



Mark Rutherford School

The Rutherford Review

Headlines

I hope you enjoy reading our autumn term newsletter which provides just a flavour of the hard work and achievements of our students and staff since we returned in September. The last sixteen weeks or so have gone by so quickly and there is much to celebrate from inside and outside of the classroom.

Following our Ofsted inspection in the summer term we made a number of strategic changes to include a new behaviour for learning policy underpinned by our new core values of Motivated, Respectful and Successful (the acronym of MRS and a direct link to our school's initials). The focus this term has been on being respectful and we have definitely seen some improvements in this area. We have had a big focus on students being awarded praise points for being respectful and this culminated in a prize draw in each year group rewards assembly's based on the number of cards they have been issued by teachers who have seen students demonstrate this value. In addition, our rewards trips have seen students going bowling and ice skating. It is important we recognise students' successes to embed the high expectations we have. The spring term will have a focus on being motivated; information will be shared with students when they return from their well-earned Christmas break.

Teachers have been focusing on improving their practice in the classroom. 'Do Now Activities' are well embedded into our practise to support students retrieving information linked to their prior learning and we have a clear whole school focus on 'the inclusive classroom'. There has been some staff training on 'teaching to the top' and 'cold calling'; both of which are underpinned by evidence as having an impact on students' academic progress and engagement in their learning. The quality of education our students receive is at the heart of what we do and is evident in our vision statement of 'every child is unique'. This will continue to be embedded in the spring term when we focus on being motivated; we will be looking to see this demonstrated in lessons and beyond.

Just from reading this term's newsletter you will see that the personal development of our students continues to be a strength of the school both in the classroom and via the extra-curricular activities and opportunities on offer. In Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) lessons, delivered in tutor time, students have focused on the same topic around how they treat each other to ensure consistency, and making a direct link to being respectful. There have been a wide range of opportunities for our students across a number of subject areas. The school show of The Addams Family was very popular and a sell-out. Yet again we have received rave reviews from NODA which is testament to the commitment from the Performing Arts team. The standard was equal to that of a professional performance and when watching myself on the Friday night I was incredibly proud of the hard work students and staff had put into the shows.

I continue to be very proud to be the Headteacher of our amazing school. The staff work hard every day to demonstrate our core values and the students are a pleasure to work with and support. The autumn term has passed in a flash and therefore I close by wishing you all a lovely festive holiday and a Happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming students back to school on Thursday 4th January 2024.

Mrs K Foster, Headteacher

Bedford River Project

Fifty Year 8 students have been involved with the Bedford River Project, a multi-disciplinary arts project, collaborating with diverse communities in Bedford to celebrate the river Great Ouse. This multi-disciplinary arts project has enabled students to collaborate with artists and produce work that champions our natural heritage and conservation. The work produced will be exhibited with other schools and possibly nominated for prizes. See this weblink for more details: www.bedfordriverproject.com

This project has been devised and created by Anthea Barclay, a poet, educator and creative producer based in Bedford. She and Anne-Marie Abbate, a visual artist who has visited our school on a number of occasions, has delivered a number of workshops in which students' developed ideas and starting points for some poetry and visual art.

The students have engaged really well and have thrown themselves into the project, many returning after school to continue with their mixed media sculptures. We look forward to the exhibition in February 2024.

Ms Saunders



Meet the new Sixth Form STEM scholars!

Every year Mark Rutherford Sixth Form students have the opportunity to join our STEM scholars programme. Now in its ninth year, our new team of STEM scholars are continuing the traditions by running the highly successful Years 7 and 8 Smarties Club and are busy planning a Christmas special! The scholars meet weekly to research and plan activities, liaising with STEM staff to ensure the younger years have a fun-filled afternoon of experiments and activities. As a reward, our Scholars have the opportunity to participate in a highly prestigious Young Leaders Award run by Villiers Park Educational Trust.

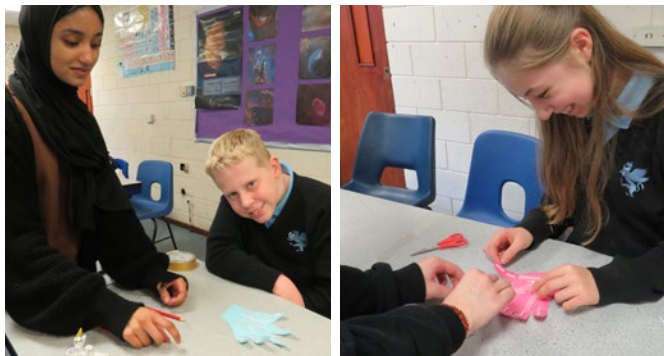
This year's scholars are taking a different approach to the programme and have split into two groups to deliver the activities in rotation. Vincenzo, Marcella, Inara and Amber took on the first week of activities and will also be delivering the Smarties Club Christmas Special on Wednesday 13th December. Maryam, Nuha, Suraya and Sara will also be running the weekly club but will be delivering our popular Primary STEM day during British Science week in March 2024. Local primary schools are already signing up for this highly anticipated event!

