

Spring Newsletter 2015

On 05 and 06 February 2015 Ofsted carried out their third monitoring inspection.

The following are highlights of what they found:



Achievement of students at the school

“The school’s own data, as well as students’ books, show that their progress is improving. Much work has been done by middle and senior leaders to ensure that teachers are more accurate in their assessment of students’ work, giving more confidence to the school’s data. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics and science. Good examples of support by additional staff were seen, which enabled students new to English to make more rapid progress.”

“Students, particularly in Year 11, are making better progress as a result of improved teaching and a range of intervention classes. They are tackling some more challenging topics and covering a greater volume of work. Analysis of students’ strengths and weaknesses, and teaching to address the latter, is driving up standards in the core subjects.”

“Teachers clearly understand the urgency of improving standards. Lessons in registration, lunchtimes and after school are all contributing to the catching up that is needed.”

The quality of teaching

“Students are astute in their evaluation of teaching. One noted, ‘A lot more work is being done in lesson time to a higher standard.’ Teaching is improving. A mandatory programme of fortnightly ‘twilight sessions’ is helping to raise expectations of what students can achieve. Senior leaders have ensured that basic things such as schemes of work and lesson objectives are in place. The several strongest teachers in the school are supporting their colleagues through coaching and mentoring programmes. This is having an impact in driving improvements, particularly in providing clarity about what will be learnt in lessons and how it will be assessed. However, not all teachers are adept at checking whether students have understood key teaching points or technical vocabulary in a lesson, and so they move the lesson on too quickly.”

Behaviour and safety of students

“The impact of the school’s action to improve behaviour continues to be seen and, while some poor behaviour still exists, students are generally polite and courteous. Outside of lessons, there is a calm, orderly environment which reflects students’ growing sense of social responsibility, as does their success in raising funds for charities.”

“In the majority of lessons, students work well in groups, as well as individually, responding to teachers’ instructions quickly. When pushed to think harder, they apply themselves and rise to the challenge. Studious attitudes were seen in many lessons, and students’ commitment to work and to succeed was seen in many extra Year 11 lessons. Students now feel they are getting better guidance about their post-16 choices.”

“Presentation in books has improved and shows students are taking more pride in their work. Nevertheless, more work is needed to ensure this is the case across the school. Too much variability remains in how much work some students in the same class are willing to do and the quality of it.”

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

“Senior leaders continue to refine and embed systems that did not exist in the school previously and they have managed to do this while maintaining staff morale. Improvements are also being driven by some very

effective subject leaders, the majority of whom understand what needs to be done and are ensuring regular discussions are held about students' achievement and how to improve teaching. Many, but not all, subject leaders are good role models for their staff, modelling high expectation and challenge."

Literacy development

In response to the comments from Ofsted about literacy we have put in place several measures including:

- Transformation of the Hub into a fully functioning lending library
- The purchase of new books for the library
- The development of a 'Literacy for Life' programme, which will enable students to track their progress against level descriptors. Posters describing these levels are up in classrooms and around the site
- Training for all staff on literacy
- The formalisation of our marking and presentation policy to ensure consistency
- The introduction of a 'Read to Succeed' programme, where every student will be expected to read a book during form time at least once a week

How can parents/carers support literacy?

- Be a good reading role model
- Listen to your child read
- Work with your child to improve their spelling
- Ask your child to tell you about the book they are reading
- Help your child redraft work neatly

If you feel your child needs support with spelling or handwriting please contact Miss Hudson or Miss Bennett [we have after school clubs which can help!]



Year 7 News

A group of students were invited for a tour of Little Havens Hospice following the fundraising we started at Christmas. The students were taken on a tour of the hospice, met some of the carers and saw all the facilities available for the children who go to Little Havens. The students were fantastic representatives for the school and are now keen to get back fundraising. Students designed Easter cards and left messages for the children who go to Little Havens.

