

## LETTER FROM MR WILSON

Welcome to Edition 24 of Newsflash for this academic year.

I would like to start my letter off by congratulating and thanking Connor White in Year 8 for his quick thinking and decisive actions in coming to the aid of a member of the public earlier this week. Connor and a friend were at the Edge Lane Metrolink Stop when a gentleman who was waiting for the tram had a seizure. Connor didn't panic and managed to flag down a passing Ambulance, ensuring that the man received swift and timely emergency treatment from Paramedics. The gentleman was taken to hospital and we hope that he is now making a speedy recovery. Well done to Connor again, your actions were commendable and, without them, there may well have been quite a different end to this story.

We were pleased to receive a letter this week from Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, which praised the rapid improvements that have been made at the Academy since the last Inspection and the impact that good leadership and management have had in driving up standards and expectations of both staff and students. The letter also commented on our good performance in English and the systems that we now have in place to manage, support and improve the quality of teaching. Whilst there is still much to do across the Academy, I would like to thank leaders and staff at all levels for their continuing hard work and commitment. Similarly, I would like to thank parents and carers for their continuing support; school improvement is a real team effort, please do not underestimate the part that you have played so far and, hopefully, will continue to do so.

On behalf of colleagues and students, I would like to congratulate Angela Wood, Senior Assistant Headteacher, on achieving the National Professional Qualification in School Leadership. Much of the work Angela has completed in achieving this award has been based at the Academy and has made an important contribution to the improvements we are making.

Year 10 Pre Public Exams begin on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March and I hope that all students are revising and preparing thoroughly for this important week. Preparation for GCSE examinations is a marathon and not a last minute sprint; students achieve success through hard work over time, from when they start with us in Year 7, and indeed beforehand at primary school, until they leave in Year 11. Year 10 students who prepare and revise thoroughly now are investing in their success in 2017 when they take their final exams.

With this in mind we held a Year 7 Raising Attainment event on Thursday where the theme of the evening was "Securing Success for 2020", the year, of course, when the current Year 7 will take their

**Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work**

GCSE exams. As many of you will know, there have been significant changes to the way that GCSE courses are assessed and graded and hopefully the evening gave parents and carers a clearer understanding of how this will affect their child. Many parents and carers had the opportunity to meet with Form Tutors too and there were also resources available which will support student learning and progress. Thank you to those parents and carers who attended; I hope that you found the evening useful and informative.

Thank you for reading this edition of Newsflash and, as usual, I hope you have a good weekend.

Best wishes

Mr P.Wilson  
**Headteacher**

## GCSE COUNTDOWN

### **YEAR 11 REVISION AT HOME PLANNING: The GCSE Examinations begin in 7 school weeks**

#### **WHEN SHOULD MY DAUGHTER/SON BEGIN PLANNED FORMAL REVISION AT HOME IF THEY WISH TO SUCCEED?**

On Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March all Year 11 students, parents and carers will receive a letter about your daughter/son's planning and hard work for revision at home in preparation for the GCSE examinations. GCSE is a two-year course and the end of Year 11 examinations are now based very heavily on knowledge, memory and understanding. We will issue a Revision Booklet to all students on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March. This is our signal as to the **latest date** your daughter/son should leave it before they start a formal, planned, careful programme of study revision. The letter that goes with that booklet will provide more information.

#### **HOW SHOULD THEY USE THEIR HOLIDAY? (Easter and May half-term)**

We suggest that at least 50% of that time (the equivalent of one full week at Easter and 3 days during the half-term holiday) should be devoted in full (morning, afternoon and 2 hours in the evening) to formal planned revision.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THEY DO THESE COMING WEEKS? (The weeks beginning Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March to Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March)**

So, the next two weeks are a very important time for the whole family (parents/carers and your Year 11 son or daughter).

Both weeks should be about them focussing seriously in class and completing their homework to a very high standard.

**Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work**

Our experience and professional learning tells us that you should use this time to tactfully ‘interfere’ in their student lives but in a very positive way – whether they want you to or not. Some decisions need to be made this week – these are your choices but this is our advice:

- At home, **where is their main place of study?** They will need space, quiet and a good-sized table or desk. They cannot revise effectively on a bed or chair or in front of a TV or distracting screen.
- What **materials should be around them?** They will need paper, index-file cards, highlighter pens (4-5 different colours), good pencils, pen, ruler, professional calculator, paper, blu-tac and post-it notes.
- What **storage should they have?** They will need trays for each subject (cheap plastic trays will do) - they probably **shouldn’t** revise during this week unless they are already organised: instead, they should look out all their exercise books, text-books, past exam papers, any assessments they’ve done, any notes they have made in class or when they revised for their exams in Year 1- and their two PPE Exams (mocks) in year 11 and place everything together for ONE SUBJECT in one tray.
- There **should be a discussion about home-life, visits, sports, dance, the arts or music they do** and, as a family, agree what can be done to build study around those activities (if they do activities as well out of school they will have to use their study time even more efficiently) and whether they need to cut down on some for a little while. The family should discuss the leisure time that would be reasonable (there is nothing wrong with having Friday and Saturday night off so long as they work really hard and don’t go out on the other evenings).
- There should be a **discussion about phones and electronic devices.** The world is a fascinating and more open place for our students, now, and we must realise that they like to ‘keep-in-touch’ using social media and their phones. However, this can become a real distraction if not carefully managed. Families do not need to argue about this but just have a grown up discussion about the next 7-10 weeks of their lives.

### **WHAT SHOULD THEY DO WHEN THEY RECEIVE THEIR STUDY BOOKLET?**

The first couple of nights – straight away (say, Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March or the day after) – is about planning what (list not just the subject but the topics, knowledge, understanding and past-paper practice they will be doing) they should do each night. More details will follow in our letter that goes with the booklet.

### **WHAT WOULD BE WORTH REMEMBERING?**

The UK is a service, business, finance and high-skilled economy in 2016. **It is knowledge, qualifications and sound character that will set your son or daughter up for life.** They won’t even be looked at for jobs and careers in the next 30 years – and evidence suggest they will do 2-3 different careers in their working lives (“remember these GCSEs are for life, not just for Christmas!”) if they do not have the basic qualifications to a good level in English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Modern Foreign Language and their other Options’ Subjects.

**Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work**

***The benefits of intensive study and doing past-exam papers at home against the clock (sticking to the time set by the exam) are invaluable in giving them the best chance of success. Students will face stiff competition now to get into the best colleges (and universities if that is their chosen path) and so the highest GCSE grades they can get will help.***

### **WHAT CAN I DO?**

Parents and carers can be a constant source of support and challenge. Why not discuss with them, in a good moment without any moans, how they think you could help them? If you wish you can help by testing them on the cards and notes they write. You can help by checking that they have memorised the key words they need for each subject, the key facts, the key points and the key quotations they need to learn. They can tell you what the key elements are. You can help them to 'tidy' and organise their chosen study space and support them with the right stationery and equipment (please see above). You can support them with the right diet and sleep patterns and rewards for being mature about their study. And...you can speak to us at any time. Please do not think as a school we are trying to interfere. So many parents and carers have asked us what they can do, we thought it was important to offer some tips that we know work really well when handled with infinite patience and quiet firmness.

These are general examinations for all. **Some students don't worry enough and others get far too worried.** If your son or daughter begins to fall into either category please look after them very carefully and speak to us the moment you have any concerns. We can help. The right balance is enough worry to motivate themselves without so much that it gets in the way. If a student studies well **and** completes past-papers in timed conditions at home and then shows them to their class teacher they will do well without having to worry too much. Remember they have to do timed past-papers at home (even if they have done them before) because they are not just learning how to be good at the subject, they are learning how to show how good they are in timed exam conditions, against the clock. There is no need for any panic though as these are GCSEs, not University Degrees. ***Do not hesitate to get in touch with your son/daughter's Year Manager, Miss Davies, or Year Leader, Mr Frost, if you have any concerns.***

### **WHEN SHOULD THEY BE READY TO PROPERLY BEGIN SERIOUS AND MATURE REVISION**

At the latest, by Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March (see above for more details – they could even start sooner). They should do 2-3 hours per night with no more than 2 evenings off in 7. This is not a punishment, it is an opportunity to shine and be fully prepared.

