

Parents' Post

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Autumn 1 2021

Thoughts from the Principal's Office

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you at the end of a very busy and successful half term. I would like to start by thanking all of the parents, students and colleagues for being so welcoming and helping me to settle in. I have thoroughly enjoyed my first seven weeks at the Academy; I believe I have learnt much about the staff, students and the local community and I am eager to develop my understanding more next half term.



Before Covid 'The Post' was a half termly publication to celebrate with families the work that has been taking place at the Academy. During the pandemic so much of the extracurricular activities had to stop and parent communication became weekly Covid response updates that meant this publication became redundant. It is a great pleasure to be able to reintroduce it, now that extra curricular and enrichment activities are returning to the curriculum. Hopefully throughout the year we will see this publication grow in size as we are able to increase our enrichment offer further.

Braunton Learning Cooperative Trust

As you will be aware the Cooperative Learning Trust was set up in 2019 between the five feeder primary schools: Caen, Southmead, Kingsacre, Georgeham and Marwood. Due to the pandemic much of the collaborative work so far has been focused on Headteachers working together to support each other with the impact of Covid. However, this half term I had the pleasure of a day's strategic planning with the Headteachers of the other five schools where we began the process of developing greater links and sharing good practice more widely across the Trust.

The initial focus will be on supporting Additional Learning Needs with our SENDCOs regularly meeting to look at ways that we can work together to support students across both primary and secondary phases. The second agreed focus has been sharing good practice in curriculum areas with subject leads from all the schools' meetings next half term to share our curriculum plans. Later in the year members of the senior team at the Academy will be working with the primary schools to review and further develop our transition processes to support students when they move to secondary education. This is a very exciting development and one that will enhance our transition and teaching practice in Key Stage 3. I will continue to update you on the progress of the Trust throughout the year.

Mrs F Bowler, Principal



Year 7 Bonding Experience

Year 6 Open Evening

Braunton Academy opened its doors to the Year 6 students from our feeder primary schools in September.

Around 150 students were treated to an evening of fun and excitement as department staff showcased the best they had to offer, while the students earned stickers for each one they visited. Our Head Boy Jay Tittle and Head Girl Lucy Hillier gave encouraging speeches to the visitors and students.

We were thrilled to welcome so many to our Academy and say a big "thank you" to all who attended.



STAFF LEAVERS

Mr Fry

Mr Fry joined Braunton Academy in 2014 initially as a Forces' Student Coordinator and Mentor. He came into this role with a wealth of experience having served in the Armed Forces and the Police. and his unique skill set was quickly recognised and he moved into managing The Skills Centre facility within the Academy. Mr Fry's calming influence and persistence has supported many students. Most recently he co-ordinated the Lateral Flow testing unit with military precision, enabling both staff and students to get back into the school environment as seamlessly as possible after lockdown. Mr Fry will be greatly missed by all those staff and students who have had the pleasure of working with him and we wish him the best of luck with his new venture.

Mrs Frayne

One of our three Student Support Mentors, Mrs Frayne will be leaving us temporarily to go on maternity leave. Mrs Frayne has worked with a number of students who need extra support to enable them to achieve to their fullest potential, and goes above and beyond for them on a daily basis. Many would struggle more without her genuine care and guidance.

It is now the turn of your baby to be the full focus of your attention, and we wish you all the very best with it all, and look forward to welcoming you back next year! You will be missed by students and staff alike.

Mrs Popple

Mrs Popple joined Braunton Academy almost 20 years ago, initially as a Teaching Assistant, before moving on within the Academy to become a Cover Supervisor and, later, a Tutor.

In addition to these roles, Mrs Popple also was the VOLE (Vocational Outdoor Learning Environment) co-ordinator which gave her the responsibility for Outdoor Learning. Due to the diversity of these roles, Mrs Popple has worked with students across the whole of the Academy and she will be greatly missed by students and staff alike.

We wish Mrs Popple all the very best with her new role which will allow her to indulge more fully her creative nature.

Numeracy Tips for Parents and Students

Top Tips

1. Don't say things like "I can't do maths" or "I hated maths at school"... your child might start to think like that themselves...



2. Praise effort – this shows that by working hard they can always improve.

3. Talk about numbers in sport. How many points does your team need to avoid relegation? How many goals/tries/conversions/points/runs has your team scored this season?

4. Cooking. Measure ingredients and set the timer together. Talk about fractions in cooking, for example ask them how many quarter cups make a cup.

5. Work out offers in supermarkets together. Ask them to work out which are the best deals.

Time for Tea!

Year 9 students worked with air drying clay to produce these stunning cakes. Once dried the students painted them with realistic icing colours. The students did a fantastic job finishing these considering the disruption that Covid caused during their time making them. They should all be very proud of what they have produced, they look good enough to eat!



Rotary Young People's Non-Face-to-Face Competitions 2021-2022

As well as 'Youth Speaks', the Rotary are running a range of competitions for young people. If you are interested in entering any of the following, please email Mrs Young (dyoung@braunton.academy) for more information.

- Young Artist
- Young Environmentalist
- Young Writer
- Young Film Maker
- Young Photographer



Spoken Language Endorsement and 'Youth Speaks'

In the first couple of weeks of the Autumn term, Year 10 students worked on and then presented to their English class, a spoken language endorsement on a controversial issue of their choice. These topics were wide ranging and included: drugs in sport; social media and its effects on body image; euthanasia; animal testing and climate change. The students were assessed for the content of their speeches, how they engaged their audience and how well they answered a question. Each student then received a pass, merit or distinction grade. The presentations were engaging, maturely delivered, sophisticated in their level of detail and highly convincing. Year 10s should be proud of their achievements!

