



Stanchester Academy

December 2017

Dear Parent

As the end of a very busy term approaches I wanted to update you on some of the fantastic opportunities our students have had over this very busy autumn term, some of our achievements as a school and some news regarding changes of staffing.

In November we were very pleased to welcome Challenge Partners into school. Challenge Partners is an external organisation whose aim it is to work collaboratively with schools to improve pupils' outcomes, enable schools to improve, create national leaders and develop a world class, self-improving and sustainable education system. A large part of the work undertaken by Challenge Partners is to complete a review of each of its schools. Stanchester had its review in early November where we were pleased once again to be identified as good overall but with our school improvement strategies recognised as **outstanding**. Reviewers commented that *"A positive, enabling culture has been established and students report how well staff care for and challenge them. Students believe that they can 'be the best' and they strive to achieve academic excellence from Year 7 onwards."* The full report can be viewed on our website under 'School Improvement'.

There have been many exciting events taking place across the Academy this term. Many of you will have watched 'Into the Woods Junior' last week where our students delivered an outstanding performance under the guidance of drama teacher, Mr Newbury. Every year I am lost for words at the incredible talent on display in the school and this year was no exception – well done to all the cast, crew and staff involved.

Our student leaders have worked tirelessly this term and as ever have been incredible ambassadors. Our Head Girl, Head Boy and their deputies have visited all of our local primary schools giving talks and answering questions, both challenging and interesting, about aspects of secondary school life and their experiences. All our year 11 senior students have undertaken duties around the school, supported many events and escorted dozens of visitors – we are continually praised for their conduct, their communication skills and the pride they have in our school. Thank you and well done to all our senior students.

Year 7 have had an incredibly exciting term – starting in September with their residential trip to Hestercombe House. Year 7 have been learning through a new curriculum under the theme 'Medieval Madness' this term, culminating in a trip to Chepstow Castle and a wonderful medieval banquet where they were able to share their learning with parents and enjoy a medieval feast. Students have thoroughly enjoyed their first term and the many opportunities it has provided them with. Their feedback has provided us with a few tweaks to take forward into next terms planning for their theme 'The world around us'.

Students across year 8 have been learning a great deal about leadership this term with large numbers applying for leadership positions as community leaders. It is our year 8 community leaders who take tours of visitors around the school and also organise and run our annual party for our local senior citizens, which took place on 12 December. The feedback we have received from our visitors has illustrated what a fantastic job year 8 are doing for the school – well done year 8.

Our year 9 students have been focusing very much on thinking about their futures by attending our options evening, talking to local colleges and starting the process of selecting which courses they will continue into year 10. Many year 9 students have also taken part in a geography field trip this term to Dawlish Warren and some



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had the opportunity to experience languages at Bristol University. It is a very busy year for our year 9 students and we look forward to continuing to support and guide them through their options process next term.

Year 10 have started the formal aspect of their GCSE syllabus this term with many opportunities to put their learning in context through various visits including the photography trip to Lyme Regis and an opportunity to watch a production of 'A Christmas Carol', enabling them to embed and deepen their understanding of this GCSE English text. Year 10 have also attended the local careers fair, supporting their early preparation and thinking about the next steps in their education and training. Many year 10 students will also be thinking about student leadership and planning for the applications they will be making to become senior students next year – good luck year 10, we look forward to starting this process with you.

Year 11 are now well within their last 100 days of secondary school and have been working incredibly hard preparing for their mock exams but also thinking about their destinations for next summer when they leave Stanchester. The whole year group have attended college taster days and the local careers fair. Students across year 11 have also been able to enrich their learning by attending visits including their geography field trip to Bristol, watching a performance of 'A Christmas Carol' for the English GCSE and 'Woman in Black' for their drama GCSE, and visiting Munich for their studies on Nazi Germany for their history GCSE. We wish you all the best for your mock exams year 11.

The end of term always comes with sad news and this term is no exception. This Friday we will be saying goodbye to Mr Yeates before he travels to Munich with our year 11 historians next week. Mr Yeates has taken the decision to leave teaching and we wish him well with his future career and hope that he retains his love of history and someday returns to the profession. Mr Flynn, who has been teaching maths since Mrs Craven moved to Belgium at half term, has successfully applied for a teaching post at a primary school and will be leaving us at Christmas. We would like to sincerely thank Mr Flynn for working with our maths team over this period and wish him well on his return to primary school teaching. And finally it is with enormous sadness that we will be saying goodbye to Mrs Liz Leach at the end of term. After 35 years at Stanchester Mrs Leach has taken the decision to retire. I know that many of you yourselves will have been taught by Mrs Leach and will understand what a great loss her talent will be to our school community. We will be saying goodbye to Mrs Leach on Monday 18 December though her final day in school will be Wednesday 20 December. We would welcome any comments or memories you would like to share with her, thanking her for her incredible service to the school.

Whilst saying goodbye to staff is incredibly sad we are also very pleased that we have successfully recruited a number of new staff who will join us in January. Mrs Blatch, a very experienced English teacher will be joining our English team after Christmas. Mr Edwards, another very experienced teacher will be joining our maths team for two terms and Mr Remington will be joining humanities. We will also be welcoming back Miss Sayer who has previously worked at Stanchester but who has now qualified as an art and design teacher and will be joining our creativity and expression department under Mrs Bartlett. Miss Sayer will become the new tutor for 7WY.

Finally you will have noticed from the school calendar that we have reintroduced our academic mentoring day on **Friday 9 February 2018**. I can confirm that this day will be academic mentoring for **years 7 and 11 only** with students from years 8, 9 and 10 not in school. Further details will follow from the year 7 and 11 Phase Leaders but the day will involve you attending an appointment or series of appointments to review your child's progress.

I would like to end by thanking all of you, our parents and carers, for your continued support and feedback and to wish you all a happy, safe and restful Christmas. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year and continuing to share your child's journey with you.

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Joynes
Principal