



Voice

THE VALE OF YORK ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 12 | 4th October 2017

Message from the Principal

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the many new members of the Vale of York community as we commence our first full year as a brand new academy. We have already made a terrific start and this newsletter is crammed full of the exciting events of the last few days. It has been a real pleasure to see the Twitter feed and read the reports of the excellent Year 7 residential trip to Lakeside; a fun-filled, action-packed three days where our new students got to know each other, got to know the staff and built the foundations for firm friendships.

The staff have been working incredibly hard over the summer revitalising the school building and preparing for the new year and I was delighted to welcome many new staff to school on 4 September. Mrs McDonagh and Mrs Ward join the senior leadership as Head of English and Maths respectively. Mr Metcalfe and Mrs

Humphreys fill the English team. Mr Vine has joined Science, Mr Elwell, Maths and Miss Slingsby has been appointed to Modern Foreign Languages. I also welcome to our team Mrs Day the new attendance officer and Mr Durrant who is on the site team.

We were also very pleased to see so many happy faces on GCSE results day. As a result of steadily improving outcomes, the whole year group were able to leave Vale of York and move on to new courses of their choosing at providers right across the city. We have already begun strategic interventions with members of our new Year 11 to ensure pupils are thinking of the very best, the very highest aspirations possible for summer 2018 and we have been really pleased with the positive attitudes and work ethic of these pupils nearing the end of 12 years of education.



We had hoped to trial our new electronic newsletter alongside this printed version, unfortunately technical issues have prevented this – so watch this space!

May I wish you all a successful year ahead.

Mrs H Dowds, Principal

KEY STAGE 4: A new academic year, new challenges and exciting times ahead for our Year 11s. I have been very impressed by their start to this year, they have come back with a mature and determined attitude for the year ahead. This half-term is all about improving progress from last half-term. We will be identifying students for interventions and mentoring support where needed to help them achieve their goals. At the end of this half-term on 24 October, we have the Year 11 Parents' Evening to discuss progress and support needed from home.

Years 9 and 10 have started their GCSE courses, and feedback from staff has been very positive. Students are enjoying the new challenges and most are pleased with their option choices. Some Year 9 students are attending Manor CE Academy (our partner school within the Hope Learning Trust) for an option and some Manor students are attending Vale of York to study the new Psychology GCSE. It's great to see how welcome our students have been made to feel and how welcoming they were to the Manor students. We are all looking forward to a positive year ahead. *Mrs E Hardy*

HOLLY MAKES THE GRADE!

Congratulations to Head Girl, Holly Cairns, who passed her AS Level Maths this summer, achieving an amazing A grade.



Getting to know you...

90 Year 7 students and nine staff headed off to Lakeside Activity Centre in the Lake District from 13th-15th September



This was the first year the Academy has run the residential trip which allowed the students to get to know each other and the staff, whilst pushing themselves out of their comfort zones.

This feel of 'reaching for the top' is how we want the students to approach their learning. The students jumped in head first and had a go at high ropes, abseiling, kayaking, canoeing, raft-building, challenge course, archery, initiatives and climbing. In the evenings, the students spent time as a form class having BBQs and sitting around the campfires.

Everyone was very well-behaved and it was inspiring to see the students forming solid relationships with each other and their form tutors. As the trip came to an end, the students said that they felt they could accomplish anything -- if they can face their fears of heights or water, then they can face the challenges in the classroom.

Photos will be provided on Dropbox to parents' e-mails for those who would like to keep a copy. Thank you to the students for being ace, the staff on the trip and those back at school for covering!



For a larger selection of photos, check out the website under Students > Year 7 Lakeside.

Mr Rampling, PE & Science Teacher and D of E Coordinator

CURTAIN UP!

The Drama department's extra-curricular activities are up and running again this term. Drama club runs on a Friday straight after school (3.00-4.00pm) and is open to all year groups.

We are currently working on performances for Open Evening but will be soon starting some spooky plays for Hallowe'en and our spectacular Christmas shows. Keep an eye out for auditions for a scripted show coming soon!

Miss Nicholson, Subject Leader: Drama

MUSIC PLEASE!

We are holding our Autumn Concert at 7.00pm on Wednesday 18th October in the Main Hall. Tickets £2 / Concessions £1.50.

Please do come along!

York Music Service: YMS offers high-quality individual or group tuition on a wide range of instruments. Currently we have students receiving tuition on drums, piano, bass, guitar, voice, saxophone, flute, clarinet and trombone. If you are interested and would like to find out more please visit the York Music Service website at www.yorkmusicservice.co.uk.

Prices depend on length of lesson and group size and financial support can be offered in certain circumstances.

Music Clubs: Singing Club is on Mondays 3.00-3.45pm and Band is on Wednesdays 3.00-4.00pm, both in S20. Singing Club is open to all ages and abilities and Band is suitable for any instrument from about Grade 3 standard.

Music Tour: Final call! We are looking onto the possibility of running a Music tour to Holland next May but numbers are a little low at the moment for it to go ahead.

