



Nottingham Free School Newsletter

March 2016

From the Head of School

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

Despite being slightly shorter, this term has been a busy one with the assessment week in January, theatre trips to see books brought to life on the stage and the start of our inter-house competitions.

Our students continue to follow the school motto, 'Work Hard, Be Kind' in so many ways and it is such a pleasure to be able to reflect on the many achievements and successes in each term. Year 8 have been fully involved in making decisions about their GCSE option choices for next year and shown great maturity in doing so. Year 7 have just finished some swimming lessons at two local leisure centres, both of which commended all students for their positive attitude and polite manners.

Our student council have been very active in organising charity events for Sport Relief and contributing to some big decisions in school. After a number of students raised the question, tutor reps having been gathering ideas for the school kitchen about possible drinks and snacks to be served at break time. Having fed the results back to the executive council, a very productive meeting was held with the student executive council and Mrs Pratt our cook. Watch this space for more details!

On the subject of school food, the catering staff have produced a new menu for after Easter. Again, many dishes have been requested by students in response to our school food survey.

A recent presentation to students on the new extra-curricular choices highlighted how many exciting opportunities our students have to take part in very different and varied activities which help to develop wider skills. These can often have longer term benefits too as shown by many of our students who were involved in the Girl Power programme last year. They were successful in their interviews to become peer ambassadors for female students in school. They were congratulated on their confidence and the ability to communicate all of the skills they have learnt from the programme.

This term we sadly say goodbye to two staff: Mr Towle who was the pavilion groundsman for 26 years and Miss Ayers, our music teacher. We thank them for all of their hard work and wish them the very best for the future.

I wish you all a happy and relaxing Easter break and thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Mrs J Brown

Attendance and holiday dates

Please note that our last day of this term is Thursday 24th March and we return on **Monday 11th April**. Please remember to check the term dates on the school website to ensure family holidays are not booked during term time as fines are likely to be issued.

School Road markings

There are still a number of parents who are using the area in front of school with yellow road markings as a drop off zone. This is not allowed at the start or end of school. We have had a number of complaints about this from other road users and it compromises the safety of our students. The police have been passed the registration numbers of cars parking dangerously by other road users and they will attend the school site at various times to monitor the situation. You may need to park a little further away from school in order to use the road safely, please plan this in to your journey time.

Year 7 Residential

On the 9th - 11th of March we took 57 year 7 pupils to Walesby scout camp to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities including: climbing, a cave maze (finding their way around a cave in the dark), crate stacking, an assault course, zip line and archery. Unfortunately due to bad weather the lake activities were cancelled this year but we rearranged the activities so pupils enjoyed other team building activities including: orienteering, low ropes, leap of faith and a wobble pole.

A highlight of the trip was the disco on the second night with the staff enjoying the dance floor just as much as the students!

As always, residential trips are a great way for the pupils to forge new friendships and their behaviour was commented on by the staff at the centre as being exceptional. I am looking forward to taking the next cohort of year 7's next year.

Mrs Douglas

Extra – curricular

It's been another exciting term for extra-curricular. In sports we have continued with our football training. The boys have been working on skills and tactics and the girls have just finished their last term with the Notts County coaches. We have also been practising our table tennis skills and we have continued to work closely with the Robin Hood Gymnastics Club. Capoeira and Yoga have been a success and the students have been working hard on their complex moves and positions!

In our more creative clubs, drama have continued to work on their performance skills and LAMDA are in the midst of preparation for their exam in July. Creative writing have been working on all different types of writing styles and produced their own "zine" called "megazine". Please see the amazing extracts below. Students have also had the chance to design and make some beautiful jewellery and take part in various arts and crafts, including origami. See the item blow for information about what our green fingered students have been planning and growing plants for our school garden. Samba band have been creating some great and very LOUD rhythms and baking has been extremely popular. My favourite week was definitely the flapjacks!

A special mention goes out to our students who have just completed their First Aid certificate from St John Ambulance and the students who have taken part in the lottery funded Brilliant Books whose work will be published in our very own book next term.

Many thanks to all of the teaching staff and outside providers who make our students' experiences here so rich.

