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HERE



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Spring 1 is such a short but intense half term so I can imagine everyone is as tired as I am. It has been a particularly busy week with two days of Ofsted at Holyrood and obviously I cannot disclose the outcome but I want to congratulate everyone there for a superb team effort. Seeing staff in every type of role in the school pulling together and working tirelessly to help the school to secure the grade it deserves was truly uplifting. Thank you.

We also shared the exciting news that we are considering a merger with the schools in the Castle Partnership Trust. The document I sent out was only a taster of some of the benefits that we hope such a collaboration will realise and I promise to keep everyone updated as we go. As our schools go from strength to strength, I feel very optimistic about our future as part of a bigger family of schools sharing these strengths and working together on the bits we would like to do a bit better.

Thank you to everyone for your hard work in the darkest months. Hopefully when we return it will be Spring. Wishing everyone a fabulous half term break.

Lorraine

Chief Executive Officer, Uffculme Academy Trust



LORRAINE HEATH





This term, although a slightly shorter one, is very intense particularly as we pack so much into life here at Axe Valley Academy.

We began our new year here at AVA with a SEND coffee morning. We were delighted with the turn out for this amongst our parents and carers. It gave James Kyberd, a chance to introduce myth busting facts and a chance to boost communications between families and our own SEND team.

We also launched a support strategy to our Year 11s upon receiving their mock results. Now is the time to make their own beautiful evolution, rather like the metamorphosis of a butterfly. This journey is exciting, a little bit scary, but exciting. Mr Wilson introduced our revision support scheme 'Axe-cess Success', ready to help them respond effectively.

Our students literally bounced into this year with the launch our new lunchtime and after school Trampoline club. This club is packed every Monday. Our extra-curricular opportunities bring us great joy here on a daily basis from chess to crochet and art to Axe Valley Voices, our clubs are ever popular. Buggy rehearsals are ramping up and preparations for costumes and sets are starting to come together for a Spring performance. Dates will be announced soon.

We are delighted to be part of a wonderful project. A group of our Year 8 and 9 have been selected to be part of a series of ten creative writing workshops. The leaders and story mentors from The Bank of Dreams and Nightmares work with the children to develop ideas and craft their thoughts into remarkable writing and a beautifully finished product. A book launch in Archway Books in Axminster at the end of the programme is planned.

Within our community we have some really uplifting projects that we are proud to be a part of. Some of our Year 10 students are part of a weekly work experience programme with The Waffle House, The Community Shed, Archway Books and Axminster Library.

We were proud to show Councillor Ian Hall and PCSO Hayley Widger our school. They then spent the morning speaking with me about the important community link ups that make a daily difference to our children. We were very grateful for their time and also for the very positive feedback we received about the quiet, purposeful nature of this school and the friendly and polite welcome they received from our students. As our visitors are both part of our Alumni campaign, which is really starting to take shape, their view of AVA is really important to us.



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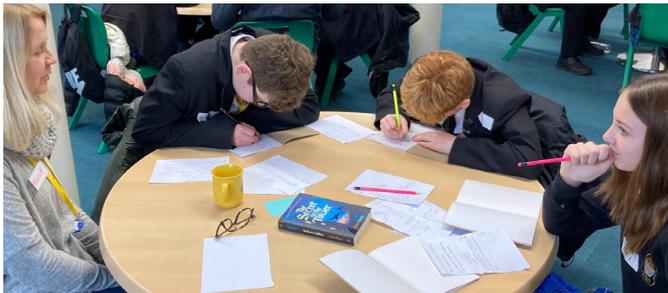


Each week, Project Food supports many of our young people. We are very grateful to have this outlet pretty much on our doorstep. To find more about this incredible organisation please do follow their work at www.project-food.org.uk.

We were honoured to have Henry Schachter visit our Year 9 students during Holocaust Memorial week. He encouraged us to challenge the narrative and explore and seek out the truth, to keep our minds open and alert. Please follow the link for Henry's story: <https://genocideknowmore.org.uk/hidden-child-survivor-of-.../> Thanks to the bravery of Holocaust survivors talking to us, we can shine a light on one of history's darkest chapters.

