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We have had a busy few weeks since the last newsletter. Firstly thank you to all staff for your contributions to the appraisal process which concluded for teachers just before half term. I have since had the privilege to hear, from our Headteachers, of all the wonderful work which was completed over the last 12 months via their reports to me. When the board met to consider the pay recommendations, they were, like me, enormously impressed and grateful to everyone for all of your hard work. To have emerged from (and actually continue to deal with) a national crisis and achieve so much more than simply survival is nothing short of astonishing. It's a shame that the national recognition is not particularly forthcoming but we are all very aware of the unstinting work that has been achieved.

We have also spent some time scrutinising plans and impact reports for pupil premium and recovery spending. The panel, whose role it is to quality assure these, is chaired by an independent expert, Deb Wring. Deb is an experienced Ofsted inspector and school improvement partner so it is a rigorous process. We were all similarly struck by the ambition and compassion for the most vulnerable children and the quality of strategies to support them in our schools on display.

I would further like to extend a very warm welcome to Barbara Manning who has joined the Trust for one day a week as Safeguarding Lead. Barbara's substantive role is a Director of Educational Welfare and Safeguarding for Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust.

Barbara has been an educational professional for thirty years, originally training as a teacher of RS/PSHE and working in the secondary phase, in five schools, in London, Lancashire and Devon. Since then, Barbara has been a middle leader, an Advanced Skills Teacher and a senior leader. In addition, Barbara spent two years in higher education as a senior lecturer in initial teacher education and programme lead for National Professional Qualifications at the University of Cumbria. Her last school-based post was as Vice Principal of a large cooperative Devon secondary school and Barbara is also Chair of Governors for an alternative provision setting in Devon.



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Barbara explains that “safeguarding is my absolute raison d’être – I care deeply about people, relationships, well-being and welfare and doing the right thing for the right reason. To quote Khalil Gibran; “safeguarding the rights of others is the most noble and beautiful end of a human being”

We are very privileged to have Barbara assisting us on such an important aspect of our work and are very grateful to Dartmoor for supporting this appointment. She will be instrumental in facilitating cross school working and setting up networks of support for DSLs and DDSLs. It is really exciting to see our plans for collaboration being enacted across the Trust. As we are able to make more appointments to the central team, we will, I am sure, start to properly realise the true benefits of partnership.

Lorraine Heath
Chief Executive Officer, Uffculme Academy Trust



LORRAINE HEATH





The last few months have been furiously busy, in the most exciting and productive ways. Students have been working hard across the curriculum and their hard work and disruption free learning has been commented on extensively by all of the visitors we have had to the school. We have been lucky enough to invite a whole range of people into the school including vast numbers of parents and families for school tours, teachers and Headteachers from other schools and Governors. What has been evident is just how proud our students are of their school, their teachers and their work. We have had lots of curriculum competitions going on and it continues to be a fiercely fought House competition where, at the time of writing, Coram (Gold) are in the lead. Clubs have taken off with a bang and whether it is craft club, music clubs, grow club, sports club, homework club or many more students are attending in their droves.

The PE department have gone into overdrive and our representation at local cross country and cricket competitions has been fantastic with a first place from one of our phenomenally talented Year 11 students.

Mr Knott has continued to increase the number of students doing Duke of Edinburgh award and again this adds to the vibrant and exciting offer our students are taking up. The new homework books are becoming a habit of excellence and we are seeing more and more exemplary homework every day. We love the fact that our students read every single day as part of their homework and they continue to treat the Library as the heart of the Quad.

We were delighted to see Mrs Moran host her first music concert and it was incredible. The hall was set out like a beautiful twinkling music club and we enjoyed the most diverse range of musical talent. Mr Jevons, along with a range of talented staff and peripatetic music teachers, did Axe Valley's first 'Orchestra in a Day' for both primary and secondary musicians which culminated in a really quite incredible performance in front of parents.



