



The Astley Cooper Newsletter

October 2020

Welcome back

. . . to school and to the new academic year. A special welcome to our Year 7 students who have made an excellent start to secondary school: they look very smart in their new uniforms and seem a delightful year group.

We have 174 students in Year 7 and just under 770 students in our school. This time five years ago we had 80 students start Year 7 and 399 students in total. It is very pleasing to see our roll growing each September.

Our school feels very different this year with our staggered start and finish times, staggered breaks and lunchtimes, and students working in year group bubbles. These fundamental changes to the way the school operates reflect the restrictions on all lives through Covid-19.

(There is a note about the impact of Covid-19 on us this half-term elsewhere in the *Newsletter*.)

We are pleased with the way that the students have responded to these changes, appreciate the positive attitude they have shown on their return to school, and thank you, their families, for your support during this extraordinary time.

I am also very pleased to welcome a significant number of new colleagues who have joined Astley Cooper recently. You will find their names and photographs on the following pages.

Our increased student population has enabled us to appoint more staff. We are very fortunate – particularly in this difficult time – to have so many talented and committed staff who have risen magnificently to all the challenges that this year has already brought.

All of us have become accustomed to this strange new world of virtual meetings, including a virtual Open Evening, which seems a contradiction in terms. This went on our website on 1 October and is in the school information section. All the departments made short films to introduce themselves to parents new to the school and these videos give the viewer a good overview of the various subjects.

We wish all our students from Year 7 to Year 13 an enjoyable and successful year.

***Mr Gaynor,
Headteacher***



Welcome...new staff



Mrs Al Alousi
Teaching Assistant



Mrs Animashaun
Librarian



Mr Benaziza
Dance Teacher



Miss Colfer
English Teacher



Mr Culank
Science Teacher



Mr Dwane
Cover Supervisor



Mr Fallan
PE Teacher



Mr Fanning
Inclusion & Humanities
Teacher



Mr Footman
English Teacher



Mr Govind
Maths Teacher



Mr Hart
Science Teacher



Miss Hunt
PE Teacher



Welcome...new staff



Miss Kempson
Teaching Assistant



Miss McLaughlin
Cover Supervisor



Mrs Millar
Finance Administrator



Mrs O'Connor
Teaching Assistant



Mr Moscovici
MFL Teacher



Ms Nowak
Business Teacher



Mr Parker
Science Teacher



Mr Siu
Assistant Headteacher



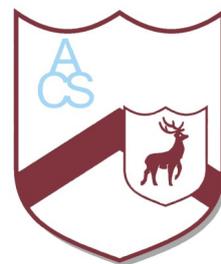
Mrs Thomson
Food Technician



Mr Welby
Production Arts
Technician



Mrs Wiles
English Teacher



Staff Allies

Astley Cooper was celebrated in the local press for our LGBT+ inclusion initiatives. Our school has always prided itself on inclusion and social justice, so being celebrated for our new programmes which exemplify this has been really positive. Featured in the article were Ella Cairns and Lily Johnson in Year 9, and Megan Whale in Year 8. You can read the article here:

<https://www.hemeltoday.co.uk/news/people/hemel-hempstead-teacher-introduces-initiatives-make-school-more-lgbt-inclusive-2991163>

Mr Moscovici
MfL Teacher & PSHE Co-ordinator



Year 9

It has been such a pleasure to have had the Year 9s back after such a long time away. They have done well with adapting to the new routines and structures that must be followed due to COVID-19

I am proud with how quickly the students have settled back into school life. It is a strange time for us all; what is wonderful to see is the students in lessons learning, whether in practical or academic studies.

I hope that you, your families and the students have a restful half-term. I cannot wait to see all the students back after their well-deserved break.