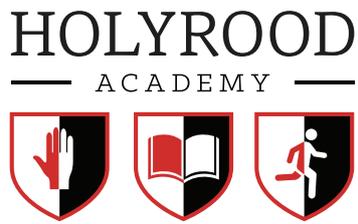
Ever Friday, we end the week with a very positive post about our school. It may be a D&T lesson where students show off their work, a tutor time cello session or it may be simply some Year 7s enjoying their fish and chips. This is a really simple reflection of the delightful vibe that we have going on here. These posts appear to be gaining us great traction.

Laura Jenkins, Headteacher



LAURA JENKINS





It has been quite the half term at Holyrood, ending with an Ofsted inspection on Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th February (hence my slightly shorter entry this time!). It was an intense experience for #TeamHolyrood, but one that really validated the hard work we have all put in to our school improvement journey over the past 3 years.

The impact of being part of the Trust along this journey has been profound. The learning we have taken from the culture of rewards and participation at Uffculme School and the amazing outcomes students achieve has inspired lots of the work we have done here. Similarly, working with colleagues at Axe Valley who always find a way of helping any student to fit in and excel, and who have done great things to grow their school, has supported us to get better. The same can be said through our work with Neroche and Uffculme Primary on how our curricula can better build on what has been learned in Primary School before students join us. Ali and Fraser have been amazing sources of support for us as we have moved through this journey.



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The central team, too, have all played a tremendously important role in helping us to improve our school. I must pay particular tribute to Beth Warwick who has been instrumental in helping us to understand how to meet the needs of our SEND students better and has supported us to take our SEND provision to a strong place from a low baseline in just a few months.

Lastly, I would like to thank Lorraine on behalf of Holyrood for her relentless support, challenge and drive for us to make Holyrood the best school it can be. As a new Headteacher, I have always felt so supported by her and she has been the best possible person for me to learn from. Our success is very much a testament to her leadership and is something for us all, as a whole Trust, to celebrate. Thank you all.

Dave MacCormick, Headteacher



DAVE MACCORMICK





This term, we have welcomed Brodie to our school team. Brodie belongs to one of our teachers, Miss Peat and is now a school dog at Neroche. We have all fallen in love with Brodie and he has quickly become a valued member of our team. He has a base in Year 2 at the moment while he familiarises himself with the school, but his role will develop over time. The children enjoy spending time with him, and he has already heard countless books from the library as he has been used as a reading buddy for several children. We have developed a new award system for the children called earn your PAWS. They have to complete a range of activities to earn their green, bronze, silver and golden PAW badge. Our Pre School children have their own Puppy PAWS badge that they can earn to start to interact with him.

This half term at Neroche we have been enhancing our RSHE curriculum with series of external visitors into school. We have enjoyed visits from the carbon monoxide safety team, the road safety team along with visits from the PCSO to talk about online safety as part of our Internet Safety Day. The children have enjoyed all of these experiences and learning from visitors coming into school. All visitors have been impressed with the engagement of the children and the level of interaction from them. The children were thrilled with their free gifts from the road safety team.

Year 4 children enjoyed a visit into school as part of their History learning. They took part in an Anglo Saxon workshop where their learning was brought to life with drama and artefacts. Pupil voice from this experience was high and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

We enjoyed taking part in NSPCC Number Day raising the importance of safeguarding through the curriculum area of maths. We used this as a charity fundraising day and children came into school dressed to reflect something mathematical. Even Brodie wore his number jumper to keep warm outside. Mrs Warner, one of our Support Staff composed a number rap for assembly which inspired the children to try and write their own.

We have raised the awareness of children's mental health and wellbeing through children's Mental Health week. We held an express yourself mufti day where children could come into school wearing anything that they felt reflected their own unique personality. Throughout the week children have taken part in yoga and mindfulness activities and have enjoyed forest school activities.