Please see the website for details of next terms options.

Mrs Inglis

Gardening Club

This term has seen the launch of gardening club, a team of 20 pupils have successfully grown a variety of plants from seeds including: peas, sweet peas, broad beans, tomatoes and parsley.

We managed to secure a number of trees and shrubs, free of charge, which will be planted outside next half term and at some of our primary feeder schools. NFS also won a bid to take part in a science experiment with seeds that have been to the international space station with Tim Peake. Students from this group will soon be taking part in the national Rocket Science Experiment planting the seeds that have been in space to see if microgravity can affect the growth mechanisms in seeds. I will be looking for volunteers after half term to keep the plants growing and to run this experiment.

Mrs Douglas

Megazine

The following are pieces of writing from 'megazine' created by students in the creative writing group in response to various stimuli.

Nothing to Lose, Nothing to Gain

You stare through a lens
Experiencing the whole journey through a sheet of glass
Can't keep your eyes off the phone
Can't keep the feet off the grass.

Why do we boast about having the biggest building
Or the latest phone?
Why do we worry about the new fashion
When there's an animal on his own?
Nothing to lose and nothing to gain.
Hunt, eat, sleep, always the same.

My sister is a wild cat

Sly, crazy, camouflaged fur to match its forest environment.
Eyes as starry as a galaxy in the vast, beautiful night sky.

Poverty

Poverty. The factor of life we ignore.
Us in our flashy cars speeding past the help centres.
Only caring about all our money and what we can do with it.
Jogging past the slums in our vibrant sports kit,
Brushing the idea of it out of our minds with a single sweep of distraction.
Glaring at the dirty faces, barely noticing the 1p's in the hat by their seat.
Flicking a speck of dust into their only bank.
Thinking that's all they deserve.

Curriculum News

A chat with Tim Peake

7B's PSHE group were lucky enough to have the opportunity to take part in a live link up with the international space station. Students from all over the UK were able to pose questions to Tim such as 'does your heart beat faster in space?' The answer, by the way, is that it actually beats slower!

Hopefully the live link up has inspired some future astronauts from NFS!

Mrs Douglas

Mental Health Awareness

We have had a focus on mental health during tutor time this term with students participating in relaxation and mindfulness exercises. They also have a stress reliever app on their iPads which will be available after Easter.

English

The English Department at Nottingham Free School has been involved in a number of exciting events recently. On March 3rd we celebrated World Book Day. All students received a book token to go and exchange for a book of their choice and there were many competitions and events to enter. Well done to everyone who designed a book token and to all those who had a go at the Big NFS Book Quiz - results to follow after Easter!

We also held our first Curiosity Challenge for this academic year. The question was Where Does Your Reading Take You? We were so impressed with the great entries and amount of creativity that went into them. Well done to the runner up Emma Davies for her rocket cake and to Millie Cunningham Siddall for her incredible symbol of how a book opens doors - look out for the picture on the website!

In addition, both year groups have had a trip to the theatre; year 8 to see Jane Eyre and year 7 to see Gangsta Granny. Both were excellent productions and the students were a brilliant audience.

Miss Britten

House Rewards

Hawksley have won this term's reward and will get an end of term party as a treat. They have also been given a small sum of money to spend on a reward of their choice. The students are currently voting for their preferred options.

Year 7 Parents' Evening

These are on Thursday 14th and Tuesday 19th April. Please make sure that your child has made appointments with their subject teachers.

Key Dates

All dates are available on the calendar on our school website. Please check regularly for updates.

24th March	Last day of the spring term – break up for Easter holidays
11th April	First day back to school. Summer term begins
14th & 19th April	Year 7 parents evening (attend one date only). School ends at 3.30pm for all students on these days.
18th April	Parent Forum
27th April	Year 8 Aspire Careers Workshop visit (held at Harvey Haddon sports stadium)
2nd May	May Bank Holiday – school is closed.
30th May – 3rd June	Half term – school is closed

16th June	Year 7 science and geography field trip
29th June	Provisional sports day
22nd July	Last day of term – break up for the summer holidays
5th September	First day of the new school year for all students



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