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We also hosted the most emotive and informative workshop from Paul Hannaford about county lines, drugs and gangs to Year 10 and 11. This was one of the most powerful presentations we have all ever seen and as such Counsellor Ian Hall has pledged to fund Paul returning for the next 3 years to ensure more of our students benefit from this - we are incredibly grateful for this.

We have also instigated a fantastic No Labels No Limits workshop which involved a range of inspirational women from local businesses working with our Year 9 and 10 girls to support them in improving their confidence as well as looking at their ambitions for their future. We look forward to seeing this grow and evolve and in particular wanted to acknowledge the support from local businesses, in particular Axminster Power Tools and Machinery's Jane Boulton.

Alongside all of this that we have packed into our week we have also had a whole host of exciting weekend events including a recent trip to Twickenham to watch England vs. Tonga. We are now looking ahead to our next community events. We are hosting Christmas in the Quad on Thursday 25th November, 3.45 – 5.30pm. A completely home-spun event that our local community can enjoy safely outside.

Laura Jenkins, Headteacher



LAURA JENKINS





At Holyrood, this has been a great half term so far! We are busy working hard, being kind and joining in to make sure that our school continues to get better and better. Most of our cultural input this term has focussed in on being kind, as we are constantly taking opportunities to make our school a happier, more welcoming, more celebratory place in which anyone can feel free to be themselves. Our students have responded very well to this and supported their staff brilliantly by coming forward to call out the recent TikTok issues that have plagued many schools. We were so impressed to see the willingness of our students to come forward and say 'not in our school!'

Again this half term, it was pleasing to see some fantastic performances on the sports field and on the stage as our Grease! rehearsals continue ahead of shows in February. Seeing so many young people getting involved in fun, healthy activities is excellent to see! Our Diwali celebrations were a real highlight, with staff and students getting involved in art, dance and cookery activities to celebrate the Hindu festival of light. Thanks so much to Sam Davison and Blanche Harrar for arranging such a special day.

Another highlight was the respect and reflection shown by our community on November 11th as we remembered those who have given the ultimate sacrifice during conflict. Our students and staff stood together on the Astroturf to show their collective respect and then, led by our Cadets, conducted an impeccable two minutes of silence before visiting our local church to lay our wreath. The day was made incredibly poignant and special by the work of Stuart Roper, our Head of History, who led assemblies for the students to learn about the Denslow Family, after whom one of our school houses is named, and who gave three sons who lost their lives in WW1. It was so powerful to then visit their memorial with our cadets before treating the students to a hot chocolate. This was a truly great day, not just because of its meaning, but because it visibly



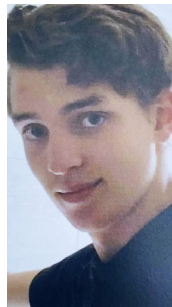
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showed how far student behaviour at our school has come. We were all able to stand back and be proud of what our students have achieved, which was great!

Finally, I am looking forward to our fundraising efforts for Suicide Prevention Bristol across the month of December. If you have any fundraising ideas, please do speak with your school fundraising lead and help us to break our £8k target, in memory of our former student Callum.

Dave MacCormick, Headteacher



Callum Graham Quartley
2000 – 2021



DAVE MACCORMICK





Life at Neroche has been interesting over the last few weeks with a return to class bubbles and limited whole school opportunities due to a sharp rise in COVID cases. The staff team has been hit hard with up to 11 class based adults off at a time. The children have coped really well with a change to their routine, adapting to supply teachers and they have embraced more time as a class, cementing and building on class friendships.

Luckily, we have been able to utilise our lovely outside space and have enjoyed hosting cricket and rugby taster events for the children to enjoy. Each class had the opportunity to work with experienced cricket and rugby coaches to widen their awareness of the sports and local opportunities on offer to them. Feedback from the children has been really positive and we are now encouraging them to look at out of school cricket and rugby club opportunities to develop their enjoyment for these sports as a result.

