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Highdown Link

Aspire Achieve

From the Headteacher

Dear Parents

The Summer terms have started with some glorious weather and Highdown always looks its best when the sun shines.

Our facilities and grounds are superb for the students to enjoy and they would be the envy of children who attend cramped city sites. The student leadership body has decided to put some of their money raised in the recent non-uniform day towards a new path down to the woods and back exit to the school. Whilst in summer months this isn't needed, very wet weather can make it necessary to close the back gate for safety reasons. We are a long way from the final total but progress is good.

Highdown School is very proud to be involved with Abbey Touraid. We will be linking with a community in Lesotho, Africa and are about to embark on some serious fund raising. We will be seeking the support of all Highdown and the local community to raise money to bring students over to Britain and to support village development. We will also be asking Highdown families to host a young rugby player. There will be much more information coming out in the coming weeks and months. Project leader Daniel Burnell says, *'I am very excited to have the opportunity to bring adolescents from Lesotho to this country and provide them with the chance to play such a great game and learn so much about themselves.'* See how a lasting legacy can be achieved through the project at www.abbeytouraid.com.

With public exams taking place for students in years 10, 11, 12 and 13, summer can be stressful. I know they will be looking forward to the end of their exams. We look forward to celebrating the successes on results day. Wishing all a very good summer.

Rachel Cave



Discovering the wonders of China

During Easter, Highdown students immersed themselves in the richness and diversity of Chinese culture and language. Our seven day itinerary packed in student exchanges, visits to famous landmarks and museums, and digging into authentic cuisines.

Beijing is a vibrant mix of history and modernity. We were lucky enough to visit some of the finest remnants of China's imperial past including the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, the famous Great Wall and Tian'anmen Square (photo above). Modern Beijing is bursting with contemporary architecture including art galleries. The affectionately known Bird's Nest stadium and the Water Cube offered an aftertaste of the glorious moments of the 2008 Olympics.

As Beijing is the hub of China, there's a stunning array of foreign cuisines and exotic flavours from all over the world. We joined the locals during the lunch rush hour to taste the most scrumptious noodles ever- Beijing Zha Jiang Noodles.

Students got to try out their Mandarin speaking skills with native speakers and had a taster in the fine art of Chinese calligraphy. With a visit to an exchange school, the group was able to meet Chinese students in class and chat over lunch.

Since 2009 I have organised and led trips to China. Highdown Beijing Study Tour 2015 is a particularly special memory! The students have been exceptionally receptive to the language and culture and have been really proactive in practising the Mandarin they have learnt in class. They have soaked up every opportunity and it has been a pleasure working with them.

Mr Wu, Head of Modern Foreign Languages

What is economics?



Why is it so hard to get a foot on the property ladder? Who makes the most money from the demand for fancy coffee? What influences currency rates? Why are willing, able workers unable to find jobs? Why does government always need more money? Our daily lives are beset with economic questions!

If you're interested in the News, why not study A-level economics?

You'll understand and discuss current economic issues, such as: whether the UK should join or stay outside the Euro zone, the importance of controlling inflation, and the effect of price rises on businesses, consumers and the economy.

A redesigned economics A level course this September will explore factors that contributed to the 2007 -2008 crisis reflecting the realities of the ever-changing economic world. Telegraph.co.uk-26/04/15.

Mixing art and science into one subject, economics links brilliantly with a majority of other A levels. You'll develop skills that are vital for

the workplace - from writing skills to analysing data. Career choices are diverse including business and financial professionals, engineering, management, retail and marketing.

Step it up a level and an economics degree could put you in the ranks of one of the UK's top earners.

university.which.co.uk.

The Undercover Economist, Tim Harford (Abacus), and websites beta.tutor2u.net/economics and whystudyeconomics.ac.uk will give you a great feel for the subject.

Economics always hums along in the background affecting our choices - from buying clothes, deciding what to eat or seeking a job.

AS Level Taster Days

Find out more about Sixth Form life
Meet like-minded students
Pick the teacher's brain
Firm up your decisions
Chat to Sixth Formers

25 & 26 June

BPP Professional Apprenticeships are offering a 3-day cv and interview skills course for students in Year 11, 12 and 13 interested in a career in Business, Finance or Law. Register by 30.06.15 for your free place at bpp.com/appschool.

See GCSE and GCE exam timetables at 'Exam Information' on the 'School Life' menu of the Highdown website www.highdown.reading.sch.uk

Careers guidance

Insurance... it's not what you think!

Rob Clements, Head of Underwriting Services, Covéa Insurance

Did you know that the UK insurance industry is the largest in Europe with over 300,000 people employed dealing with investments of over 1.8 trillion pounds?

