



NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL

Nottingham Free School Newsletter **October 2014**

It's with enormous pleasure that I write this school newsletter at the end of our very first half term. I am so proud of all the achievements made by students and staff in the last eight weeks and would like to share some of them with you.

Our students

The most important point to make about our students is what a fantastic start they have made as the very first cohort. It is a delight to get to know them and see them grow and develop even in the short time we have known them. They are making fantastic progress and are always engaged and focused in lessons. As a cohort they approach all aspects of school life with great enthusiasm and a real highlight of the half term was definitely the student council elections. Fourteen students put themselves forward and all have been given a leadership role. Their next big decision is choosing student lockers.

We have now recruited eleven more students which takes us to full capacity at a cohort of 90. Any further enquiries or applications will be placed on a waiting list. This is a real testament to the positive experience that students are having and are obviously spreading the good word about our school. The new students have been made to feel very welcome and have all settled in very quickly.

Our building

Since opening we have made some improvements to the initial space which you may have already heard about. The school kitchen has been fully functional for the last three weeks and the school dinners have been really popular. All of our science lab benches arrived in September and have been well used for a whole variety of experiments. We now have a small library area in one of the classrooms which is stocked with popular fiction.

During half term we will see some further improvements to our current section of the building which includes:

- The installation of air conditioning into three classrooms and the office
- A large sink in the science lab
- A new fire door at the end of the corridor
- A school bell
- The painting of the toilets, music practice room and staff kitchen

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The Courtaulds Building, 290 Haydn Road, Nottingham NG5 1EB
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Head of School: Jenny Brown BSc (Hons) Mathematics, PGCE, N.P.Q.H.
Executive Head Teacher: John Tomasevic B.A. (Hons) Econ, Cert.Ed., M.Ed., N.P.Q.H., N.L.E.



We will also be receiving some extra furniture over the next few weeks including more storage and display boards for classrooms. The contractors for the next phase have been appointed and planning meetings are well underway. The next phase of building work will involve the rest of our space being completely renovated. This is planned to begin in March 2015 and completed in December 2015. Final plans should be available in the next few months and these will be shared with you.

Wider experiences

As you are aware, we have provisionally booked tickets for the pantomime at the Nottingham playhouse for an end of term trip. We would really like the whole school to participate; please get in touch if payment is an issue as we can arrange a suitable payment plan. If you haven't yet returned your reply slip please bring this in after half term.

Mrs Douglas is also planning a residential trip to Walesby in March and further details will follow after half term.

Last week we celebrated Black History month in many different ways; please ask your child about all of the different activities they took part in which had this focus. Our yarn bomb group and many other knitters have contributed to the knitted poppies to commemorate the 100th anniversary of World War One. These will be sold and the profits will go to the Poppy appeal. Have a look on twitter to see how impressive they look.

The charity group raised over £150 for Macmillan Cancer Support by running two very successful coffee mornings. Their organisation and dedication was impressive on both occasions and their next venture is to support the Christmas shoebox appeal.

Mrs Harnan is organising an artistic event in November to support 'The Big Draw' and Armistice day. She will be utilising everybody's origami skills and students will also be able to contribute to a themed sketch book.

Rewards

Information has gone out to parents and carers about the importance of excellent attendance at school. To encourage and reward attendance we have introduced 'Flapjack Fridays' where the tutor group with the highest attendance for the week are rewarded with a flapjack each. This has proved to be a very popular initiative and our catering staff have enjoyed the extra baking!

You may have heard about our school reward system and will be able to see the rewards your child has received on 'Insight'. Positive points are issued to students

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for showing positive attributes towards our school motto; work hard, be kind. Four points issued in a lesson can be exchanged for a plastic disc which are then stacked up in tutor group piles. This has created fierce competition between the tutor groups and we are all waiting with baited breath to see who wins the prize for the first half term!

Our next cohort

We have been very busy this half term showing prospective year 6 students and their families around the building. I'm sure you will remember this time last year and it has been fantastic to be able to have open evenings in our own building! Due to our limited space this year we held two open evening events which quickly became fully booked and so offered a number of tours during the day. We received so much positive feedback and so many people commented on how impressed they were with our students. They displayed such confidence, enthusiasm and good manners at all times and were a huge credit to yourselves and the school.

Communication

Future newsletters will feature news items from staff and students in order to keep you up to date with school news and developments. Please do follow us on Twitter (@nottinghamfree) for regular updates and do check our website which we are in the process of populating and updating.

You should have all received a letter giving you login and password details for our new 'Insight' system. This allows you to see some key details such as the attendance and behaviour of your child and the homework that has been set. Please do get in touch (contact@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk) if you experience any technical problems with using this system or have any other queries.

Our first parents forum was held on Monday 20th October with a focus on homework. The evening was full of excellent discussion between staff and parents leading to a greater mutual understanding. We will be implementing some of the suggested ideas after half term and will let you know about the focus and dates of future parent forum meetings.

Finally may I take this opportunity to thank you all for all of the support that you have given the school to date. It is very much appreciated by us all. I would also like to wish all of our students and their families a very happy and restful half term.

Mrs J Brown
Head of School

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