

July 2023



ACS NEWSLETTER



Headteacher's Message:

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we draw to a close on another successful year for The Astley Cooper School community, I wanted to thank you for your continued support and share some of our plans for the next academic year.



This year has seen its challenges as well as a huge number of successes that you will see as you continue through this newsletter. Moving into the new school building has been one of those, and I'm really pleased with how well the students have settled into their new environment, the increased efforts towards their school work and an improvement in their general behaviour. If you haven't had the opportunity to visit yet, please join us at the Open Evening on Thursday 12 October and see all the exciting things we are doing in school.

There have also been a number of trips and experiences that you will be able to read about in this newsletter. From the Year 10 work experience, the Year 7 trip to Mountfitchet Castle, the multi year group trip to Norfolk Lakes and the Year 9 trips to the World War 1 battlefields and to Cadbury's World.

Key dates 2023-24

Click [here](#) for the term dates for 2023-24

Parents Evenings

Year 7 - 22 May 2024

Year 8 - 1 July 2024

Year 9 - 31 January 2024

Academic Review Day

Year 10 and Year 12 - 28 March 2024

Year 11 and Year 13 - 18 October 2023

Year 9 Preference Evening

28 February 2024

Letters Home

Click [HERE](#) to find the most recent letters we have sent home to parents.

Vacancies

Click [HERE](#) to find our current vacancies.

Follow our social media pages for up-to-date news and information about ACS.



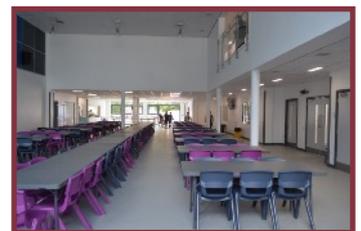
Further information is also available on our website.



I know that the last 18 months have been challenging for the country as we have returned from the difficulties of the Covid pandemic, only to be met with economic hardships and international issues including the war in Ukraine as well as public sector strike action. The fallout from the war in Ukraine is continuing to impact on the whole school community as the cost of living increases and resources are harder to come by. I want to remind you to reach out to the school if you need support or assistance, as well as looking out for those around you who may be finding life difficult. The Department for Education and education unions have potentially reached an agreement on funding, workload and teacher pay which will hopefully mean school is not affected by strike days during the next academic year and we can focus on maximising the attendance of all students, every single day.

We have also seen an increase in the negative and damaging rhetoric towards public services from global and national leaders as well as a funding crisis which has impacted on the recruitment of teachers and support staff onto training courses and therefore into schools. This is a challenging time for schools. The number of teachers available to fill vacant roles in schools has reduced and schools in challenging areas are finding it even more difficult to recruit the good staff who will help their students to make progress to catch up with those in more advantaged areas.

As a school, we have managed to recruit a number of excellent staff to replace those who are moving on to new adventures; some in new schools and others in different professions. I wish those leaving all the very best for the future and I ask that you support us into the new academic year by discussing with your children how important excellent behaviour, hard work and focus are to a successful future to support new staff joining us. I want the staff at The Astley Cooper School to be able to teach fun and enjoyable lessons where all students can achieve their full potential. Well-behaved, well equipped students are a crucial part of helping us achieve this. Students in exam year groups should look out for work on Google Classroom over the summer to prepare them for the next academic year. Please support us by helping them to find the time to complete this before they return in September.



