



Castledon School

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Dear Parent/Carer

14th November 2022

Welcome to the second half of the Autumn term and all the activities and festivities that this time of year traditionally brings. It has been a busy start to the academic year and there are lots of successes to share with you:

Primary phase

It has been wonderful to welcome 13 new pupils to Castledon School, all of whom have all settled well into their new routines. This term has seen the continuing development of our green room provision which has provided pupils with opportunities to develop their communication, social and emotional skills in an engaging play based learning space and it has been lovely to see lots of smiles as pupils engage in a wide range of games and activities. We recently had a visit from 'The Travelling Librarian' who ran a sensory story session for pupils which was very much enjoyed by all and we look forward to inviting her back later in the year. As part of their inspiration day this half term, pupils in Leeds and Windsor classes hosted a Tiger who came for Tea and pupils in Kendal and Dudley classes were fully engaged in making models of the internal organs that make up the digestive system. York class have developed in confidence when accessing the community as part of their curriculum and are demonstrating increased independence in keeping safe in car parks when walking between the minibus and the supermarket. Pupils have begun practising their scripts and songs for the Christmas performance and we are looking forward to welcoming parents to this event later in the term.

Key stage 3

We have warmly welcomed new pupils to KS3 and they have settled in well. Pupils have been learning about Roman Britain and investigating Roman inventions. Pupils were excited to meet a Roman Gladiator who taught pupils about his daily life and showed pupils Roman armour. Pupils have enjoyed making their own versions of Roman armour and sandals. In Food Technology, pupils have been using frying and sauteing skills to make a healthy cooked breakfast. Pupils have enjoyed getting to know peers in their new classes by taking trips out into the local community and participating in social activities in class. This half term, pupils will visit Braintree Discovery Centre to learn about how exercise affects the body as part of topics. They will also visit the German Christmas Market at Meadow Croft Garden Centre to develop their money skills in the community. Pupils will have an exciting opportunity to attend an end of year disco with peers.

Key stage 4

In KS4 this term we have welcomed the new year 10 students to the phase. Staff have been extremely proud and impressed with how all the students have settled into KS4. In order to prepare our year 11 students for adulthood, they have been taking part in weekly work experience days at Poppies Cafe and Lauriston Farm. Students have demonstrated the ability to communicate with the public, follow instructions and carry out cafe and farmyard activities independently. Students have also accessed Attendance Week activities during this term. The activities were designed for students to have a better understanding of why attendance at school is important, while also getting them to think about strategies to help them improve their attendance and how good attendance could help them in the future. We are looking forward to the end of year festivities where we will be celebrating Christmas at the KS4 disco. For the first time, this will be held at Time and Space in Battlesbridge.



Sixth Form

The Sixth Form welcomed visiting students from Cedar Hall School and were also delighted to celebrate our three Jack Petchey winners. We have also explored Black History Month with a range of form time activities and discussions. Students have settled back into their gym sessions, with many now accessing this facility using public transport. We have also had trips out with photography students to Hanningfield Reservoir and Hadleigh Castle, producing some excellent work. Horticulture students have been growing herbs in the greenhouse and weeding beds, and English students have been working on their speaking and listening assessments by presenting on such varied topics as Strictly Come Dancing, Only Fools and Horses, vocaloids and cosmicism! Finally, our Life Skills students went on a trip to see the celebrated author and poet Michael Rosen at the Towngate Theatre in Basildon. This term we will be exploring some of the issues surrounding social media use during Anti Bullying week and plan to end the term on a high with our Christmas meal at The Darby Digger.

Employability update

This term was launched with our second successful Careers Fair at Wat Tyler Country Park, where our students had the opportunity to learn about a range of opportunities open to them. Preparing for Adulthood Advisors have also been working closely with our Years 11 and 14 students as they consider their futures after Castledon. We have had visits to both the South Essex College Digital Centre and Xtend Digital Centres which gave our students some great choices for future pathways. Students have also been to see Chelmsford College and the Lilyrose Day Provision. We are also delighted to be running our first Cardrome session of this year.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are running bespoke courses with our year 14s to prepare them for the world of work, and this will continue into next term.

We are currently working on a new platform for parents and young people to use called Naturally Talented Me. This will support our learners with recording their skills, work experiences, achievements, and future aspirations and we look forward to telling you all more about this in January.

Coming up is the KS4 and KS5 Christmas disco being held at Time and Space Battlesbridge this year on 9th of December, we are looking forward to seeing our young people celebrating Christmas.

Finally we have been so excited to be hearing from and visiting our ex pupils in their new provision and work placements this term. We have been thrilled with how well they are all doing. One of our former students, working at Wat Tyler now, won the NASEN young person award for their contribution to the community last month, which has made us all extremely proud.

Residential - Update

This year leaders have been creating a two year progressive residential program for all key stages. The two year plan will not only ensure that our work on residential are fun and exciting, but also give our young people as many learning opportunities around planning their own holidays as adults in the future as possible (in line with our motto - unlocking potential). We are also hoping this will give parents more time to plan into their family and financial yearly calendar to allow maximum uptake for these opportunities.

We look forward to sharing with you before Christmas the residential two year plan, along with a letter for this year's residential opportunities.



Other important news to communicate with you:

Parent survey

The views of families are extremely important to us and we welcome everyone to complete our Autumn parent survey. The survey link will be sent out to everyone by text next Tuesday afternoon and should only take a few minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to complete this.

Car parking

Our school car park gets extremely busy at the start and end of the day. May I please ask that parents do not park in the school car park. Also, please be mindful of our neighbours and not block access to their properties or parking dangerously on bends or corners. Thank you for your consideration.

Staff changes

I am pleased to let you know that Miss Kathryn Hemmings has taken on the new role of Assistant Headteacher for the Primary Phase. Miss Hemmings has a wealth of experience having worked at Castledon for over 10 years and previously at Glenwood School. Miss Hemmings has been our primary middle leader and Literacy lead for the past three years.

Mr Jacob Hewitt will become the class teacher for York class alongside Miss Verity Jones, who will be commencing maternity leave in January. Jacob has worked at Castledon School for quite some time, particularly more recently in the primary phase and is looking forward to working with our learners in York class.

Christmas arrangements

It is never too early to talk about Christmas! Further details will come out nearer the time, however we will be celebrating with lots of festivities, including a Christmas Jumper day and of course a lovely Christmas school dinner both on Wednesday 14th December. Our last day of the term is Tuesday 20th December, which will be a usual school day, finishing at the usual times. It will be a non-uniform day with a voluntary charity donation to support a local charity chosen by our school council.

Vaccinations

It is the time of year for some further child vaccinations. Letters and consent forms have been sent home if you wish your child to receive these in school.

Parents evening

On Tuesday 15th November we will be holding parent meetings with teachers. This is an opportunity for you to talk about the progress your child is making and what we can do together to further their progress. Appointments are being made directly with class teachers. Years 12 and 14 parent meetings have already taken place this term.

King Charles III Coronation

As announced by the Government last week, there will be an additional bank holiday on Monday 8th May to mark the coronation of King Charles III. School will be closed on this day and I attach a copy of our term dates for this year to reflect this.



Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

S Holliday

Simon Holliday
Headteacher

