



A Message From Our Principal

Dear families and friends of OBA

Welcome back to another half term, this time with slightly brighter mornings and longer days.

You have many exciting things to read about in this newsletter, from the success of our annual ski trip to Les Menuires, France – for the first time as a joint trip with Ormiston Chadwick Academy – to student visits to the Whitworth Art Gallery and London's Dance department trip. In addition, there is sporting excellence with our Year 11 netball team, as well as information about further enrichment opportunities and an update on our English specialism.

Last week, Ofsted visited us as part of a project focusing on the great work we do, especially with those disadvantaged students who receive the Pupil Premium. We were selected for this project because our outcomes for disadvantaged students are so outstanding and significantly surpass the outcomes of other disadvantaged students across the country.

Two inspectors joined us for a day to speak to staff and students about the strategies and impact of our Pupil Premium spending. The visit was a huge success and they were finding it difficult to focus on just two areas of good practice as they had seen so many. Eventually they did narrow their focus to Transition, Curriculum and our Philosophy 4 Children programme. Ofsted will write a case study report that is to be used by other schools nationally so that they can adopt some of our methods to achieve success with their disadvantaged students.

I am once again extremely proud of the whole OBA team.

Best wishes.

Mr. M Wyss - Academy Principal

VI Form Pupils 'Move It' at Dance Convention

On 13th and 14th February Year 12 and 13 dancers travelled to London with Miss Roper and Miss Johnson to participate in the 'Move It' dance convention - the biggest dance convention in the UK. This consisted of pupils participating in dance classes with renowned colleges, universities and famous choreographers and dancer performers including winners and finalists from 'Britain's Got Talent' and 'Got to Dance' - including 'Momento', 'Duplic8' and 'Addict Initiative'.

Pupils also explored the array of stalls selling dance wear and possible college and university stands which they might attend in further education. On the main stage were performances from all different styles of dance, from students through to professionals - all professional and stunning in their own rights!

Students were also fortunate to attend Cambridge Theatre in the West End London to see Roald Dahl's inspiring 'Matilda' which was incredibly funny, with a stunning set and child performers! All students and teachers returned from a successful trip with aching muscles but had a fantastic experience!



Pupils Hit The Slopes For An Amazing Week Of Skiing

On Friday 7th February 18 Pupils from OBA and 22 pupils from our sister school OCA set out on the Academy annual ski trip to Les Menuires in the French Alps. The group flew from Manchester to Geneva with Mr Fenner, Miss Walsh, Mr Bird and Mr Rigby, they then travelled by coach to their resort.



Skiing instruction began on Sunday morning with the pupils being split into groups based on their abilities. Our instructors; Hugo, Andy, Sophie and Fabrice were fantastic and really made the pupils feel supported with their fantastic instructions. The group were very lucky to spend the week skiing in absolutely perfect conditions; blue skies and warm sun every day. We were told we had picked the best week of the year to spend there!

Our hotel, the Hotel Piolet was fantastic, home cooked meals were provided every day and even the fussiest eaters managed to find something they liked. Pupils' evenings were spent joining in lots of après ski activities; from the very silly team games of the tough-mudder night, to swimming and multi-sports, a disco with 4 other school groups and bum-boarding on our final night.

By the end of the week each and every pupil had progressed into a more confident skier and this was marked by an awards ceremony with our instructors where everyone received a certificate and a medal.

Every member of the group returned home after having a fantastic time and showing exemplary behaviour. Mr Fenner, trip leader said: "Once again the ski trip was a huge success. It was amazing to see pupils being taken so far out of their comfort zones but really pushing themselves to do well. All of the staff and pupils had an incredible experience and everyone returned home exhausted yet very happy. Well done to everyone involved."

Next year's trip is already being planned and letters with more information will be available soon.



Year 11 Girls Triumphant In Halton School's Netball Tournament

OBA Year 11 Netball squad secured victory for the second year running in the Halton schools Netball Tournament to end a fantastic season whereby they are also awaiting the Netball league results were there is a great possibility of the squad doing 'the double'.

Miss Fleetwood spoke of the team; 'the girls have been together since year 7, they have shown incredible dedication through every aspect of their school sporting life and have grown from strength to strength. I am immensely proud of all their achievements and I hope to see the girls continue their performance in a sixth form squad. It is their sheer drive, fantastic teamwork and moral which has gained them their success. Congratulations'.

