

Newsletter 10 23rd July 2021

We made it! Well done to each and every one of you who has survived the year, crossed the finishing line and made it to the end of term. So many thank yous.

Site and cleaning teams

You are all heroes. Thank you so much for everything you have done to keep everyone safe and well in these most difficult times. I know of so many schools where transmission has been much greater than in ours and whilst it would be inappropriate to be smug, your work to keep everything spotless has been outstanding and most certainly contributed.

Catering Teams

Once again thank you to everyone who has kept us all fed and put up with the very many barriers and restrictions from extended breaks and lunches, to the use of disposable everything, and also dealing with staff shortages. Your working conditions have been considerably harder than they should be but you have looked after all of us brilliantly.

Support staff

Thank you to all of our teaching assistants, technicians, admin, finance and HR staff. We really appreciate your hard work in oiling the wheels, rolling your sleeves up and doing all of the stuff that properly supports the teaching and learning and adds value to what goes on in the classroom. Education genuinely could not happen without you.

Teaching staff

There must have been times when educating children and young people felt like the last thing on your mind. Moving from *remote* to *in person* to *in person and remote*, dealing with pupils who are struggling to manage their own anxieties, self-isolation, TAGs, CAGs, curriculum development, trying to get enrichment going and so much more, must have felt impossible at times. Your work changes lives and despite the often unfair and untrue caricatures in the media of teachers, we know that our parents really do appreciate everything you do.

Governors

I never forget that you are volunteers, giving up your own precious time to give back to our communities. You have had a tough job to do this year to support your school leaders but I know that they have valued everything you have done and are particularly grateful to you for the time you give so freely and generously.

Thank you so much to all of our wonderful UAT family. I hope that you enjoy the summer break, spend time with family and friends, relax and restore. If you are leaving us for retirement or new challenges, please remember your time with us fondly and if you can, keep in touch. Thank you for all of the differences you have made to our schools.



Lorraine Heath

News from the Schools



Axe Valley Academy

I want to first and foremost thank the incredible staff at AVA for all their dedication and hard work this year. It has been a tough year for everyone but I can't believe how much we have achieved in spite of this. Just this term alone we have launched a brand new House System which was shown to be a great hit at sports day. That competition and fun has really felt like it has grown and grown as the year has gone on. Selecting the new House Captains was a very lovely experience that everyone got to be a part of



We have celebrated academic success with genuine joy and a real feeling that it is celebrated to do well at school. Prize days were a joy and again it reminded us all of why we do what we do.

We have also tackled some really tough issues such as facing being named on the list of testimonies for experiencing sexual harassment in schools on Everyone's Invited head on with our students through assemblies and follow up student work and really looking critically at our contextual safeguarding and the quality of the RSE we deliver - particularly if we are current enough for our students.

We have a brand new curriculum ready to go for September with our new 3 Year KS3 and a completely reinvented homework offer at KS3 that has been a huge undertaking to prepare. We have reading high on the agenda and new anthologies and a canon that makes the importance of reading everyone's responsibility. There is so much we continue to strive for as a staff every single day and even beginning to write it to celebrate what we are trying to do is overwhelming.

Just yesterday evening we had our prom. We had a fantastic turn out and the kids had a magical evening. We all looked at these young people and felt proud that we helped shape these utterly gorgeous human beings. Staff at AVA will know that the most special moment of the evening was when Sapphire was crowned prom queen after



We have been able to reintroduce some live music and share this with the parents of our most talented musical students. This was a really incredible event having everything from rock band to classical solo performances and ended in a fantastic cover of 'I Feel Good'. This followed a stunning art exhibition that really showcased some of the most excellent work we have seen.

being incredibly brave and arriving at prom as her true self. This was a shock to most of our students in year 11 who had never known Sapphire as Sapphire or female. To have such tolerant, accepting and supportive children made us tear up! Below are some of our Duke of Edinburgh expedition students at prom straight after the hottest expedition of record!



So thank you all of the staff of AVA for driving relentlessly forward, supporting each other without question and helping to shape some really spectacular young people. Have a very well deserved Summer break.

