

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for your ongoing support of students and staff at the Priory Belvoir Academy throughout the last term. It has been a pleasure to speak with many of you at parents' evenings and celebrate the ongoing progress and achievements of many of our students. We have set up a 'pre-loved uniform' shop to support families in purchasing uniform items and this has been well received by those parents who have used it. Moving forward, we will provide this opportunity, twice in each half-term and give you the dates in advance. We have received many requests for various items of uniform including PE Kit and blazers. Any donations of uniform to the school will be gratefully received and recycled for others to use.

Earlier this week, I sent you the details of the changes to the school day for the new academic year beginning on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023 to fall in line with the government's requirements for schools to have students on site for 32.5 hours a week. Although this will mean a small change to the timings of the school day, we have taken this as an opportunity to extend and strengthen the provision in the tutor period to better facilitate assemblies, PSHE activities and intervention and reading sessions to support students who need them.

As always, it has been a busy term and I have shared with you in the remainder of this newsletter, a selection of the highlights from across the school.

### ***Pushing for the best grades...***

Since January we have had a plethora of strategies and interventions, mainly but not exclusively to help support Year 11s. These have consisted of:

- Revision skills mentoring with dedicated support staff
- After school 121 or small group tutoring in Maths and English administered by a private government sponsored company called Teaching Personnel.
- Small group tuition in Science using a local excellent private tutor.
- Our own staff have once again gone above and beyond by offering whole class after school revision sessions right up to the exams
- Using two full time private tutors for daytime withdrawals in Maths, English and reading fluency interventions (the latter for younger years)

We have also been instructing and inspiring Year 11s in the principles and art of revision. Students have benefitted from a programme of mini-sessions in tutor time where the principles of revision have been slowly drip fed. These led to the main two hour revision skills seminar with Mrs Torr where students specifically devised their own revision timetables.

Coupled with these sessions there has been a programme of visiting speakers in assemblies and tutor time to inspire students to work hard and smart. Both current pupils and ex-students have explained how they revised and achieved so well, either in mocks or in their actual exams. In assemblies we were thrilled to welcome back

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some wonderful past students who inspired our current cohort of Year 11s. In late January Rosa Booth-Clibborn explained how she didn't allow her SEN label to define her and used some small successes in Year 10 to motivate herself to work harder and more efficiently. She told the students how she then achieved a raft of grades way above her original predictions, breaking her personal glass ceiling. Surely this gave hope to some that have a tendency to self-label themselves. We hope so! Daisy Yarham also explained so eloquently how her tendency to overwork had to be curbed to get the best out of herself. She again managed it and did amazingly well in her GCSEs. Three weeks later Ollie Stutting, Maddie Chester and Archie Curtis came in to continue to inspire us with their stories of dedication, success and future plans.

Education at the Priory Belvoir Academy is more than just GCSE grades, but at this time of year it is imperative that we put 100% focus on getting the best grades possible for our Year 11 students, so they can achieve all they can in the future. We trust that the students will be rewarded for theirs, yours and our efforts in the summer.

### ***We will remember them...***

At the start of February, 55 Year 9 students participated in a trip to Ypres to visit the World War One Battlefields. This trip received an unprecedented level of interest with over 100 students wanting to take part! Those who were lucky enough to participate built on their knowledge of the First World War gained during their History lessons. They did this by visiting several museums, Commonwealth War Graves and trenches still partly intact from the war! Many of our pupils had ancestors who fought in the war and are commemorated at the places visited such as at Tyne Cot Memorial. They were able to locate their grave or their name and take pictures of this back home to their families, with many of these students being the only ones in their family to visit in person.

Pupils also got to experience the incredibly moving Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate and the fantastic Isla and Arthur represented our school by laying a wreath during this ceremony. Our pupils were exemplary during the ceremony which required complete silence to fully appreciate the atrocities of the war. There were several schools there during this ceremony and Priory Belvoir students modelled respect of the highest calibre. Throughout the trip, all of the staff were impressed with the curiosity shown by our students and the questions they asked. We are so proud of how well they represented the Priory Belvoir Academy.

### ***Geography***

In Geography lessons this term Year 7 have been learning about where they live – ask them the difference between the UK, Great Britain & the British Isles. Year 8 have been studying settlement and patterns of crime in preparation for some local fieldwork next term. Year 9 have been thinking about global issues including the impact of the fast fashion industry.

Last week Year 10 collected data in Nottingham for their first GCSE fieldwork investigation – this was very successful and we were lucky to dodge the rain showers. Finally Year 11 are working very hard to complete their final GCSE topic on Natural Hazards before embarking on an intensive period of revision leading up to their first exam on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

### ***All things literary....***

#### **Tom Palmer's visit**

In January, Year 7 and 8 students were treated to a visit by award-winning author Tom Palmer. Students had been reading his novel *Resist*, as part of their weekly Reading for Pleasure lessons, in the lead up to his visit. Tom talked to the students about all things related to writing, including; planning, publishing and even scrapbooking. Students were able to ask Tom a range of questions and had their books signed by him afterwards. This visit created a real buzz around reading, and students left eager to read more of his books!