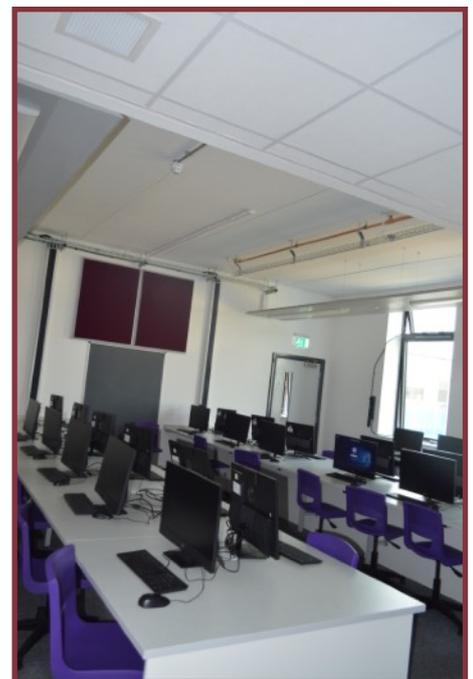
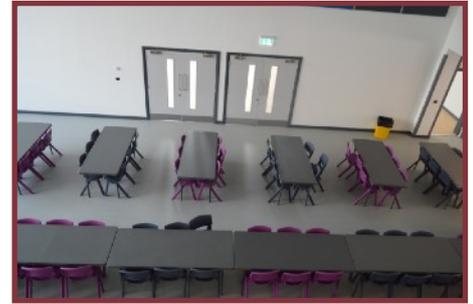
I have spent time, along with the governing body, meeting with parents and reviewing the responses to school surveys. This has enabled us to review the school vision and values to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflects the changing nature of education. I have also reviewed the time and structure for meeting with parents and next year we will return to Parents Evenings for Years 7, 8, 9 while keeping Academic Review Days for Years 10, 11, 12 and 13. The provisional dates are shared in this newsletter to give you an idea of the range of events we are holding during the next academic year. There will be more opportunities for you to meet with governors through the 'parent focus group' meetings on Wednesday 24 January 2024 and Wednesday 4 July 2024 from 5.00pm to 6.00pm to hear about the work they are doing to support the school and provide feedback to them.

For Year 13 parents and students, you can collect your A-level and BTEC results on Thursday 17 August in the new canteen between 10.00am and 12.00pm. For Year 11 parents and students, you can collect your GCSE results on Thursday 24 August in the new canteen between 10.00am and 12.00pm. If you are away, or are unable to collect your results in person, please contact Ms Roberts or Ms Cansick to ensure we can get your results to you in a timely way.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a safe and relaxing summer break. I look forward to seeing all the children back in school during the week beginning 4 September 2023 - Year 7 and 12 on Monday 4 September and the whole school back on Tuesday 5 September.

Thank you

Sam Orsborne





Year 6 Transition

The Year 6 students arrived nice and early on the 13 July for their Transition Day. They were excited and apprehensive at the same time. There was a real buzz of excitement when they were put into groups and when they met their form tutors for the first time.

At lunchtime, the students went onto the field to play and lots of new friends were made. There were football games being played, and I was asked to referee one game of football which I gladly agreed to do.

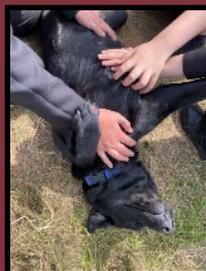
The Year 6 students made a great impression on their first day.

The students brought their parents/ carers back in the evening and gave them a guided tour of their new school and the lovely new building. They also listened to the Headteacher's speech and listened to two Year 10 students speaking about their experience of their time at Astley Cooper.

We also had additional transition days for a small group of identified students. The final extra transition day for our new year 6 students was a huge success. Ark Farm came to visit! All of our fantastic new students listened beautifully to a talk and spent some time with the animals. Our favourite was the Ronnie the goat!

We look forward all the students joining us in September.

Mrs Goodchild (Head of Year 7) and Mrs Beresford (SENDCo)



Diversity Week

Diversity Week started with a bang on our Disability Awareness day where Gareth Tyler, an ex Astley Cooper pupil returned, 25 years on, to speak to all the year groups about his journey struggling with Dyslexia and ADHD. He has become a successful musician and runs his own music school, Sound Box.

His amazing drum demonstration and speech enthused the pupils and helped to raise aspirations and awareness regarding achievement and success! He was joined by Sophie, who has learning difficulties and who presented the work she does with resin in designing jewellery and ornaments. Her beautiful work has developed with her buying her own workshop where she is growing her business!