Miss Roberts
Head of Year 9



Pre-Apprenticeship Programme

Generation Renovation

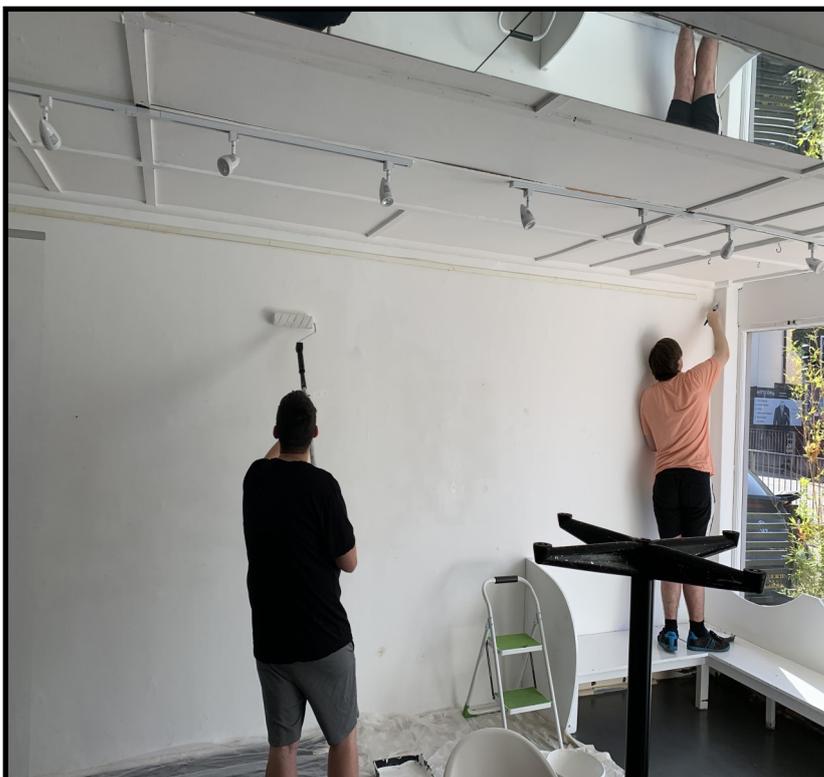
Astley Cooper Pre-Apprenticeship students have emerged from the darkness of lockdown with bright eyes and bushy tails, raring to get stuck into the fully socially distanced world of work. First up on the list of work experience has been a renovation project at Open Door, a community café and meeting place in Berkhamsted.

The eight teenagers have been helping restore the garden for elderly visitors, clearing and levelling paths, cutting down overgrown shrubs and trees and preparing the ground for new planting next spring. They cutback a mass of ivy off a giant tree making more space and letting light into the seating area that is vital for guests coming in for tea during the Covid-19 restrictions.

Outdoors finished, they moved inside to spruce up the café. As the café was closed to the public for just one day, the team had to prepare the walls, paint them twice and clean up after themselves so no one would know they had ever been there in time to get the minibus back for the school bell. 'They all worked so hard and so fast the job was finished ahead of time. With a clean and pristine finish, they enhanced their reputations and represented their school very well, I couldn't have been prouder', said Programme Co-ordinator Richard O'Brien.

The Open Door is run entirely by volunteers and from public donations. It provides a vital service to the elderly and vulnerable members of the community with a pay-what-you-can snack menu through the day in the café. There are also group activities held in the meeting spaces upstairs. It is all designed to combat loneliness and to improve the visitors' physical and mental health.

Before starting their three-week stint at Open Door, the students thoroughly researched the centre. They picked through the website www.opendoorberkhamsted.co.uk with a fine-tooth comb so they could explain to their parents and to teachers exactly what they were going to do and who it was for. At the end when asked how they felt about what they had achieved they all agreed 'We did a good thing and we did it well'.



Pre-Apprenticeship Programme

Contd/

Open Door's Volunteer Co-Ordinator Mary-Jane Martin, said, 'We're so lucky that the students chose Open Door for their work experience. They've made such a difference, both in the garden and inside the building – no job was too big or too small! We were so impressed with their enthusiasm and hard work. It's been such a pleasure having them at Open Door.'

Mr O'Brien
Pre-Apprenticeship programme
Co-ordinator



Transport

Inclusion & Achievement

Several students in the Inclusion & Achievement Centre have been learning about the history of transportation this half-term. One project focused on exploring the local community on the school mini bus. One particular Year 10 student Alex Donkeng thoroughly enjoyed researching local routes to and from school by travelling in the school mini bus. A big thank you to our Facilities Manager Mr Biswell for arranging this experience.

The SEND Team



Picturing Hemel

Congratulations go to Keeley Bolton

Towards the end of June 2020 we were contacted by DK-CM Architects on behalf of the Hemel Garden Communities Team programme – an ambitious development programme to transform the town of Hemel Hempstead and create new neighbourhoods to its north and east by 2050.

As part of the project, DK-CM Architects have set up a new online platform, the Hemel Channel (on Instagram [@HemelChannel](#)) to host conversations and activities about all things Hemel. They are particularly interested in involving children and young people, who will inherit the future development.

