

## Governors' Newsletter

### Chair Of Governors Update

2020 has been a year like no other. We have developed a whole new vocabulary and 'unprecedented' must be the most used adjective in the English language. However, that is what the last year has been and it has presented challenges to us all, including Castleford Academy and its pupils and staff.

These challenges have been met with innovation, creativity, resourcefulness and sheer hard work. I want to express my thanks to all of the staff at the academy who have shown a can do attitude and determination to keep our pupils safe and continuing with their learning.

The teaching staff, business, office, attendance, cleaning, IT and catering teams have met huge challenges and dealt with them because they share the CAS ethos—they care! So, on behalf of the governors I thank them so much.

2021 will present new challenges that we will tackle with renewed optimism. Castleford Academy is in a good position to move on thanks to the work of the staff in 2020. They have been awesome.

Happy Christmas and an 'unprecedented' New Year to all.

**John McNichol - Chair of Governors**

### Governor Visits

The governors usually visit the academy for a full day 3 times per year. These visits are an opportunity to see the academy in action during a working day and to look into deeper detail at areas that the academy may have been working on that the governing body have decided they want to spend some more time scrutinising. John McNichol, our chair of governors, has visited the school to look at the implementation of the Covid risk assessment but in order to cater for more governors, it was necessary to go virtual! The governors experienced a virtual tour of the school filmed when all pupils were in, looked at various procedures the academy has in place and had the opportunity to talk to some Year 7 pupils about their transition and how they have settled in. It was a really successful virtual visit and although we would much rather have the governors here in person, it means that we can hold further virtual visits until such a time that we are able to welcome them back into the academy.

### Parent Governor - Peter Roe

We would like to congratulate Peter Roe on recently being elected to join our Governing Body as a Parent Governor. The vote was held using an electronic form and Peter was voted exclusively by parents. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kimberley Hinde and Michelle Wright for their nominations. Peter has served as a governor on several other boards including two others within our Trust (Park Junior and Glasshoughton). He has a great deal of experience in education as well as with the local authority so is an excellent addition to the team.

### A Big Thank You To Local Businesses

The governors would like to thank businesses and volunteers in the local community who stepped up to the challenge of providing meals to children. Free School Meals are only available to those who are eligible during term time and although these were made available in voucher form over the lockdown and summer holidays, this was not continued into half term. In its place a wide range of businesses, volunteers and leaders in the local authority filled this gap. The governing body would like to thank those in the community who supported this. For this Christmas, the government have given the local authority a Covid Winter Grant to provide targeted support to those who need it.

### Virtual Governor Meetings

The Governing Body have adapted quickly, as we all have, to using technology to ensure that they are still meeting regularly with the staff and leadership of the academy. All the calendared meetings for governors have been honoured using Microsoft TEAMS and attendance and feedback has been extremely positive. The Governing Body meets in full regularly across the year and there are also committees dedicated to Teaching & Learning and Finance, Premises and Personnel.

#### Castleford Academy

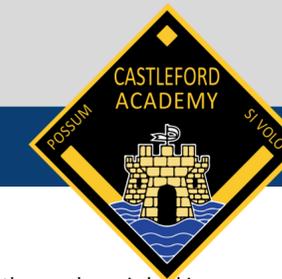
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# Newsletter

Castleford Academy | **Care Aspire Succeed** | Winter 2020



### Headteacher's Welcome

Welcome to the Christmas edition of our newsletter. As the busy term draws to an end, everyone at the academy is looking forward to Christmas and a well-earned break. All pupils have been working extremely hard in the run up to the end of term and have been involved in a range of activities including the Burberry Inspire Project with Leeds Playhouse, Be Safe and Healthy days and an extensive extra-curricular programme.

The way pupils continue to conduct themselves in and out of school and follow the new hygiene measures whilst in school is exemplary. As a result, at the time of writing this newsletter, we are pleased that we have not recorded any positive coronavirus pupil cases at the academy in the last 6 weeks.