We also had Monty, our therapy dog in school where pupils could meet him and spend some time understanding what he does to support children.



Thursday was a day to celebrate and raise awareness around LGBTQ+. Shae and Jamie from Service for Young People joined us for the day and did workshops with all of Year 8, educating them around the history of LGBTQ and also considering hate crime and what constitutes this. They had their pop up stand in the hall at lunch time promoting all the local work they do in Dacorum with young people that covers a range of interventions for all needs.

Friday was our Culture Day where pupils were invited to attend school wearing cultural wear or colours of their flag. It was amazing to see all the different outfits celebrated in school representing a range of different cultures we have here!

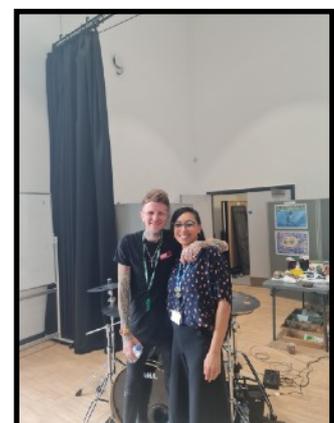
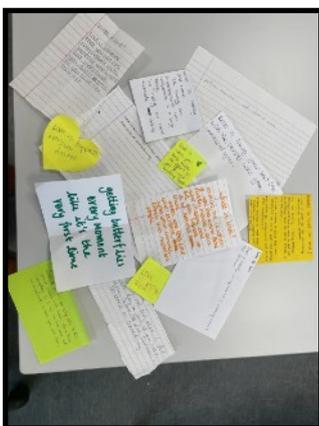
Our key speaker Ayo Fowale, who is a spoken word performance poet, spoke to year 9 and 10 about his journey into poetry and the childhood which led him to find this outlet. He performed a range of his original poetry, covering topics such as race struggles, gang violence and freedom.

He was joined by Imrana Mahmood, who spoke to inspire our pupils around the Creative Arts and production. She spoke specifically about her experience as a Muslim lady and how this impacted her experience within this career. Pupils were so engaged and asked some great questions to our visitors.

During lunch time we offered a Djembe Drumming workshop, facilitated by Kris Banks, where pupils got to experience playing Djembe's and learned some key drum rhythms. The participants were so involved and had a really fun time playing these together.

We ended the day with a photo shoot of all the pupils who had come to school in cultural wear (as well as some staff!) celebrating the beautiful outfits and with Ayo leading some poetry workshops. Some of the work produced by the pupils was highly impressive and they read their work out loud at the end of the workshop.

The week was an incredible success, celebrating and raising awareness across a range of areas of diversity and inclusion.



Final House Points 2022-2023

Parks	King	Curie	Nightingale	Hawking	Shakespeare
27510	27297	28128	31087	27109	28280



ACS House System



Congratulations to Nightingale House who won both the final House competition on Sports Day, and the overall House Trophy for 2023-24!

Please click [here](#) to see our drone footage of Sports Day. Well done to all students who took part.

Sports Day Results

Year 7 - 1st: Shakespeare and Nightingale/ 3rd: King/ 4th: Hawking/ 5th: Curie/ 6th: Parks
Year 8 - 1st: Hawking/ 2nd: Curie/ 3rd: Shakespeare/ 4th: Nightingale and Parks/ 6th: King
Year 9 - 1st: King/ 2nd: Hawking/ 3rd: Nightingale/ 4th: Parks/ 5th: Shakespeare/ 6th: Curie
Year 10 - 1st: Nightingale and Parks/ 3rd: Shakespeare/ 4th: King/ 5th: Hawking/ 6th: Curie





PE Department

District Sports

On Wednesday 5 July, we took a strong squad of Athletes to Jarman Park for District Sports Day. We had a very successful day with numerous personal bests and 14 medals including 2 golds. An incredible 8 school records were also broken during the day! Well done to all that participated.