To launch the Hemel Channel, they hosted two competitions:

'Picturing Hemel', asking our students to submit two photographs of Hemel, and 'Future Hemel' asking our students to submit a drawing of what they envision our Future Hemel to look like. Each competition offered a chance to win a £200 bike voucher.

Several of our students in Year 7 and 8 submitted their entries and I am pleased to announce that congratulations go to Keeley Bolton in Year 8 for her 'Picturing Hemel' entries for which she was awarded the position of Runner Up prize and a £20 National Gardens Gift Voucher. Please enjoy reading Keeley's caption and enjoy looking at her lovely photographs.

Miss Holmes
Art Teacher

'Picturing Hemel Competition'

Hemel means a lot to me as I have grown up in this town ever since I was born. I like it when I go out to smell the fresh air. Gadebridge Park and Old Town are part of Hemel and will always be part of it.

This picture is of The Old Town with the square part of the road with all of the shops behind. The Old Town is one of my favourite places to go in Hemel as it has these wonderful shops. One of my favourite shops there is Annabella which is one of the newest ones there.



This is my second picture and it is the old church which is very symmetrical. This church is pretty inside. I have been in there because my second cousin got married here and I was a bridesmaid. The church has lots of beautiful flowers and bushes around the grounds, including roses and buttercups.

Keeley Bolton
8TB



Year 10 Self Portrait with Mask



Delia Morinescu



Joshua Mitchell



Sarita Silwal



Sarah Graham



Masie Deane



Mia Brumfield



Richard Pegg



Amy Saunders



Tyler Waite



Amelia Edwards



Libby Brown



Jacob Waggeh



Faye



Oliver MacDonald



Abby Hailey



Hallie Young

Headteacher's Commendations

September Award

Prestyn Agate 7SWi

Pulitha Wijesinghe 8SCL

McKenzie Gavin 8Inc

Gabriel Souza 9GPo

Sarah Graham 10JDo

Lewis Rose 11HH

Amal El Gharrafi 12RP

Akshay Patel 13JHo



Congratulations

for excellent effort,
attitude &
achievement

October Award

Zoe Wright 7KFa

Eve Logan 8AB

Sonny Turner 9AOG

Harry Ashpole 10CH

Charlotte Chantler 11CHa

Alexia King 12RP

Holly Armitage 13JHo

Year 8

I am proud to inform you that I have been appointed as the new Head of Year 8. I have been a Cover Supervisor at The Astley Cooper School for two years and already know the students well. I am looking forward to working with you and your child from 1 November.

Should you wish to contact me, my email address is D.Buzzle@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

In the first instance, you can contact your child's form tutor with any queries, questions or concerns.

Ms Myers (8HMY) H.Myers@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

Mrs Babouri (8TB) T.Babouri@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

Mr Burnaby (8AB) A.Burnaby@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

Mr Parker (8APA) A.Parker@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

Miss Hodges (8GH) G.Hodges@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

Mrs Clyne (8SCL) S.Clyne@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

I look forward to meeting you in the future.

Mrs Buzzle
Head of Year 8



COVID-19

As parents already know, we have now had two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the last couple of weeks of this half-term. One was a student and the other was a teacher. In both cases, we immediately followed the latest guidance from Public Health England.

Students who were in close contact with both confirmed cases were sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. Letters went home to their families on the same day and to everyone else for your information. That letter is also on our website. The teacher's close colleagues were also advised to self-isolate.

In the first case, it affected approximately 30 students but in the case of the teacher, we sent home seven classes and the form group with whom the teacher had been in contact in the 48 hours before the onset of symptoms.

While the advice states clearly that, *'the default should NOT be to self-isolate the whole class or bubble in a secondary setting'* * we wanted to minimise the risk to our students and their families and therefore sent all those classes home.

As one parent said in a phone conversation with me, this was a question of when not if. While we completely understand the anxiety parents may have, I would like to reassure you that we will continue to strive to keep our students safe with staggered start and finish times, staggered breaks and lunchtimes, and year group bubbles working in different areas of the school.

I would like to thank the families most affected by this for your support and sensitive response. Unfortunately, this health crisis is going to be with us for some time and I would ask for your continued support in ensuring that your children bring a face covering to school, follow the guidance about regular hand washing, and try as far as possible to observe advice on social distancing.

We hope to see everyone safely back at school after half-term on Monday 2 November.