Mrs Baytar

Smarties Club

Smarties Club runs every Wednesday after school from 3-4pm in which younger years students get opportunities to experience fun activities across the STEM subjects, Science, ICT, DT and Maths. So far students have had the chance to build a tower of marshmallows and a robotic hand! Lots more exciting activities are planned and younger years will get the opportunity to enter for a bronze STEM CREST award.

Mrs Baytar



Art Alumni Exhibition

The Art Department is thrilled to announce the very first Art Alumni Exhibition on Friday 15th December took place between 5 and 7pm in the Garner Lecture Theatre Foyer.

This event was first conceived to celebrate Mark Rutherford's Alumni and we had a wonderful response from previous students. Many have gone into the art industries as varied as lighting designer, tattoo artist to stationery and jewellery designers. Please do join us to celebrate the wealth of talent of Mark Rutherford School students.

Ms Saunders



Young Drummer of the Year Competition

James this year entered the UK wide Young Drummer of the Year competition, which is open to all UK drummers from age 16 and under. There were hundreds of entries from very talented drummers, and James was initially shortlisted in the list of the top 40 entrants.

I am delighted to say the James has made it to the top 10, and incredible achievement, and will compete in the Finals in February.

Mr Phelps

Year 7 Cooking Club

The club was launched in October in order to teach skills and techniques that can sustain and encourage our students to maintain a healthy balanced diet.

Students have made a range of dishes and produced quality outcomes.

Mrs Mpofu



Drama: Trip to Life of Pi

Students in Year 11 studying Drama visited Milton Keynes Theatre at the start of term to see Life of Pi, the story of a man cast adrift at sea with a tiger! Showcasing a variety of drama techniques including some incredible puppetry, the students will have plenty of things to write about in their upcoming exams. It also provided the students with lots of ideas and inspiration for their own pieces and continuing to expose our students to live theatre and storytelling.

Mr Doughty



Visit to Tate Modern

This month the A Level Art and Photography students had a trip to Tate Modern. Years 12 and 13 thoroughly enjoyed the experience, getting so close to many famous and well-known pieces of art and discovering new ideas and concepts that challenged them.

The Art Department believe that seeing art in context is vital and essential for our young artists to develop their practice. This annual trip is enriching and rewarding in so many ways and we urge all to visit museums and galleries.

Ms Saunders



Poetry Based Workshop

This term we welcomed Anthea Barclay back to Mark Rutherford School to work with our current Year 11 students. Anthea is a local performance poet with a wealth of experience and we were incredibly fortunate to be able to invite her to engage with our students. She performed some of her own poetry through a Black History themed extended assembly before working with three smaller student groupings on the themes of mental health, wellbeing and one of our school values of resilience. Anthea is back this half term to work with our Year 8 cohort on the Bedford River Project and will be back again soon for some more exciting poetry-based workshops. Watch this space!

Mr Johnson



Work Shadowing Experience - 18th and 19th January 2024

Year 10s are having the chance to go out on two day work shadowing in January. This is to build on their experience of finding out about businesses and jobs, and to give students the opportunity to go out to their parents/carers or a family friends work if they didn't have a chance when they were in Year 8.

The forms are all on line and have been sent out. The deadline for completing the forms is Friday 5th January 2024.

If you have any questions about this Work Shadowing Experience, please contact me as the schools Careers Lead.

Mrs Unwin



Computer Science News Article

This is going to be an exciting year for Computer Science students from Years 7 to 13. A trip to Bedford University to attend the Powering Transformation event is planned in the spring term for Year 7. This is an insight into higher education and the world of work, which involves taking part in a problem-solving challenge which focuses on solving social and environmental issues using technology. We have attended this event in previous years and student have always found the day informative and fun. The day is fully facilitated by a Talent Foundry facilitator, and students have the chance to engage with Dell mentors and university student ambassadors who support the workshop. Students can also ask questions about higher education and the tech sector, whilst developing their core transferable skills and raising their aspirations.

Mr Mataire

Coding Clubs

This year we have many students from Years 7 to 10 taking up the Coding Club as an extra-curriculum activity. There is a wide variety of activities in both the Junior Coding Club (Years 7 to 8) and the Senior Coding Club (Years 9 and 10). The primary focus of both clubs is to find and foster the students who are driven to teaching themselves how to code and how to program the world around them. Activities in these clubs include developing Python programming coding skills and basic problem-solving. This also includes writing code to interface Raspberry Pies with different devices such as burglar alarms. The club members usually participate in the Cyber Challenge annually held at Cranfield University in the summer term. The competition is a positive way to fulfil STEM benchmarks like linking curriculum learning to careers.

Mr Mataire

Wakeboarding Success

Kieran won Nationals last year in the Under 14 boys' category making him ranked number one in the UK; as a result he was invited to join the Team GB wakeboarding team. Over the summer, Kieran travelled to Denmark with Team GB (along with older brother Callum) to compete in the European Championships. Kieran went straight through to the quarter-finals with the highest points and finishing first in his heat against French, German and Italian competitors. He won in his quarterfinal and went into the semi-final, but missed out on the final by a few points. He was awarded a silver medal for highest point score. Team GB came second in the overall competition!

