



## **PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

**MARCH 2018**

On 1st June 2017, Claydon High School, East Bergholt High School and Hadleigh High School joined together to form a multi-academy trust - The South Suffolk Learning Trust. The Trust (led by an experienced board of local trustees) intends to grow and support the learning of Suffolk youngsters aged between 3 and 19 and add positively to improving life chances of Suffolk children through effective collaboration. In February 2018, Mrs Sarah Skinner was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the trust and she, along with Headteachers Maéve Taylor, Colin Turner and Caroline Gibson, are delighted to be continuing to work together to share best practice and enabling an even wider number of children to reach their full potential.

Last summer saw Claydon High School's first cohort of Year 11 students receiving results for the new style of GCSE exams. These exams were designed to be more challenging and I am pleased to report that of our 120 students, 63% achieved a grade 4-9 in both Maths and one of their English GCSEs; the grade 4 is equivalent to grade C in other subjects. 26% of our students achieved passes at grade C or 4 in their EBacc suite, which includes a Language and Humanities subject. We had many strong performances in individual subjects including from some students who had faced significant challenges during their GCSE studies. Students should all be very proud of what they have achieved, in terms of both academic success and the contribution they have made to school life over the past five years.

We regularly invite authors, poets and speakers to the school to give presentations and hold workshops for different year groups. On Friday 13th October, children's author Stewart Ross visited the school to talk to Years 7 and 8 about his writing as he launches his latest book 'The Salvation Project', the exciting finale to 'The Soterion Mission'. With over 250 published titles to his credit, Stewart Ross is one of Britain's most popular and versatile writers. Students were given the opportunity to meet the author in person and purchase a copy of his latest book. As an experienced speaker, Stewart engaged very well with his young audience and it was lovely to see so many enthused and interested faces and lots of questions being asked!

Our annual WOW Week took place at the end of October. This involved three days of specially designed activities for each year group. Year 7 camped at Mersea Outdoor Centre, taking part in various team-building activities such as orienteering and rocket building. Years 8-10 participated in a 'festival based' enterprise challenge, focused on creating an entrepreneurial spirit, developing leadership skills and accelerating employability skills. Year 11 students visited Trinity Park for the Suffolk Skills Show and spent time in school and visiting sixth forms and colleges, looking at career choices and employability skills. Students were very open minded and listened carefully to a wide variety of speakers and participated actively in sessions to increase their knowledge of post 16 and post 18 options.

In October, we interviewed students for positions in our Student Leadership Team and subsequently appointed a Head and Deputy Head Boy and Girl. This was a very tough process and a hard decision as the quality of applicants and their well-prepared presentations was so high. These students have been leading our fantastic team of prefects and everyone has been making a real positive contribution to the school as well as developing their leadership and communication skills.

Following on from WOW week, in December, Year 11 students took part in a 'Learning about Work Day'. Employers from local businesses came into school to act as business mentors and to work with small groups of students for the day, looking at CV and application form writing, conducting mock

interviews and teaching them about employer expectations when applying for jobs. With only a few weeks to go, Year 11 continue to prepare for their exams and last half-term 100 students travelled to the Outdoor Centre in East Mersea, Essex to take part in an intense GCSE Bootcamp. This overnight event was a chance for Year 11 students to get together to learn vital revision strategies to take away with them as well as taking part in structured Maths and English revision within a classroom setting and enjoying some outdoor challenges.

We have had a very musical year so far with families, friends, governors, teachers and students enjoying a fantastic Christmas concert on 12<sup>th</sup> December, where our talented musicians and poets gave stunning performances to a packed audience at the Church of St Mary and St Peter, Barham. It was a very festive evening, interspersed with traditional carols and an opportunity to warm up with some hot winter punch and mince pies. On 5th February a group of students were joined by a fantastic band from Guildford called 'Kissed and Crowned' and a team from I.E.M. (Industry Education in Music) to take part in a Rock Band Workshop and concert. Students from across all year groups split into groups to form eight separate 'bands' and spent the day composing original pop music from scratch. With a very tight deadline, this was a huge challenge but our talented students worked extremely hard, using advice and guidance from the professionals to come up with some impressive and original material that was performed at a concert on the very same evening. All our students have worked fantastically hard to give amazing performances.

On 15th March, a group of Year 8 students took part in the BBC's annual School Report Day. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> year the school has been participating in this event and students spent the day planning, researching and interviewing staff and students, before writing articles which are featured on a dedicated online news website. Every single article was produced from scratch and to a 2pm deadline, which was a tough challenge. All students showed great commitment and dedication, impressing staff with their enthusiasm for developing their media literacy skills and producing their own stories about subjects that matter to them.

During the month of March we had two trips to universities. A group of Year 9 students visited Cambridge University to tour their Gonville and Caius Colleges, meet staff and students and join them for lunch, before heading out to the Cambridge Arts Theatre in the afternoon to watch their production of 'The Jungle Book'. Year 11 French students visited the University of Reading for a GCSE French Student Conference run by PiXL. The interactive and motivational revision conference was designed to encourage and support students to be 'exam ready', equipping them with a range of strategies and techniques which will maximize their exam performance and achievement in all four language skills.

The PE department has had a successful year with some great sporting achievements in cross-country, netball, football and athletics. Year 11 GCSE students had the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills when they ran a successful Year 6 Sports Morning for over 100 students from our feeder primary schools. A range of activities were on offer, including table tennis, badminton and fitness and rowing challenges. We look forward to our annual Fun Run, Sports Day and our 'Sports Personality of the Year' awards evening in July.

In other areas of the school - Year 11 Business Studies students visited Colchester Zoo. GCSE Geography students travelled to Felixstowe to investigate the role of hard engineering in protecting our coastline. KS3 students took part in a Readathon Challenge. Year 10 and 11 GCSE Art students visited the Tate Modern in London. Year 9 and 10 English students put their nerves aside and took part in the ESU Debating Competition and Youth Speaks 2018; a competition run by the Rotary Club to encourage students to put their ideas out there and speak in front of an audience. Drama students had a visit from the New Wolsey Theatre, with their touring production of 'Who to Follow', aimed at tackling students' perceptions around the issue of drugs and a visit from Conservatoire East from West Suffolk College, who came and delivered a workshop about Shakespeare and then performed a shortened version of the play Twelfth Night. A Maths team took part in the regional finals of the UK Team Maths Challenge at Framlingham College and our Science department held a week long timetable of activities and events to commemorate British Science Week.

Students have been fundraising for charities close to their heart throughout the year and have so far delivered cheques to: Macmillan Cancer Support; Suffolk Young Carers; and The Chapman Centre in Ipswich, who support the homeless and also received 33 hand-made festive-themed hampers filled with food and essentials donated from home by students and staff.

We look forward to welcoming Year 6 students to the school in the summer term to take part in transition events designed to prepare them for when they start with us in September.

We still have lots to look forward to before the end of this academic year, including a London theatre trip, community tea party, Battlefields trip, spelling bee and GCSE Art Exhibition. As I write this, rehearsals are also underway for our forthcoming production of 'Madagascar' on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June; staff and students are very excited so please do come and watch!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank students, staff, governors and the PTA for their continued hard work and to parents/carers for their ongoing support. If anyone would like a tour of the school, please feel free to book into one of our monthly Open Mornings – I would be delighted to meet you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'l'.

Maéve Taylor  
Headteacher