

15th March 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

It has been some time since the last Newsletter in February, please therefore find lots of news and information below.

Year 9 Options evening

Thank-you to all parents that attended the recent Year 9 options evening. The turnout was excellent, higher than anticipated. Students need to return their completed option forms to reception by 3pm on Friday 22nd March. Any questions regarding the process please contact Mr Riley (jriley@ounsdale.staffs.sch.uk).

Year 8 Options

Students in Year 8 will be given two subject choices later in the year. They will need to choose between History, Geography and Ancient History. They will also need to make a Modern Foreign Language choice. Information regarding this procedure will be detailed in the summer term.

Progress (all students)

Just a reminder on our progress tracking system. Students in all years are set a Year 11 target grade for all subjects. This target grade is highly aspirational, roughly one grade higher than national average progress. Teachers then assess whether they think students are on track to meet this aspirational target grade with a progress grade from 1 to 4.

- Progress grade 1 – The student is not meeting target grades and significant intervention is needed to help them progress.
- Progress grade 2 – The student is making progress. To make the progress needed to meet the highly aspirational target grade the teacher may give additional work.
- Progress grade 3 – The student is making progress and is likely to meet highly aspirational grades set for them. This is a really good achievement.
- Progress grade 4 – The student is making progress above what is expected to meet highly aspirational target grades. This is outstanding. For some students that have very high aspirational target grades (grade 8/9) it is not possible to go above them at GCSE level, however in such cases teachers will stretch students by broadening the curriculum.

Students have now received their second progress grade (February 2019) of the year. Please contact teachers to request additional work if you are concerned about the progress your child is making. If students have mainly progress grades of 3 they are doing exceptionally well. Where students have progress grades of 1 significant intervention is needed.

Changes to uniform from September 2019

From September 2019 all students will be required to wear black shoes for school. We will not be accepting any form of trainer. If you are in the process of replacing school shoes please do contact Mrs Thompson to ensure any current purchases will be suitable for September.

Rome

On the 15th February, twenty three Ounsdale students went on a four day trip to Rome, Italy. This was the fourth time the bi-annual Ancient History trip had taken place, offering a chance for Year 10 and Year 11 students of the subject to sample a city that dominates half of their curriculum.

Staff and students had an amazing time. The students conducted themselves in a respectful, polite, mature and articulate manner, they were a true asset to the school. Many thanks go to Mrs Dean and Mr Ward for organising such a great trip.

Oxford trip

Selected students in Year 10 were given the opportunity to visit Oxford University in February. They visited Oriel College and had the opportunity to sample college life. We have some academically talented students at Ounsdale and we hope this trip has inspired them to aim high. As on so many of our trips, student conduct was exceptional, well done Year 10.

D of E

Students in Year 9 and 10 are busy completing Duke of Edinburgh work with lots of volunteering, physical activity and skills being undertaken. This year we have made use of an outside company for the expedition section to ensure we can provide the Duke of Edinburgh experience for a greater number of students. We have 68 students taking part. Their first weekend is the 23rd March, students will be going to Standon Bowers Outdoor Education Centre to complete their first walk and learn the many skills they will need to complete their assessed expedition in June.

80th Celebrations

Ounsdale High School has been served by Sheila Standish for around 50 years. Sheila played a key role in the reprographics department of the school for many years before moving into hospitality, particularly for staff. Sheila celebrated her 80th birthday last week and it was honour that we could join the celebrations. Not only is Sheila an integral member of Ounsdale High School, she has also dedicated much of her life to Brownies and Guides, her commitment to the community is fantastic. Well done Sheila.

Music News

Two of our talented musicians, Abigail Stanton in Year 9 and Jake Woodward in Year 8, performed at the River Rooms in Stourbridge in February, supporting a professional band. This is a fantastic achievement, their music was widely praised by Mr Wykes and the audience.

