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30th September 2022

Parent Update

Introduction

We are just over the mid-point of the first half term, and I would like to take the opportunity to share with you all a brief summary of the first four weeks of term. We will provide full details in the end of half term newsletter, but I would like just to mention the positive start that students have had this academic year.

The incoming Year 7 students have been a credit to you all and have had a brilliant start to their time at OSA. We have 240 students, around 20 more than we usually have, and the extra numbers have meant the year group is the largest that we have ever had. All students have taken their CATS test and this data will be used to inform teaching and learning planning and be used to provide additional support where required. All Year 7s have also had the school photographer take their pictures and we hope to have these back soon. It was a pleasure to see all of Year 7 take part in the "Big Sing" and I hope following the success of this that students take part in the school choir.

It has been a pleasure to welcome parents and carers of students at Spires to one of the "Parents Welcome" meetings, where you have had opportunity to meet the senior leadership team of the school, key contacts in the year team, and have your questions answered. I hope you have all received the presentation following these events and are now able to contact key staff should you have any further queries. We are hosting Open Evening on the 6th of October for our next cohort of students, and we will be hosting a Year 7 "Meet the Tutor" evening shortly.

The start of term saw the school win the English-Speaking Union's Oracy Culture Award for 2022. This is a national award that celebrates schools which place oracy throughout their curriculum. We are so pleased with this recognition and thanks must go out to the staff and students that have made this possible. Oracy is part of our enrichment programme, and all parents will have seen the publication of the enrichment timetable for the first term of 2022. Please check the most up to date [Timetable](#) using the link or visit our website. Already we have seen many of these take place with the pantomime rehearsals, mock bar, debating, and nerds clubs having a strong showing in terms of attendance in the first few weeks.

The sixth form have had a busy start to post 16 life with a number of trips and events including Hertford College, Oxbridge workshop, INTO university independent study workshop, Complex Numbers trip to the Maths Institute, a visit to the British Museum and Vice Chancellors Innovation Awards. The sixth form team met with all incoming Year 12 students at the start of term to set expectations, confirm courses and introduce



themselves. Again, the sixth form have had an incredible start to the year, and they are a pleasure to engage with around the school site.

As part of our student voice programme, all tutor groups have nominated a school council representative and they have had the first meeting of the academic year. The discussion points have been collated and the student leadership group are presenting these thoughts to the senior leadership team next week. Thank you to all the participants of this, as it really matters what the student body think and suggest. We are looking forward to hearing from them and being able to respond in due course.

It was a privilege to listen to the Year 11 Post 16 Choices assembly where it represents one of their first chances to find out about options once GCSEs are completed. There are many paths each individual student can choose and the important thing at this stage is to research and look at options. No decisions need to be made now, but it is vital that each student thinks about what they would like to do next year.

I know the creative arts department have been delighted that the lifting of Covid restrictions have enabled them to go out to the theatre, to watch performances, and take part in workshops. All of the students involved have had a fantastic experience and I know more will be said in the newsletter. Thanks, must also go to all the staff for organising and attending the trips, as they would not be able to take place without the extra effort and time, they put in to make them happen.

In the final three weeks of half term there is much more to look forward to at OSA, with the geography department taking the students out to complete their fieldwork, the school recruiting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Ambassador's, the first House activity (Football) taking place, work experience for Year 10 and Year 12 launch, primary and senior maths challenges, plus the first FOSA (Friends of Oxford Spires Academy) meeting and Parent Power meeting. The art department have a number of enrichment activities, including the Big Draw, artist workshops and an art study day. The focus on Year 11 will see the first parents' evening of the year take place and a study higher conference focusing on revision skills as they build towards their first set of practice examinations.

I look forward to the newsletter to be able to provide more details of the above, and I would like to thank everyone, students, parents, carers, and staff alike, for the positive start to term.

Regards

Rich Corry – Principal



Safeguarding Update

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are well and have enjoyed a summer of warm weather!

I am writing to you as the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Oxford Spires Academy with an update of changes to the team here and to welcome those of you that are new to the school. I also have some additional information that you may find useful and may wish to discuss with your child/children.

Over the summer, we appointed a Home School Link Worker – Hannah Gray. We are really pleased to welcome Mrs Gray into the safeguarding team. In addition to adding capacity to the team, her role will take a focus on working with yourselves as families, working with students and their families to improve attendance, working at the 'Early Help' stages of safeguarding and monitoring of the IT systems in school. Mrs Gray has made a positive start here and is looking forward to meeting more of our students and yourselves to offer her support. The team also consists of Ms Bhag (Deputy Safeguarding Lead) and Ms Henry (Safeguarding Officer) who between them hold over 30 years of safeguarding knowledge and experience, and myself, Shelley Baker who has been the Designated Safeguarding Lead for just over 2 years and am heading into my 11th year at Oxford Spires Academy.

All staff have been busy over the last few weeks reading up on updates to statutory safeguarding guidance to ensure that the level of good practice of safeguarding at Oxford Spires Academy is maintained.

Our key priorities in safeguarding remain similar this year in line with the data we receive from the local authority and our academy data. The purpose of these priorities is to ensure we have a focused education (alongside other safeguarding matters) for staff and students due to these issues affecting the lives of a large proportion of our school community. The priorities are listed below.

- Kindness/anti-bullying
- Mental Health
- Exploitation
- Abusive behaviours

We have linked up with the National College, who support teacher training and have proven useful for us here at Oxford Spires Academy. Part of this package gives us access to supportive guides which you may find useful. Due to the recent passing of HRM Queen Elizabeth, I thought it may raise questions and many thoughts for our students. I have therefore attached a guide on 'Tips for Supporting Children in Dealing with Grief.' I hope you find some use from this resource.



Finally, I would like to take this opportunity, as the nights begin to draw in, to ensure that you have conversations at home around safety in the community. I advise that you discuss with your child/children about safe routes (well-lit areas), being in the presence of friends, agreeing a timescale with yourselves, knowing their where-abouts and if they have a mobile phone, ensuring that they carry this and ensure that is charged up. If you wish to track your child/children, there are many free apps out there which allow you to do this.

Shelley Baker - Designated Safeguarding Lead

Enrichment Opportunities

LAMDA – Students wishing to improve their drama skills and get a recognised qualification can come to LAMDA Thursday in PA12 3:00-4:30pm.

Instrumental Lessons – We offer a wide range of lessons on both classical and pop instruments as well as vocal training. Does your child want to play drums, guitars, violins, flutes, voice – plus many more? If you are in receipt of Free School Meals instrumental lessons are FREE

Come along and sing along – Year 7 choir. After the huge success of The BIG sing, we are starting a Year 7 choir. Rehearsals will take place in the Theatre at lunchtimes – 1:30-2:00pm every Wednesday. It is all very informal and just for fun!!

Dance Programme Opportunity for 12–16-year-olds

Is your child interested in joining a Dance Leadership Programme this October half term?

The programme runs at Pegasus Theatre, Oxford from Mon 24th to Thurs 27th October and aims to guide young people to create choreography, plan and deliver inclusive classes, promote mental health awareness, and leads to a certified qualification! You can find more information at the following [website](#).

BODY POLITIC

DANCE LEADERSHIP

AN INTENSIVE WEEK OF DANCE TRAINING FOR 12-16YRS

TRAIN | TEACH | CREATE
BECOME A LEADER

Mon 24 - Thurs 27 Oct | 10-4PM bodypoliticdance.com
Pegasus Theatre 07791905851
BOOK NOW info@bodypoliticdance.com

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND | danceOXFORD | ACTIVATE LEARNING | COMMUNITY FUND