

Newsletter

Castleford Academy | Care Aspire Succeed | Autumn 2020



Burberry Inspire

Last year, as part of the Burberry Inspire project, our pupils worked with Northern Ballet. We took 300 pupils to see Northern Ballet's performance of Cinderella at Christmas and pupils were also invited to take part in various workshops both the academy and at the Northern Ballet dance studios in Leeds. This year, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 will have opportunities to work with Leeds Playhouse across a range of subjects. As one of only two schools in Wakefield selected to take part in Burberry Inspire, we want our pupils to take every opportunity to engage in the project and look forward to seeing the results of their hard work!

Mrs K Chippendale - Assistant Headteacher

Year 11 Exams Update

The Department for Education (DfE) have now confirmed that exams will go ahead next summer. As part of our efforts to support pupils in achieving their very best GCSE and BTEC results, pupils have a series of mock exams starting on Monday 30th November which will last for approximately two weeks, ending on Friday 11th December. These mock exams are crucial in improving pupils exam technique and building pupil confidence, as well as identifying gaps in knowledge which can then be addressed in lessons and in after school boosters.

We recommend pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 spend a minimum of two hours per night on independent study and revision, which includes homework and after school boosters. In order to support your child's independent study at home please encourage them to:

Have a revision plan

- We recommend pupils plan out their revision for different subjects, taking on a 'little and often' approach for each subject topic.

Be proactive and use a range of resources available

- Pupils have access to a range of web-based programs such as Hegarty Maths, Educake for Science and GCSE Pod for a range of other subjects.
- Pupils are welcome to ask their class teachers for additional paper based revision resources.

Complete homework to a high standard

- Pupils are set weekly maths, English and science homework that is specifically planned as revision.
- Purposeful work should be challenging however, if your child is finding aspects of a topic difficult, please encourage them to be resilient, independent and ask for help if they need it.

Understand that testing and reviewing is the most effective revision technique

- Past papers are the most effective - 15 minutes reviewing the content/knowledge needed, followed by 30 minutes of answering exam questions, concluded with 15 minutes of marking and correcting answers in green pen.

Have a positive attitude towards revision

- Support them in having a quiet revision space away from any distractions such as games consoles, mobile phones and social media.
- Getting to bed at a sensible time and being well rested will also help concentration levels both in academy time and when revising at home.
- Encourage your son/daughter to communicate with their class teachers if they have any worries about exams in each subject.

All Year 11 pupils have been given English and maths work to complete over October Half Term. We would appreciate parental support in ensuring this work is completed over October Half Term to a high standard. Thank you for your continued support.

Mr L Holmes - Assistant Headteacher

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Headteacher's Welcome

Welcome to the autumn half termly newsletter.

This first seven week half term has flown by. After a difficult few months, it was wonderful to welcome all pupils back to the academy in September. All staff were delighted to finally have pupils back at the academy, to see their smiling faces, re-establish routines and to get them engaged in their face to face learning. The happiness and wellbeing of all pupils and staff has been paramount and will continue to be our primary focus as we continue to deal with the effects of a pandemic.

The way that pupils have conducted themselves has been exemplary. All pupils have adapted really well to the new hygiene measures and have been following all of the measures we have put in place.

We would like to thank parents and carers for your continued support. We know that this is a challenging time for the entire community, however, pupil attendance and parent/carer support for the academy has been tremendous. Our staff have also been amazing and have uploaded an entire working from home curriculum to the website so that pupils who do need to self-isolate do not fall behind and we will continue to update this regularly.

We are pleased that the new Year 7 year group have settled in well with 300 pupils joining us in September. At the same time, we would like to wish our ex Year 11 and ex Year 13 pupils who achieved well with their qualifications, the very best of luck for the future. Ex pupils will be contacted shortly with arrangements to collect their GCSE certificates and subject awards and celebrate their GCSE results in a method that is suitable given the current restrictions around social distancing.

In light of coronavirus restrictions, as we adapt to the new ways of working, we have taken our annual events, such as the Year 6 open evening online, and are trialling arrangements for virtual parents evening meetings. More information to follow on this.

Subject leaders have been busy to ensure that the curriculum and lesson plans have been adapted to build on content delivered before, during and after the academy closure to ensure high quality lessons can be delivered and any gaps in learning have been identified and addressed. Plans for this have been put in place to ensure we meet pupils' academic and pastoral needs. Recent assessments in lessons will be used to provide further support.

I am delighted we have been able to organise an extensive extra-curricular programme across all curriculum areas. It is important that pupils are given a wide variety of opportunities to further extend their learning and experiences.

Pupil prefects play an important role at the academy by assisting the academy's leadership team to move the academy forward. Year 11 pupils have now taken up prefect roles after a rigorous selection process. May I take this opportunity to thank all of the candidates. I look forward to working with the Head Boy (Alex Anaman), Head Girl (Sophie Tillotson), Deputy Head Boy (Samuel Davey), Deputy Head Girl (Keira Marriott), Assistant Head Boy (Mackenzie Delaney), Assistant Head Girls (Darcey Worth and Layla Bridges) and all of the other prefects.

During the coming months, it is important to keep a positive mindset for our pupils whilst we make the necessary plans to ensure they can attend the academy safely, whilst maintaining an outstanding education. Hopefully, the pandemic will be behind us soon, in the meantime thank you to parents, staff and pupils for your on-going efforts.

George Panayiotou
Headteacher



School Dates

Monday 2nd November - School reopens for all pupils
Thursday 5th November - Year 7 Parents' Evening (Virtual)
Thursday 19th November - Year 11 Parents' Evening (Virtual)
Friday 27th November - INSET DAY
Friday 18th December - School Closes for Christmas

Covid 19 Update

As you are aware, due to the current restrictions, all pupils and staff are expected to wear face coverings when they are moving around the academy, at break time and at lunchtime (when not eating), this will continue to be enforced after the half term break (unless you have already made us aware that your child is exempt). We also ask that you remind your son/daughter about following the hygiene regulations on local buses and in local shops. There is a requirement that all people (unless they meet the exemption criteria) wear a mask in shops and on public transport.