As a result of his success, Kieran was selected by Team GB to compete in the World Championships in October, which took place in Bangkok.

Max unfortunately missed out on the European Championships after an injury, but he has been asked to compete in the World Championships in October!

Mr Taylor

AI Webinars for the Sixth Form students

Artificial Intelligence is the ability of a machine to display human-like capabilities such as reasoning, learning, planning and creativity. AI is bound to change our daily lives in many ways. One of the ways is how students learn various subjects. AI enables technical systems to perceive their environment, deal with what they perceive, solve problems and act to achieve a specific goal. AI systems are capable of adapting their behaviour to a certain degree by analysing the effects of previous actions and working autonomously. Future applications are expected to bring about enormous changes, but AI is already present in our everyday lives.

The computer receives data - already prepared or gathered through its own sensors such as a camera - processes it and responds. This year we have planned a number of webinars for our A Level Computer Science students.

Mr Mataire

Autumn Showcase - 13th November

Monday 13th saw a number of students from all year groups (and staff!) performing in our termly showcase. These smaller, less formal concerts take place once a term and are an opportunity for students to show off their talents in Music, Dance and Drama. Once again it was great to see a great range of performances, including a number of soloists, duets and bands. The showcase also saw our String Group and Brass Group give their first performances of the year. Congratulations to all students and staff involved in the event.

Mr Phelps

Sixth Form News

This term we have had a variety of visitors to talk to Year 12 in our timetabled Speaker Session. These have included our ex-student Dr Peter Clough who spoke about his journey into academia and now commercial research. He is best known locally for his work looking into hydrogen at Cranfield University. Another ex-student Cairenn Brown spoke about her transition to university whilst Steph Strange of UoB spoke about the benefits of higher education. She has also provided drop-in sessions for Year 13 students to discuss their personal statements.

There are various activities being delivered to support our students. The Safe Space Project led by the Recovery College has restarted. This provides an opportunity for students to discuss sensitive issues to assist their mental health. Elevate Education has delivered a series of workshops about study skills, acing examinations, organisation as well as time management. Business Studies students had a session from Sam Greenfield of Champion Training about negotiation skills. Next half term we will be offering examination anxiety workshops.

Ready2Lead

Our latest Ready2Lead team has shown exemplary commitment. Alice describes their project. *"We are 'Bettering Bedford' - a local project run by Year 12 students at Mark Rutherford Sixth Form. Our aim is to ensure that young people around Bedfordshire have equal opportunity to be who they want to be and to make the most of their lives. By working hand-in-hand with local organisations in and around the community, we are fundraising to provide boxes of resources and gifts for children who may not have access to such, examples including gloves, socks and education books, to keep them warm and satisfied during the holiday season, since not everybody has the luxury to afford or receive gifts at this time. This is only the start of our project, and we hope to expand to ensure that Bedfordshire is a kinder, safer and more inclusive environment for everyone."*

Mr Nicholls



Year 10 and Year 11 Wadham Project

Mark Rutherford School is a hub school leading on the Wadham Project for North Bedford. A group of Year 10 students have just begun the project.

"During the Wadham project, I have been introduced to a range of courses on offer to students at university, such as genetics, law, psychology, history of art and more. Not only has this improved my understanding of what's available during higher education, but it's also developed my communication, teamwork, and organisational skills due to the tasks given. Overall, I believe that the Wadham project is an extremely beneficial experience and would recommend it to any student considering attending higher education in the future."

Aiva



New Group Reading Tests (NGRTs)

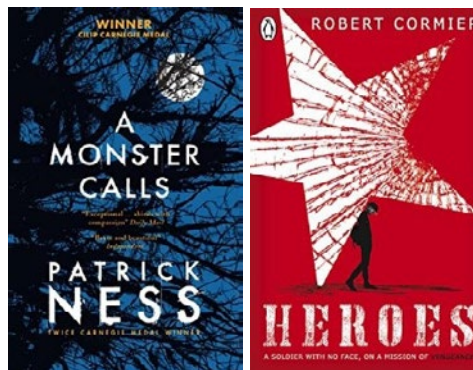
All students in Key Stage 3 have taken their NGRTs this term. Mark Rutherford School's new approach to literacy now involves testing students in Years 7, 8 and 9 termly. This provides us with reading ages which will enable us to track all students, ensuring that they're making progress as the academic year develops and meeting age related expectations.

Mr Johnson

Tutor Time Reading Programme

In September we launched our reading programme for Key Stages 3 and 4. All tutor groups were given a text and once week students are read to by their Tutor. This is to allow all students the chance to engage with reading outside of a subject area and to read for pleasure. With the end of term approaching, tutors will be preparing to swap their books with another tutor group within the same year and will be able to discuss what they've previously read with their peers.

Mr Johnson



Spring 2024 Term Key Dates

Wednesday 3rd January	Staff Training Day
Thursday 4th January	Term Begins
Thursday 11th January	Year 10 Supporting Success Evening
Thursday 1st February	Year 9 Subject Evening
19th - 23rd February	Half Term
Thursday 15th February	Year 13 Subject Evening
Thursday 21st March	Year 8 Subject Evening
Thursday 28th March	Term Ends