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Highdown Link

Aspire Achieve

From the Headteacher

Dear Parents

2014-15 has been a great year for Highdown School. We are very proud of being recognised as a good school with the word outstanding coming through strongly in the text. This spurs us on to greater achievement for the future.

We met future Highdown students on Friday 10 July 2015, with our annual Year 5 day. As is the tradition, the sun shone strongly and all had a great time. When I spoke to the students, they all told me how much they had enjoyed the different lessons: Mandarin, Cooking, PE, Maths, Computing and Science. As one of the Highdown Year 7 students commented – this must be good because they didn't say that play time is the best. We were very proud to have given them a taste of Highdown Learning and look forward to seeing them for open evening in the new academic year.

Year 11 may have finished their GCSEs but taster days brought them back to experience some of the learning they will have in the Sixth Form. We know that their results will be worth celebrating in August as they have worked so hard and are looking forward to having them back as our new Sixth Form students.

As with all schools we are facing challenging times with finances and are seeking sponsorship for some of our new enterprises as we do not wish to stand still. Our new skills development programme would be great if we could find some sponsorship from a local company who may want to see their logo on a USB stick with the Highdown logo on the other side. Sponsorship of around £100 from five companies would secure a new skills programme that we want to introduce to support academic achievement with the soft skills which are so important to secure employment. I would very much like to hear from anyone who could help?

Lastly, I wish all parents, carers and friends of Highdown a very happy summer holiday.

I look forward to seeing some of you on results days.

Rachel Cave

Year 9 Normandy Trip

On Tuesday 30 June 2015, 45 Year 9 students set off to Normandy to visit the sites of the D Day Landings. Despite the strikes at Calais, the group persevered and, after almost 17 hours, arrived at their beachside accommodation near Caen.

Following the gruelling journey, the students enjoyed a relaxing first day visiting the historic Bayeux with its tapestry, market and cathedral in the sweltering heat. Following this the group went bowling, where Sarah Malik emerged victorious. They then spent the evening relaxing and playing on the beach, their own version of mini golf and some sunset yoga.

The third day was a sobering day of History, visiting many WWII sites. Starting with the impressive and moving film at Arrmanche's 360 degree cinema, the students visited the American cemetery at Omaha beach and the starkly contrasting German cemetery, La Cambe. They saw where the Germans heavy defences oversaw the landing beaches at Pointe du Hoc, and visited the American Airborne Troops museum at St Mere Eglise, where the film the Longest Day is set.

On the final day, brought a visit to the Pegasus Bridge Memorial, a moving and fitting end to the visit.

The staff on the Normandy trip were incredibly proud of the Highdown students, their patience and cheerfulness in the face of the huge amount of travelling, their interest in the history we were studying and their conduct throughout was exemplary and was commented on by other tourists at sites they visited and teachers from other schools. A fantastic trip!



Sixth Form news

On Friday 19 of June a small group of sixth form students set out to Oxford to get their first glimpse at life as a student at two of the University's many colleges: St Catherine's College and University College. First, it was off to St Catherine's, where the students were to receive a lecture-style presentation, this was also a chance to hear from the St Catherine's students themselves. With lunch out of the way it was time to head to University College- think Hogwarts, with a few less turrets and much less wizardry. Here, a University college student led the group on a tour of campus. Once again, the students were given a chance to ask questions, learning as much as possible about what it means to be an Oxford student.

The day gave the group much to think about, some of which will be hugely helpful come September, when current year twelves will begin thinking about UCAS applications and university choices.

On Thursday 25 and Friday 26 June 2015, Year 11 students were invited to attend sixth form taster sessions at Highdown for their chosen A-Level subjects. The lessons enabled students to experience the subject briefly and gain an understanding of the subject specification. Afterwards the students were invited to a BBQ which gave them a chance to meet new prospective students and staff. Overall the days were a great success and highly informative for all students involved.

Year 8 French Trip

This term a group of Year 8 students had the exciting opportunity to experience five days in France. They visited a Canadian War Memorial before travelling into Paris where they saw amazing views of the city from the top of the Eiffel Tower and during a boat ride along the Seine. The students visited a goat farm where they got hands-on experience of milking the goats and making their own bread, followed by a visit to a small village bakery where they learnt the techniques of making traditional pain au chocolat and croissants before sampling the treats. Next they visited a snail farm and most were surprised at how much they enjoyed tasting the different flavours. The last stop was to a chocolate factory learning about the history of chocolate from around the world. All students immersed themselves in the French culture and practised using the language with native speakers.