***“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”***

Benjamin Franklin (one of the founding fathers of the USA as we know it today)

**Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work**

## IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK

Congratulations to those students, pictured below, who were awarded their OCR Exam Board Qualification in Business and Enterprise, having successfully completed the course which we run in conjunction with City in the Community.



The Excel Charter is launched across the Academy detailing the expectations of, and opportunities for, students in the Excel teaching groups.

The Academy holds Year 9 Standardisation and Moderation Week to consider the progress of Year 9 students.

The Academy holds a Raising Attainment evening for Parents and Carers of Year 7 students based around the theme of "Securing Success for 2020".

Year 9 students attend a Careers Convention at Connell Sixth Form College as part of National Careers Week.

Year 11 GCSE P.E. students visit the Manchester Climbing Centre.

## PARENT VOICE

Thank you to the 68 parents who completed the recent Parent Voice Show My Homework Survey. It was really useful to read your comments and see how interested and involved you are in your child's learning.

The results showed that all parents valued quality homework, with most finding Show My Homework a useful tool for checking and monitoring the work set. Parents also made it very clear that Planners are the most useful tool for quick checking and that they preferred the option of having both systems available to them.

A number of comments also highlighted some technical problems with the on-line service which we are now looking into.

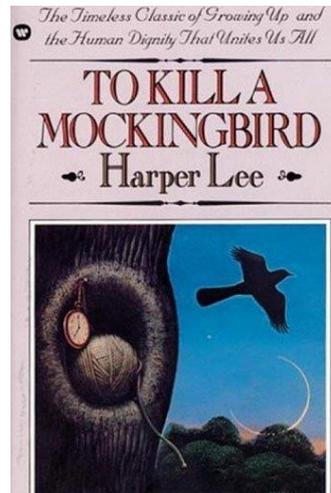
**Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work**

Thank you for your continued support and the high expectations you have of your child's learning. Your comments are always really useful and help us to develop and improve different aspects of our provision.

## DROYLSDEN'S TOP TEN!

The votes have been counted and verified and it can now be revealed that Droylsden Academy's top ten books are:

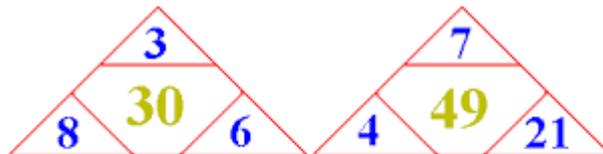
1. To Kill a Mockingbird
2. Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief
3. Matilda
4. Goodnight Mr Tom
5. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
6. 1984
7. The BFG
8. The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas
9. The Fault in our Stars
10. Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone



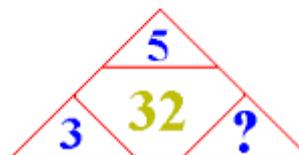
Congratulations to all the authors on making the Droylsden Academy Top 10 and particularly, and posthumously, to Harper Lee, author of To Kill a Mockingbird who won our prestigious award.

## MATHS' PUZZLE

This week's Maths' Puzzle.....



Work out the value of the missing number.



●	▲	▲	★	16
★	●	●	●	14
▲	●	★	▲	16
★	★	★	★	20
17	15	17	17	

● =

.....and the answer to last week's puzzle!

★ =

The circle has a value of 3

▲ =

The star has a value of 5

The triangle has a value of 4

**Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work**

The National Citizen Service programme will be launched with Year 11 students on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March.



*"It is important that we nurture and develop the potential in the younger generation and programmes like NCS are a good way to develop confidence and leadership skills, to encourage a new generation of business and community leaders"*

Sir Richard Branson

There will be an Open Day at Manchester College on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March between 11.00am and 2.00pm.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Academy will be closed for Good Friday and Bank Holiday Monday on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March and Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March respectively. As Easter is very early this year, we will not actually break up for the Easter holiday until 2.35pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April.

There will be a meeting of the Governing Body on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March.

Year 11 Students depart for their residential Geography Field Trip to North Yorkshire on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March.