Mrs D Cook - Associate Headteacher

Transition and Open Evening

Congratulations to our Year 7 pupils who have had a fantastic first half term at the academy. Year 7 have started the year smoothly and teachers have been very impressed with their behaviour and positive attitudes.

For current Year 6 pupils considering our academy, unfortunately, current government guidance has meant that we have not been able to hold an open evening this year. However, we have a virtual open evening which can be found on our website. Please take a look at the video and see what our pupils have to say about life at Castleford Academy!

Mrs K Chippendale - Assistant Headteacher

Achievement update - Year 11 Leavers

I would firstly like to thank all of last year's leavers for their patience and maturity over the summer holidays whilst awaiting their results, which was no doubt a very turbulent time full of uncertainty. I would secondly like to offer congratulations from all of the staff here at the academy, to all of our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils who received their long awaited examination results and have successfully moved on to the next phase of their life. Whatever that next step is, we wish them the very best of luck and really do hope that they are now able to continue on the path they planned.

I am delighted to report that despite no formal examinations, pupils at Castleford Academy made outstanding progress and achieved exceptionally well, in-line with what we were expecting before school closures and with previous years.

I would like to also thank parents and carers for your continued patience and understanding during such unprecedented times.

Mr L Holmes - Assistant Headteacher

Year 11 Careers

It is an important time for our Year 11 pupils. Not only do they have the most important year of their educational lives with their GCSEs, but they also need to decide where they are going next! Pupils in Year 11 will complete their college applications forms next half term. Applications for college courses must be either completed through a computer package called First Media or, in some cases, directly through the provider's website. We have been assisting pupils in this process since September. Year 11 are having a range of assemblies from New College, Wakefield College, our own Sixth Form and other providers. We will also have an apprenticeship group in January when positions start getting advertised. Pupils in Year 11 must stay in some form of education or training until they are 18 and the vast majority of our pupils go on to further study at a College or Sixth Form. Normally, we would be encouraging pupils to attend an open day; however, in the current climate we would recommend that they go on to college websites as they have various virtual information on there. Appointments with our careers advisor can be made through the library and there are a range of careers advisors regularly visiting the academy to provide one to ones to all pupils (not just Year 11).

Mrs K Chippendale - Assistant Headteacher

Mental Health and Online Safety

At Castleford Academy, we have placed great emphasis in supporting our pupils with their emotional wellbeing upon returning to us this academic year. The 'Wellbeing Wednesday' tasks during form time have focused on the following; re-establishing routines post-lockdown, maintaining healthy relationships and staying safe online. Should parents want additional information about online safety, please see parentinfo.org. Furthermore, all pupils have been signposted towards the mental health contact list in their planners, should they need further support.

Ms M Page - Assistant Headteacher and Mrs S Salmon - Assistant Headteacher

Summer Enrichment

Over the summer, pupils were given an Enrichment Passport to enrich their summer! The passport encourages pupils to get out there and do five completely new and different things with their summer. Pupils had to describe what they did and get a parent or carer to sign. If they did, I gave them five epraise to make a great start to their school year. Employers and Colleges often tell us that they want pupils to be able to talk about a wide range of interests and achievements in interviews, enriching your life is a great way of doing that and building confidence by getting out of your comfort zone.

Thank you to all of those pupils who enriched their summer and handed in their passport at the start of the year. We had a range of activities completed: cooking for family, fishing, helping parents at work, 10 mile hike, Leeds Utd Champions trial, baking a cake, golfing and used an astronomy app to identify stars to name a few! Pupils do not need to wait until next summer to add to their enrichment! Encourage your child to continue building their interests and achievements as they journey through this year as much as possible in the current climate whilst remaining safe.

Mrs K Chippendale - Assistant Headteacher

Re-start a Heart Day

On Friday 16th October, the whole of Year 8 took part in the national event: Re-start a Heart Day. This year, it was virtually, where a variety of volunteers from different agencies St Johns Ambulance, British Heart Foundation and Yorkshire Ambulance taught our pupils how to perform CPR via video link. This means that our pupils have learned a new life skill! During this day, our Year 8 pupils also learned about how to make a healthy breakfast, how to take care of their emotional wellbeing and the dangers of smoking. We hope this day helps them to make positive choices in their futures.

Ms M Page - Assistant Headteacher

Show My Homework

Alongside the use of the school planner to record homework, Castleford Academy have continued to invest in the online homework package, Show My Homework. As well as being a simple online homework calendar showing homework information, deadlines and attachments for pupils and parents, Show My Homework will also be the main source of pupil classwork and homework should the academy be placed into any type of partial or full lockdown. This will enable pupils to continue with their planned classwork and homework should any situation arise. At this point, pupils would be expected to complete the work set from teachers at home to ensure their learning continues in line with the academy curriculum.

Castleford Academy would like to thank all parents who regularly log on to view homework set, support and prompt their child to complete homework and discuss their child's work with them. As an academy, we would ask all parents to regularly log on (at least twice a week) to support their child with homework. It has become clear after numerous discussions with parents that they often use their child's log-in to view Show My Homework. Although this will still enable you to access previous homework tasks and future tasks, it is advised that you use your own unique code to log on, if you want to know the email address that you initially logged on to Show My Homework with, please email admin@castlefordacademy.com for the information ensuring that you include your child's name and form. For more information regarding the Show My Homework package and to see the benefits of using the system, please view the information on our academy website.

Mr R Guest - Assistant Headteacher