Careers

Award winning Author

On 8 July 2015, Sophie McKenzie and the events team from Waterstones, Broad Street, provided Year 7 and 8 students with a most memorable event. Sophie introduced her new book "All My Secrets" and brought it to life with the aid of some reading and role play from four students. She also talked about how her career path brought her to her dream job as a writer and the way that she earns money through the sale of her books. At the book signing during break time a number of Year 9 students took the opportunity to come and meet their favourite author, some bringing their complete collections of her books to get signed.

Year 10 Hilton Visit

Year 10 students visited the Hilton Hotel, Reading for the afternoon. Here they were introduced to a huge variety of careers within the hospitality industry and given a taste of what it would be like to work for Hilton Worldwide. Students who are studying GCSE Food and Nutrition also received valuable advice on food presentation which they will be able to use for their coursework.

Highdown Hurricanes

Staff took part in a successful touch rugby season campaign in the O2 Reading Mixed Touch League. The top scorer was Mr Mackie with 11 tries and Mr Burnell had the top assists with 8.



Mr Burnell, Mr Lester, Mr Mackie, Miss Chakera, Mr Franks, Miss Behrens, Miss Clark, Miss Turner, Miss Stansfield and Miss Blake.



Christine Bates



Ruth Ryley

Curriculum Support Teachers

Christine came to Highdown as an LSA in 2013 to experience life in a secondary school. Having worked at St. Anne's and St. Martin's schools, when the opportunity came up for a job as a primary trained teacher, she applied for the post. This year she has been supporting students who struggle with maths.

Ruth has worked primarily in Year 6 in several Reading primary schools, the last one being Caversham Park. She was encouraged to make the transition to secondary school by Dr. Love, who invited her to help initially in the reptile club as a volunteer.

She was then persuaded to apply for position as Curriculum Support Teacher and has been working with students in English. Our mission is to identify children who would benefit from extra support in and outside the classroom to help them to access the curriculum. Often children struggle during the transition from primary to secondary school and have gaps in their learning which we hope to target, so they build up their self-esteem and confidence. We also focus on children in other KS3 classes who would benefit from small group work and extra support. Next year we are going to be based in the Curriculum Enhancement room where we will be working with individual students as well as group work concentrating on Literacy and Numeracy skills. We hope to work closely with the English and Maths teachers to help differentiate work within and outside the classroom giving children the opportunity to access the secondary school curriculum at their level.

Christine and Ruth are looking forward to working together to ensure that students can improve their literacy and numeracy skills and make the necessary progress to enable them to access the entire curriculum that Highdown has to offer.

Sports news

Reading Schools Competition

The U16 team performed fantastically over the three weeks of heats, qualifying 2nd for the A team final. At the final itself they performed well against strong opposition, finishing in a very creditable 12th place. The U14s qualified 9/25 in the Reading Schools Competition putting them in the B team final after three weeks of heats. At the final everyone ran, jumped and threw exceptionally well, finishing 2nd overall, a fantastic achievement.

Reading Schools Town Championships

The U16 team again pulled out some excellent results and finished 7th overall, with a particular mention to Chante Bynoe-Gittens (200m) and Jasmine McCallum (Long Jump) who both won their events. The U14 team had great success with a number of top three finishes. Particular mention goes to Grace Hannibal (Shot) and Kyra Hannibal (200m) who both won their events. Overall the team finished 5th. The U13 team had four students finishing 1st in their events, Bethan Roberts (75m), Lucy Penton (600m), Naomi Harris (1000m) and Becky Stone (Long Jump). These excellent performances along with the rest of the team meant they finished 2nd overall.

Aggregate Trophy

This competition is where students are selected to represent Reading Schools at the Berkshire Athletics Competition. The following students were selected for the Reading Team. Chante Bynoe-Gittens (200m), Yasmin Parris (100m), Jasmine McCallum (Long Jump) 1st overall, Naomi Harris (1000m) 4th overall, Bethan Roberts (75m) 3rd overall, Lucy Penton (600m) 2nd overall, and Becky Stone (Long Jump) 1st overall.

Highdown v Prospect School

The boys were top of the league, therefore securing themselves a place in the league final against Prospect. Ten minutes in they were 2-0 down, but shortly before half time Bradley Keetch scored a vital goal to make it 2-1.

Second half Highdown were on the front foot but were struggling to find an equaliser. Joshua Lambden came on and produced some lovely skill to beat two defenders and make it 2-2. In the last minute Giaan Juttla scored to make it 3-2.

Congratulations to the Year 9 boys football team. They are now Reading League Champions!

