



Highdown Link

Term 4 2013/2014
Volume 13 Issue 4

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre Newsletter – keeping parents and the community informed

Little Shop of Horrors

During the week beginning Monday 17 March 2014, Highdown's finest musical theatre talent went on stage to perform this year's whole school musical, Little Shop of Horrors. The cast performed over three nights and one primary school matinee. The work for this show started in November 2013 and was the result of the collaboration between the Art, Drama and Music departments. Many hundreds of hours were put into bringing this fantastic show to life and the cast ranged from Year 7 students up to Year 13. The audition process was rigorous and it was a monumental task to cast this show, but we definitely made the right choices. Both onstage and off, the students were a fantastic cast to work with and made our jobs very easy. There were so many memorable moments from the show, from the lead actors who excelled themselves in every performance they did, to the stunning chorus who were superb. No show would be complete without the commitment and hard



work of the stage manager and crew who did an equally fantastic job. The show would not have been as visually amazing had it not been for the vision and talent of the awesome team of artists and puppeteers. Finally, no show would be complete without the wonderfully professional eleven piece show band, which involved students and staff working together on a seriously complex score to accompany the action on stage. Thank you to all those who supported the show. We are already looking forward to planning the next one.



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Careers@highdown.reading.sch.uk

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Year 11 Art Trip

On Tuesday 4 March 2014, Year 11 Art students went on a visit to the Tate Britain in London, to look at the vast amount of works that are displayed there and to take photos of London life. Students have started work on their externally set unit and this was an ideal opportunity to see some of the artists' work first hand and collect primary research for their exam project. Students will be sitting their ten hour practical exam on Thursday 8 May and Friday 9 May 2014. The work completed in London and back in the classroom will form the development part of their project. We look forward to seeing the exciting final pieces developed from this preparation time.



Girls Football

Well done to Highdown's Under 16 Football team for getting through to the Berkshire finals. The score against Prospect was 4-2 in extra time in the semi-finals. Good luck to the Under 13 Football team who are playing Charters on Friday 28 March 2014 after beating Waingels 5-2 in the first round.

Primary Dance Competition

Highdown hosted its annual Primary Dance Competition on Tuesday 11 March 2014. The theme for this years performance was 'What's in a name?' songs with a name as the title. There were four local primary schools taking part:- Caversham Park, Emmer Green, Micklands and EP Collier. Thank you to all the judges for helping to give out all the awards and well done to Aishwarya Shah for doing a performance for us. The parents were very impressed.



Business Studies



On Tuesday 11 March 2014, Year 10 and Sixth Form Business Studies students were given the opportunity to hear about entrepreneurship from one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Berkshire. Sir John Madejski, entrepreneur and owner of Reading Football Club and Auto Trader, came to deliver his story to the students. His story was interesting and informative, alongside a few anecdotes here and there, who would have thought that he had impersonated a Beatle for the night! He inspired the students and provided them with opportunities for some topical questioning. He was able to answer many of their questions, even about the sale of the Club, although no clues were given away with regard to any new investors. His main message was the importance of education in order to succeed and his one regret was that he had not achieved more because of a lack of qualifications. A truly determined entrepreneurial spirit.

A huge thanks to Sir John Madejski and Mrs Evans for organising this prestigious event. The Business department are always looking for opportunities to bring the business world to the students in order to allow them to see the theory in practice. If you would be interested in getting involved with this, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs S Stevens, Curriculum Leader of Business. If you want to know more about the exciting events and engaging lessons happening in the department please follow us on Twitter @highdownbus.

Data Collection Sheets

Reminder: Please return any outstanding Data Collection Sheets to the Main Office for the attention of Mrs Heather Evans. Thank you.

Highdown Quiz

Congratulations to 'Quizteam Aguilera' who won £80.00 at the Highdown Parents' Link Quiz night on Friday 21 March 2014. A popular night out for parents, teachers and students. Highdown's Mr Franks delivered the questions in a relaxed and humorous style from his arm chair! This month's quiz was probably more challenging than previous ones, you could see visible lines of concentration on the faces of the contestants. Hopefully they have all recovered and will be back for more next time. The Highdown Parents' Link will be looking to run more events in the summer and volunteers are always welcome. We are particularly keen to hear from parents/teachers who would be interested in sharing any talents at a musical/dancing event in July 2014. Please contact Debbie Evans on debevans@ntlworld.com or 07970047416 for more information.

World Book Day



Surabhi Luthra and Connie Stevens won a book of their choice for coming first place in the Highdown School Radio book trailer competition. They had to make a thirty second audio trailer to promote their favourite book, 'Midwinter Blood' by Marcus Sedgwick. The trailer was then submitted to schoolsradio.com's national competition where they were highly commended for their work. A number of Highdown students joined in the national celebration of books and reading for pleasure with a variety of events and activities.



