ready to learn with correct equipment in perfect uniform. They all contributed in their 2 lessons this week talking about summer events and a general knowledge geography quiz. Brilliant!

**Reminders:**

Any uniform issues please let the year team know so we are able to assist.

Please ensure all students have all the required equipment for their learning. This must include a reading book.

Lockers – please send in the required money in a labelled envelope. This then needs to be handed to Mrs Bell in the finance office. Then your son/daughter will be given their locker key.

To help with uniform going missing please can you add your son/daughter's name to their blazers/ties/PE tops.

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 7)  
Mrs Smith (Assistant Head of Year 7)  
Mr Dilley (Year Team Support)

## 2. Year 8

I'm sure you're all very happy to have your child back in the academy and not missing them at all, its lovely to see nearly everyone back and talking to so many about their summers. They have settled in really well and are engaging in every lesson.

A few reminders that they now must be wearing their blazer in the academy. Uniform was good in Year 7 but can be better, I understand some uniform is on order and will be with them soon, please let their tutor, Mrs Roe or I aware.

Please encourage your child to familiarise themselves with their timetable for when they have PE/food tech so they bring in the right clothes/equipment.

I'm excited to what this year will bring and seeing our year group flourish around the academy.

Teacher praise:

Brilliant effort from 8O in their history lessons this week. Loads of questions and answers – Mr Walters

Good effort from Junior B in science yesterday – Mr Murray

Mackenzie M for excellent work in Maths – Miss Moy

Charlie S for excellent reading in my science lesson – Mr Lambert

Mr Lambert (Head of Year 8)

Mrs Roe (Assistant Head of Year 8)

## 3. Year 9

It's been a brilliant start to the new term for Year 9. Attendance has been 95% this week which is 2% higher than national average! Excellent attendance is vital as we know so this is great to see.

Can we remind all parents and carers that full uniform is compulsory, this includes a blazer each day. Thank you for your support with this as we believe correct uniform helps them to maintain a working mindset for school.

Some praise for Year 9 this week:

All of my English class were awesome in their first lesson back - it's hard to pick a standout one! Perhaps Chakib and Charles for being able to recall their Year 8 knowledge of psychoanalysis - Mrs Clayton

Caitlyn N for helping other students in maths - Mrs Marsham

Dre worked really well yesterday and showed a real interest in the topic - Mr Murray

Brilliant start from 9H in Art. They showed real focus and determination working on their observation skills – Mr Walters

Year 9 have been looking at the work of Grayson Perry and have today been creating abstract drawing sheets of random household objects to inform their repeat prints. We used drawing techniques such as continuous line, wrong hand, eyes closed and spacial disorientation to create abstract outcomes that pushes us out of our comfort zones.

They particularly enjoyed drawing with heads on the desks and feeling like they have no control of the pens - Mrs Rednall

Students who deserve a mention for their effort in music are Jasmin, Bella, Sav, Amy, Angel N, Ava, Hannah, Hope, Lucy and Tallulah. Special shout out to Peter, who taught 2 other students a piece and they all played on one piano as a trio – Mrs Morgan-Hart



Big praise for the following for an absolutely brilliant start to Year 9 maths to Munashe, Kaelan, Taylor, Destiny, Jamie, Tulisha, Logan, Ollie, Ava, Misha, Bella, Lucy, Liam, Matilde, Jess, Kaiden, Ruby, Kelsie, Isaac, Ewan, Elizabeth, Kimberley and Leon - Mr Bradshaw

Mr Walters (Head of Year 9)  
Mr Hawkins (Assistant Head of Year 9)

#### 4. Year 10

Year 10 have dealt with a lot of change in the first few days back in terms of moving into options and changes in teachers. They have done this with maturity and are communicating any issues with timetables with Mrs Edwards and Mr Fisher. All timetable change requests from this week will be adjusted where possible.

The deadline for any changes made to options will be 30 September. Once that deadline has past students cannot swap options as some subjects have their first module exams in January and students will be too far behind their peers.

Students of the week: Evie D, Reece Y, Somaya R, Paige W, Lily A

In their first textiles lesson, Year 10 started a drawing task, working in the style of Vivienne Westwood. We looked in detail at the Punk Rock era of the 70's and 80's and started our own garment line ups. These are some of the amazing drawings so far – Ms Rednall



Mrs Power (Head of Year 10)  
Mrs Edwards (Assistant Head of Year 10)

## 5. Library

The library will be reopening properly for students on Monday, hooray! As a reminder, here are the times:

### Monday

Open Tutor  
Open Break  
Open Lunch

*Mondays will be our silent day in the library this year. So students who struggle with noise will have somewhere quiet to go.*

### Tuesday

LGBTQ+ Club only during Tutor  
Open Break  
Book Club only during lunch

### Wednesday

Closed all day

### Thursday

Open Tutor  
Open Break  
Open Lunch

### Friday

Open Tutor  
Open Break  
Open Lunch

Library clubs and groups will be starting up over the next few weeks. This includes writing club, book club, LGBTQ+ club, D&D club and board game club.

### Library Fines

A quick reminder to parents that fines will be issued for lost/overdue books in the next few weeks. Any books still outstanding from the last school year will incur a £2 fine per book. We also accept replacement copies or good quality second-hand copies in place of the fine.

## 6. Chaplain's Update

### Care for the Family

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

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

### This Week's Reflection

Every September at the start of our school year, I like to remind **YOU** our community how valued and priceless you are. Last year we had the seven **YOUs** of September, this time it is sixteen. I would encourage you to keep these near and handy throughout this year to be encouraged and to remind yourself who you are.

### ***The 16 YOUs of September***

- 1) **You** are wonderful, you are amazing.
- 2) **You** being here is not a mistake, everyone here belongs here.
- 3) **You** are family.
- 4) **You** make a difference.
- 5) **You** are needed.
- 6) **You** are priceless and irreplaceable.
- 7) **You** are the only one of you.
- 8) **You** are not alone.
- 9) We walk with **you**.
- 10) **You** will make it.
- 11) **You** are loved.
- 12) **You** will recover.
- 13) **You** will be blessed.
- 14) **You** are free.
- 15) God is for **you**.
- 16) God Loves **you**.

I pray that the wonderful peace of God would be with you always. God bless you all.

Mark