

ISSUE 8

12th January 2024



MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year! I hope 2024 has started very well for you.

It is my pleasure to share with our first blog of 2024 and as always I hope you enjoy reading these updates. At the very end of last term I introduced Mrs Singla who has joined us in our Science Department. I would also like to welcome Miss Wilson who has joined us in the Art Department and will be here with us until the end of this academic year.

Term 3 has started very well here, despite the chill in the air and snow/ice that affected us on Monday! Year 12 have completed their first set of prelims which will provide a good indication of how well they have started their courses. Year 11 have their 2nd and final set of prelims very soon which are very important exams as they will be the last 'practice' exams that students will sit before their GCSEs this summer. We wish them well. Year 9 had their Parents Evening this week and should now be really starting to think about their GCSE Options choices which will need to be made in March. Much more information to come on this for those of you who have children in Year 9.

Last term we asked all Parents and Carers to complete a questionnaire for us, so we can improve our understanding of your views on certain aspects of the school. On the following pages you will see the headline results of this survey. It is extremely heartening for us to see that in almost all measures we have improved on our scores from 2022 when we last completed a survey like this.

We also asked parents to tell us what you thought were the main 3 strengths of the school. For your information, the most common answers (given by 30 or more people) were:

- Pastoral care / support / wellbeing / safety
- Discipline
- Communication
- Quality of Education
- Staff
- Clubs
- Range of subject choices
- High standards
- Classcharts improved how informed you are as parents

It is very pleasing for us to see these outcomes and thank you to the nearly 300 Parents and Carers who completed this for us.

Of course though, nothing is ever perfect and there will always be areas we can improve on. We also asked you all to tell us 3 things that you would like us to address. My senior team and I have already started discussing these and I will provide updates on each area of improvement, one at a time, in each blog over the next 2 terms.

Lastly I thought I would share that I read a quote the other day from Roald Dahl which was 'I don't like January. I'm going to have 2 Julys this year instead!'. I really liked this and sums up how I feel as I am scraping the frost off of my car in the mornings and driving through the dark to get to work. I hope your cold and dark January is going well and I wish you and your families all the very best for 2024.

I will provide further updates in 2 weeks time

Mr L. Preston
Headteacher

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Our students have been involved in a number of brilliant activities over the couple of weeks. Please take a moment to read through these fantastic opportunities.

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KEY DATES

Term 3

- **WC Monday 15th January**
- Year 11 Language Orals
- **Thursday 18th January**
- Music Trip
- **WC Monday 22nd January - WC Monday 29th January**
- Year 11 Prelims

STAY CONNECTED

Follow Us on Social Media

See all of the enjoyable and engaging activities we get involved in throughout the year.

Follow us on our social media channels.



[@TSAT - Holcombe Grammar School](#)



[@TSATHolcombe](#)



[@tsat_holcombegrammarschool](#)



FREE SCHOOL MEALS



We pride ourselves in ensuring we care for all of our families are aware that money is tight, especially at this time of year. If you require additional support, and do not already receive free school meals, we do encourage you to apply. If you complete the [Free School Meals Application Form](#) and return to leigh.wood@holcombegrammar.tsat.uk who will then let you know if your child qualifies for this benefit.

Please note you could be eligible for free school meals if you are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of no more than £16,190

Once your child is eligible for free school meals, you will automatically qualify for holiday food vouchers, which are organised from Holcombe Grammar School, you will not have to complete any other forms.

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS



Summer 2022 = 347 responses

December 2023 = 283 responses

		Summer 2022	December 2023
My child is happy at the school	Strongly agree	28%	34%
	Agree	60%	55%
	Disagree	9%	7%
	Strongly disagree	2%	2%
	Don't know	1%	2%
My child feels safe at the school		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	26%	36%
	Agree	65%	58%
	Disagree	5%	3%
	Strongly disagree	1%	2%
The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	19%	26%
	Agree	50%	56%
	Disagree	17%	9%
	Strongly disagree	5%	3%
My child has been bullied and the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	3%	4%
	Agree	13%	11%
	Disagree	11%	4%
	Strongly disagree	3%	4%
The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	12%	18%
	Agree	33%	52%
	Disagree	39%	19%
	Strongly disagree	8%	4%
When I have raised concerns with the school, they have been dealt with properly		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	14%	16%
	Agree	49%	48%
	Disagree	14%	9%
	Strongly disagree	4%	4%
Does your child have SEND	Yes	12%	13%
	No	88%	87%

