

October 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

The term continues to go well, students are working hard and taking part in a wide variety of activities. Please find below news of key achievements and upcoming events.

Sporting success

The talented footballers of Ounsdale are working well in teams and beginning to win matches, great news! Year 8, 9 and 10 have all won recent matches, Year 9 defeated SWB 5-1 and Year 8 won 5-2 against St Edmunds, Year 7 have a little more work to do before they too can become a threat to opposing teams. Well done Ounsdale footballers.

A large group of students from Ounsdale took part in the Wolverhampton Schools Cross Country event at Moseley Park on 3rd October. There were some excellent times achieved and all students gave of their best – well done!

Upcoming sporting events

On 9th November Ounsdale will be entering teams into the Invictus School games tournament at Ellowes Hall. Students should see Mrs Brotherton for details.

Selected Year 9 students will be taking a sailing course at Himley Hall on 18th October. What a fantastic opportunity.

Ounsdale's Got Talent

Talented Performing Artists will be taking a break from Grease rehearsals to compete in Ounsdale's Got Talent. On Wednesday 24th October, students will be competing in front of an audience to find out who will be the winner of this year's Ounsdale's Got Talent. They will have already competed in the qualifying stages, with only our most hard-working and dedicated performers making it through to the final.

Make sure you are there so you can vote for your favourite act in our very first Live Vote! Expect musicians, expect dancers and expect comedy. Expect an unforgettable Ounsdale evening! Tickets will be sold on the door at £4 per ticket, with all proceeds going to fund the School Musical Production of "Grease" - show starts at 6.30pm.

Young Writer's Competition

During 'Enrichment Week' last July, a group of students took part in a writing workshop, where they explored the skills which go into writing fiction and developed their own short stories. As part of this workshop, the students had the opportunity to submit an entry to the Young Writers short story competition, "Stranger Saga's".

The judges were really impressed by the standard of writing, and three Ounsdale students had their work selected for the publication "Stranger Saga's, Staffordshire Authors".

A Ghost's Story, by Samuel Barker (Year 8)

Trapped, by Xanthe Law (Year 9)

Rescue, by Charlotte Atkins (Year 9)

The book is due to be published by 31st December 2018, and all three students are also in with a chance of winning the short story competition.

We have such talented student in our school – congratulations!

New enrichment and support activities for students

A Key Stage 3 book club will take place every Monday after school beginning after half term. Students can contact Mrs Langley for details.

A debating club will begin after half term, with competitions to follow. Students can see Miss Wilkes for details.

Support for Key Stage 3 English homework will be available every Wednesday in Room 16 with Miss Willetts.

Year 11 Support evening

This is a very important time for Year 11 students and most students are rising to the challenge. To support students and families we will be holding an important information evening on Thursday 15th November. Information will be provided on how to support students with revision and time management, in addition to information on the structure of the year. It is imperative that all Year 11 families attend this event. If you are unable to make the date stated please contact the school and alternative arrangements will be made.

Invictus 6th Open evening

In addition to focusing on revision, Year 11 students should begin to consider their 16-19 programme of study. For most Ounsdale students we believe Invictus 6th provides a high quality and fantastic opportunity. I had the privilege of interviewing Year 13 students for Head boy and girl this week, I was blown away by the eloquence, positivity and professionalism of the students. All of the students I met had found Invictus 6th a fantastic part of their education pathway and are now aspiring to amazing and varied University careers.

Current 6th form students will be available to talk to Y11 students over the coming weeks about the positive experiences they have had. However, a key date for the diary is the Open evening at Himley Hall on Thursday 8th November. Please put this in your diary.

Homework update from Mr Weatherhogg

I'd like to commend the students for the effort and the quality of the homework that they are producing. They have really risen to the challenge of the increasing demands placed on them.

Furthermore, I'd like to clarify a few things following some valuable conversations I have had with parents. Firstly, we do not use the 'handed in' function on Wise to acknowledge homework completion. We have done previously but found that the system works better when we do not. Rest assured that you will be contacted if your child has not submitted a piece of homework and a yellow card will be issued on the system.

Secondly, a few queries have been raised with regards to the marking of homework. Ideally the school would mark every piece of homework; the reality is that this is simply not possible with the demands placed on our hardworking and dedicated teachers. We still want students to receive feedback on their homework, including the use of peer and self-assessment, which are valuable tools in helping students to improve their work. We have also invested in ICT solutions, such as Hegarty Maths and Active learn in Languages, to help with this. There are plans in place to extend this to other subject areas in the coming months. All of the homework is planned so that it plays a role in helping with assessments that take place in school that are marked. This means that the homework plays a crucial role in preparing students for assessed work they will carry out in the future.

Finally, the homework is intended to last 45 minutes per subject at Key Stage 3 and one hour per subject at Key Stage 4. Please make sure your child sticks to this as closely as possible. We do not expect them to spend hours on one piece of homework.

Once again, can I give a heartfelt thanks for your support and guidance when it comes to supporting your children's learning at home. It all helps in helping them to become the best they can be.

Contact details

It's important we have correct contact details for parents/carers. Please check the details recorded on WISE are correct. If any data has changed please let us know by email (office@ounsedale.staffs.sch.uk) or letter.

Photographs of students

Images are taken of school activities from time to time by designated individuals. Such images may be used in our prospectus or other printed publications, on the website, and on project display boards. At high profile events the media may also take photographs or film footage. If you do not wish your son/daughter to appear in images or film footage please let us know by email (office@ounsdale.staffs.sch.uk) or letter.

School fund

Every year we ask parents to contribute towards Ounsdale School Fund which we use to provide additional opportunities and resources for students. This year we are planning to use School Fund money to update computers and support the Accelerated Reader scheme. We would be most grateful if parents could donate £8 (per family) for this academic year; this can be paid via ParentPay. Your donations to this fund are very much appreciated.

Thank you for your continued support,

Dr G Smith

Headteacher