The theme of remembrance has been a focus for classes and this has been developed even further in our Upper Key Stage 2 classes who have been studying World War 1 in History lessons. Representatives from our school attended a social distanced village remembrance ceremony last weekend and a wreath was laid on behalf of the school. Children have taken part in a wide range of curriculum opportunities from looking at the different colour tones on poppy petals, the use of language in war poetry for effect and identifying how fiction books can also be a source of facts and information about the war this period in history.

John Martin, our local PCSO, kindly came in to speak with our Year 6 children about the importance of keeping themselves safe online and the importance of taking responsibility for actions when sending messages and photos on social media. This has helped to reinforce our RSHE curriculum and helped to validate important e-safety messages with the children. The PCSO service are regular visitors to the school site to help monitor parking and traffic at drop off/collection points and are always happy to come in and talk to the children to reinforce key learning in our curriculum.



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Our Christmas plans are very evident and the sound of the Key Stage 1 and Early Years children learning songs for their plays and proudly sharing their speaking parts with adults demonstrates their growing excitement. We are constantly monitoring the COVID situation so we can adapt our plans for performances and sharing these important events with the school community. We are still hoping to enjoy our whole school trip to the pantomime, we have everything crossed that performances can go ahead.

Ali Collins, Headteacher



ALI COLLINS





Staff and students have been enjoying being able to 'get back to normal' a bit as this term has progressed and this has meant being able to welcome visitors to the school again as well as to get out on more activities and trips.

Our first big event was our Open Evening when we were delighted to welcome both prospective pupils and their families and also the families of existing pupils who had not previously visited the school. Around 750 people attended, and they were able to take part in a wonderful range of activities from a murder mystery and information about medieval medicine in History to dance performances, choreographed by the students themselves. As always, our Open Evening would not be the experience it is without the marvellous contribution made by the many students who stay to help both in the departments and in escorting visitors around the school and answering their questions. This year around 220 students volunteered to stay behind for the evening.

We also welcomed many Year 10 and 11 students with their families to our Post-16 Evening earlier this month: everyone found it a valuable opportunity to discover more about the different post-16 options.

Visitors have also come to the school this term to work with our students, both in Science where a group took part in an engaging and informative day learning about Henrietta Leavitt's contributions to astronomy, and in Drama, which had a visit from the Paper Birds theatre company. This company performed their latest show 'Broke' to GCSE Drama students and Gifted and Talented Year 9 students. Watching the show and working with the actors not only equipped students with the knowledge and understanding needed for the GCSE written exam but helped to inspire and develop their own devising skills, supporting the remaining elements of their practical Drama work.

At the end of the Summer Term, KS3 pupils took part in the annual House Writing Competition, The Cameron Cup, dedicated to the memory of past Head of English, David Cameron. This year's theme was 'Things for which we are proud'. There were hundreds of wonderful entries and it was incredible to hear pupils writing about their own achievements, which can actually be quite challenging to share publicly. The overall winner this year was Joe Moore, now in Year 10, and he was very proud to have the green of the Gaddon house colours on the cup.

Earlier in the term the Languages department celebrated the importance and diversity of native languages which we have here at school and throughout the world during their Loving Languages Week. Years 7 and 8 were treated to an assembly presented by students



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and staff who are fluent in at least two languages, all of whom presented facts about the benefits of language learning whilst speaking a multitude of languages: Polish, Portuguese, Russian, French, German and Hebrew. Students from all year groups took part and their efforts were inspiring.

As well as activities in school, we have now had our first residential visit since before the pandemic. About 60 of our Year 11 History students had a wonderful, if tiring, time in London enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the 'Crime and Punishment' element of the GCSE course. They walked many miles, visiting sites including Tower Bridge, the London Dungeon and the Clink prison museum. You can see their blog at: [History 'Crime and Punishment' Trip to London | Uffculme School](#)

Things have been very busy in the outdoor activities programme: 23 Year 11 students have completed the challenging expedition component for their Silver DofE award, spending 3 days and 2 nights on the Quantocks: 16 students from across all the year groups have successfully achieved their British Canoeing Discovery Award at the Haven Banks centre in Exeter: students have taken part in mountain biking, golf, archery and caving; and around 45 students successfully completed the Three Moors Challenge on Bodmin Moor, Exmoor and Dartmoor.