Laura Jenkins



Holyrood Academy

I am sure that the whirlwind experience of the past few weeks at Holyrood has been mirrored across

our Trust schools and so I would like to start by saying 'well done' to you all for making it!

As we look towards the next year at Holyrood, our focus will be on further developing consistently excellent teaching in every classroom, every day, for every student, through our coaching model for teachers. We are also excited to work with our students on building as many positive relationships with adults and other young people and on their punctuality to lessons. Finally, we are determined to continue to tackle all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination in and around our community. This work will include a robust response to Ofsted's excellent research into sexual harassment and sexual violence amongst young people. We all have a duty to keep all children safe and this is a responsibility that all members of the Holyrood community commit to wholeheartedly. We are determined to say 'not here', even though we know that issues of discrimination and harassment are national issues, but this takes for us all to actively report these issues when we come across them. More on this work in September.

Unfortunately, this time of year always means that we say goodbye to some of our staff who leave us to pursue new opportunities. I am delighted that many of the colleagues leaving us move to promoted posts with some of those across our Trust family of schools. We say goodbye and thank you to the following staff:

- Mrs Sarah Elder (English)
- Mrs Wendy da Costa (D&T)
- Miss Sophie Cameron-Mitchell (Geography)
- Mrs Caz King (Science)
- Mr Adam Bates (Maths)
- Mr Charlie Bond (D&T)
- Mrs Margrethe Stuttaford (MFL)
- Mr Jonathan Ingrams (SEMH Intervention Lead)
- Mrs Anita Heale (Display Technician)



Wishing you all a fantastic holiday! I have included a few pictures from our recent Year 11 Celebration Day/Prom and Year 13 Leavers' Lunch - fantastic events full of great people!



Dave MacCormick



Neroche School

We can't quite believe it is the end of the academic year at Neroche, it has certainly been an eventful year. Sadly, we say goodbye to Carole Burgess our Caretaker. Carole has worked at the school for what seems like forever and it is time for her to retire. We will miss her dreadfully and all she has done for Neroche over the years. Also leaving us is Sam Poole, our SEN HLTA who is off to a new position in September. Claire Bowditch starts her Maternity

leave and so we temporarily say goodbye and good luck to her as well.

The year 6 children have had a great ending to their time at primary School and had an action packed time on residential at Kilve Court. Despite the soaring temperatures they managed to pack in as much as possible with many challenging themselves to try new activities and experiences being away from home for the first time. They all coped amazingly well and we are very proud of them all. Year 6 have their award presentation to look forward to tomorrow before we say a final goodbye and wish them well in the next phase of their educational journey. We are delighted that so many of them are staying in our trust family and will be transitioning to Holyrood Academy in September.

End of year celebrations are happening for all with class parties and transition opportunities across the school. The children will break up tomorrow feeling confident about their next class and what to expect in September. As a school we are looking forward to putting bubbles behind us and being able to come together as a whole school once again.

Plans are in place for continued improvement to our school site over the summer with the new addition of replacement internal doors. These doors will provide increased soundproofing between learning areas and improve the internal spaces. Thank you to the site team for their role in making this happen.

We wish everyone a restful summer, best wishes the Neroche team.

Ali Collins



Uffculme Primary School

I cannot quite believe we have reached the end of the year. It felt like the longest year we have ever

had and one that has been incredibly challenging in so many ways. Despite this, I have been overwhelmed with how unbelievably hard our staff have worked throughout the pandemic. Their dedication and determination have been inspiring and I feel so proud to be leading such a wonderful staff team. So much has been expected from everyone here at the primary school and they have all risen to the challenges posed within this pandemic. From the bottom of my heart, thank you all so much. Your hard work has ensured the children had as little impact on their learning as possible and for that, I will be forever grateful. And by all staff, I mean all the teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff, mealtime assistants, cleaners, and caretakers.

I would also like to thank the Central Trust team who have provided the school with ongoing support and are always there whenever called upon. The Local Governing Committee too have been a great support to both me as headteacher, and the whole school.