Our Year 3 children have been enjoying forest school sessions both on the school grounds and extending to the local woods where they have been working together to construct dens out of forest materials. Mrs Dellow our Forest School Leader is also completing her ELSA training so this will be a fantastic addition to the skill set at Neroche and will enhance our wellbeing support for the children.



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Since September, we have moved towards a different lunchtime dining experience at Neroche and have made a move towards a more family dining experience. We have been left with over a hundred green plastic moulded plates to find a new home or purpose for. I set the Eco Council a challenge to find a way to recycle them alongside raising money to support a solar lighting project for our outdoor classroom. They have met as a group and have decided on a design a garden competition using the plates for half term. We have also been awarded £500 from Hinkley Point towards our solar lightening project and Mrs Dellow is looking forward to being able to light the Hedgehog Hut.

Miss Peat has joined the school and has worked hard on developing our Music Curriculum. We have a new approach and a new commitment to all children learning the Ukulele. The children are excited by this and we can't wait to get started with these changes after the half term holiday.

We say goodbye to Miss Wilcox at the end of this half term as she leaves Neroche to start a new chapter of her life with her partner in Bath. We will all miss her dreadfully but wish her every success in her new school setting. We have welcomed back Mrs. Crosby from her Maternity this half term and Mrs looker returns after half term to our staff team from her maternity Leave.

Wishing everyone a very happy half term break from all at Neroche.

Ali Collins, Headteacher



ALI COLLINS





UFFCULME PRIMARY SCHOOL

It has been a great start to 2023 at Uffculme Primary School. The children returned full of energy and have thrown themselves into school life in classic Uffculme style.

The term began with several parental engagement events. Firstly, parents joined us for Open Classrooms, which was an informal opportunity to meet the teacher and look around the classroom. Children were also able to share their work from the previous term and talk about what they were proud of.

The school also held various information evenings for parents. Year 4 parents were invited to a residential information evening in which they heard all about July's trip to Escot. We also held a Year 6 SATs workshop, informing Year 6 parents of how these assessments take place, as well as exploring past papers.

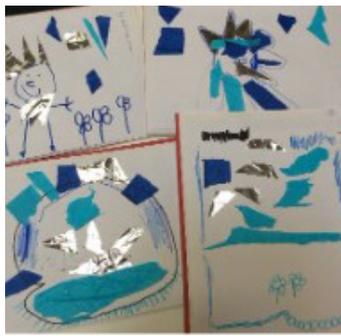
Parent consultation evenings take place this week. These meetings are an important part in the home/school partnership that will contribute towards the children's mental health, happiness at school and progress in their education.

The school celebrated all things Science on the 30th January for our annual Science Day. We welcomed some scientists from Sciencedipity who led some excellent workshops on a variety of scientific topics. Children carried out a range of investigations, with a STEM theme, including rocket making, balloon cars, biscuit 'dunking', biscuit architecture and many more. The children thoroughly enjoyed their day and were able to put their theories and predictions to the test, whilst also linking their work to the curriculum by working scientifically.

Our new classroom building project is nearing completion and we are hoping that Years 5 and 6 can move in properly after half term. Although the project has been delayed by three months, we are still incredibly excited about the difference this will make to our school. We are currently planning on creating a SEND Hub/sensory room and a meeting space with the vacant classrooms.



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We are delighted to share with you all that Annie Elkington, our SENDCo, gave birth to her beautiful baby girl, Aletheia (AKA Theia), on the 23rd January at 6:26am. Annie is doing really well, and her family are loving being a family of four! I am sure you will join me in sending our warmest wishes and congratulations to Annie and her family.

We have also had successes on the sporting field. Firstly, both our basketball and High Five teams represented the school in local competitions, performing well in both tournaments, winning the majority of their games. Most excitingly of all, after qualifying for the area East Devon Schools Athletics Meet, the school won the whole competition. A massive well done to all those children who represented the school. However, what we are most proud of is the manner in which our children represent the school – such humility, effort, respect and teamwork.

