



24 November 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope you have all had a good week and are suitably prepared for the spell of colder weather that is to follow. Please can I ask that students have dark, plain coloured coats and do not come to school in hoodies, as per our uniform guidelines. In addition, you will have seen my earlier communication regarding socks and I thank you for your support regarding this matter.

Presentation Evening

Our week has been lifted by a wonderful Presentation Evening on Thursday. This event honours students from across the school with a particular focus on last year's Year 11. It is always a pleasure to hear of the triumphs and destinations of our former students and of the great things they are hoping to achieve in the future. We were honoured to have the Chair of Sonning Common Parish Council, John Stoves, the CEO of the Maiden Erlegh Trust, Jon Peck and our own Chair of Governors, Charlotte Cant in attendance. A great evening was had by all as the photo below shows.



PE Success

Our PE Department have continued to have great success in both their widening offer and their triumphs. Our Year 7 Girl's football team won their League this week with two more victories (4-0 over Icknield and 7-0 over Wheatley Park from Oxford). The County Cup awaits! I took the opportunity to have a Hot Chocolate with them this morning and tell them, "Well done!".



In addition, we see our first Table Tennis club session today with Coach Gary coming in to provide coaching and inspiration and it is great to see it fully subscribed.

Our lunchtime rowing sessions have also been incredibly popular and this will be highlighted by an indoor rowing fixture next week. Sam Townsend, the former Chiltern Edge student, who went on to represent Great Britain in the men's eight at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics is also coming in on December 6th to run a rowing masterclass.

Extra-curricular opportunities

Next week we have our next Drop Everything and Read session which will take place on Wednesday morning so can all Year 7-9 parents please check that your children have their reading book with them for next week.

We also have our annual Astronomy Evening on Wednesday. This event, supported by the Reading University Astronomy Club, is a wonderful way of getting students excited about the mysteries of space. Thank you to Mrs Sarpong for organising this event and fingers crossed for clear skies.

Standards and staffing

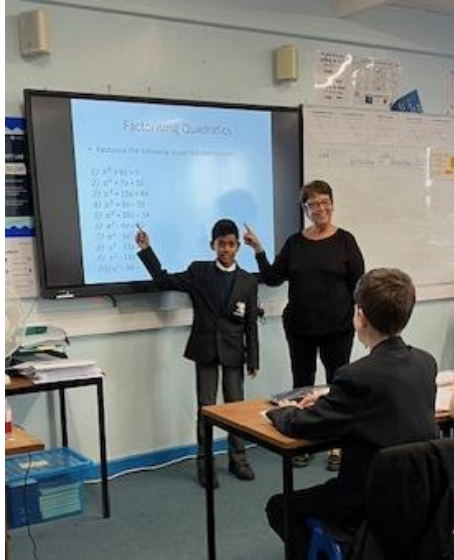
During the deep dark evenings of November, it is sometimes difficult to remember all the good things, but I have been encouraging staff to write positive e-mails to all staff about any great lessons they've had or any outstanding individuals. It's e-mails like the ones below that really make us feel like we are making a very positive difference.

Just a quick one to say 8B were sensational today in RP P1. All working hard in silence and really engaged.

Just wanted to email you to say how impressed I have been with 8E2. They were able to do a complex practical today with every single person focused and trying their best.

I also wanted you to know that we continue our work ensuring standards are high. Staff have had two training sessions this week and I have done a Learning Walk on the Science department with our MET Director of Curriculum, Sara Elliss. I am pleased to say she was delighted by what she saw - purposeful, calm learning environments, lots of high-quality book work, great teaching with complex work being modelled, guidance given and then gradually students being given the confidence to work independently on some tough topics. I've also visited top set Year 7 Maths

this week where I saw some brain bending work on factorising equations - it was awe inspiring to see the high quality of many of our young mathematicians.



Whilst I realise there are still some issues with staffing in English and Art, we are close to resolving these matters and I thank you for your patience, and there are many examples of amazing work from dedicated staff and our incredible students.

Stars of the week

My staff star of the week is jointly awarded for this week to **Mr Harte** and **Mrs Brown** for their tireless endeavours in preparing for the school show, Mary Poppins Jnr, at the end of term. They were both in last weekend and will be in again for another weekend just prior to the show. In addition, they are giving up lunchtimes and countless 'after schools' to get the show up to scratch. School shows couldn't take place without the dedication of staff like this which is why they make such worthy winners.

My student star of the week is **Grace C** of Year 8 who not only won a gold at her gymnastics event at the weekend, but she also spoke wonderfully at our Presentation Evening on Thursday.

Please leave any feedback you may have using the links below.

Have a great weekend.

Best wishes,

Andy Hartley
Headteacher

