



PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

MARCH 2019

Students of the Class of 2018 were awarded an excellent set of GCSE results, rewarding their hard work over the previous two years. Of the 148 students in Year 11, 73% achieved a Grade 4 or above in English and Maths; 54% of them achieved a Grade 5 or higher. Pass rates in both of these two subjects at the Grade 4 and above, needed for future employment, education or training, were over 80%. We had many strong performances in individual subjects including from some students who overcame personal challenges to achieve some excellent grades. Students should all be very proud of what they have achieved, in terms of both academic success and the contribution they have made to school life over the past five years.

Our annual WOW Week took place at the end of October. This involved three days of specially designed activities for each year group. Year 7 camped at Mersea Outdoor Centre, taking part in various team-building activities such as orienteering and rocket building. Years 8-10 participated in a 'social action' enterprise challenge, focused on creating an entrepreneurial spirit, developing leadership skills and accelerating employability skills. Year 11 students visited Trinity Park for the Suffolk Skills Show and spent time in school and visiting sixth forms and colleges, looking at career choices and employability skills. Students were very open minded and listened carefully to a wide variety of speakers and participated actively in sessions to increase their knowledge of post 16 and post 18 options.

In October, we interviewed students for positions in our Student Leadership Team and subsequently appointed a Head Boy and Girl and Deputy. This was a very tough process and a hard decision as the quality of applicants and their well-prepared presentations was so high. The preparation, dedication and commitment shown by all candidates made me very proud; these students have been leading our fantastic team of prefects and everyone has been making a real positive contribution to the school as well as developing their leadership and communication skills.

Following on from WOW week, in November, Year 11 students took part in a 'Learning about Work Day'. Employers from local businesses came into school to act as business mentors and to work with small groups of students for the day, looking at CV and application form writing, conducting mock interviews and teaching them about employer expectations when applying for jobs. With only a few weeks to go, Year 11 continue to prepare for their exams and last half-term 80 students travelled to the Outdoor Centre in East Mersea, Essex to take part in an intense GCSE Bootcamp. This overnight event was a chance for Year 11 students to get together to learn vital revision strategies to take away with them as well as taking part in structured Maths and English revision within a classroom setting and enjoying some outdoor challenges.

At the end of November a group of language students visited the province of Seville in Spain to take part in a week long exchange trip. Students took part in organised group activities during the day, staying with their host families each evening and over the weekend. This was a fantastic opportunity, allowing students to soak up the culture, practise the language and experience the wider world, developing key life skills. We are looking forward to the return exchange when the Spanish students visit us in March, where we have lots of activities planned including trips to Aldeburgh and Cambridge.

Families, friends, governors, teachers and students were treated to a festive evening of music on 11th December, at the school's 'Countdown to Christmas' concert. The evening featured over 20 separate performances involving more than 60 students across all year groups. With vocal and

instrumental solo and ensemble pieces interspersed with traditional carols and an opportunity to warm up with some hot chocolate and mince pies. On 5th February a group of students were joined by a fantastic local band called 'Gemma and The Night Jars' and a team from I.E.M. (Industry Education in Music) to take part in a Rock Band Workshop and concert. Students from across all year groups split into groups to form nine separate 'bands' and spent the day composing original pop music from scratch. With a very tight deadline, this was a huge challenge but our talented students worked extremely hard, using advice and guidance from the professionals to come up with some impressive and original material that was performed at a concert on the very same evening. All our students have worked fantastically hard to give amazing performances.

Our former Year 11 students who left us in the summer, returned to Claydon High School on the penultimate week of the autumn term for a Presentation Evening, where they were awarded with their GCSE certificates and special subject achievement awards, recognising individual commitment and progress. It was really lovely to spend the evening with them and to hear about how they are getting on in this next phase of their lives. We are all extremely proud of all aspects of their success and achievement and wish them all the very best for whatever the future brings.

At the end of January, we hosted a three day visit by students and staff from schools in Shanghai, China. These students joined us to experience lessons in an English school but the cultural exchange has been both ways. Year 7 students were taught some basic Mandarin phrases, how to count to ten on one hand and to write some basic characters using traditional calligraphy. Our Year 10 Mathematicians worked alongside the students from China to deliver some Maths Mastery lessons to students in Year 7 and also to students at Claydon Primary School. We are looking to explore a future fuller exchange visit with some of the people we have met.

The month of February saw two overseas trips taking place. Two students were chosen to represent our school on the First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme, a national programme funded by the Government. Accompanied by a teacher, they visited battlefield sites in Belgium and France, participated in remembrance ceremonies and recorded, reflected and shared their own experiences. In addition to this, we will continue to run our annual Battlefields trip (open to Year 9 and 10 students) in July, offering them the same experiences with an additional focus on the History and English curriculum as well as keeping the memory and legacy of this war alive for future generations.