It goes without saying that these opportunities are only available to the students because of the dedication of our wonderful staff who give up so much of their time and energy both to organise the activities and to accompany the students.

Alan Blackburn, Headteacher



ALAN BLACKBURN





UFFCULME PRIMARY SCHOOL

It has continued to be a very busy but productive few weeks at Uffculme Primary School, full of learning, sport and fun. Plans are in full swing for Christmas and our Key Stage 1 classes have begun rehearsals for their Christmas productions. Despite Covid curtailing some of our intended plans, we have a full schedule of events to ensure we have a more celebratory Christmas than we did last year.

I would like to share how wonderfully proud we all are of our youngest children in Reception Class. The children have already made strong progress with not only their academic work, but also their resilience and independence. A huge thank you also to Mrs Sharpe and the rest of the Reception Class team who go above and beyond to ensure our children get the best possible start to their school life.

Just before half term, we celebrated China as part of our Countries Day. Every class had the opportunity to partake in a hands-on Dragon Dancing Workshop, which involved dancing with a real dragon, dancing with fans, and using authentic Chinese parasols. The children also had the opportunity to sample a range of Chinese delicacies, from lychees to spring rolls, whilst also producing some amazing art and DT work. Every child commented on how enriching and fun the day was. I would like to specifically thank Mrs Wright who planned the day. A special mention also for all staff members who threw themselves (some quite literally) into the day and created some memories that will last a long time.

After half term, we held three open mornings for prospective parents. We were amazed with how well-attended they were. It was so lovely to celebrate the school community with these parents, whilst also sharing our vision and values. We received positive feedback from parents who were so grateful that we could actually hold these in person.

We have also recently held our parents' evenings and had a very good turnout once again. The focus was very much on how the children had settled into their new year groups. To be in a position to welcome parents into the school for the first time in what feels like forever was a great feeling, so a special thank you to all the staff for their time and effort during these important evenings.

We have sadly said goodbye to two of our staff team who have moved on to pastures new. Lauren Saunders, one of our SEND TAs and assistant SENDCo, and Jackie Moon, who was one of our mealtime assistants. We wish them the very best of luck in their new roles.

We have welcomed some new staff members to the school: Anouska Blake, Leila Walters and Devon Pearson, who all join us as teaching assistants. All three staff members have hit



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the ground running and have made such a great start to their time here at the school. We also welcome Trina Baker back to the school to join the mealtime assistant team.

We also have some more exciting staff news to share. Alice Hughes is expecting her first child, due in March. Everyone at school is unbelievably excited for Alice and her husband, Tom. They will be incredible parents and we look forward to meeting their baby next year. As a result, we will be advertising for a maternity post over the next few weeks. We also have our SEND TA interviews this week and I look forward to sharing this news with you in the next newsletter.

On the sports field, the competitive events have started well with a great performance from the Year 5 & 6 football team who beat Plymtree 7-0. What was most impressive about the performance was how well the team passed and moved, and how the children conducted themselves. Also, huge congratulations to those children who ran in the Culm Valley association Cross-Country event at Killerton. Incredibly, the team did so well that they currently lead the standings with the second event due in March and for the first year ever, every child qualified for the next round (East Devon) which will be held before Christmas.

I would like to share the amazing achievements of two of our children, Alyssia and Fred Hayes, who took part in a charity event at home. Having lost their nan and great grandma in quick succession to cancer, both children wanted to turn this tragedy into a positive, so they decided to do the 26 miles in 26 days challenge. They managed to raise over £800 for Macmillan Cancer. What an inspirational achievement to have the mindset to do something so positive when both children were hurting. What superstars!