Fraser Wallace, Headteacher



FRASER WALLACE





Over half of our Year 11 ended the Autumn Term with the excitement of the school Ski Trip. After a long coach journey 140 pupils arrived in Austria for 5 days of skiing. The majority were completely new to the sport, but all made excellent progress and were able to take part in the slalom race on the last day followed by a presentation ceremony with their instructors. As if 6 hours of skiing each day were not exhausting enough, there were excursions included each evening including to the Thermae Spa with its pools, and to Salzburg for the Christmas markets, which gave plenty of opportunity for the students to practice their German. Their behaviour was outstanding and considering the 22-hour journey each way they were patient and considerate to others. Those Year 11s who didn't take part in the ski trip had a day at the Christmas Markets and the Winter Wonderland ice rink in Exeter, where the temperatures seemed just as cold as in the Alps!

Since returning back, Year 11 (and Year 10) have been fully focused on their mock exams. However, despite all the hard work involved with revision, a number have still found time to throw themselves into training for this year's Ten Tors event. The cold weather continued on their recent practice walk on Dartmoor as you can see from the photos! As usual we have teams entered for all 3 walks, the 55 mile (this team is made up of ex-students), 45 and 35 miles.

With the mock exams now coming to an end, the Year 11 School Councillors are taking part in a series of team building sessions to further support their work with the other Year Group Councils. Each tutor group has a representative on their Year Group Council and work together (with members of the Senior Council) to address issues that are relevant to them and their peers and help bring about change and improvements.

Assemblies are a vital part of school life and are key to reinforcing our ethos – who we are, what we want, how we will get there. Each week student musicians are chosen to perform at the start and end of assemblies, over the week performing in front of over 1000 students and staff which takes great courage. The assemblies are also an important opportunity to celebrate achievement and this term we have made presentations to the Year 10 and 11 students who have successfully completed their Bronze and Silver DofE awards.

We have strong uptake from students for the DofE awards with over 100 in Year 10 and 11 currently enrolled – already more than 50 have achieved their Bronze awards and 4 their Silver. All have completed the expedition section which we run 'in house' with a great deal of input from staff, ably led by Dave Harbour and Karen Purrington. Activities have included learning sign language and origami, taking part in dance and water polo and helping at food banks and with



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small mammal conservation surveys. Over 90 Year 9s signed up for the Bronze award in September and have made an excellent start.

Our students have been involved in a couple of competitions this term, a Virtual Court and Vex Robotics. Fourteen schools took part in the Mock Bar Trial and our students managed to take 3rd place overall. It wasn't quite enough to make it to the National Finals in London, but everyone performed really well and did themselves proud. Meanwhile our robotics teams travelled to Colyton Grammar school to compete in the Vex South West Regional competition. After a number of highly competitive matches one of our teams got chosen as an alliance with another Colyton team to compete in the final. The final was incredibly close and was only decided by the smallest of margins with our team taking second place, losing out by just 5 points. Congratulations to all these students for their achievements and the effort that was put in both in preparation for and at these competitions.

Alan Blackburn, Headteacher



ALAN BLACKBURN



West Country
Training School Alliance



WHAT MAKES A GREAT TEACHER?



WE DO



Skills such as communication, listening, collaboration, adaptability, empathy and patience are just a few of the attributes every good teacher needs to thrive in education. If you think you have what it takes to start a new career as a teacher call **01884 842908**.

wctsa.org

West Country
Training School Alliance



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The West Country Teaching School Alliance offers two distinct School Direct routes into teaching, both of which are accredited by the University of Exeter. Trainees who successfully complete the course receive their PGCE qualification from the University.

What is School Direct?