Despite this being a dynamic, innovative and ever-growing industry, very few people consider a career in insurance. I didn't and in a recent survey, 93% of people within the industry say they "fell into it". Insurance has a bit of a reputation for being dull, however with a wide range of roles from IT to HR it's far from it and the industry is currently working hard to shed this image.

Also there is a perception that insurance is male dominated, however, this is not the case with recent figures published showing that 51% of people working within General Insurance are female. Our company reflects these numbers and infact the operational area that I am responsible for has a slightly higher percentage.

Here at Covéa Insurance we're particularly keen to create a vibrant and passionate environment to work in across all our business areas; from Claims to Marketing, Customer Services to Technical Underwriting, our dedication to this has led to us being named as one of the 2015 Times Top 100 Best Companies to Work For in the UK.



We have four main entry routes in to Covéa Insurance; our graduate programme, our apprenticeship programmes, internships and general recruitment.

Within Underwriting Services we focus on general recruitment and our apprenticeship program to bring people into the department. When recruiting we look for a minimum of 5 GCSEs including Maths and English (grade c or above) and the ability to demonstrate key competencies such as good communication skills and own initiative. However, above all we recruit those people who we believe have the right attitude and will fit in to our culture.

Our apprenticeship program is similar, but in addition to the above we look for potential candidates to have a minimum of 2 A levels (grade d or above).

I'd like to focus on our apprenticeship programme and our commitment to nurture and develop talent within the insurance industry. This year we're offering several different apprenticeships for example, Level 3 Providing Financial Services – General Insurance. This 15 -18 month programme of 'on the job learning' is supported by a national training provider and gives our apprentices the perfect opportunity to "earn while they learn". The programme provides technical knowledge using a Certificate CII (Chartered Insurance Institute) qualification and work-based competence assessment centred on providing the practical training required to quickly become an effective member of the team. Once completed there are lots of opportunities for our apprentices to continue their personal development.

Rob

For more information about Covéa Insurance please check out:

www.coveainsurance.co.uk

 Covéa Insurance plc

 @coveainspc



51%
female
employees



David Stephenson
Curriculum Leader Computing & IT

Why study Computer Science?

Computers are everywhere. We use mobile phones, TVs and cars that include large amounts of software, almost everyone has a computer in their home and virtually everyone under 30 plays computer games... almost every major development in the worlds of science, engineering and medicine in the past decade have relied on advanced computer science. When you study computer science, you learn about the fundamental principles of the science; advanced techniques that are used for practical systems development; learn how to think and solve problems in a logical way and how to express your solutions as computer programs. There is currently a world-wide shortage of people with skills in computer science and for many completing a GCSE or A-Level in computing will be their first step into a highly creative and rewarding career.



Jemma Hunter
Inclusion Manager

Based in the Star Centre, Jemma works to develop and encourage the emotional health and well being of *all* Highdown students, from Year 7 to Sixth Form. Everyone struggles with issues at times; special support can help us feel included and break down barriers to learning so we may succeed. The Star Centre offers a safe haven for students to confidentially talk and find ways to deal with a range of issues, from low mood, anxiety, and exam pressures to problems outside of school, friendship issues and bullying.

Social work qualified Jemma runs one-to-one and group emotional literacy sessions. 'Star' is the acronym for Success Through Art and Recreation. It represents the range of fun resources students can explore during the sessions to develop self esteem, self control

and social skills so that they may blossom into independent learners. Students can be put in touch with a qualified counsellor if needed.

Jemma is teamed with newcomer Julie Mullett, Learning Manager. Julie will visit local primary schools' year 6 students during their transition to secondary school.



Daniel Burnell
Assistant Head of Achievement, Year 8

PE teacher, Daniel Burnell, has been appointed as Assistant Head of Achievement for Year 8. As Emma Turner's right-hand man, Daniel can address social and academic concerns from Year 8 parents and students. He is committed to making sure students are punctual, have good attendance and delivering informative PSHCE sessions. Daniel has set up the staff 'Highdown Hurricane' rugby team.

Music

Moon walk heroes



Kim Ifill, Anita Rackley, Lynne Gannon, Nic Fitzpatrick, Pauline Walker, Dorothy Company and Caroline Clark

Several Highdown employees stayed up all night walking 26 mile through the streets of London on May 16 2015 to raise funds for Breast Cancer Charity. Donations to this deserving cause can still be made at:

<http://wtwalk.org/moonwalklondon2015/caroline-38> to help fund breast cancer research and a wide range of projects including those which provide emotional and physical support for those living with breast cancer.