In February half-term, 40 students travelled by ferry and coach to Obertauern in Austria for our bi-annual Ski Trip. This seven day trip included daily ski lessons, exploring the local area and organised evening entertainment. As well as the physical challenge, this trip allowed students to try something new, experience the wider world and develop independence, resilience and confidence.

On 7th March, a group of Year 8 students took part in a 'School Report Day'. This is the 11th year the school has been participating in this event and students spent the day planning, researching and interviewing staff and students, before writing articles which are featured on a dedicated online news website. Every single article was produced from scratch and to a 2pm deadline, which was a tough challenge. All students showed great commitment and dedication, impressing staff with their enthusiasm for developing their media literacy skills and producing their own stories about subjects that matter to them.

Our Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award scheme was launched this year and our participating students are busy planning to undertake their expedition in June. They are currently training hard and will do a test run in May, a bit closer to home where they can practise their walking, map reading, cooking and camping skills.

Following on from being awarded the School Games Gold Mark Award in July 2018, the PE department has had another successful year with some great sporting achievements in cross-country, netball, football and athletics. Students have also been given the chance to participate in some new sporting clubs and competitions, including: basketball, hockey, rowing and rock climbing. Year 10

GCSE students had the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills when they ran a successful Year 6 Sports Morning for over 150 students from our feeder primary schools. A range of activities were on offer, including table tennis, badminton and fitness and rowing challenges. We look forward to our annual Sports Day and our 'Sports Personality of the Year' awards evening in July.

We have had several careers based events, including a 'Quick Fire Connections' speed networking event for Year 9, trips to local businesses and the University of Suffolk and visits from the Army and St Elizabeth Hospice to talk about volunteering and career opportunities.

In Maths, a team of Year 8 and 9 students took part in the regional finals of the UK Team Maths Challenge at Framlingham College and our most able mathematicians in Year 10 took part in a 'Maths Feast' at Kesgrave High School on 6th March, where they competed in teams of four against eight other schools in the county. Our A team were outstanding, winning all four rounds and subsequently crowned overall winners of the competition. The B team walked away with a joint runner up certificate for scoring highly in all of the rounds. We are incredibly proud of their achievements. In April, a group of Year 11 students will take part in the 'Strive for Five' Maths conference in Coventry.

In other areas of the school - Year 11 Business Studies students visited Colchester Zoo. GCSE Geography students travelled to Southwold to investigate the role of hard engineering in protecting our coastline. Languages students travelled to London to visit Westminster University to find out about studying languages at degree level as well as visiting the Victoria and Albert Museum where students had the chance to enjoy a range of collections including the much acclaimed Frida Kahlo exhibition. Design and Technology students visited the Design Museum in London which included a hands-on workshop with their on-site designers. A group of Year 8 and 9 students took part in the Magistrate's Court Mock Bar Trial on Saturday 9th March. This competition involved a team of students taking on the roles of magistrates, lawyers, witnesses and court staff to prepare a specially written case. The schools competed against each other at Ipswich Magistrates' Court. In English, a Year 9 student won the regional 'Book Mastermind' competition; students visited the Globe Theatre to watch 'Romeo and Juliet'; and Year 9 and 10 students put their nerves aside and took part in the ESU Debating Competition and Youth Speaks 2019, a competition run by the Rotary Club to encourage students to put their ideas out there and speak in front of an audience. Drama students have visited Suffolk One to watch their performance of Chicago and we have students competing for the first time in public speaking competitions in French and Spanish.

Students have been fundraising for charities close to their heart throughout the year and have so far delivered cheques to: Macmillan Cancer Support; Children in Need; and The Chapman Centre in Ipswich, who support the homeless and also received 34 hand-made festive-themed hampers filled with food and essentials donated from home by students and staff. We are also currently painting our baby 'Elmer the Elephant' who will form part of Elmer's Big Parade and be on display at the Suffolk Show in May, raising money for St Elizabeth Hospice.

We were significantly over subscribed for places in Year 7 and we look forward to welcoming Year 6 students to the school in the summer term to take part in transition events designed to prepare them for when they start with us in September and Year 5 students who will join us for an 'Arts Festival' in July. Our PTA work very hard throughout the year and have hosted quiz nights and our wonderful Christmas Grand Prize Draw. We regularly hold Parent Forums at the school and have provided information and workshops for parents/carers on a variety of subjects.

We still have lots to look forward to before the end of this academic year, including: a DT Skills Day, community tea party, Battlefields trip, History trip to Poland, spelling bee, Shakespeare Competition and GCSE Art Exhibition. As I write this, rehearsals are also underway for our forthcoming production of 'We will Rock You' on Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th July; staff and students are very excited so please do come and watch!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank students, staff, governors and the PTA for their continued hard work and to parents/carers for their ongoing support. If anyone would like a tour of the school, please feel free to book into one of our monthly Open Mornings – I would be delighted to meet you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'l'.

Maéve Taylor
Headteacher