

# Newsletter



Castleford Academy | **Care Aspire Succeed** | Christmas 2021

## Headteacher's Welcome

Welcome to the Christmas edition of our newsletter. As we approach the Christmas break I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers for all your support and warm welcome in my first full term as Headteacher of Castleford Academy. 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 our CAST Showcase, Be Safe and Healthy days and an extensive extra-curricular programme.

I have been really impressed with our pupils mature and responsible approach towards mask wearing and other hygiene measures whilst in and around the academy during this term. The academy continues to follow national guidance to ensure both staff and pupils feel that Castleford Academy is a safe place to learn and work.

The Year 11 mock exam period has ended with the deadline for college applications fast approaching. Pupils 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, 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 Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Good luck!

Unfortunately, due to the current circumstances, we have not been able to host our annual GCSE Presentation Evening for the class of 2021. We are aiming to host the Presentation Evening in the New Year, restrictions permitting, and have set a new date of Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 for the event.

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

In November, the Music Department took a group of eight Year 11 GCSE Music pupils to perform at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the Music for Youth Remix Proms 2021. It is hard to sum up just what an amazing opportunity this was for our pupils. The faces of the pupils when they walked into the Royal Albert Hall for the first time and their reaction to seeing and hearing a live orchestra was worth the very early start this trip required. Performing at such a prestigious venue is something that most musicians can only dream of, so to have made this a reality for our pupils was incredible.

This winter I would like to wish A Whitney a long and happy retirement and thank her for all her hard work supporting so many of our young pupils throughout their time at school. I would also like to wish O Stanley all the best in her new role as Head of Health and Social Care at Farnley Academy and thank her for all her hard work and outstanding contribution to academy life.

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.

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

**Wesley Bush - Headteacher**

## Post 16 Update

It has been a busy start to the academic year with visits from the Army to host a careers and skill building session, Spectrum covering sexual health and finance workshops by the Chartered Insurance Institute. We continue to run a busy and varied wider curriculum for all of our pupils. Our Health & Social pupils have recently completed their long awaited first work placement and are currently preparing for their January exam. UCAS applications are now being submitted and we look forward to supporting our Year 13's as they plan for their Post 18 pathways.

We are continuing to accept applications for places on our Level 3 courses starting in September 2022. Details of our Post 16 courses can be found on the Castleford Academy website in the Post 16 Section and the application form can be found under the heading 'How to Apply'. Interviews will be held from January onwards.

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

## GCSE Presentation Evening 2021

Due to a nationwide delay of schools and academies receiving GCSE certificates from the Summer 2021 exams, the academy took the difficult decision to postpone the awards evening. We are pleased to confirm that the presentation evening will now take place on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm, subject to government restrictions.

The evening will include an interactive video of your time at Castleford Academy with teachers' comments, the presentation of GCSE certificates as well as the presentation of a number of special/subject awards. Pupils will then be invited on stage to collect an envelope of official GCSE certificates. Individual pupils grades will not be announced. The presentation will take about one hour and you and your family are then invited to join us for a buffet and drinks in a more relaxed and informal setting where you can talk to 'old' friends and teachers.

**Mr L Holmes - Assistant Headteacher**

## Preloved Uniform

In the new year, we are starting an initiative to collect any preloved uniform your child may have grown out of. This is to support families who may find it difficult to purchase uniform for whatever reason. If you have any unwanted items of uniform, including PE kit, that your child has grown out of please donate this to Step Up who will ensure that it goes to other families who may benefit from it. Any donations must be in good, wearable condition. Further details about how you can apply for preloved uniform will be made available in the new year.

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

## Chair of Governors

As we approach the end of another challenging term at Castleford Academy, two thoughts come to mind.

Firstly, pride in the way the academy has returned to almost normality over the autumn term and for this I thank all staff, pupils and parents/carers for their resilience and hard work. We have all developed a new appreciation of "normal"!

