

The Update

Axe Valley Academy Newsletter: Friday 8th June 2018 - Issue 5



Axe Valley and Feeder Primary School ASPIRE students visiting Powderham Castle for Classical Concert

Executive Headteacher's message

I would like to take a moment to explain my new role at Axe Valley Academy. As the Executive Headteacher I will be now working here full time on a day to day basis.

I will be working very closely with Laura Jenkins as the Deputy Head to ensure that the students here continue to get a fantastic education. As well as a small change to the uniform which will be introduced for September, we will be re-visiting many of our processes and procedures to ensure that where necessary they can be tightened up and made even more effective.

My beliefs are quite straightforward. To have a great school we need a great teacher in every classroom. Much work has already gone in to improving the quality of teaching here and that will remain our main focus.

With regard to the students, they need to feel safe and secure around the site and excited and enthusiastic in the classroom if they are to achieve their true potential.

My role is to encourage and support the teachers to teach to the very best of their ability so that the students can learn to the very best of theirs.

Thank you for your on-going support. I will be available every morning from 7.30am if you have anything you would like to discuss with me. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming weeks as we work together to continue to provide the very best opportunities for our students and your children. Please contact my PA, Lucy Ford if you would like to make an appointment by email lford@axevalley.devon.sch.uk or phone 01297 32146.

Martin Brook - Executive Headteacher

Diary Dates

- Mon 11th June - PTFA Meeting at 6pm
- Tue 12th June - Concert at Guildhall 4.15pm
- Wed 13th June - Year 6 Small Schools Transition Day
- Wed 13th June - Transition Evening
- Thu 14th June - Year 6 Transition Day
- Thu 14th & 21st June - Wood Turning workshops
- Fri 15th June - Year 11 Leavers Assembly & BBQ
- Mon 18th June - ASPIRE London Trip
- Wed 20th June - ASPIRE Primary Arts Carousel
- Thu 28th June - Year 11 Prom at Hornsbury Mill
- Fri 29th June - ASPIRE STEM Challenge
- Tue 3rd July - Year 5 Transition Day & Evening
- Wed 4th July - Sports Day
- 9th & 10th July - Prize days
- Tue 10th July - Year 7 Parents Evening
- Wed 11th July - ASPIRE Picnic
- Thu 19th July - Activity Day
- Fri 20th July - Last day of Summer Term
- Wed 5th September - First Day Autumn Term



Celebration Assemblies



Year 7

Year 7 are never short of things to celebrate and we once again struggled to get it all into our Assembly.

I was delighted to hear the tutors talking about their kind and helpful tutee who they felt had particularly embodied the schools core values during the last term. Year 7 have done so well on the school rewards system that it has been necessary to create an entire new tier of achievement and the new 'Double Platinum' award winners were recognised, as well as those who have achieved gold and platinum awards.

Finally it was particularly nice to recognize Chloe Castro for all her hard work and great attitude this year and to thank Maddie Hale for showing such good team and school spirit when asked to be a very last minute replacement for the athletics competition recently. Well done all the winners and the whole of Year 7 for their continuing high performance.

We were delighted with the enthusiasm and engagement of students during the recent trip to Exeter University. The University staff and Student ambassadors were really friendly and helpful and I think most students felt more informed about the possibility of going to university and their options for the future.

Mr Carr - Year 7 Leader





Year 8

Celebration Assembly this half term was an enormous success with most of Year 8 being rewarded for something. Awards were handed out for the core subjects as well as the usual Attendance, Tutor, Year Leader and Senior Leader Awards.

Special mentions should go to Maddy who won the Year Leader award for a fabulous start to her time at Axe Valley. She has approached lessons with enthusiasm, positivity and a real desire to do well.

Nabi received the Senior Leader Award for always putting all his effort into everything he does and representing the school in cricket. Mr Owen said that Nabi is the best student cricketer he has ever seen - and Mr Owen has been teaching for a long time!

Congratulations to all who received a bronze, silver, gold and platinum badge, and to a select few that have earned themselves a "Double Platinum" award, because they have achieved so many points!

Mrs Osborne - Year 8 Leader



Year 9

Congratulations to all our Prize Winners this term. It is always a tough choice for the tutor team to decide on winners because there are so many of our students that always make worthy winners.