#### **Quantum Theatre *A Christmas Carol***

Also in January, Year 9 and 10 students watched a performance of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* performed by The Quantum Theatre Company. The company put on a fantastic show, using only three actors, which the students

found very impressive. This was a fantastic opportunity for the students to watch the novel come to life, and aided them greatly in their understanding of the classic novel.

### **Year 8 Trip to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London**

50 lucky Year 8 students were taken to London to watch *The Tempest* at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Students made the most of the coach journey by doing some sightseeing, pointing out The Tower of London, The Shard, and St Pauls Cathedral amongst many other iconic sights. Once students arrived at the theatre they were blown away by the modern-looking staging of *The Tempest*, which included giant bubbles and pink foam! During the fantastic show, students were told to pay close attention to the staging of key scenes, including Prospero and Caliban's argument. This is to help them with their upcoming assessment on staging in *The Tempest*.

### **World Book Week**

As always, the English department celebrated World Book Day with a series of stand-alone lessons for KS3, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March. However, this year we turned it into World Book Week, with students completing a range of reading-related activities during tutor time, to create a 'buzz' around reading. Lots of staff got involved too, dressing up as well-loved book characters, including; Robin Hood, Cat in the Hat, Jane Eyre and all of the characters from The Wizard of Oz.

### **French in Practice**

In January, in the French department, we started off the new year by immersing year 9 students in a French marketing experience. They were tasked to create some advertisement materials to promote the sale of Jelly Babies to the French market. Students learned how to research a market according to the culture of the country, work in a team, share and listen to ideas. Year 9 performed their advertisement in French in front of the other students, all in French, which was impressive! The workshop was followed by a talk to all of year 9, explaining how useful a language can be in the world of work.

Year 7 and 8 also watched our annual French play performed by Onatti. This play was particularly well linked to the topic of holidays which is studied in year 8. As usual, the actors were brilliant and funny, and offered a wonderful learning experience outside of the classroom.

### **Science week**

Students across Years 7-9 took part in our yearly celebration of British Science week. Events included: Science week lessons based around the theme 'Connections', Science pub quiz, entering National competitions (and some within school) and racing to find what their teachers considered to be 'the greatest invention ever'. For those of you that have supported with the design competitions from home, thank you for helping us promote Science!

### **Year 7 Faith Tour**

In Religious Studies, a group of year 7 students descended on Derby to visit the Derby Open Centre and take part in a faith trail. They visited a local mosque where they were able to ask lots of questions about the religion they are currently studying and view the beautiful religious artifacts inside the building. They also visited a Sikhi Gurdwara where they saw the prayer hall with the Guru Grantham Sahib being read and got to hold each of the 5Ks. The Gurdwara also included a free meal inside the Langar - a lentil dahl with roti, a few of them said it was the best food they'd ever had!

The group also took part in an Asian food tasting workshop as part of the trip, where they tried a variety of different traditional Asian snacks. This seemed to be the favourite part of the day for many as they enjoyed sampling different fruits, sweets, and savoury treats!

### **GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition**

23 Year 11 GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition students had their final practical assessment from 15-17th March. The students' dishes had to be seasonal and nutritious café food. Students showcased their skills across their three dishes with accompaniments, in three hours. Lots of staff and students enjoyed sampling the final dishes (once photography had taken place!). The students did themselves (and Mrs Suschitzky) proud. The dishes

looked appetising and tasted delicious, worthy of any National Trust Café! Thank you to the all parents involved for facilitating endless 'practices' at home before the big day.

### ***Careers***

Our Year 11's all took part in 'mock interviews' on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January. Held annually, this event is first class experience with local employers, in preparing our students for their up-and-coming post 16 destination interviews as well their future 'world of work'. Students received verbal and written feedback from their interviews, constructively helping them to move forward. Students should be very proud of themselves for how well they interviewed and overcame their nerves. All students agreed that it was a valuable experience, worth repeating! As ever, thank you to our wonderful parent/local employer volunteers for supporting this event.

Year 10's went 'to work' for three days from 7<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> March. Work placements varied from agriculture and marketing, to dog grooming and primary schools. Some students were fortunate to be able to visit RAF Waddington and Coveris (labelling) in Boston, and then completed a project to encourage more females into the RAF. Feedback from all involved has been overwhelmingly positive, areas for improvement including 'better weather' and 'longer placements'! Thank you once again to our wonderful parents for supporting this valuable opportunity for our students. Year 9 beware, you're next so start thinking about possible placements now!