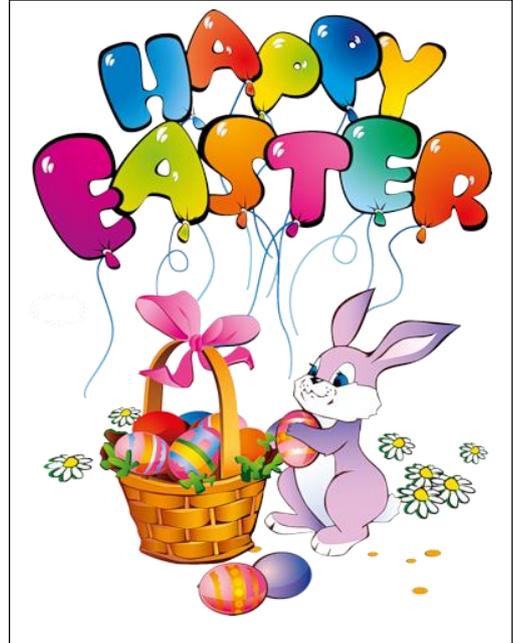


Year 9 News

We have been taking part in workshops about teen boundaries. Each form is being given the opportunity to work with an outside agency, which is proving very successful. Students are engaged and are showing a good understanding of the issues being raised.

Particular praise is given to the group which worked with Nishmah on Wednesday 25 March, she said she had not worked with such a fantastic group for a long time, their behaviour and participation was excellent.

Year 9 have also been working hard to collect money for their chosen Charity. We have had lots of different fund raising activities, such as 'Guess the amount of eggs', 'Guess the name of the bunny', Easter egg hunts and more.



Year 8 News

The Year 8 Student Council Representatives and TREAD representatives have been appointed and we now meet on Thursday lunchtimes in Room 28. So far we have had really productive meetings and are happy for others to sign up!

Show Racism the Red Card involved 8a/2 and 81/2 and both classes were praised for their input into the event and how mature they were when discussing serious themes.

This term the Year 8's have had the opportunity to represent the school as student receptionists. Whilst some have been a little nervous, the majority have worked very hard and have gained valuable experience of the work place



Year 10 News

23 students took part in the Jack Petchey 'Speak Out' Challenge, it was a really successful day.

Every year 10 student took part in a Barclay's Life Skills Day, where they learned about job application and interview skills.

We were very pleased that three of our Year 10 girls played for Southend United on Saturday 21 March 2015.

LifeSkills
Created with  **BARCLAYS**

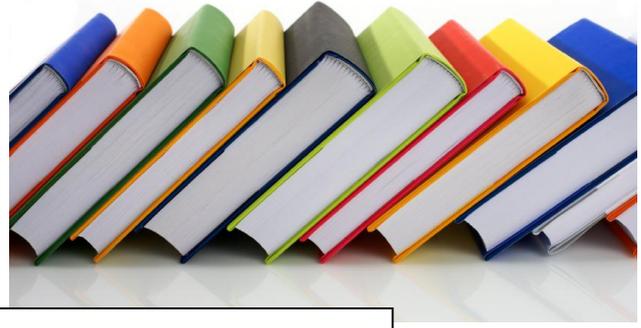
Jack Petchey's
"SPEAK OUT"
Challenge!

Year 11 Easter Revision

Intervention and revision sessions for GCSE Examinations will be taking place during the Easter break.

Year 11 students have been given timetables; full details can be found on the school website.

Please encourage your son/daughter to attend and also to make use of the revision packs provided, including 'gcsepod'



Finally, a few important reminders:

Physical Education

Just a reminder to advise that **all** students are expected to participate in Physical Education. It is a compulsory part of the National Curriculum.

If a student is unable to participate, a note will be accepted from a parent/carer for a one-off occurrence, but written medical evidence will be required thereafter for longer periods. If the student cannot provide this then a detention will be issued at break and lunchtime.

A school PE kit is compulsory and students will be issued with a detention if they are not wearing the correct kit. If required, PE kit order forms are held in the school office with prices and where to obtain the items.



If your child is really not well enough to attend school, please remember to telephone the absence line on **01702 415338** to report the absence.

You can call at any time and leave a message.



**Sickness
Absence**

Please do not wait for us to text you to find out where your child is!

**The summer term starts on Monday
13 April 2015.**

**All students are expected to arrive no
later 8:40am, in full uniform and
ready to learn**