The Year 11 mock exam period has ended with the deadline for college applications fast approaching. They have adapted well to the new exam routines and as a result, we have completed a full set of mock exams which will shape the key knowledge and understanding that will be taught in the next term to address any gaps in learning and fully preparing pupils for their summer exams. Their work ethic, progress and behaviour this term has been exemplary and we look forward to them receiving their mock exam results on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Good luck!

Unfortunately, due to the current circumstances we have not been able to host our annual GCSE Presentation evening for the class of 2020. Ex pupils have been posted their GCSE and BTEC certificates and we wish them all the very best for the future.

Our annual art Christmas card competition has concluded, with Year 7 and Year 8 pupils designing an array of Christmas cards. The winning card has been printed and distributed to staff and local schools/businesses. I can confirm that the winner was Year 8 pupil A Fairbanks. Well done!

As part of our work with the Burberry Inspire project, Year 7 – 9 pupils recently welcomed Jenny Jones from Leeds Playhouse who will be working with pupils at the academy every Friday. Last week, Jenny worked with pupils in drama, art and English to launch the Creativity Kits and every pupil who worked with Jenny has been gifted a kit to take home. All lessons taught by Jenny are based on the topic for this year: 'Inspired Places.' We look forward to continuing our work with Leeds Playhouse through lessons in the New Year.

Well done to the prefect team who planned and organised Odd Sock Day as part of Anti-Bullying Week 2020 and raised over £260 for Young Minds.

We would like to thank the music department who have treated us throughout December to an advent performance each day on twitter, helping to get us into the festive spirit. We would also like to thank Castleford Tigers, who have donated 30 replica shirts to the academy, which have been awarded to pupils who have displayed outstanding behaviour and attitude to learning each week. More information on this can be found within the newsletter.

Seven pupils from Years 9 and 10 have recently been recognised as being in the top 10% nationally in their age group for their score on the Bebras Challenge. The Bebras Competition is an International competition aimed at raising awareness of Computer Science in a fun and rewarding way. The competition involves solving problems using computational thinking skills. Computational thinking involves using a set of problem-solving skills and techniques that software engineers use to write programs and apps. These pupils will now be invited to enter the TCS Oxford Computing Challenge in March 2021. We are very proud of their achievements and wish them all the very best of luck in preparation for the next steps.

As mentioned in my previous newsletter, we have taken some of our annual events online. We have now hosted two virtual parents' evenings for Year 7 and Year 11, which have been really well received by both parents and staff. We look forward to being able to welcome parents back into the academy in the near future, when it is safe to do so.

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/carers support for the academy has been tremendous.

Finally, may I take the opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Castleford Academy.

**George Panayiotou**  
Headteacher

### School Dates



**Friday 18th December—School closes at 12.20pm and re-opens Tuesday 5th January**

**Thursday 14th January— Year 11 Mock GCSE Results Day**

**Friday 29th January—INSET DAY (School open to staff only)**

**Thursday 11th February— Year 7 Parents' Evening**

**Thursday 11th March—Year 8 Parents' Evening**

**Thursday 25th March—Year 11 Parents' Evening**

### Applying for Free School Meals

Many parents do not realise that they are eligible for free school meals or that you have to reapply when your child starts secondary school. I'd like to remind parents that if you receive any of the following, you will qualify for income-related free school meals:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit - as long as you have a yearly household income of less than £16,190 (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) and you do not get Working Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working tax Credit)
- Universal Credit

This also applies to Post 16 pupils. If you think you are eligible then you need to fill in the online form on the Wakefield Council Website at <http://forms.wakefield.gov.uk/forms/schools/freeschoolmeals.aspx>.

It is also worth noting that the government, in response to the work done by Marcus Rashford, have passed on the extra funding to local councils to support families over the two week Christmas period (weeks commencing 21st and 28th December 2020). This means that families in receipt of Council Tax Support will get a voucher payment of £15 per child per week to go towards the cost of their Christmas food bill. Letters including instructions on how to redeem voucher codes will be sent out by Wakefield Council. Please contact the council if you haven't received yours.