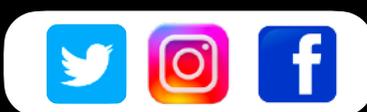
Norfolk Trip

The PE rewards trip to Norfolk Lakes Manor Adventure was incredibly popular with the current Year 7's and 8's with a total of 75 students attending. Whilst we were there, students enjoyed a variety of activities including Giant Stand Up Paddle Boarding, Kayaking, Rifle shooting, High ropes and Crate stacking. A personal favourite of every student was the Giant Stand Up Paddle Boards where most spent the hour and a half trying to push their instructors and teachers off to claim the board for themselves.

The students' attitude and behaviour were fantastic. They all did their best and many pushed past their fear of heights to enjoy the different activities. Many students finished the trip saying they will be coming again next year.



Follow our social media pages for up-to-date news and information about ACS.



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Geography

As part of their GCSE Geography course, Year 10 Geography students went to Brighton and Brick Lane, to carry out fieldwork investigations to help them with their exams in Year 11.

On Monday 10th July, we went to Brighton and were met with a beautiful sunny day. We were there to investigate how wave action changes the beach, to fit in with the coasts section of our curriculum. In order to do this, we measured beach profiles, the size and shape of sediment (pebbles), the number of waves and longshore drift. The students were very excited to be at the seaside, and practiced their stone skimming skills alongside their fieldwork skills. It was the perfect opportunity to enjoy the sea air, have an ice-cream and observe the gentle summer waves lapping on the beach. Due to the day being so warm, and the breeze being strong, we didn't notice the strength of the sun, so there were a few sunburnt faces when we got back.

On Tuesday 11th July, we went to the East End of London to study how the environmental quality changes from the Whitechapel part of Brick Lane to Spitalfields Market. We carried out different fieldwork techniques from the Brighton trip, to give students the opportunity to try out new skills, while investigating how people have changed the environment. We carried out pedestrian counts, traffic counts and environmental quality surveys to show how the areas changed as we walked from Whitechapel, up Brick Lane to Spitalfields Market. The market was a firm favourite with all the students, as we were able to buy a delicious lunch there. We walked a long way in London that day, and the coach ride home was definitely quiet due to lots of tired students.

All in all, both trips were worthwhile for all the students who attended, and lots of fun was had by all.



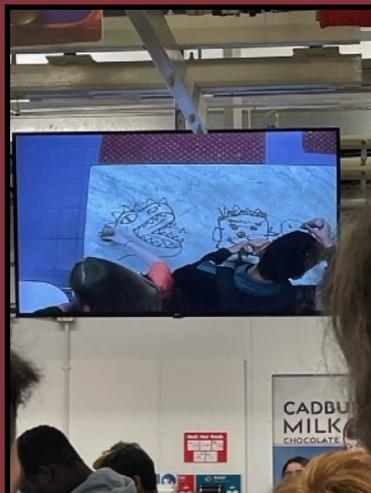


Year 9 Cadbury World

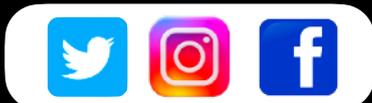
Year 9 Geography students went to Cadbury World to learn about how chocolate bars are made. We went to the factory in Bourneville to link with our topic on Globalisation, where we have been studying the spread of global products around the world.

During the day, students were invited to practice their artistic skills by drawing with chocolate. We sampled some of Cadbury World's finest produce (for free!) as well as visiting the Cadbury World shop, posing in front of a green screen for a picture and riding through Cadbury Bean land. We also looked into the world of advertising and how the Cadbury brand has grown over the past 100 years, to make it the worldwide brand that it is today.

All in all, it was a fantastic trip where much fun, and chocolate, was had by all.



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History Trips



Year 9 Trip to the Battlefields

An early start on Thursday was followed by a hop over the channel to explore the battlefields of the First World War. The focus of the trip was not just fun, but remembrance for those who gave their lives. The pupils were able to visit several memorials and cemeteries, exploring, for some, the resting places of their relatives. Two pupils were chosen to lay the wreath on behalf of the school at a daily ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. On the first day pupils were able to visit the largest British First World War cemetery on the Western Front, Tyne Cot. Some were also given the opportunity to fire blanks from a rifle or pistol in the recreated trenches at the Hooze Museum.