A special mention must go to Kayla for winning the Head Teachers award for her recent fundraising efforts and assembly on Breast Cancer. Her tutor Mrs McCarthy has been hugely impressed with how she has been an inspiration to others in the tutor group.

Another special mention goes to Kieran for winning the Year Leader Award. I have been so proud of Kieran seeing him carry on coming in to school during what has been a very difficult time for him. He has shown a huge amount of determination and has our upmost respect for how he has conducted himself.

Thanks to all the students that have recently held cake sales to raise money for the outdoor play equipment. It's been great to see students using this equipment at lunchtime.

Mr Horn - Year 9 Leader





Year 10

Once again I am extremely proud of my year group and it was wonderful to celebrate so many achievements again this term. I have never known another year group that has achieved so much and fully committed to so many extra opportunities that the Academy provides.

It is going to be a tough time for them from now till the end of Year 11 and we will all need to support them fully during this intense but rewarding time. I wish them every success in achieving the outcomes they deserve.

Mr Davies - Year 10 Leader





Year 11

Year 11's final celebration assembly took place on the last day before half term. It was such a lovely atmosphere, students took joy in everyone's success and the majority of students were celebrated in one way or another. An impressive number of students earned badges - four students earned double platinum which was an excellent achievement.

It was lovely to see a variety of students pick up awards for English, Maths and Science and so see a great number of students be celebrated for having a very impressive 100% attendance! Even Mr Brookman enjoyed himself despite being the butt of nearly everyone's jokes.

It was an absolute pleasure to celebrate a successful year with Year 11. They have been amazing and I wish them every success in their futures.

Ms E Sloman - Year 11 Leader



Trip to Normandy



In the early hours of Wednesday in half term, 40 students and teachers from the Axe Valley Academy set off for France. Upon arrival in Cherbourg at around 2pm, we travelled to our place of residence via 'Caramels d'Isigny' a caramel factory where we were greeted with plenty of free samples!

We stayed at the wonderful Chateau du Baffy, they treated us like royalty - lovely food and accommodation, I wish I could've stayed there longer! We also visited the American Cemetery and Omaha beach, I think the sheer vastness of the cemetery really resonated with some of the students.

The baguette making workshop at the Boulangerie Les Co-Pains was a highlight, the eccentric French chef Eric was a hoot! The stunning views from the Abbey at Mont St Michel were spectacular.

On the final day we visited a market in Bayeux (luckily no one left with any ducks!) as well as the Bayeux tapestry which was a real sight, all 70m of it!

All in all it was a fantastic trip enjoyed by everyone. Many thanks to Ms Thomas-Davies, Mr Daly and Ms McDonagh for making the trip run smoothly and helping all the students with teaching us and having fun too!

William House - 12FM



Arts Update



Music Award

The Axe Valley Music Department have been awarded the ISM Bronze Certificate in Music 2018. ISM is the Incorporated Society of Musicians. This is in recognition of the excellent work done for music in the school.

Data was collected and showed that more than **10% of all GCSE Students at Key Stage 4** at Axe Valley took and achieved an A*- C in music last year. This puts us in the **top 526 schools across England**.

This is a great achievement for Axe Valley as 35% of the 526 schools were Independent Schools and Music Specialist Schools.

GCSE Art

Below is a snapshot of Neve Wellman during her GCSE Art exam last month hopefully on her way to achieving top grade at GCSE. Mr Petty judged her work as the best he has seen for a Key Stage 4 artist in 15 years. The topic for her final piece was 'Interiors' inspired by contemporary artist John Monks, and depicts the interior of a derelict building.



Met Office Science Camp

MET Office Science Camp

Our Year 7 ASPIRE students were very privileged to spend a night at the MET Office in Exeter last month. The specialist Met Office Staff created a carousel of ten fascinating workshops giving the students insight into the workings of the weather.

In particular the students learnt about the creation of clouds, the dynamics of the wind, the effects of temperature, the probability of rain and the evolution of storms. Each workshop had a hands-on demonstration to illustrate the theory.

Interactive workshops showed the students how weather is measured and forecast and how essential accuracy is for the Military, Transport, Agriculture and Industry as well as for us at home planning our summer holidays. A particular highlight was the challenge to forecast and present the weather on TV for a special client - Justin Bieber!