Leah Bentley year 11 captain congratulated all the girls on their success and spoke of how proud she was to captain the team throughout this academic year.

Congratulations girls and good luck in your pursuit of winning league title!



Art Department Create New Links With Regional Artists In Visit To Whitworth Gallery

On Valentine's Day Mr Reid, along with some Year 10 pupils was invited to a very special event held at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester. The event was a sold out talk by artist Cornelia Parker, who is best known for her working the field of sculpture and installations.

On the day the pupils were able to meet the artist and hear her talk about the processes and ideas that she uses to develop her art and the collaborations between Art and Science in helping her produce these amazing works.

Mr Reid said of the day "It was an amazing experience for both myself and the pupils. It was fascinating to hear about the inspirations for such amazing pieces of artwork. The queues to the Whitworth were massive and we were able to jump these queues, which made us feel like tiny rock stars. "

Ms Parker has also kindly offered to lend her name to our art department, when the big refit happens. Hailing from Cheshire herself, she is now an honorary professor at Manchester University for the next three years and we hope to build from this initial event to help highlight the important work Art holds not only in the hearts of the people, but in the community it speaks for.



English Specialism Update: Promoting Reading and Writing Through Academy Projects And Events

The English team have been working hard at promoting reading and writing both within the subject and across the school. For example, Mrs Johnson has taken on responsibility of organising special events in the Academy in order to promote the specialism and reading. Last term National Poetry Day was celebrated by staff reading their favourite poems to students, a writing competition was launched and a committee of pupil "Reading Ambassadors" was founded to help promote reading and organise events for their peers. Staff have also been encouraged to put various reading-themed posters on their doors.

This term, Mrs Johnson has organised special events for World Book Day which include: staff dressing up as characters from books and contributing £1 to Book Aid; the Learning Street decorated as reading wonderland; Primary pupils coming in to be read to by our Year 7 and 8s; a "Book Club" Coffee Morning held in the Café for parents to come in and talk about their favourite books, eat cake and drink tea (proceeds to Book Aid); a Mad Hatter's Tea Party rewarding students who have tried hard in English; the world renowned author, Melvyn Burgess working with classes; all staff teaching one lesson inspired by a favourite book and a "Lads and Dads Bookfest" on Saturday 7th March encouraging boys' reading. Assemblies will also be held during the week promoting reading and World Book Day and 6th formers will buddy up with some of our weakest readers in Year 7 and 8 to do some paired reading and talk about books.

Mr Traves, the librarian, together with Mr Pack and Mr Rushton have set up a Creative Writing enrichment to be held every week and will also run a special Creative Writing workshop on World Book Day for Gifted and Talented pupils. Their intention is to produce a book of creative writing pieces from the day which is to be published online.

Mrs Richards organised a 6th form Creative Writing Workshop English trip to Ty Newydd in Wales which was led by two published authors: Jim Friel and Rachel Trezise. Mrs Richards is going to be producing a booklet containing the creative pieces written by the students to be published and kept in the school library. Mrs Johnson and Mrs Richards also organised a 6th form English Literature trip to Wordsworth's home, Dove Cottage, in the Lake District to support the students with their A Level studies.

Finally, other English staff who have been raising the profile of reading this term include Miss Styles who has created new Accelerated Reader booklets and a reward system to track and motivate pupils' with their independent reading and Jeanne Walker has used various innovative strategies with our Core Skills cohorts with fantastic results.

A Blooming Great Enrichment In Time For Mother's Day

A fantastic, new enrichment opportunity is available for any pupils wanting to give something special to their Mum, Grandma or carer this Mother's Day.

In association with local business 'Anita's Blossoming Flowers and Gifts' students are being offered the opportunity to try their hand at floristry. On Wednesday 11th March from 5.30pm-7.30pm pupils are invited to come along to meet Anita Moorfield to learn about the beautiful craft of flower arranging and create something truly special and unique to give as a gift, just in time for Mother's day on the 15th March. The enrichment is free of charge and all pupils who attend will be able to take home anything that they create. Places are limited so please see Miss Holmes for more information or to sign up.