We'd also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all of the local businesses in the Castleford area who set up so much support for families over the recent half term.

**Mr S Prinsep - Deputy Headteacher**

### DT Ambassadors

This year in Design Technology we have started a DT Ambassadors programme to highlight the pupils who represent what Design Technology subjects are all about. Over 30 pupils across all year groups were chosen as ambassadors in the areas of Product Design, Engineering, Construction, Food and Textiles. All pupils were chosen for their skill, passion and enthusiasm in lessons, the way they showcase their knowledge and their fantastic communication skills. Each pupil has received a special DT Ambassador badge to wear proudly as part of their uniform. We hope to get these pupils to become involved in open evenings and other extra curricular events in the future.

**Mr D Costello - Leader of Construction and Engineering**

### 30 pupils rewarded with Castleford Tigers Shirts

Castleford Tigers kindly donated 30 brand new replica shirts to the academy and it was decided that during the last three weeks pupils would be entered into a draw to win one of these shirts. Pupils had to have an outstanding week to have their name put into the raffle. There were over 2600 instances of pupils having an outstanding week during the last three weeks. A big thank you to Castleford Tigers for their generosity and well done to all pupils who were entered into the draw!

**Mr A King - Assistant Headteacher**

### Social Media

Some pupils may receive new devices for Christmas. As a parent it is difficult to keep up with the safety for new social media sites and other apps. This link is useful for any questions you have about social media and other apps.

[Parent.info.org](http://Parent.info.org)

The site offers help and support to parents about safety settings and keeping safe on social media and apps. Here, you can ask for advice and report incidents.

### Tik Tok - useful advice for parents.

TikTok is used by many teenagers and sometimes children younger than 13. A Family Pairing feature can allow parents to guide their child's TikTok experience in a safer way. Features include setting search limits, managing screen time and privacy settings. A helpful poster can be found by following this link:

<https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/tiktok-update-parental-controls-with-family-pairing-feature/>

### Safeguarding support over Christmas

Unfortunately, Christmas is not an easy time for everybody. Some families may require support over the Christmas period. If you are concerned about the safety of a child in the community over the Christmas holidays, you can ring the numbers below for help and support.

0345 8503 503 can be used to report a concern about a child in Wakefield.

Alternatively, 0808 800 5000 NSPCC can also be used to report a concern.

An immediate concern would require a call to 999.

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) online can also be accessed by young people over the Christmas period. Other support sites are in pupil planners.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy Christmas.

**Mrs S Salmon - Assistant Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead**

### Post 16 Update

Despite the challenging circumstances of this term, Post 16 pupils have experienced a vast range of Wider Curriculum experiences and opportunities including in depth coverage of UCAS and Post 18 pathway support sessions. This is in addition to our own pastoral care programme of group and individual mentoring, career guidance and 1-1 UCAS sessions. We have endeavoured to use a variety of virtual presentation methods to ensure our Wider Curriculum plans could go ahead as planned.

During our extensive Drop Down Day provision, we have covered topics including Future Financial Planning, CV and Job Applications, Employability, First Aid, Mental Health, Sexual Health, Higher Education and Apprenticeships.

Our Year 13 pupils are on course to complete their UCAS applications before Christmas which is a first! Year 12 pupils are now familiar with a new careers platform called Unifrog, which is a fantastic network for guiding pupils through their Post 18 choices.

**Mrs K Falk - Head of Post 16**

### Leeds Playhouse

This year, pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9 have the opportunity to work with Leeds Playhouse across a range of subjects. Jenny Jones, Creative Education Officer for Leeds Playhouse, launched her first sessions with our pupils from this term and pupils are thoroughly enjoying the activities which are based on this year's topic: Inspiring Places. As part of the project this year, Burberry Inspire are giving a Creativity Kit to every child in Years 7-9 which includes various resources, in a Burberry tote bag, to help pupils to get creative in the Leeds Playhouse lesson and also at home.

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 we look forward to seeing the results of their hard work through the year.

**Mrs K Chippendale—Assistant Headteacher**