Secondly, we all have concerns for what the new term may bring due to the ongoing pandemic, but whatever we need to deal with I want to assure everyone that the academy will be working tirelessly to ensure pupils are kept safe and that their education will continue. Contingency plans are in place and the academy is well prepared for all eventualities.

In the meantime, I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a safe New Year on behalf of myself and the governing body.

**John McNichol - Chair of Governors**

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### School Dates

**Friday 17th December - School closes at 12.20pm for Christmas**  
**Tuesday 4th January - Onsite Lateral Flow Testing**  
**Wednesday 5th January - School open to all pupils**  
**Thursday 10th February - Year 7 Parents' Evening**  
**Thursday 17th March - Year 8 Parents' Evening**  
**Thursday 31st March - Year 11 Parents' Evening**

### Safeguarding Information

There has been a lot of information in the news recently about harmful sexual behaviour in schools. As part of our response to this, we have developed a reporting system for pupils to make reporting harmful sexual behaviour easier for pupils to do. This can now be done through a QR code that all pupils will be issued in January as part of a trial. The QR code can be used to report incidents of sexual harassment, for example – being sent explicit material online, sexist jokes and derogatory sexist comments that take place in school. This QR code is to be used outside of school hours to report incidents and will be monitored by the safeguarding team. All pupils have received information about how and when to use this during assemblies. We have a zero tolerance to harmful sexual behaviour and do not dismiss it simply as “banter”. We are hoping that by enhancing our reporting system, we can show that sexual harassment has no place in our academy.

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

### Safeguarding Contact Information

May we take this opportunity to thank you for all your safeguarding support of pupils in our care. Christmas can be a difficult time for some of the young people in our care and therefore pupils have a mental health support page in their planner for any help they may need over Christmas. Websites such as Kooth.com, www.young.minds.org.uk and services such as Night Owls all offer support over the Christmas period. There are also additional services available on the safeguarding part of our website which may be of use should you need them.

If you are concerned that a child is at immediate risk, you must contact 999. If you are worried about a family in the local community, you should contact Wakefield Social Care on 03458 503503. This can be reported anonymously. Safeguarding leads in school will not be available over the Christmas period so please use the numbers above to report any concerns you have. We will not be able to respond to any safeguarding concerns until Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January when we return.

We wish you all a safe and Happy Christmas.

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

### Readathon

For two weeks, from 22<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>th</sup> December, Year 8 were set the challenge of the Read for Good ‘Readathon’, to raise money for children’s hospitals, as well as boosting their reading. The challenge tasked Year 8 pupils with recruiting sponsors from their friends and family, asking them for sponsors per page, per book, or per minute reading. They could choose absolutely anything to read; from fiction, non-fiction, or even audiobooks and newspapers.

Year 8 pupils were then asked to read as much as possible, completing a sponsorship card as they went. This was all in service of raising crucial funds to pay for professional readers, and brand-new books, for local children’s hospitals. Not only that – it also provides discounted books and reading tokens for our library. Prizes were then awarded for the pupils who raised the most money, as well as those who read the most pages or books.

A fantastic well done to all the Year 8 pupils who participated; we managed to raise close to £150 to support this fantastic and worthwhile cause. In particular Phoebe H, Niamh B, Emily T, Imogen-Leigh F and Olivia H who went above and beyond in their efforts.

Well done!

This fantastic initiative will be introduced to other year groups throughout the academic year, in order to raise more money, and encourage even more reading.

**Mr R Nagy - Teacher of English**

### Performing Arts Showcase

Castleford Academy Performing Arts have launched ‘The CAST’, Castleford Academy Stars of Tomorrow. The CAST is designed to showcase the incredible talents of all the singers, actors, musicians and performers we have at the academy. We aim to build confidence through rehearsals and performing, whilst teaching them the vital skills they will need to succeed in the Performing Arts industry. On 1<sup>st</sup> December, over 100 pupils ranging from Year 7-11 performed in our first show. Highlights included a performance of ‘Merry Christmas Everyone’ by Soul Band, a powerful rendition of ‘Warriors’ by our ensemble, and a heartfelt performance of ‘The Christmas Truce’ by our Principals. We are so proud of all the hard work and dedication of all our pupils and look forward to working with them for the rest of the academic year and beyond.