After Easter 2015, Mr Trimby, Mrs Flynn, Ms Chakera, Dr Capaldi and Mr Haskins took thirty seven Year 12 students to Calshot Activities Centre near Southampton for three days of Maths and Science AS revision. The students also were able to learn other activities including Archery and Climbing. They had a chance to cycle in the velodrome where the track is steeper than the official Olympic track. Students worked incredibly hard and were in revision sessions until 8:30 p.m.

On the button

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

www.memrise.com	gojimo	Ready Player One	Gravity Force, Camberley
From languages to history, Memrise uses science to give your brain a work out helping you learn your subject faster and better Different course levels use a wonderland of multimedia. Free service.	The free app to help students pass their exams. Extensive cover of A Level and GCSE subjects for self-test exam preparation.	The best-selling debut novel from Ernest Cline is sci-fi light-speed sensation mixed with 80s nostalgia. The hero competes in a virtual world with life-and-death stakes. This teacher recommendation gets the students' thumbs up.	For adrenaline junkies of all ages. Interconnected trampolines with angled edges literally allow you to bounce off the walls! Dodgeball a favourite.
WEBSITE	APP	BOOK	GIFT IDEA

Author visit



Leslye Walton, Waterstones Children's Book Prize shortlisted author

Leslye Walton, author of 'The strange and beautiful sorrows of Ava Lavender' flew in from Seattle on 24 March for a Waterstones organised intimate lunchtime talk. Connie Stevens (9J) and Maddie Stevens (9J), interviewing for Highdown Radio, learnt how Leslye's creative story line and lyrical prose style combine to make her unique brand of magical realism.

Sporting success

Girls' Football team are U13 County Cup Winners

Outstanding result on 7 May was 4-7, the girls played amazingly well and if it wasn't for the woodwork which they hit 4 times, the winning margin could have been greater. Kyra and Grace were scouted by the Berkshire county team coaches and have been asked to attend trials in September. Players: Amy Boswell (8F), Vicky Jones (8K), Katie Taplin (8F), Freya Jenkins (8C), Sophie Lin (8H), Kyra Hannibal (8G), Grace Hannibal (8H), Paige Ryan-Swanston (8D), Leonie Widdowson (8K), Solange Samuel (7K), Bethan Roberts (7K), Elsie Routledge (7J) and Amelia Philips (7H).

Visit to Olympic Park

In April, the U13 Hockey Squad went to the Olympic Park to see the England Women's hockey team play Japan. It was an excellent match with England winning 5-1 with goals coming from open play and set pieces. After full time, as it was a friendly international, a penalty shoot out took place. Although England lost, it was great to see the different tactics used by both teams in this pressurised situation.

Miss Clark, PE Teacher

1 June	FIRST DAY OF TERM 6
1-5 June	Year 8 internal examinations
15-19 June	Year 10 internal examinations
18 June	KS3 concert
18 June	Year 9 Geography Trip (invitation only)
22-26 June	Year 9 internal examinations
24 June	Staff Training Day
25 & 26 June	6th Form A Level Taster Days
30 June—3 July	Year 9 Normandy Trip
3 July	Year 12 Art Trip
5-11 July	Year 8 Rhos y Gwaliau Trip
7 July	School Sports Day
8 July	Year 11 Prom
9 July	Summer Concert
10 July	YEAR 5 DAY - SCHOOL CLOSED TO STUDENTS
13 July	Headteacher's Award, 1.30 p.m.
14 July	KS3 Drama Showcase, 7.00-8.30 p.m.
15 July	PSHCE Day
16 July	Year 8 Parents' Evening
17 July	Year 10 Portrait Award/Gallery
20 July	Science Fair
24 July	LAST DAY OF TERM 6

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

Dates for your diary

NEWS IN BRIEF



On 3 March, Year 10 and 11 students attended the **PiXL Conference** in Westminster. They learnt how to get into the top universities from some of the top speakers from the PiXL club (a collaboration of school leaders), Oxford and Kings College London. Tips to make applications stronger gave the students an insight into what they should be doing, even at this early stage in their education. Students said that the conference was, 'very interesting and useful'.

Well done to Angus Gallantry (12B) for a great performance at the **Delancey Chess Megafinal** (regional final). He was one win away from becoming a supremo for his age group, giving him a shot at qualifying for the Gigafinals.

Target smashed in 20 hours 36mins 26sec



Whoop whoop to Conor Macnab (11F) and his paddle partner Simon Tilbury-Clarke for finishing the 125 miles Easter endurance race from Devizes to Westminster. They crossed the finishing line well within their target time.

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