		Summer 2022	December 2023
%My child has SEND and the school gives them the support they need to succeed	Strongly agree	13%	14%
	Agree	19%	12%
	Disagree	7%	2%
	Strongly disagree	0	5%
	Don't know	61%	67%
The school has high expectations for my child		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	31%	38%
	Agree	56%	50%
	Disagree	7%	5%
	Strongly disagree	1%	1%
My child does well at the school		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	30%	32%
	Agree	56%	52%
	Disagree	6%	9%
	Strongly disagree	1%	1%
The school lets me know how my child is doing		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	20%	25%
	Agree	49%	50%
	Disagree	24%	17%
	Strongly disagree	4%	2%
There is a good range of subjects available to my child at the school		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	24%	27%
	Agree	64%	63%
	Disagree	6%	6%
	Strongly disagree	1%	2%
My child can take part in clubs and activities at the school		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	26%	34%
	Agree	57%	57%
	Disagree	6%	4%
	Strongly disagree	1%	1%
The school supports my child's wider personal development		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Strongly agree	17%	20%
	Agree	44%	49%
	Disagree	15%	11%
	Strongly disagree	2%	2%
I would recommend the school to another parent		Summer 2022	December 2023
	Yes	79%	86%
	No	21%	14%

Comments

When asked to name 3 biggest strengths of the school:

Mentioned 30+ times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pastoral care / support / wellbeing / safety - Discipline - Communication - Quality of Education - Staff - Clubs - Range of subject choices - High standards - Classcharts improved how informed they are
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A LEVEL ART TRIP



On the last day of term, Year 12 and 13 Art and Design students spent a day in London exploring three different galleries. Always a sunny day when Mrs Mourino and students go on a trip, this day was no exception! Starting with the Photographers' Gallery, just off of Oxford Street, where the exhibition space was devoted to one photographer Daido Moriyama. The storytelling in each image was powerful as the artist documented his life after World War 2 through to contemporary life.

In contrast the next stop was The Wallace Collection via McDonalds. This museum is a wealth of treasures. From Armour to Rembrandts, extremely bling ceramics to Canaletto, this collection has it all.

After a lunch stop around the Christmas lights of Oxford and Bond streets, the last gallery was the Tate Britain. Despite being exhausted and overwhelmed the brave students soldiered. Through Pre-Raphaelites to Sarah Lucas, the students took notes and photographs to help and support them in their studies. Best of all Mrs Mourino avoided the book shops of all the galleries, which is a first.

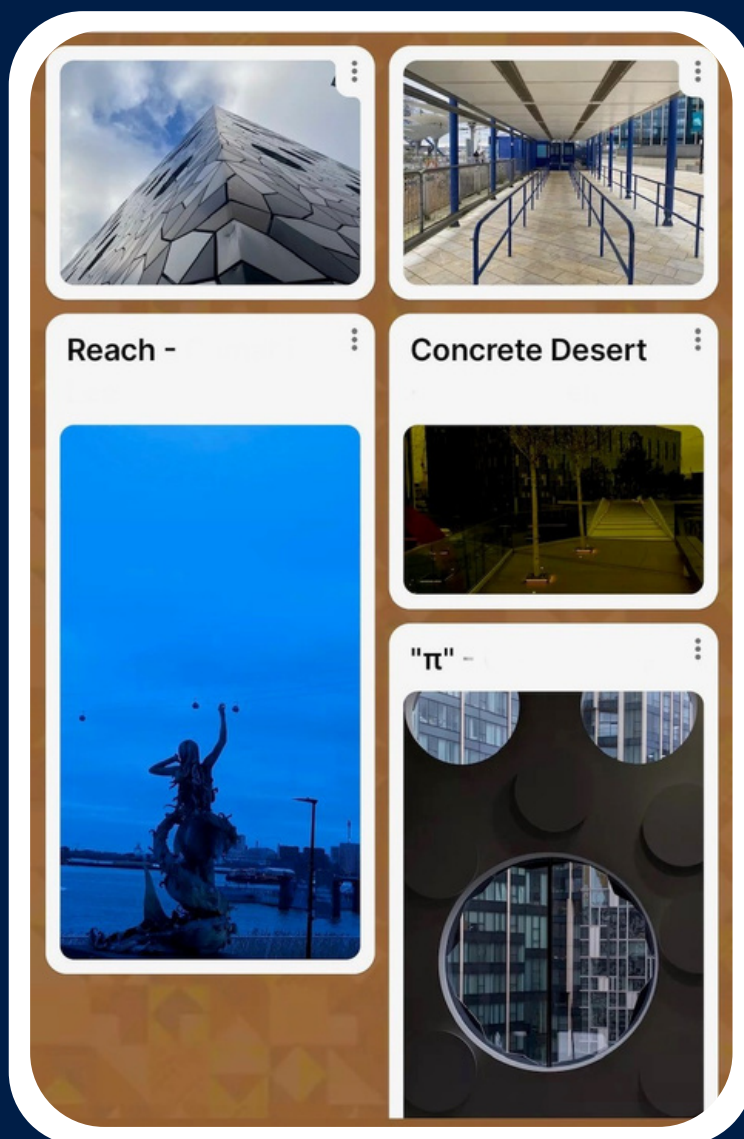


YEAR 11 AND 12 MEDIA TRIP



Students from Year 11 and Year 12 Media Studies attended a Film Workshop at Ravensbourne University in Greenwich. Ravensbourne is an innovative, industry focused university, primarily focusing on digital media and design courses. Students were given a tour of the building, with an introduction to some of the undergraduate and apprenticeship degrees that they offer, as well as an insight into their high-standard, industry led facilities available to all students who study there.