It has been fantastic to see the continual commitment and dedication of the large numbers of students attending Rounders Club. Due to the large numbers we were able to enter two teams into the Year 7 schools tournament. Both teams had great results against the local schools, with the B team finishing 6th overall and the A team finishing 3rd.

On the button

Share your educational and inspirational websites, apps, books, videos, games etc. at editor@highdown.reading.sch.uk.

www.thestudentroom.co.uk	QuizUp	Book of the Human Body	Airkix, Basingstoke
Forum and wiki where KS4 and KS5 students can share academic and social knowledge and experiences. Includes study help, choosing a university, careers, and life.	The biggest, free trivia game in the world with over 700 topics. Deceptively intriguing and devilishly addictive because of its league tables.	Part of the How it Works series. With amazing illustrations, the 170+ page magazine is packed with curious questions, facts and trivia.	Experience the thrill of indoor skydiving, learn to ski, surf and even climb all under one roof.
WEBSITE	APP	BOOK	GIFT IDEA

KS3 Music Concert

A fantastic evening featuring the amazing musical talent at Highdown was held on Thursday 18 June 2015, in the Barn. Students from Year 7 through to Year 9 impressed the audience with a wide range of musical styles including original compositions. There were solo performances, duets and groups, both instrumental and vocal. Pieces performed were by artists such as Taylor Swift, David Guetta and Sam Smith as well as the theme from the Bond movies and The Entertainer by Scott Joplin.

An evening of great talent which really showcased the musical talent of our KS3 students, well done to all those involved!

Summer Musical Showcase

To round off another hugely successful year in the Arts calendar, students and staff presented the summer musical showcase, this year entitled "Divas and Crooners". On Thursday 9 July, the entrance foyer was converted into an Art gallery with the stunning exhibition of work from students across a range of media whilst the main hall was transformed into a vibrant performance venue. The audience, seated around tables rather than in the traditional rows, were waited upon by the student fundraising team, who had organised the refreshments for the evening, including a full mocktail bar with drinks names after well-known singing stars.

There were performances from across the school. Years 7-13 and staff, with a range of music to suit all tastes. Students choreographed much of the work themselves and all performances were extremely well received.

At the end of the evening, students who are leaving Highdown at the end of this academic year were thanked for their unerring support of the Music department throughout their time here and wished every success in their future ventures.

Maths Challenge

Special congratulations to Surabhi Luthra, Lizzy Hawken, Rory MacFadyen, Josh Wetten; all got through to the Kangaroo stage of the Maths Challenge. Further congratulations to Owen Aljabar and Bertie Taylor who competed in the Maths Olympiad round with Owen achieving a distinction. The recent Junior Maths Individual Challenge has also had great success with 50% of our Year 7 and 8 students achieving Bronze, Silver or Gold awards.

Further congratulations should go to Arran Reeve who scored highly enough to get put through to the Junior Maths Challenge Olympiad.

NEWS IN BRIEF

World Challenge:

Madagascar 2016

This year, future Year 12 and 13 students will be given the chance to explore the island of Madagascar. The student led expedition will give them the opportunity to take part in a range of activities from trekking to scuba diving. However, the most valuable and humbling experience will be the chance to rebuild and decorate classrooms and homes in a local community.

Berkshire Science and Technology Challenge Day

On Monday 29 June 2015 Dr Toovey took Year 9 Gifted and Talented students to Reading College for the Berkshire Science and Technology Challenge 2015. Students had to compete in collaborative teams on four challenge areas (forensic E-FIT, making vehicles, construction, and programming a robot). All students enjoyed the day and it was lovely to see them putting their skills and knowledge to the test.

Year 7 Buddies

In recent weeks we have seen a start to the hard work and commitment of our new Year 7 buddies. They have already helped assist Year 6 students and their parents at a number of events and have been excellent ambassadors for the school. We would like to thank them for the hard work they have shown and for the hard work still to come! You will see the Buddies helping at other events this year, and then importantly, guiding our new year 7's around school when they start next year.

Dates for your diary

8 September 2015	Year 7 and 12 Induction
9 September 2015	FIRST DAY OF TERM FOR ALL STUDENTS
14 October 2015	Inset day
23 October 2015	LAST DAY OF TERM

Report student illness to the Attendance Officer on 0118 9015823 before 9.30 a.m.
Are you a student feeling anxious? Find support at worried@highdown.reading.sch.uk

School Reception: 0118 9015800 | office@highdown.reading.sch.uk | www.highdown.reading.sch.uk

 HighdownSchool

Email newsworthy items for the Highdown Link to editor@highdown.reading.sch.uk