School Direct is a one-year full-time course leading to a Post Graduate Certificate in Education with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and credits towards a Masters degree. Schools in the Alliance are experienced in delivering Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and are committed to developing new entrants into the profession. By selecting this route into teaching, trainees can state a preference for which school they would like to train in. Trainees will spend the majority of the year in this lead school as well as benefiting from a contrasting second school placement of approximately 10 weeks. All placements are organised by the WCTSA and trainees are consulted on which schools they would like to train in. All trainees also undertake cross-phase placements in primary and post-16 settings during the course of their School Direct training; these placements are also arranged by us.

We offer two different options for School Direct:

School Direct Distance Secondary (fee paying)

Trainees are based in schools for the entire academic year and are treated as a member of staff from Day 1. This route is more suited to those who have some experience of working with young people and have good subject knowledge.

School Direct @Exeter Secondary (fee paying)

Unlike University based PGCE programmes, School Direct@Exeter trainees have the benefit of being in school from Day 1. They join their lead school at the start of the academic year and remain at this school undertaking school based learning tasks until the University course begins.

For more information:

wctsa.org



JEN KNOWLES



THE VIEW FROM HERE

COUNSELLING

WELLBEING AT UFFCULME ACADEMY TRUST



What is counselling?

Counselling is considered to be a talking therapy that involves you meeting with a trained therapist who will listen to you and help you find ways to deal with emotional issues.

What are the benefits of counselling?

Like most therapies, counselling can help you cope with several different emotional issues that you may be experiencing at various points during your life.

It is important to remember that we are all individuals and that we deal with aspects of life in our own way, you may feel like your worry is perceived as trivial. However, this is not a reason to avoid seeking help.

Counselling may help you to cope with:

- Mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety or even an eating disorder.
- Physical health conditions, such as infertility, alopecia, and many more other conditions.
- Processing difficult emotions, such as low self-esteem or even anger issues.
- Processing difficult life events, such as a bereavement, relationship breakdown or even stress.

What to expect from counselling?

Counselling can take place in various formats, it can be done face to face, over the phone or even by email and/or Zoom. Counselling can be done on an individual basis or as a group activity.

Counselling sessions are wholly confidential, and it is important to remember that the trained therapist who will be listening and supporting you, is doing so without judgement or critic.

At your appointment, you will be encouraged to talk and discuss your emotions and worries openly.

Counselling sessions may be offered on a single basis, a short course of sessions over a few weeks or months, or a longer course that lasts for several months or years may even be required.

It is useful to remember that it can take several sessions before you may start to feel the benefit of your sessions however this should not make you feel disheartened.

How can I access counselling?

Counselling can be rolled out through the NHS through a referral from your GP. Counselling via the NHS is a free service.

You can, if you feel necessary, pay to see a private therapist however it is recommended that you make sure that they are qualified, and you feel comfortable with them. Private counsellors charge anywhere between £10 to £70 per session.

Some charities and voluntary organisations offer counselling services. The sessions may be free, or you may be requested to pay a minimal fee to cover the cost of the session.

Some charities that may offer counselling include:

- **Samaritans** – call **116 123** to discuss any troubles at any time day or night.
- **Cruse Bereavement Care** – call **0808 808 1677**, available Mon – Sun.
- **Rape Crisis England & Wales** – call **0808 802 9999** for anyone aged 16+ who has experienced any form of sexual abuse or assault.
- **Relate** – visit www.relate.org.uk to find your local contact Centre.
- **Victim Support** – for anyone who has been a victim or witnessed a crime call the 24/7 support line on **0808 1689 111**.

Counselling can be sought via the Uffculme Academy Trust's Wellbeing Service and delivered by Amanda Woodward, Director of Wellbeing. Amanda has over 25 years experience of wellbeing delivery and is a trained in counselling and cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), with her approachable and positive presence, this immediate service on site is invaluable.

How do I book a counselling session with the UAT Wellbeing Service?

Simply use the following wellbeing booking link to book your appointment, please make a note that you are seeking a counselling session.

Please remember, all sessions are completely confidential and can take place either on a face-to-face basis on school site, at a mutual meeting point or via Zoom.

<http://www.uffculmetrust.org/wellbeing>



AMANDA WOODWARD





www.uffculmetrust.org