Students were then given a filming challenge, fulfilling the brief of 'liminal space', which allowed students to tour around the site looking for areas they could film or photograph that created a eerie or surreal atmosphere within the space. The students took on the brief and produced some very creative pieces that impressed the tutors and graduate students who were assisting them.





Reading at Holcombe



See below for the English Department's book recommendations. We have included a contemporary choice and a literary classic!

KS3

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas: Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful, gripping and piercingly relevant YA novel about inequality, police violence, 21st century prejudice and one girl's struggle for justice.

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley— A gifted scientist attempts to break new frontiers and create human life from nothing, but has his quest driven him mad?



KS4

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky: Set in the early 1990s, the novel follows Charlie, an introverted and observant teenager, through his freshman year of high school in a Pittsburgh suburb.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe: Okonkwo is the greatest warrior alive, famous throughout West Africa. But when he accidentally kills a clansman, things begin to fall apart.



Studies have found that reading for pleasure enhances empathy, understanding of the self, and the ability to understand one's own and others' identities. From the Reading Agency.

Keep calm and come to the French Club!!



Après Noël et le réveillon du jour de l'An, c'est l'heure de la **galette**.

En ce début d'année, la tradition veut que l'on célèbre l'Épiphanie en tirant les rois, chaque 6 janvier ou le dimanche qui suit le 1er janvier.



Illustration: [unreadable]



Bastille Day

Le 14 Juillet

La Fête Nationale Française

citénature

MERCREDI 21 JUIN

1^{ère} Fête de la Musique des Enfants

Animations > de 14h à 17h

APPRENDRE EN S'AMUSANT !



23 BOULEVARD SCHIMMELMAN / 81000 ARAAS / CITE.NATURE.COM / 03 21 31 31 39



KS3 students are welcome
Room S14
Every Thursday at lunchtime
Discover French celebrations and traditions : new games ,
songs, movies , culture conversations and more ...



RNKMD FESTIVAL



A fantastic opportunity for students to perform in a competitive festival to develop their performance skills in music, drama and public speaking. Build and grow in confidence performing in front of adjudicators who are experts in their field. Gain experience of performing in preparation for grade and GCSE exams. Fee per class is £9 and entry deadline is Saturday 27th January 2024. The event will be held at Holcombe Grammar School on Saturday 23rd March 2024 9am-4pm. For further information please contact grace.pathberiya@holcombegrammar.tsat.uk or visit their website at www.rnkmdf.org.uk for terms and conditions.





WELCOME TO MEDWAY




New to Medway or looking to connect with other families in the community? Join us at the #WelcomeToMedway Family Event! Whether you're new in town or a long-time resident seeking new friendships with other parents, this FREE event is perfect for you.

**TUESDAY,
10-13 FEB**

- ✓ **Child-Friendly Activities**
- ✓ **Free Demos**
- ✓ **Free gift for every child.**

Meet over 10 local partners, discover community resources, and make new friends at the Church followed by activities at the Chatham Children and Family Hub.

 All Saints Church, Chatham ME4 5NE and
The Chatham Children and Family Hub ME4 5AZ



January 2024



Newsletter

LET'S FACE THE NEW YEAR!

Tuesday
16th Jan
19:00 - 20:00
FREE



FREE SESSION
Cannabis Awareness
Get the facts so you can have the conversation

Thursday
1st Feb
19:00 - 21:00
£24



Supporting a Child with ADHD
Challenging stereotypes, explaining what ADHD is and offering a range of interventions that can make lasting differences.

Monday
5th Feb
19:00 - 21:00
£24



Autism: Improving Communication
Small changes in how you communicate, lead to huge improvements with your ability to communicate with someone on the spectrum.

Tuesday
9th Jan
19:00 - 21:00
£24



Getting a Good Night
Screen Addiction, insomnia, energy drinks and more. Get a range of extremely useful ideas on how to improve the quality of their sleep.



Medway Parents and Carers Forum's 3rd Annual Send Survey

This is your chance to tell us about your experiences with SEND services in Medway over the last 12 months.

The survey is anonymous and will help structure improvements moving forward. Any information provided will be used to guide improvements for families.

Follow the link below or scan the QR code to complete the survey and enter for a chance to win one of 3 £25 Amazon voucher prizes.

Prize draw T&C's can be found on www.medwaypcf.org.uk

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MPCF23SEnDSurvey>

