



Newsletter

Summer I | May 2021

A Short Note

The end of the summer term rises over the horizon. We have planned music performances, showcases, parents' evening, Relationships and Sex Education parents' forum, a 'movement day', and parents' evening, amongst other smaller events.

This half term, we have seen a new outdoor stage built for Eurythmy, a Japanese garden begin its life at Tintagel, chicken coops arrive for the future brood, dye plants spring from the raised beds, a boar travel to another farm to father piglets, countless trees planted at Eyam – all directly augmenting the student experience.

It's been an exciting year, full of change and ups and downs – we are seeing the students thrive and excel as the year draws on. A big 'good luck' to all of our GCSE candidates and leavers, this year, as they prepare for the next phase of their educational journey. One more year, very nearly drawing to a close...



Dates for the diary

Tuesday 8th of June First day of Summer II half term

Wednesday 9th of June: Relationships and Sex Education Parents' Forums (10:30am and 6:00pm)

Tuesday 15th of June: Brantwood 'Movement Day'

Friday 25th of June: Vocal Performance for Students

Friday 2nd of July: School Concert / Showcase

Monday July 19th - 20th: End of Year Celebration

Wednesday 21st of July: Last Day of School

Class teachers will be communicating shortly about times/dates for parents' evening, If you've not already responded, please do.

From Eric's office:

Coffee Morning, April/May 2021

Thank you to those who attended it for the coffee mornings. Just in case you wished to take part but couldn't, I am planning more of these in the months to come.

Just to bring you up to date...

Since November 2020:

- Refurbished, painted and carpeted much of the main site
- Appointed new class and craft teachers (land, green woodwork, blacksmithing)
- New chicken coops (chickens will arrive when we can secure the coops fully from foxes)
- Brought the area at the back of the Merlin back to life, including the green woodwork shelter and a new staged area for drama and Eurythmy
- Completed the transition to a thematic curriculum for all class groups
- Assessments and interviews are more solidly based on the craft and outdoor curriculum
- Developed OCNs, qualifications that accredit areas of our curriculum, including animal husbandry, blacksmithing, and many others. These go to level 2 (old GCSE A – C grade) and start at Entry Level 3 (pre-GCSE).
- Moved to 60% craft and outdoor curriculum for the majority of the students

Since the start of the pandemic:

- We accommodated 28 students most days throughout the first lockdown
- Provided supermarket vouchers to those qualifying for and requesting them
- Our curriculum was entirely craft and outdoor based
- The student numbers grew from 38 to 51
- And after the September 2020 closure, we've remained entirely open to all students
- Ensured lateral flow testing since January 2021
- Training (including that for PDA), has resumed fully for all staff

During the coffee mornings, the following requests were raised:

- Student reports of progress in OCNs to parents/carers
- A straightforward account of the 'Steps Assessment' AND progress toward these sent to parents/carers
- An account of reading for individual students and information about the schemes sent to parents/carers
- The One Page Profile sent to parents
- Better communication between new class teachers and families, including assurances that the teacher is entirely familiar with the background of the students
- A 'who is who' for staff at the school made available

Parents' Evenings, scheduled for this term, will allow for teachers and families to discuss student progress – OCNs (that's Open College Network qualifications), 'Steps Assessment' progress and the other five measures through which we view progress will be discussed.

Rae, Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning will share information regarding our Reading Curriculum with all families – we'll have a focus on reading in the September term.

Please do speak with teachers directly about One Page Profiles – teachers can share these and you can recommend changes to be made. This can also feature at Parents' Evening should you wish.

I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Hello and Goodbye

As we continue to develop our staff team, and as others move on to new careers, we would like to say 'goodbye' and 'thank you' to those who are moving on, and welcome those who join us with open arms.

Thank you to Neal Kirk, who has been working with us to support teaching on a temporary basis. Neal, for all of your work with the students, and with the administration of the school, we're very grateful and you will be missed. Thank you to Kath Bailey, our residential support worker. Kath, your efforts and warmth with our students will be missed in your absence. With wish you both the best in the future. To our two colleagues embarking on maternity leave, Pippa (SaLT) and Amy (TA) – good luck.

A warm welcome to:

Sophie Lillyman, SaLT covering Maternity Leave

Jeanette Cope, who will join us in the near future as HEaRT/Training Coordinator for Brantwood

Jane Ulyiot, Class Teacher on a temporary contract

We are currently in the process of hiring a Student Engagement Manager, so that Digby Brown can move into his new role as Assistant Head (Behaviour Support and DSL). We also seek a Deputy Head, a Maths Subject Specialist Teacher, an Occupational Therapist (with Sensory Integration) and have interviews this and next week for a permanent member of the teaching staff.

This can be a challenging time of the year to seek competitive candidates within education. In the interests of securing the best possible person for each of these jobs, we continue to be discerning and hold unwavering high standards for our staff. This may mean the process takes a little longer. We will continue to communicate with you about our colleagues and hiring process promptly, as changes are confirmed.

Warm regards,

All the staff at Brantwood Specialist School