Year 7 students took part in an inter-tutor quiz, run by the Year 11 student librarians. The questions were read out and they showed how knowledgeable they were answering questions on books and general knowledge. All tutor groups were represented, some by two full teams. The teams that drew in second place were 7Ea and 7Ca with thirty five out of forty correct answers. The winning Tutor Group was 7D who was represented by Matthew Curtayne who scored 37 points. Mrs Boyd's Year 8 English class joined other schools across Berkshire to take part in an e-book. Each group of four schools wrote a chapter a day in relay and the resulting books were published on the Education Library Service website. Our contribution to a thriller called 'Blood Group A' was written by Alfie Burnett, Ryan Checkley and Zac Mayo. This was chosen from a host of brilliantly chilling and creative chapters produced by the other groups in the class. The link can be found through the news page of the Highdown website. A 'Writing for Teenagers Conference' hosted by Leighton Park School, brought together some leading authors for young people, Chris Priestley, Sita Brahmachari and Sally Nicholls for a day of presentations and workshops. Highdown was fortunate to be one of the schools allocated places for this massively oversubscribed event and ten very keen Year 9 students snapped up the chance to attend. The authors shared their own experiences from writing to publishing tips. Chris Priestley, who writes chilling horror stories, shared how his fear of heights helped him describe his characters feelings of terror. He is the writer of 'Uncle Montague's Tales of Terror'. He told how using a mood board was especially helpful in setting the scene and helping him to flesh out the characters in his latest book "Through Dead Eyes" a ghostly, creepy story set in Amsterdam. The ending of his horror stories is very important to Chris, to the extent that he crafts the last sentence until it has the right number of syllables. As well as hearing from the authors, Sarah Lambert talked about her work as an editor for the publisher Quercus and Barbara Band, the president of CILIP talked about Censorship. She then led a lively discussion on what topics should and what should not be contained in books written for young people. As a



professional librarian, Barbara extolled the values of her professional body, which is against censorship and asked the youngsters to fight anything that restricted their 'freedom of expression and debate', whilst acknowledging the difficulties that this poses for librarians. All students were offered a £1 World Book Day voucher and received the new details of how to access the online library system and their individual accounts. The easiest way is through the new library page on

the school website. There is a reward for all students who add book reviews through their accounts and there is a prize for the best one added during March 2014. The winner will be announced on the school website.

Careers@highdown.reading.sch.uk

At Highdown all students have access to independent, impartial and professional careers advice and guidance. All students can use the drop-in careers session on Tuesday lunchtimes, where they can talk to Lyn Kenward our careers adviser, who is contracted to work in the school through Adviza. Lyn introduces herself to students at assemblies and attends parents' evenings. The other way to contact Lyn, and parents are welcome to do this, is by emailing careers@highdown.reading.sch.uk. KS4 students have a one-to-one interview with Lyn, who talks them through their choices and options, which are then laid out in a personal action plan. Most students receive their interviews during Year 11 but some may get theirs at the end of Year 10. The service is also open to Sixth Formers, with Lyn working closely with the Sixth Form pastoral team, who may refer students for an interview. Students may also self-refer and of course can use the Tuesday drop-in session. As with all aspects of life, knowledge is power, so students have access to careers information through a comprehensive collection of careers books in the library, and through the links on the careers page of the Highdown website. For general careers queries, parents can also use the webchat and textback services provided by Adviza, which are available out of school hours (weekdays) and during school holidays. Webchat is www.adviza.org.uk/chat and Textback 07860 017206.



Goalball Activity Day

On Friday 14 March 2014, seven students from Years 7 to 11 took part in a day of Goalball activities at Alfriston School in Beaconsfield.



The students had regularly attended the lunchtime club, learning the skills of the Paralympic sport. Highdown students took responsibility to teach a group of students the main skills of Goalball, including rolling the ball and defending, as well as taking part in a competitive mixed Goalball match. The students did very well and did Highdown proud. Well done to Sally Pearce, Fidyan Qasir, Rebecca Hemmings, Emma-Nicole Hunt, Xavier Hopkins, Adeeba Afzal and Samina Hussain.

Year 10 Maths Challenge

On Thursday 13 February 2014, two teams from Highdown attended a team Maths Challenge at John Hampden Grammar School in High Wycombe. Teams from across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire were competing. The competitors included three Independent schools, eight Grammar schools and seven Comprehensive school teams. Highdown's Team A came sixth, Team B were sixteenth. Team A were the top team from a non-selective school. Congratulations on an amazing result. The Highdown competitors were:- Team A - Owen Aljabar, Lizzy Hawken, Gideon Lewis and Marta Radosevic. Team B - Marina Bates, Isabelle Morrin, Ben Shimeld and Frazer Widdowson.

Noticeboard

SCHOOL CALENDAR ADDITION

Thursday 26 June and Friday 27 June 2014 - AS Taster Sessions for Sixth Form Applicants

MOBILE PHONE RULES FOR STUDENTS

Mobile phones are NOT to be used during the school day, including break and lunchtime. If a student is found to be in breach of this rule, the phone will be confiscated and remain secure in the Headteacher's PA's office until the end of the school day, when it can then be collected. The sanction will be to serve an afterschool detention on the following Thursday. Parents will be notified.

DATES

Year 8 Parents' Evening
Thursday 1 May 2014

Year 7 Parents' Evening
Thursday 8 May 2014

ABSENCE LINE

If your child is ill please contact the School Office on 0118 9015823 before 9.30 a.m.

DATA CHECK

Do we hold the correct information on your student?
Please complete a data form and return it to Highdown.

TERM 5

Starts: Wednesday 23 April 2014
Ends: Friday 23 May 2014

LOST PROPERTY

Please ensure that your student's belongings are named.
Lost property handed to the School Office, if named, can be returned to the student. Any unnamed items will be displayed for students at regular intervals.

SPARE SCHOOL UNIFORM

If you have any outgrown uniform/PE kit in good condition that is no longer needed, please bring it to the school office where it can be utilised.

School Reception 0118 9015800

Email office@highdown.reading.sch.uk



HighdownSchool



www.highdown.reading.sch.uk