This pandemic has brought out the best in people and I feel the support provided within and around the wider school community has really helped the school as a whole.

We have just a few bits of news to share.



The staff were treated to a performance of *Robin Hood and the Sherwood Hoodies* last week which was absolutely fantastic. The enthusiasm and confidence that the Year 6 children showed was brilliant and the audience were chuckling away throughout the performance.

The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves at this year's Sports Day and had several opportunities to compete in a range of events. It was amazing to see the whole school together, cheering each other on and working hard as a team; we really have missed events like these over the past 18 months. Well done to the eventual champions Germany.



I would like to say a massive thank you to Mr Carpanini who orchestrated the whole event and to great success. The timings and organisation went very smoothly indeed. It is a monumental effort to plan Sports Day and we are truly grateful for his hard work. Also, we would like to say a big thank you and well done to the Uffculme School Junior Sports Leaders who led all the events and were a huge help to us as a school – what wonderful role models they made!

We feel sad saying goodbye to our lovely Year 6 leavers, but we are all filled with pride as they take the next step on their educational journey. They have been absolutely amazing throughout their time here and especially over the past 18 months. We would like to wish them all the very best and we look forward to hearing of their successes.

We are also sad to be saying goodbye to Claire Hayman who is starting her maternity in

September. We wish her all the very best as she becomes a mum for the first time. She will be sorely missed, and I would like to personally thank her for being such a rock for me throughout my first six months. We are excited for Claire and look forward to her return next Summer.

Finally, everyone at Uffculme Primary School would like to wish all our friends and colleagues across the Trust a lovely, well-deserved Summer break.

Fraser Wallace



Uffculme School

It has been a busy month for PD here at Uffculme! We have delivered messages via assemblies, tutor time and PD lessons across all years on Mental Health awareness and how the young people can help others around them and the signs to look for if people are struggling. We have also had a school wide focus on our school values of Respect, Tolerance and Courtesy and how and what those values mean both in school and in the wider world.

For Years 7, 8 and 9 we have caught up and completed our PD curriculum delivering the important content that helps all our students make sensible choice in their lives.

For Year 10, it has been all about safety! In early July we held a drop-down day where all the students attended safety sessions on; water safety (coastal and inland waters); Drug and alcohol education and safety including external speakers from Five Lives; Gambling Awareness; and First Aid. The students also had a session on consent linked to Sexual Harassment and sharing images. The feedback from the students has been really positive and has allowed them to ask for other areas that they would like more information on - we are already planning this in for next year.

We were also fortunate to have a visit from the theatre group Alter Ego who delivered a powerful performance to our Year 10's on knife crime and 'Breaking the Chain'.

It has been great to catch up, deliver our important PD curriculum and start planning for next year!

We are really excited to have recruited our next senior council and head students. We had applications from over 40 students in Year 10 which meant a tricky first round of shortlisting. Those who were successful were appointed as senior councillors and then given their next challenge in their quest for the role of Head Students...a 2-minute recorded video of why they should be head student. We had Downing Street mock-ups, music video style presentations and lots of well-articulated ideas and hopes for Uffculme School and our students. All students and staff were invited to vote for their favourites which left us with four students in the running. Next followed a tough interview with a panel of senior leads and Head of Year. We're delighted to announce that we have appointed: Freya Gray as Head Girl and Eve Jacobs as deputy Head Girl (preferred titles selected by the students). We also appointed: Joe McQueenie as Head Boy and Makan Coulibaly as Deputy Head Boy (preferred titles selected by the students). The senior council is then made up of a further 12 students who have already started their important work of supporting the Year 6 with their primary to secondary school transition. Congratulations to them all.

This week the whole school has been enjoying Activities Week. As Year 10 missed it last year and were unable to do their normal work experience, they have joined in as well – as a result we have had 845 pupils involved in day activities from Rugby training to trips to water parks and theme parks to cookery schools.



