

19<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**Outwood Academy Ripon**

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Principal: Mr Will Pratt

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

I can scarcely believe that we have already completed the first term of this academic year. It is equally unbelievable to consider that in under a week, many families across the city of Ripon and the surrounding areas will be celebrating Christmas Day. It seems that these special occasions and dates come faster and faster and the academic days pass us by at increasing speed. This week I was fortunate to attend the unveiling of the Civic Society plaque which commemorates 80 years of education at the academy. We were honoured to be joined by distinguished guests, including the Mayor of Ripon Eamon Parkin, Richard Taylor Vice-Chairman of the Civic Society, Chair of Academy Council Annette Beckwith and representatives of the Academy Council Alma Williams and Mick Stanley. It is a historic moment in the chronology of this site in providing education for the young people of Ripon.

We began this term celebrating the outstanding results of those students who left the academy in the summer and acknowledging the huge collaborative effort of staff, parents and carers in assisting students to achieve those excellent, life changing outcomes. We welcomed a new cohort of Year 7 students into the academy whose demonstration of great maturity and independence was recognised by academy staff from the first day. Year 7 have started wonderfully and their fantastic engagement in the ACE, Academy Conduct Expectations programme, shows that they are a year group with huge potential.

I have been very impressed and I am hugely appreciative of the efforts made by staff in going above and beyond their core jobs to put our students first and give them exciting experiences outside of the curriculum. I have done my best to capture some examples of these efforts and share them with you all within this newsletter.

It is very important to me that this summary of events and achievements starts with the Physical Education department, whose students have demonstrated significant resilience and resolve during this winter term. It has been one of both challenge and achievement for both students and the department. The development of the academy site has progressed further from the summer, with the work on the refurbishment of our sports hall beginning in October. However, despite the constraints of limited indoor space for the PE curriculum whilst this exciting development progresses, the department has sprung forward before the clocks fell back and the evenings grew darker. It has been wonderful to see team after team prepare themselves each and every evening for competitive fixtures in football, netball and rugby over the past 15 weeks. Student accomplishments of particular mention have included the Year 8 Boys' football team who are through to the quarter finals of the County Cup following a hard-fought 5 – 3 victory over St. John Fisher's (Harrogate). Good luck to boys in the next round! The successes of the year 8 boys have been echoed by the Year 8 girls who also still remain in the football county cup competition. This excellent achievement is all the more impressive as it is the first time the academy has entered a girls' team in the competition. Well done girls in your debut cup run and good luck in the next round!

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Importantly, successes have not been restricted to only the traditional team sports. The academy was well represented at the Harrogate and Craven Schools Cross County Championships, with 30 participants across a variety of year groups. Congratulations to Shannon Robinson, Harrison Swaine and Georgia Hooley who as a result of top 10 finishes, have been selected to represent Harrogate and Craven at the North Yorkshire Championships in January. A special congratulations to Shannon who won her race after an outstanding tactical and determined performance.

The academy was also excellently represented by a committed and determined female dance group consisting of a composition of different ages, who participated in the Yorkshire School's Dance festival. After a month of repetition and rehearsal, the girls provided an outstanding performance and represented the academy excellently at this county event.

Alongside some great sporting performances this term, the Physical Education department have also engaged in a working partnership with the RFU (Rugby Football Union) "All Schools Project" and have subsequently trained ten Year 10 students as rugby leaders. These newly qualified leaders and junior referees have utilised their skills to lead and officiate in rugby festivals involving schools from North Yorkshire. They conducted themselves with a high level of integrity and maturity beyond their years.

This term the academy has organised many different trips and events and it has been inspiring to witness the multitude of opportunities that have been offered to students outside of the traditional sporting fixtures provision. Mr Shann took a number of budding Year 8 computer scientists to participate in a Family of Schools coding competition which, this year, focused on programming that supported environmental change and sustainability. Pupils were challenged to program drones that would be able to clean ocean oil spills. Mr Shann commented on the high level of initiative and resilience shown by the academy representatives during a day filled of high level coding challenge.

In Mr Shann's unwavering quest to spread the world of coding to all, he has registered the academy in the "CyberFirst" competition which is available for Year 8 girls. This national competition begins on the 13th January and hopefully I will be able to update you all on the progress of our students in my next newsletter.

Mrs Carpenter – Harvey led a team of inquisitive science staff and 69 enthusiastic Year 11 students to Salford University "Science in Action" day. The students accessed 5 educational and engaging talks from scientists famous within their fields. These included famous science author Helen Pilcher, who spoke inspirationally about the possibilities of reversing extinction. Students were then wowed by Greg Foots' personal description of climbing Everest and the dramatic physiological impacts that such an adventurous event can have on a person's health and well-being.

Thank you also to the Modern Foreign Languages department who arranged for 5 talented Year 8 linguists to travel to Durham University to represent the academy in a languages and enrichment experience. The students came away inspired by

language study and the prospect of a university education. Staff reported their engagement and conduct during the trip as “impeccable”.

Unfortunately there is too much to mention in what should be a brief newsletter and I apologise to the students and staff who have participated in equally marvellous things that I haven't had space to mention here. I am excited about the planned events and continuing work in the new term and wait with anticipation to discuss with students, staff and parents the outcome of trips to the theatre to see 'An Inspector Calls' and the Battlefields 2020 trip to France and Belgium. I am eager to see the exceptional work as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors continue to develop and hope that, as an academy, we can continue to support the charitable work that students have completed already. Well done to those who have donated either their time or money in supporting the Anti-Bullying Alliance, Children in Need, Save the Children, Young Minds and recently the Ripon Food Bank.

It has been wonderful to acknowledge and recognise some of the excellent work completed by students in lessons since the launch of the Academy “Praise” boards in every teaching room in November. I am aware that the Teaching and Learning team have more developments planned in the New Year for this exciting initiative, so watch this space.

One of the key focuses for the academy in the New Year will be the relaunching of Student Voice which will allow students to put forward their opinions on the future direction of some elements of the academy. Please spend some time, as students, to consider this over the holiday period.

So, at the end of an exceptionally busy term, a sincere and heartfelt thank you from me to you all. I hope you all manage to have fun, celebrate and importantly keep warm and safe over the holiday period.

Merry Christmas and Happy New year!

Yours faithfully,

Mr W Pratt  
Principal