On the second day, we made our way to the Somme region of France and explored the Sunken Lane, Hawthorn Crater, Newfoundland Park, Ulster tower and the Thiepval Memorial. All of these sites showed the British perspective or the perspective of those who were from the British Empire but we were accompanied by a Bavarian tour guide who helped pupils to understand the German side of the war. Pupils found this very valuable and really enjoyed hearing from Christoph!

The final day started in Leonidas chocolate shop for some Belgian mementos. Stops were made in Messines and at the Island of Ireland Peace Park before the coach stopped working! Luckily our tour company were able to provide us with a local hostel for pupils to be able to use their games room and the huge field for football to relax in whilst we waited for the coach to be either replaced or fixed. Not long after we were on our way to Langemark German Cemetery and were able to appreciate the different ways of memorialising soldiers from different parts of the world.

Year 7 trip to Mountfitchet Castle

Fifty Year 7 students went to Mountfitchet Castle on a trip in June. They were able to explore the area in bright sunshine and move around the castle. Pupils were able to feed the rescued farm animals and learn about life in a castle in rural England. During the day, pupils were also able to explore the museum full of toys from the last 120 years! Some that the teachers were more familiar with and some that the pupils remember from their own toy boxes!





Performing Arts Awards Evening

It was so lovely to be able to host our Awards evening in the new Hall this year. Over 60 students from all year groups received awards for anything from 'Most Embarrassing Moment' to 'Rising Star'. It was great to see so many students celebrating their successes with their parents, carers and teaching staff and to see them all dressed up for the occasion!

The evening was also sprinkled with Drama and Music performances from students performing live for the very first time as well as the veterans among us!

Thank you all for joining us on this special occasion, we can't wait to do it all again next year!

Mrs Harley, Mr O'Grady, Miss Tyler and Miss Hobson

Performing Arts department



Maths Movie Night

The Maths Department recently held a movie night, bringing together 28 enthusiastic students for an unforgettable screening of the heartwarming film 'Gifted.' Directed by Marc Webb, the movie tells the inspiring story of a young prodigy named Mary, brilliantly portrayed by McKenna Grace. Raised by her devoted uncle Frank, played by Chris Evans, Mary's exceptional mathematical abilities become a topic of contention when her grandmother enters the picture. As the evening unfolded, the students were captivated by the film's thought-provoking themes of family, intellect, and the pursuit of happiness.

'Gifted' is available on Amazon.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Gifted-Marc-Webb/dp/B071JZ82YR>



Peer Mentoring

Over the past couple of months, Miss Cooke and Miss Ongley have been working on a Peer Mentoring Scheme to launch in September 2023. This will be for the Year 10 students to mentor the Year 7 students. There was an overwhelming amount of interest from the year group and we had over thirty students apply to be peer mentors. They went through an interview process in which they all did brilliantly. All successful candidates have been through training and are feeling very ready to go in September.

In the photo below are our wonderful new Year 9 (soon to be Year 10) peer mentors. They will be mentoring some of the new Year 7 students in September around anti-bullying, social skills, reading and study skills.

We wish them the best of luck in their new role in September!





Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award

My experience at DofE was in one word great. I enjoyed every part of it even though there may have been some challenges. I mostly enjoyed the set up at the campsite where we built our tents, cooked dinner and roasted some marshmallows. I also enjoyed getting to spend time with my team and getting to talk to them as we usually wouldn't. Though the least enjoyable part of the trip was leaving. I didn't expect to enjoy it so much and ended up not wanting to leave. I will most definitely be considering doing my silver and gold. – Nina N Year 9

My DofE experience was very positive, and I really enjoyed it and I think it is a very good thing to do. For me, DofE was more than achieving an award, it was about spending time with my friends and learning new skills. DofE taught me how to work well as a team and how to be independent away from adults and technology. The highlight of my weekend was probably when we were camping, we all had lots of fun and had a very good time. Even though we made a few mistakes we still carried on and pulled together as a team and supported each other. – Jessica T Year 9