Over 3,500 activity places have been organised by the team, led by John Roberts and Lynne Moyle, ably supported by Laurence Eve, our outdoor education coordinator. The high temperatures meant some last-minute changes to

the programme as it was too hot for pupils to do the 12 mile Uffculme Challenge walk, but staff rallied round and provided alternative events for the children to take part in.

Tuesday night saw our Prom for our Year 11 leavers – another rite of passage that was greatly missed last year. A wonderful evening was had by the students who all looked amazing as you can see in the photo/s. The weather was fabulous as staff and parents watched the students arrive in modes of transport from vintage buses to campervans.



Although we are sad to say goodbye to Year 11 we were pleased to be able to meet our new intake over the last couple of weeks. Despite being unable to hold a normal transition day, we were able to welcome pupils to the school in small groups for shorter visits. They met their tutors and

other key staff, toured the school, found out about the canteen and hopefully the visits alleviated any anxieties they may have had about moving to 'big school' in the autumn.

In addition to saying goodbye to our Year 11 students, on Friday we are also saying goodbye to a number of staff: Jason Chapman, Hannah Daniel, Lizzee Firth, Jill Goldhawk, Liz Hawkins, Laura Jones, Fiona Lee, Carly Payne, Kevin Sercombe and Charlotte Skelding. I thank them all for their time at Uffculme and wish them good luck in their new adventures. I would particularly like to mention Kev Sercombe, who is leaving for pastures new having taught PE at Uffculme for over 14 years and Liz Hawkins who is heading for a well-earned retirement having spent 13 years as Uffculme's SENDCO. All will be sorely missed both by their colleagues and by all the children they have worked so tirelessly to support.

Alan Blackburn



West Country Teaching School Alliance

As we reach the end of the academic year, we technically bid farewell to West Country Teaching School Alliance as teaching schools lose their DfE designation. We start an exciting new chapter as West Country Training School Alliance and as partners of The South West Institute For Teaching (comprised of Colyton and Kingsbridge Teaching School hubs). This new partnership provides Uffculme Academy Trust schools with so many exciting CPD and networking opportunities and extends our reach into Devon, Torbay and Plymouth and into Somerset and East Cornwall (where many Devon-based MATS have schools). As well as featuring opportunities in the UAT newsletter, you will also now as SWIFT members be

receiving the SWIFT newsletter. Please do look out for this.

ITT news

In September, we will be joined by fourteen School Direct trainees who will be undertaking their initial teacher education in UAT schools and across schools in the wider alliance. Charlotte Skelding will also be commencing her teacher training and we are delighted that she will be supported by the PE department at Uffculme School for her main placement.

All of the 2020/21 cohort have now secured teaching positions and we are delighted that Jemima Moran and Georgina Roberts will be joining Axe Valley in September.

Early Career Teacher news:

We will be welcoming a number of new early career teachers (ECTs- previously known as NQTs) across the trust from September. All of our secondary ECTs and their mentors will be in a small cohort together to complete their Early Career Framework (ECF) training. The ECF is one of the most exciting DfE reforms that I have experienced in my teaching career and we are really looking forward to working with the expertise and experience of Teach First on this programme.

Professional communities:

From September 2021, there will be an extensive range of subject and leadership networks called professional communities that as SWIFT members, UAT staff can access free of charge. These are termly meetings led by experts from across the SWIFT partnership, where the focus is on providing updates on national and regional excellence, sharing local examples of effective practice, staging expert and practitioner input and curating and sharing resources. SWIFT are currently recruiting for professional community leads to join the existing teams. If this is something that you are interested in, please drop me an email and find out more at https://www.swift.org.uk/uploads/1/3/5/0/135094932/swift_professional_community_network_lead_recruitment.pdf

The deadlines for applications is Monday 13th September at 5pm.

The first events will be released in September for Autumn 2. Please do nominate a member of your department to attend.

Thank you for everyone's support this year as I have navigated my first year in this role. WCTSA would really not be what it is without the superb work of the outstanding team of PSTs, mentors, CPD leads and facilitators - thank you.

Wishing everyone a restful holiday. Fingers crossed that this wonderful weather continues into August.

Jen Knowles