**Miss E Moran - Head of Performing Arts**

### Odd Socks Day

At Castleford Academy, we take all forms of bullying seriously and are committed to ensuring pupils are able to identify bullying and support anti-bullying. Our ‘Anti-bullying Week’ took place between 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November. The events during this time were a massive success and we saw lots of pupils and staff in the academy get involved in supporting the Antibullying Alliance ‘Odd Socks’ campaign. The academy raised a total of £120 for ‘Young Minds’ (which is a charity that is committed to improving children’s emotional wellbeing and mental health). The theme of our ‘Anti-bullying Week’ 2021 was ‘One Kind Word’. We encouraged pupils to be kind to their peers by giving praise based on their personal qualities, skills or talents not just physical appearance. The ‘One Kind Word’ campaign was designed by the Anti-bullying Alliance to break the cycle of bullying and spread positivity throughout young people in person and on social media. We would like to thank everyone for their involvement.

**Mrs J Harrison - Student Leadership Coordinator**

### Drop Down Days

During this term our Key Stage 3 pupils have taken part in their first ‘Be Safe and Healthy Day’ of the year. We welcomed many guest speakers to the academy, who led exciting workshops for our pupils as part of their PSHE curriculum entitlement.

Our Year 7 pupils had guest speakers from Change4Life, Spectrum, The Samaritans, NJA Creative and West Yorkshire Police. Throughout the day pupils had opportunities to learn about the dangers of sugary drinks and how to make healthier choices. They also gained knowledge about the facts and feelings of puberty and learnt about the importance of having a positive body image. Pupils also took part in workshops that taught them how to improve their emotional wellbeing and resilience and finally took part in an important session about e-Safety, where pupils developed an understanding of how to be safer on the internet.

Our Year 8 pupils learned CPR as part of their ‘Year 8 Be Safe and Healthy Day’. They joined millions of children up and down the country who also took part in ‘Restart a Heart Day’. The workshops were taught by the Yorkshire Ambulance Service, who have already provided life-saving training to more than 150,000 young people since they started their Restart a Heart campaign in 2014. Not only did pupils study CPR, they also had the opportunity to study a variety of other important topics as part of their PSHE curriculum entitlement. Guest speakers from The Samaritans, Sexpression, Alcoholics Anonymous, The Cross Project and Change4Life all delivered workshops on healthy minds, healthy lifestyles and healthy relationships.

Finally, our Year 9 pupils took part in their ‘Be Safe and Healthy Day’ on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November. Our pupils had guest speakers from The Samaritans, Sexpression, HopeNotHate and West Yorkshire Police. Pupils had opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles, how to look after their mental wellbeing and improve their resilience. Pupils also learnt about the facts of HIV and AIDS and took part in an informative teenage cancer workshop. Finally, pupils had the opportunity to learn about what constitutes a hate crime and the damaging effects these crimes can have on people.

All of our pupils were a credit to the academy during their ‘Be Safe & Healthy Days’, and we are exceptionally proud of their conduct and efforts. We look forward to our future Drop-Down Days with our Key Stage 4 pupils in the New Year.

**Mrs M Frampton - Drop Down Days Coordinator**

### Year 11 Mock Exam Results Day

On Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022, we will be holding our Year 11 GCSE mock results morning where pupils receive their GCSE Mock results based on the mock exams they took in December. This has been rearranged from Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January due to the Y11 Engineering exam.

After receiving their Mock GCSE results, pupils can see the progress they have made. This allows pupils to see what they can study in Post 16 with the grades they are currently achieving. The results day is successful in inspiring those pupils who have done well to keep working hard. It also motivates pupils who have failed to get their predicted grades into doing something about it immediately - before it is too late. If you would like further guidance on how best to support your child in preparing for their summer GCSE exams, please do not hesitate to contact me at the academy.

**Mr L Holmes - Assistant Headteacher**