DofE was a fun experience for me. Even with many challenges I faced, I managed to persevere with the help of my team. The walk all together went well. But the weight I was carrying was another challenge. The camping was very fun and waking up in the morning to cold fresh air was very refreshing. I enjoyed helping others with tents, socialising with the teachers and other people on the expedition. I would love to have the opportunity to do silver next year, and I thank all the teachers that help to set up this DofE experience. - Teagan A Year 10

My DofE experience was amazing. I had a lot of fun with my friends and had lots of laughs on the walk and the campsite. The only one thing that I had an issue with was the lack of sun cream I brought as it proved that I would have needed some more given the hot weather. I also was ill before it had even begun. However, even in this state I still had lots of fun with my team. - Ryan S Year 10

DofE was a good experience that made us face many challenges that were fun to overcome. It was nice to be able to do it with friends and made it easier to cope with the amount of walking and other hardships we faced. - Christian P Year 10

The Final Goodbye

What a tremendous, exciting, and emotional time it has been at The Astley Cooper School for our Year 11 cohort. It seems only yesterday that they were in Year 7 with Mrs Goodchild. I took over the cohort in September 2019 and I cannot believe how quickly time has flown. Four years has gone by an incredible speed and it is time for the students to start making their own paths for the next steps in their education.

These are the first students in two years that have sat their full compliments of GCSEs. I have commented previously to parents and carers that during this stressful and nerve-racking time, the students' attitude and behaviour throughout has been respectful and calm; this was commented on by the external invigilators that came in to assist with the GCSEs.

This, in turn, was also remarked on at the Prom. The staff at Aubrey Park were impressed by the politeness students demonstrated towards everyone, and the way that they conducted themselves. It was a very successful evening, in which staff, parents and students enjoyed some downtime and some dancing! It was heartwarming to see so many parents and extended family members and friends come a support the arrival of their child at Prom.

Thank you so much for all the support that you have given me and the tutors over the time that your child has been at The Astley Cooper School. It really has been great to work with you, your child and the tutors over the past four years. I wish you and your families all the best for the future, I hope that the students will remember their time at Astley Cooper with fond memories and continue to strive for success and happiness.

Ms Roberts



Poem for Leavers' Assembly: Monday 5th June 2023 by Ms Roberts

Listen up, it's time to say goodbye,

To Year Eleven, ready to spread our wings and fly.

Astley Cooper School, where we made our mark,

From Hemel Hempstead, we're about to embark.

Year Eleven leaving, but we'll never forget,

The memories we made, we'll treasure and respect.

Astley Cooper, you'll always hold a place in our heart,

As we step into the world, ready to make our mark.

We started as Year 7's, with dreams in our eyes,

Five years later, we're reaching for the skies.

Late-night study sessions, chasing those grades,

In classrooms and hallways, where friendships were made.

Teachers, tutors and staff guiding us through,

Unlocking our potential, helping us pursue

Our passions and dreams, they believed in our might.

Now it's time to show the world our shining light.

Astley Cooper School, Hemel Hempstead in sight,

Year Eleven's legacy, shining bright.

With gratitude and pride, we say our goodbyes,

Forever grateful for the memories, the highs.



Sixth Form News

Year 13

Friday 23 June was Year 13's leavers celebration. After an assembly celebrating their success over the last two years, students received awards from their subject teachers before finishing off the assembly with a video montage of photos from their time here at The Astley Cooper School. We then took the students into London to Puttshack, where students competed against each other in mini golf before we took them to Zizzi for lunch.

We would like to congratulate all of our Year 13 students and wish them the very best of luck for the future.

Year 13 Results day is on **Thursday 17 August**. School will be open from 10.00 am until 12.00pm to collect results. Staff will be on hand to help with any issues and to help you with clearing should it be needed.

