



SIXTH FORM DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the term closes I thought I would update you on what has been a hectic half-term.

Employment

Any student who wishes to take up employment after sixth form has had lots to focus on recently. Our Year 13s have returned from work experience which seemed to go very well. Along with this all Year 13s wishing to take up employment after school, will have a one to one chat with the Connexions adviser in January/ February to explore their options for the future. Our one year BTEC students will also get this interview to aid them in their decisions about their prospects.

Logica and KPMG have also visited this half-term to showcase their recruitment programmes in assemblies. Both companies are recruiting A-Level students to their consultancy and accountancy departments and, along with a salary of £14,000 to start, the successful applicants will also get formal qualifications as well as a career with a blue-chip company.

University

Many of our students have a lot of great offers for university and it is wonderful to share in their excitement. Particular congratulations go to Aron who was the first student to get all 5 offers. He now has some hard thinking to do to decide where he would like to study Marine Biology. Of note to our current Year 12s should be that quite a few of the London universities have been making offers that have included performance of at least a B in any AS subject that is dropped going into Year 13. Obviously working hard in all four subjects pays real dividends here!

Lots of students have had interviews for their courses recently which, judging by the offers that follow, seem to be going well. All the students in Year 13 received interview training for an hour in PDP in early November and many students have had mock interviews with staff in preparation for the real thing.

The current Year 13s are a very talented bunch and we are currently waiting to hear about James and the results of his audition at the Royal Academy of Music along with Chloe who has had auditions at several high profile drama colleges. Our fingers are also crossed for Anthony and his upcoming audition/ workshop at RADA.

We have had a large number of applicants successfully getting interviews at Oxford and Cambridge however it is impossible to tell how they have performed. I am always a little cautious when they come back with stories of 12 places on offer from 73 applicants all with straight 'A's at AS Level!

The Year 12 students also recently had a talk on the university experience during PDP. The University of Reading came to discuss with the students how lectures, seminars, accommodation and social lives operate. Finances were also touched upon. This is a taster for a trip to Reading in March for a UCAS conference before the real preparations begin after the AS examinations.

Sport

On a sporting front the students have once again been excelling. The First XV is in the County Cup final for the third time out of the last four years. They defeated Park House 46-0 in a recent friendly match and defeated St Bart's this week 18-14 in a very tight game. I have been impressed by the turn out to training with over 20 players making the increasingly dark Tuesday night sessions every week.

We have also tasted victory in the recent Champions of Enterprise event. All Year 12 students took part in a Downs School version of this in November. The winning team then went through to the West Berkshire event where The Downs triumphed for the first time since 2005. The result was decided by a combination of preparation, enthusiasm, business acumen, presentation skills and creativity in a Dragons Den style pitch. My congratulations go to Elliot, Charlie, Ruby, Freddie, Lauren and Alex.

Grade Reports and Parents Evening

Our second grade report of the year is out on the last day of term. Please make sure you ask your sons and daughters for this piece of paper! These grades are based on the last 7 weeks work and for Year 12 will be a good guide for the Parents Evening on January 19th. It was great to see such a strong turnout for Year 13 Parents Evening on December 1st with well over 90% of students being represented.

Exams and study leave

In order to accommodate the student's preparations for the upcoming January examinations Year 12 and 13 have been offered study leave. Year 12 will be off on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday January 10th -12th. This is because this week is heavily loaded with examinations and this will give the students time to prepare in earnest for these vital tests. Year 13, who will have a combination of re-sits and A2 modules, will be off from January 10th to January 23rd inclusive. However any student without exams will be spoken to and a programme of extra work will be arranged. If any student wishes to come into school to study during this period the library is open exclusively for Sixth Form students during the examination period. The examination timetable is currently up on the Parents Site of our Moodle intranet site and all the students have had a hard copy of their personalised exam timetables.

Richard Benyon MP

Year 13 (with the Year 12 Politics students) were very fortunate to have an hour of questions and answers with Richard Benyon recently. Richard's visit is now an annual event and he answered questions on a huge variety of issues including tuition fees, the EU, winter fuel payments, global warming and affordable housing for young people. He was very complimentary about the quality of the student's questions and also about the way they challenged and questioned his responses. With politics so important in these difficult times it was good to see just how many students were prepared to get involved.

BTEC

Our BTEC provision was inspected in this half-term and it is great to be able to report that the inspectors were very happy and gave the school no action points to address. The BTEC Level 2 and 3 courses in the Sixth Form are very well led and the students always perform very well indeed so it was great to receive external confirmation that the young people we are educating on these courses are getting a great experience.

Finally I would just like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas. It has been another great term and I hope the students are able to rest and be ready for the challenges and exams that 2012 will bring!

Yours

Andrew Hartley
Head of Sixth Form