### ***PE and School Sport***

Terms 3 and 4 have been busy in the PE department. In lesson times at KS3 students have developed their skills in volleyball, handball, orienteering, team building, trampolining, rugby and gymnastics. There has been some great progress made by students and many of them have enjoyed their first experience of those activities. We always recommend students watch some of these sports on videos to see experienced performers and reflect on what they have learned.

We have been able to offer a range of extra-curricular opportunities too. Most days see over 60 students playing a variety of sports in the sports hall at lunch time and the after school netball, badminton and volleyball clubs have been popular. GCSE PE students have also had time to practise their trampolining skills to raise their performance grades.

In terms of fixtures the boys have played some rugby matches. As a smaller secondary school we always pride ourselves on being able to field a side and be competitive. We haven't won many games, but there have been some great individual and team performances by all year groups and students have represented the academy in the correct spirit. There have been some mixed badminton games with the Keystage 3 girls team going on to represent the area at the county finals where they came up against an England international! Netball continues to thrive with Miss Jones increasing the range of schools that the girls are playing against as they slowly build towards the summer tour. Finally, the year 11 mixed volleyball team have played 3 matches against Ruskin and Carres, winning some and losing others but showing the huge progress we are making as a school in the sport. However, the highlight of the team was Mr Waddingham's staff/student volleyball evening when over 50 students played with and against staff in a great atmosphere that showed why it is a pleasure to offer extra-curricular sporting opportunities.

Next half term will see some continuation of the more traditional winter sports but will also include some handball, rounders, softball, tennis, athletics and cricket fixtures against other schools and a difference in the clubs we offer.

### ***Successful Grant Bid!***

Following a recent funding application, we are delighted to have been awarded of £11000 from We Are Beyond Mental Health Charity. The funding will be apportioned to provide 1:1 support for students experiencing grief/trauma counselling or similar. This will further support the pastoral provision that we are able to offer to some of our most vulnerable students. We are delighted with this announcement.

### **Cyber Safety Assembly**

On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March we welcomed a representative from Leicestershire Police Cyber Security to school. Years 7-10 took part in the assembly and listened to practical advice and guidance of how to keep themselves and others safe online. They have also agreed to offer a parent presentation in the summer term. We understand the pressures and concerns with social media and having to keep abreast of constant changes so this will be extremely useful to parents.

### **Year 11 Drop Down Day**

Our Year 11s took part in a Pastoral Drop Down Day during February. Students received presentations on Healthy Relationships, Alcohol Awareness and Fire and Road Safety.

### **In the spotlight .....**

- Emma Jackson, a student in Year 8, performed as part of the Harby Harlequins in their performance of 'Robin Hood.' These performances took place at Harby Village Hall on Wednesday, February 1 to Saturday, February 4. This required huge levels of commitment from Emma who took part in numerous rehearsals and late nights in preparation for the shows. We are really proud of her dedication towards performing arts and being an active part of her local community.
- The Rotary Club have kindly offered to fund two Year 10 students to take part in their leadership awards. This involves a weekend of adventure activities and opportunities to meet and lead students from across the local area. The students nominated have both shown themselves to have leadership potential and we look forward to hearing about their challenges upon their return.
- Congratulations to Clem Beardmore who has been selected as a finalist in the Lord Lieutenant's Award for Young People in 2023. Clem has been selected from a long list of nominations and is invited to the awards dinner and presentations on the 27<sup>th</sup> March. Congratulations to Clem on becoming a finalist. He is already a winner in our eyes but we wish him the best of luck at the awards evening.

### **Calendar**

#### April 2023

April 1st – 9th – Ski Trip to Andorra

w/c 3rd April – 14th April - Easter Holidays

w/c 24th April – Year 8 Mock Examinations

Thursday 27th April – Year 7 Parents Evening

#### May 2023

Monday 1st May – May Day Bank Holiday

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May – Year 8 Drop Down Day

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> and Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May – GCSE French Speaking and Listening Examinations

Monday 8th May – Coronation Bank Holiday

Saturday 13th – Sunday 14th May – Duke of Edinburgh Assessment Weekend

w/c 15th May – Start of Year 11 GCSE's

w/c 22nd May - Year 7 Mock Examinations

w/c 29th May – 2nd June – Half Term

#### June 2023

w/c 19th June – Year 10 Mock Examinations

Thursday 22nd June –Year 11 Leavers Prom

Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th June – Netball Tournament Weekend at Keele University

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June – Year 10 GCSE Field Trip - Yorkshire

Wednesday 28th June – GCSE Contingency Day (all candidates must be available up to and including this date)

Thursday 29th June – Year 7 Induction Day

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#### July 2023

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July – Rewards Trips  
Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July – Rewards Trips  
Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July – Last Day of Term

On behalf of the staff at the Priory Belvoir Academy, we wish you a good Easter break and look forward to everyone returning on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 with renewed energy and vigour.

Yours faithfully,

Mr L S Newton  
Headteacher