For further details about any of the above, please contact Mrs Brady, Subject Leader: Music, by email: p.brady@valeofyorkacademy.org

Mr Halifax: In the **Spotlight.**

He's Vale of York's Vice Principal and lover of all sports, but what really makes Mr Halifax tick?

Vale Voice puts him on the spot...

Let's go back to the beginning, Mr Halifax.

Where were you born and where did you start your teaching career?

I was born in London, but was lucky enough to grow up in Cornwall. I did my teacher training in Liverpool and got my first job in Hemel Hempstead in 1994. Then I moved to York in '98 and I've been teaching in York ever since. For a long time I was at Archbishop Holgate's and had various roles there – Head of Department, Head of Faculty, Head of KS4, Assistant Head – and I also did a stint as an Advanced Skills Teacher for the Local Authority. Lots of variety!

When did you decide you wanted to be a teacher?

Honestly? I was doing sports coaching post-Uni and I thought, 'I can do this and I quite enjoy it.'

What's your biggest fear?

That scene in Kill Bill 2 where Uma Thurman is buried alive? That. I'm claustrophobic.

What's the trait you most deplore in yourself?

I'm a bit too self-critical.



What would your superpower be?

There was a cartoon when I was growing up called Arabian Nights and there was a guy who could clap his hands and suddenly have the qualities of an animal – the speed of a cheetah, the strength of a tiger and so on. I remember thinking as a kid that would be amazing.

Who would your top five dinner party guests be?

Rab C Newsbitt, Queen Victoria, Stuart Pearce (my all-time hero), Muhammad Ali, Jack Nicholson...could I squeeze in Dame Kelly Holmes, Henry VIII and Joan Rivers, too?

What do you owe your parents?

How do you put that into words? It was mainly my mum for me because my dad died when I was quite young, but yes, I owe them – and especially my mum – everything.

Have you got a recommended read for us?

The most recent book to grip me was Tripwire by Lee Childs – the third in the Jack Reacher series. I'm a sucker for a good crime thriller.

What do you count as your biggest success in teaching?

I've taken kids to The National Basketball Finals and got the best results in the school with certain cohorts of kids and the bit I get most joy from is bumping into old students who have a bit of a story to tell. I love seeing a student I once taught who tells me, 'Do you know what? I'm doing well.' Ultimately, you just want to know that kids that you've taught are doing all right.

And finally, how do you relax?

First choice would be to pop on a pair of skis, get knee-deep in powder snow and just go...

ART ATTACK

Ten of our Year 11 leavers have had work selected to be shown in the York-wide exhibition 'Proper Champion'.

Our students worked incredibly hard this year and we're delighted that this show will display their efforts! Take a look at the Art curriculum area on the website to see some of the work.

Mr Wilson, Subject Leader: Art



At the heart of the community

After a busy academic year for Vale of York Academy last year, this one promises to be even more fruitful when it comes to positive community and partnership news. Hundreds of our students were rewarded with an end of year trip to Flamingo Land, a fantastic way to round off the year. A great day was had by all!



We were delighted to host a joint music project between the students at Burton Green Primary, one of our Hope partner schools, and Morrell House. This musical bonanza

was weeks in the planning and climaxed in a fantastic concert being put on for some of the older generation in the community.

As ever, Vale of York's student leaders were on hand to welcome guests and support the event, making us proud as they consistently do!

On 6th September, Vale of York hosted the Clifton Ward meeting for the first time. With a bumper attendance from a whole host of different organisations and agencies, it's clear that the school has a place at the heart of the community.

This week, we welcomed the new Year 6 students to our Pick 'n' Mix sessions. Students picked two exciting workshops to take part in – everyone had a fantastic time! You can see some of the photos from the event on our website.



Finally, the Vale of York Society is our friendly parent group. They do a superb job of supporting the academy through fundraising, raising the school's profile and offering their time and skills wherever they can be used.

We would love to see some new members in the group, so if you are interested in joining, please email the school's Community Coordinator, Rob Orr at r.orr@valeofyorkacademy.org -- he'll be delighted to get you involved, even if it's just now and again!

SPORTS CLUBS

The following clubs are running this term, after school from 3.00–4.00pm unless we have fixtures:

- Years 7 and 8 boys: Football training – Mondays
- Years 7, 8 and 9 boys and girls: Rugby training – Tuesdays



For further information please contact Mrs Colville, Subject Leader: PE by email: h.colville@valeofyorkacademy.org

DIARY DATES

Tuesday 10th October

Young Minds Mental Health Awareness Day

Wednesday 18th October

Autumn Concert

Tuesday 24th October

Year 11 Parents' Evening

Friday 27th October

School closes for half-term at 3.00pm

Monday 6th November

Academy reopens after half-term

GO PAPERLESS:

Do you want to receive this newsletter by email? Just pop a note in your child's planner or return the slip about receiving the newsletter electronically.

Contacting school:

The quickest way to contact school is through reception
Tel: 01904 560000 or Email: reception@valeofyorkacademy.org

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