Fraser Wallace, Headteacher



FRASER WALLACE





It's been great to have our School Direct @ Exeter trainees in for their preliminary experience weeks. Thank you to their ITECs and Lead Mentors for inducting them into their new school settings and for helping them settle in. I hope that the new weekly WCTSA School Direct newsletters have been helpful to you all. Recruitment is going well for this year, and we have so far appointed English, Biology, Geography and Maths for 2021-22. If your department would like to work with a trainee next year, please do discuss with your ITEC and get in touch. If you or someone that you know is interested in training to teach, please do check out our offer online or get in touch with me directly <https://wctsa.org/get-teaching/our-courses>

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES

As mentioned in previous newsletters, WCTSA has taken on the manager role for a number of SWIFT professional communities, all of which are free to access for UAT schools who have SWIFT membership. Please do look into the agendas and send along a member of your department.

Secondary MFL – Monday 22 November 2021 from 1400 – 1630

https://sw-iftcpd.org.uk/courses/bookings/c_detail.asp?cid=10435&ca=1

Secondary History – Tuesday 30 November 2021 from 1430 – 1630

https://sw-iftcpd.org.uk/courses/bookings/c_detail.asp?cid=10434

Secondary Food – Tuesday 30th November 3.45pm

https://sw-iftcpd.org.uk/courses/bookings/c_detail.asp?cid=10445

Secondary Science – Thursday 2 December 2021 from 1400 – 1600

<https://www.stem.org.uk/cpd/504672/swift-secondary-science-professional-community-invitation-only>

Primary MFL – Thursday 9 December 2021 from 1500 – 1730

https://sw-iftcpd.org.uk/courses/bookings/c_detail.asp?cid=10436&ca=1

OTHER UPCOMING CPD COURSES

Introductory look at the Early Reading Framework – Friday 3rd December 2021 11.45 – 13.00

Online – FREE for SWIFT members

<https://www.sw-ift.org.uk/programmes/ilsham-english-hub>

Key stage 2 Cross-School Writing Moderation – Wednesday 1st December 13.00 – 15.30

https://sw-iftcpd.org.uk/courses/bookings/c_detail



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AQA UPDATE SERIES

**Extended Project Qualification Network Meeting – Wednesday 24 November 2021
from 1500 – 1600**

**Religious Studies GCSE – Summer 2022 Exam Update – Tuesday 7 December 2021
from 1545 – 1645**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/>

HEALTH AND NUTRITION PODCASTS

As part of the SWIFT membership offer, SWIFT have teamed up with experienced nutritional therapist Jennifer McDiarmid who is releasing eleven, 30-minute podcasts covering different areas of wellbeing and health focusing on nutrition.

- The power of rainbow eating
- Eating to boost immunity
- Sleep, energy and motivation
- Nourish the body at Christmas
- Simple and safe ways to detox
- Eating to lift your mood
- Low sugar Easter eating
- Supporting female health
- Supporting male health
- Supporting the body whilst stressed
- All about gut health

These are completely free of charge for UAT schools and other SWIFT members

<https://sw-iftcpd.org.uk/courses/bookings/default.asp?cal=1&calday=13&calmonth=12&calyear=2021casts>

NPQ UPDATE

Leading Schools South West have just opened the next NPQ application window (for a February 2022 start). As was announced in the media a few weeks ago, FULL SCHOLARSHIPS are now being provided for all NPQs at all levels for state-funded schools. If there is a programme that you are interested in, please find further information below. The deadline for applications is December 6th.

<https://www.leading-schools-southwest.org.uk/#new-npqs>

Thanks as ever for all of your support of the training school.



JEN KNOWLES





11–12 DECEMBER 2021

On Saturday 11th December at 10:30am, our team of UAT cyclists will depart Stamford Bridge Stadium, the home of Chelsea FC. We will ride 160 miles across 11th and 12th December, finishing back at Holyrood Academy in Chard, Somerset. Our aim is to help to raise money for Suicide Prevention Bristol, in memory of Callum Quartley. Callum was a student at Holyrood and he tragically lost his life to suicide in July 2021. We are doing this to celebrate and remember him, to educate our students, to support Callum's family and to help people who need it most in Bristol.

Please support us if you can!

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/uat2021