Fundraising Success

Olivia Parker in Year 10 took on a huge responsibility in deciding to organize a concert in aid of Cancer Research. Not only did Olivia sell tickets, organize the venue, and ensure technical support was in place, she also arranged auditions and put on a varied programme. Well done Olivia, she managed to raise an impressive £1400 for Cancer Research. In addition, a massive well done and thank-you to the students that took part in the concert – it was great to see so many talents on display.

Sixth form Success

One of our students in Year 13 has been offered the opportunity to study Medicine at Birmingham University in September. This is a prestigious offer and is well deserved. What an achievement.

Sports News

Cross Country

Noah Sandland in Year 9 is representing Staffordshire Schools in the English Schools Cross Country Championships in Leeds this weekend. What an amazing achievement – well done Noah.

Swimming

Well done to all our swimmers. Students have recently competing and achieved well in local swimming galas. Particular mentions go to Alex Jones in Year 8 for coming first in the 4 length Freestyle, and Grace Stanley in Year 7 for coming first in the 2 length Butterfly.

Football

Year 8 Boys Ounsdale 3 - Wolverhampton Grammar 2

This extremely wet away match was part of the Wolverhampton Cup. The boys played well and deserved their win, controlling the game well and taking their opportunities. They progress to the semi-finals.

Year 7 Boys Ounsdale 3 – Heath Park 3

The boys played well and showed great determination to come from behind twice, they created many opportunities which bodes well for future games.

Tennis experience

Joe Conway-Lees and Jonathan Blewitt, both in Year 7, represented Ounsdale School in the Invictus tennis open day at David Lloyd gym in Dudley. The boys were coached by an experienced tennis player before they took part in a series of matches. Well done lads.

World Book Day and book donations

It was great to see students in Year 7 dressing up for World Book Day, in addition to all of the office team dressing in 'Where's Wally' costumes. Students raised £200 that will be used to buy books for the library.

Many thanks to parents and people in the community for donating their favourite books to school, we have received just over 200 books so far. If you haven't already taken the opportunity and can spare the cost of a favourite book, please do continue to send them into school, we would love to see the school shelves bursting with stories.

We were delighted that as part of the request for favourite book donations we were contacted by a former student who worked as a student librarian in her time at the school, from 1955. This kind lady has donated a copy of Black Beauty and has explained how she has always had a love of books, reading several chapters every day of her life.

Modern Foreign Languages Activities

Year 9 and Year 10 Language Ambassadors are showing their leadership and language skills by leading a Year 7 MFL Culture Club. Year 7 students will be given the opportunity to find out about the curious French tradition of Poisson d'Avril, play board games in another language, sing in different languages and even try a little Salsa.

The Great MFL Bake Off has also just begun. Year 9 students will organise rounds whereby students bake French or Spanish recipes. The final will be judged by Mr Ward, Mrs Paskin and Dr Smith on Wednesday 10th April.

Year 11 exams

Following the Easter holidays Year 11 will have final exams in both Art and oral exams in French and Spanish. Formal written exams will then begin on Monday 13th May. A day by day timetable of exams and revision sessions will operate from Monday 13th May for all Year 11 students. A hard copy of this will be given to students at the end of next week and it will also be available on the web-site from Monday 25th March. We wish Year 11 all the best in the examination period.

Please note a contingency exam day has been set nationally for 26th June 2019. Any student may be asked to attend a GCSE/A-level exam on this day, should any of their exams be changed by the exam board. Please do not book a holiday for this day. If you have already done so, please be aware you would need to return, should the contingency day be used by any of the exam boards.

Building Update

Work is progressing well on the new teaching block situated behind the 3 storey block on the old tennis courts. Ground work is complete and foundations are now being built. This 10 classroom teaching venue will be an excellent addition to the school.

The new reception area is due to open in the next few weeks. Parents and visitors will be able to access the front of the school and be greeted properly by our helpful and friendly receptionists.

Thank you for your continued support

Kind Regards,

Dr Smith