Aside from the mechanics of the weather the staff also gave the students insight into sciences, maths and technology as the foundation of challenging and fulfilling lifetime careers. In the library we had a question and answer session with staff who claimed to have "the best jobs in the world". The students also had a peek at the supercomputer and looked at various aspects of how it works. Just as fascinating was the look at radar, satellite and the observation equipment and technology that the Met office use for recording the weather.

It was an action packed camp with not a wasted moment, even the bedtime story was packed with information about the moon and the night sky. Many thanks to the Met Office and their volunteers for hosting this fantastic event.



ASPIRE



Music in the Castle

At the start of Spring Term a group of our students together with primary pupils from our feeder schools were invited to a classical music concert at Powderham Castle. The performers were the Merides Piano Trio comprising piano, violin and cello, made up of postgraduate students from the Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London.

It was a stunning day and as we arrived a little early we had the added bonus of enjoying the beautiful grounds as well as the inspiring and uplifting musical performances.



Big Bang Science and Engineering Fair at Exeter University

ASPIRE and top set Year 7 Science students visited the Big Bang Fair at Exeter University exploring the interactive stalls in the Grand Hall including solving problems using state of the art virtual reality headsets, testing their blood pressure using research equipment. This annual event allows schools to expose students to cutting-edge technology to inspire the inner-scientist. The activities, the university environment and the range of ideas on display all contribute as motivators.



A high point was a workshop with Simon Watt – biologist, science communicator, writer & TV presenter - and his Ugly Animal Preservation Society. This talk challenged students' preconceptions by raising the profile of some of Mother Nature's less aesthetically pleasing creatures, to increase awareness of the world's less well-known, but equally fascinating endangered species..





Faraday STEM Challenge at The Maynards School

Five of our Year 8 scientists participated in the National Faraday Challenge (NFC), delivered by the Institute of Engineering and Technology at the Maynards School. The challenge was unknown to them in advance, thus, from nothing, they had just a few hours to design a theme ride for Thorpe Park given a list of criteria AND engineer a model of any aspect of that activity. The winning entry from this year's NFC will actually be built at Thorpe Park and the winning team will be involved in the process. Axe Valley's team came up with a wonderfully immersive animal adventure, with virtually reality-based entry into the world as experienced by an animal of your choice. The idea involved interactive activities while queuing that had the potential to upgrade the ride time and full access for all ages and abilities. A well thought out and presented idea that impressed the judges.

Talk the Talk Confident Communication Workshop

On Friday 4th May 30 ASPIRE students from different Year groups spent the day with Genevieve Steele from the Talk The Talk organisation to work on their communication skills. To start the day the students ranked themselves according to how confident they felt about speaking in front of a room full of people.

Their first challenge was to talk to their neighbour to find out essential facts and then to introduce their partner to the group using an opening rhetorical question, then outlining their likes, dislikes and ambitions, finishing up with 3 key words. Having a structure to follow made these mini presentations easy and fun.



The next stage was to prepare a presentation on a topical issue in groups of five. Each person had a particular element to contribute and the group presentations were excellent, imaginative and in most cases flowed well.

Lastly each individual prepared their own speech on a topic of their choice using the simple structure they had gradually learned. The speeches were incredibly varied and in-depth, they were all presented without notes and demonstrated the body language techniques they had learnt. In addition to their newly acquired public speaking skills the students were also encouraged to give positive feedback boosting their own as well as their colleague's confidence. By the end of the day the difference in their confidence levels from the start was astonishing, the students were radiant. We hope it will give them more courage to speak up in lessons as well as in their everyday lives.



Oxford University Visit

On a beautiful summer's day just before half term we set out with a group of Year 9 and 10s to Christ Church College at Oxford University. The students were met by the outreach team and given a presentation on University life in general and Oxford in particular with information about the style of learning, the range of available courses, the sporting and recreational facilities and the practicalities of living away from home and managing finances.

We were then invited to a wonderful lunch in their dining hall where Christ Church students have their meals every day. It was the inspiration for the Harry Potter dining room and made us feel extremely pampered.

Next we were given a tour with student ambassadors to see the spectacular grounds, beautiful library and student accommodation before then attending a workshop on astrolabes at the Museum of the History of Science.

It was a fabulous trip that I hope has made them realise that with determination Oxford is a realistic and genuine possibility for them and that they will be inspired to consider applying when the time comes.

Mrs K Pemberton - ASPIRE Co-ordinator