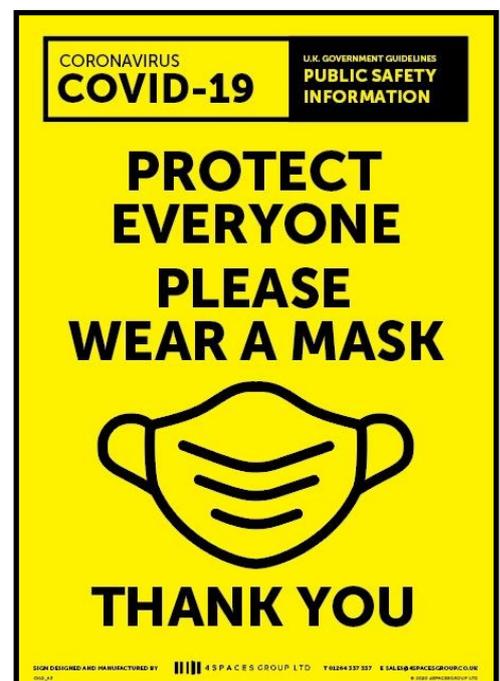
* *East of England/Public Health England/Local Authority Joint Memorandum of Understanding for management of confirmed Covid-19 case(s) in educational settings v5.1.*

Mr Gaynor
Headteacher



HCC COVID-19 response to support early years and education settings is operating as normal during half-term, email COVID.EYSEducation@hertfordshire.gov.uk – operating hours are as follows:

Monday-Friday – 9am-5pm
Saturday – 10am-6pm
Sunday – 11am-7pm



Google Classroom

All teachers have been working extremely hard to ensure students can access their work on Google Classroom. Please use the link below:

<https://classroom.google.com>

Students' work is located within their individual classes. To access this, your child will need to open each classroom individually.

You can find all the details on Google Classroom on our website page or using the link below:

<https://www.astleycooper.herts.sch.uk/news/?pid=26&nid=3&storyid=104>

Thomas Lally
Assistant Headteacher



Admission Arrangements 2022/23

Consultation on the Admission arrangements 2022/23 of The Astley Cooper School

In accordance with the requirement of the School Admissions Code, The Astley Cooper School is consulting on their admission arrangements for the academic year 2022/23.

The consultation will run for six weeks commencing on 26 October 2020 and closing on Friday 6 December.

Main rationale for the consultation:

According to the Schools Admissions Code we are required to consult every seven years

The proposed Admissions Policy and Procedures document is on the school website. Although we are consulting, we will not be changing our admissions process and will continue to be managed by Herts Country County.

Mr R Tucker
Chair of Governors

FREE WEEKLY WEBINARS TO HELP YOUR FAMILY BE HEALTHIER!

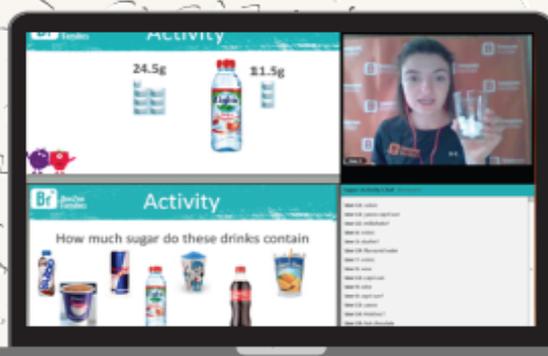


Your family's health has never been so important. So we've taken our award-winning BeeZee Families programme and made it virtual, so that we can continue to support Hertfordshire families to create healthy habits - safely, from home - during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over 12 weeks of webinars, we'll cover topics such as healthy snacking, balanced meals, portion size and physical activity. The webinars are fun and interactive, with games and quizzes, and prizes to be won!

Our team of family nutritionists are experts at engaging children around healthy eating and exercise, and can help you turn one healthy behaviour into a good habit for life!

Funded by Hertfordshire County Council, this free service is available to children aged 5-15 who have a BMI above the 91st centile (we can help you work this out if you're not sure).



"We got a lot out of the online sessions, it really helped us to make some positive changes to our eating habits. I liked the idea of having the quizzes and polls as you still felt really involved, and both Jamie and I had lost weight after just 6 weeks."

- Jamie (7 years)

"The online programme was run brilliantly. Informative, interactive and interesting. We all found it helpful and picked up useful knowledge for life! Jake has lost 11kg and he looks and feels so much better! Thanks BeeZee Bodies for giving him a lifetime of skills to keep this going!"

Jack (16 years)



New groups begin 5th October!

Sign up for your free place at beezeebodies.com or call 01707 248648

