



Newsletter

15th October 2007

Dear Parent

It has been a busy first term for the Academy with many great events happening for our students.

Open Evening

We were delighted to host over 157 families on our Open Evening on 2nd October as they finalise their choice of secondary schools for their children. Staff, students and sponsors joined together to put on a fantastic display of learning, with all subjects demonstrating their skills. Comments praised the confidence and goodwill of the students and the passion of the staff to help students progress. Another 46 families have visited the Academy during a working day and have been similarly impressed with what they have seen. If you are interested in visiting the Academy yourself then please do contact the Main Office.

Improvements to the Academy Site

I am sure that you are aware that student lockers have been issued over the last few weeks. Lockers have their own key and are for students to keep their books, coats and equipment in during the day. The Academy reserves the right to open a locker at any time and will expect each locker to be emptied at the end of each term so that they may be cleaned.

Over the next week, the changing rooms in the Gym are being improved, with showers being reinstated. New boilers are being installed to improve heating and efficiency. The Drama Studio will be completed as well, with blackout curtains running along the length of the room so that the professional lighting system can be used to the best effect.

Food and the Dining Room

Mrs McHugh, our Catering Manager, has been working very hard with her team in the Academy kitchens. This dedication has paid off with more

students than ever taking up the great food on offer at break and lunchtimes. All food is daily prepared on site, using fresh produce that is seasonal and sourced from local shops. As the cold mornings begin, we are serving breakfast from 8am until 8.30am – toast, scrambled eggs and drinks. It is a great start to the day.

Developing learning

As part of our commitment to make learning more enjoyable and focused in real life, subjects have been inviting guests into the classroom. *Sainsburys* "From field to plate" campaign had students learning about farming and then creating a meal from ingredients brought by the team.



Mrs Russell, with some of her students.

Year 7 had a "Saxon" knight visit to recount his experiences at the Battle of Hastings. The Yr 9 Travel & Tourism group is examining the leisure industry by organising a visit to Thorpe Park. Yr 7 will be attending "Danny, King of the Basement" as part of the Canterbury Festival.

We have just received news of the Asset Languages Exam - French Breakthrough - taken by our Yr 8 students at the end of last term. Having only studied French for 6 terms, all students have improved their levels in at least 2 of the 4 skills. Some even managed level 6 which was the highest grade possible at preliminary level. This is excellent progress.

Future Developments

As part of the Anti-Bullying Week in December, the Peer Mentoring group will be leading some drama workshops to be presented to the school.

Mr Henstridge will be working with all years on an Enterprise project, with links from business to improve skills. There will be a Christmas Performance from Spires Academy Drama Group – rehearsals have already begun. More details about tickets will be given out later.

Attendance

Our target is to beat 92% for the entire year. There are over 82 students who have a 100% attendance record and another 78 that have over 95% for this term. This is excellent news and will reflect well in their reports. However, if the Academy is to achieve its target then all students need to attend every day and on time.

On the rare occasions that students are ill, Mrs Stone needs to know this in the morning as part of her “first day contact” to encourage this good pattern of attendance. Please use the main telephone number to report any such absences.

Student Progress

To keep parents informed about the progress of their child, there will be an Academic Review Day on 23rd November 2007. More details will follow, but this will be an opportunity for parents and students to meet with tutors for a 15 minute discussion about targets and progress over the first two terms.

Other events to discuss progress will be:

21 st January 2008	<i>Year 10 courses</i>
14 th February 2008	<i>Year 11 courses</i>
11 th March 2008	<i>Year 8 Options Evening</i>
2 nd April 2008	<i>Year 9 courses</i>
12 th May 2008	<i>Academic Review Day</i>

The Academy’s Two Mini-Schools

Students have voted on the two mini-school names: Invicta and Canterbury. Weekly tutor quizzes have begun a healthy competition between the two schools and more will follow. Each mini-school is supporting a local and a national charity with the ideas and work being led by students.

Collecting information

At the beginning of the year we asked you to complete information sheets about your child. If any of your contact details have changed, please do let us know. This will make sure that we can contact you quickly if needed.

Another standard set of data we are required by national government to complete is on ethnicity and first language. This asks students to describe the languages they were brought up with. All students will be asked to complete the questionnaire on Monday 29th October during the school day. This confidential information is used by the Academy to celebrate the many different backgrounds of our students and to ensure that we are getting the right support and funding. If you want any more information about this, you should contact Malcolm Bailey, Deputy Head of School.

PE and Sports Fixtures

The school is now running 4 Netball, 6 Football and 4 Basketball teams, the most in recent history! That means that at least 124 students (over a third of the school) are now representing Spires Academy on the sports field. And that’s just in the Winter Season!

12 students are acting as Sports Captains in three sports and are already doing a good job with selection and play tactics on the field. 26 Year 11 students will be beginning the nationally recognized Level 1 Sports Leaders Award next term. They will be developing their skills in Leadership and Officiating and putting them into practice by coaching many local Primary School children throughout the year.

Yr 8 Boys football team are undefeated so far this year, beating Simon Langton Boys School and St. Anselm’s. All other teams are competing well and look very smart in their new kit!

3 students have been selected to represent Kent in Basketball – Luke Ward, Jack Waite and Sean McHugh.

And finally

There is a Staff Training Day on Friday 19th October - students are not required to be in school.

May I thank all staff and students for a very good first term and wish everyone a happy and safe holiday. I look forward to greeting everyone back on Monday, 29th October 2007 at 8.40am.

Lynn Ibeji
Head of School