In order not to put this great talent to waste, the Rotary 'Youth Speaks' programme will be reinstated at Braunton Academy after a year's absence, but will not run as a face-to-face competition. Top performing students have been encouraged to collaborate to create a senior team of three for a Debate presentation. The Debate presentation includes a chair person to introduce the topic of debate, followed by the first speaker speaking in favour of the topic, the second speaker speaking against the topic and finally, the chair person summarising the presentations. Each team will then go head-to-head against each other in a Braunton Academy face-to-face competition in order to choose the best team that will be videoed for the 'Youth Speaks' senior competition. Teams are being created this week and we will keep you updated on their progress.

GCSE Music Students on Tour

With so many school musical opportunities lost to the pandemic, Braunton Academy Music Dept has been on a mission to re-invigorate music in the community.

Mr Street and the Year 10 and Year 11 GCSE Music students understand the importance of being inspired and starting to learn an instrument at a young age. Therefore, on Friday 8th October they visited Southmead Primary School to put on a concert to all year groups. During the concert, primary students had the chance to hear different types of instruments and ask questions about starting lessons. Our students also had a fantastic time playing together once again and sharing their passion for the subject.

Southmead was the first of many trips, followed by trips to Marwood and Georgeham schools, and Caen School after half term. The Music Department hopes that these types of events will inspire the next generation of Braunton Academy students, while contributing further to a musically rich and diverse school community.

If you have any questions relating to your child starting to learn an instrument (primary or secondary) please contact Mr Street - mstreet@braunton.academy



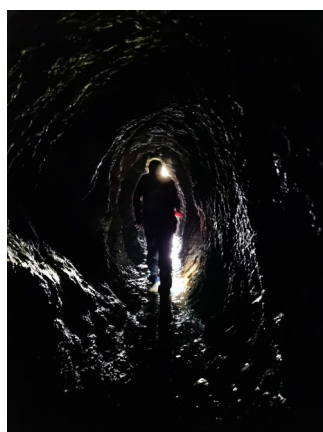
Year 7 Bonding Experience at Pinkery

Pinkery was a huge success for Year 7. Students took part in mountain boarding, fire lighting, shelter building and a low-ropes course during the day, before a walk to see Pinkery Pond and the overflow tunnel.

Each day was full of fun and was a chance for students to interact with their Learning Group and to form friendships within that group.

The Pinkery Cup was awarded based upon a number of factors including teamwork, determination, resilience, communication and general enjoyment. Once all was considered, the cup was awarded to Learning Group I.

Mr Ovey, Head of Year 7.



Chess Club

Want to transform your brain and make better decisions? Learn chess - a game synonymous with intelligence and brain power. Branton Academy's thriving Chess Club meet in Room 17 on Friday lunchtimes and is open to all players regardless of ability and is seen as a great way to meet like-minded students across all the year groups. They were North Devon Chess Champions having won most of their matches against local schools. We hope to be back playing again county-wide soon!

So why play chess?

1. Chess improves key thinking skills

As a game based on logic and processing of numerous potential combinations of moves at once, it is tailor-made for engaging your brain functions. There are a number of studies that show how chess can enhance your thinking powers.

2. Chess can improve your memory

Chess is an excellent memory exercise because it encourages remembering moves for various strategical purposes. The better players fill their memories with possible combinations. A study showed how the brains of grandmasters worked by recalling thousands of moves.

3. Chess players are successful

The 2012 YouGov poll also found a clear relationship between being a regular chess player and various measures of achievement and success. 78% of active chess players are university graduates.

4. Chess can make your children smarter.

Several studies have been done to show that playing chess (in one case for 18 weeks) increased the IQs of the children involved. Other studies show chess improves the analytical and critical thinking skills as well as visualization abilities of children in all stages of school, enhancing their development. Chess has also been shown to boost children's Maths, reading and verbal skills.

Come and play, improve your brain and enjoy the social time as well. In January we will have a school Chess Competition with prizes, and those who do well in the club will be selected for one of the three Academy teams for competitions. Badges are also earned for regular attendance.

Mr England - Chess Club

Student Volunteers

Congratulations to Joshua Mitchell and Reuben Rodwell who were both awarded the NDVS Volunteer Award for their volunteering over the past couple of years as Junior Enablers for Braunton Ability FC. Braunton Ability FC is made up of players with various disabilities including Down's Syndrome, ADHD, autism and cerebral palsy. Well done to Josh and Reuben; we are all very proud of you!



The North Devon Voluntary Service is open to people of all ages. Please access the following for more information: ndvs.org.uk

Football and Netball News

It's been fantastic to see our students back out on the football pitches and netball courts this term as we finally saw a return to school sporting fixtures in the North Devon Football and Netball leagues respectively. We look forward to a number of upcoming sporting competitions which will see us compete in Girls' Football fixtures, as well as cross-country and rugby, amongst many others very soon.



England Cadets Team

Heidi Bright was selected to be part of the England Cadets Team at the All Nations Volleyball tournament in Essex which took place on the weekend of 4th and 5th September.

This two-day tournament is a spectacle of quality volleyball played in a fun environment, in the new University of Essex Sports Arena. In 2019 there were entrants from 70 different countries, playing over 300 matches on seven courts in two days'.

They played well against all-age international teams; they didn't win any games but they did win some sets from international players, much older and with lots of experience (some at Olympic level) and were very impressive.

We look forward to following Heidi's success!



Stephens Shield Cross Country

Fifty students competed in the Stephens Shield Cross Country event, which was held at Torrington Rugby Club.

Everyone was superb, with some incredible individual placings and team positions which meant that we WON the Stephens Shield 2021 this year and regained the title from Park School. (I say won, what I really mean, is we absolutely smashed it and did ourselves proud!)

Well done to everyone who took part, and we look forward to next year.

Mr Frickleton.