Year 12

We would also like to congratulate Year 12 students on their hard work and commitment throughout the year.

In PSHE, students are currently in the process of working their way through the Post 18 Next Steps programme, which supports the students through their university application via UCAS.

They have also been out on Work Shadowing for three days this term, which has allowed them to gain an insight into their chosen career and give them valuable experience when applying for University courses or employment.



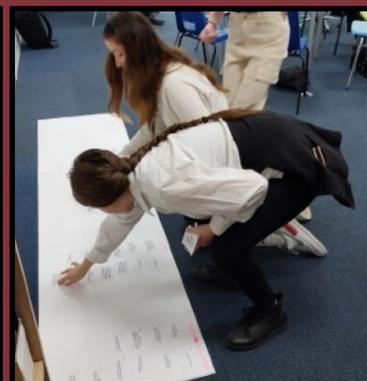
Researcher in Residence Programme

This term, six Year 12 girls have taken part in a project with the prestigious university, London School of Economics. They became researchers in their own right, working alongside LSE Cites, Make Space for Girls and Countryside (who are building the new housing, "Spencer's Park", in Maylands). They worked tirelessly for six weeks, investigating ways of creating safe, exciting and enjoyable public spaces for girls to use in our local area. The project ended with a joint workshop between the Year 12 and the Year 10 girls, who worked with Make Space for Girls last academic year. It was amazing to see the collaboration between the two groups. The Year 12 girls will now be listed as authors on the official academic paper that will be published. This is an amazing achievement for students of this age and will certainly be an exciting addition to their UCAS personal statements.

Y11 into 12 Sixth Form Induction

Over a two-week period, we welcomed Year 11 students for our Sixth Form Induction. On the first day, students listened to an induction assembly and took part in study skills sessions, which was then followed by team building activities. For the remainder of the induction period, students arrived in school for their allocated subject induction lessons where they received more information about the course and were taught the start of the Year 12 content. The attendance throughout the week was very good; it was great to see so many Year 11 students back in school, dressed smartly, with a positive attitude for the start of their Sixth Form studies.

The induction sessions were fantastic; a really useful process for the students and it has helped to prepare them for September, as well as ensure that students have chosen the correct subjects.



Transition work and Registration

Students have all been invited to the Sixth Form Google Classroom; here is where the Sixth Form team posts important information throughout the year. In September, the registration and code of conduct form will be issued to students.

All students who have applied to study in the Sixth Form will need to ensure that they complete the transition work for each subject they wish to study and return these to school to their subject teacher in September. Teachers explained these in the last induction session and work can be found in each subject's Google Classroom. These can also be found on the school website under the Sixth Form page.

If any students in Year 11 have had their situation change for next year, and would like to apply to join our Sixth Form, please speak to Mrs Ollerenshaw-East on results day or on Monday 4 September when school starts.

Results Day

Thursday 24 August is GCSE results day; there will be a number of staff around to help students with their results. All students who applied for the Sixth Form must meet with a member of the Sixth Form team on results day.

Year 12 will then be required in school on Monday 4 September, until 12:30pm. Students should meet in the Sixth Form area. Students must be on time and in the correct dress code. Lessons for all Sixth Form students will start on Tuesday 5 September.

**Year 13 students are able to collect their timetables from 12:30pm on Monday 4 September, ready for starting lessons on Tuesday 5 September.*

Our Sixth Form is continuing to grow and I am excited to be welcoming nearly 70 students to Year 12 in September.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Hall and Mrs Houchin, who are both leaving us this summer, who have been instrumental in supporting our students to be successful over the years. They will both be missed in the Sixth Form, but we wish them the very best of luck in their new roles and schools.

We welcome Miss Hunt, who will be Head of Year 12, and Miss Smith, who will be Head of Year 13, from September.

I would like to wish our Sixth Form students a lovely summer break, and we look forward to seeing you all prepared for a new year in September.

Mrs Ollerenshaw-East
Head of Sixth Form

Mrs Houchin
Head of Year 13

Mr Hall
Head of Year 12