



Longsands College Newsletter

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From the Principal..

Last term
at Longsands...

Dear Parents

This is very much a *mid-term* newsletter when there is much going on in terms of local and townwide developments. I hope the brief updates that follow are of interest.

Parents' Evenings

Thank you to the very high number of parents who have already attended a parents' evening this year. We are aware that some appointment schedules have not always gone according to plan. We will monitor this aspect but hope that, despite some queuing, you found your child's evening helpful and informative. The evenings for Years 10, 8 and 12 are still to come (in that order) in the next half of term.

Sixth Form : Student Support Capacity

We have increased the support available to the Sixth Form by fifteen hours per week of administrative assistance and ten of additional individual student mentoring. The staff concerned are working closely with Mrs Andrews, Mr Donnelly and form tutors to provide information, advice and guidance to students.

Sixth Form Funding

I am pleased to report that the funding we will receive for next year's Year 12 and Year 13 should match the number of students far more closely. While this does not rectify previous underfunding, it allows us to plan ahead with far greater confidence.

As parents of Year 11 students will know already, we are currently enrolling students for next September. It is most important that any student wishing to join the Sixth Form secure a place now as an outcome of the individual guidance offered. While late applications can be considered, there is no guarantee of spaces on preferred courses.

Future Provision in St Neots

At the time of writing, we are awaiting a confirmed decision from the County Council about the next steps in planning for the future of secondary education in the town.

In the interim, please may I emphasise again that a federation would *not* be the same as a merger. There would still be two schools with separate budgets, accountability and character.

If the County Council's initial decisions are confirmed, a further consultation will be undertaken as set out in the original document distributed last term. This would allow for further explanation of what is and is not involved as well as inviting comments from students, parents and staff.

Attitudes to Learning

Unless they were absent on the day, all students in Years 7-11 have attended an assembly about our new Attitude to Learning statements. These have now been incorporated into our reporting system, with an accompanying guidance note to parents.

We would be happy to receive any comments about the revised framework, which has been designed to encourage students to learn more actively and, therefore, even more effectively.

Yours sincerely

Robert Whatmough
Principal

Shout out

Students are being invited to make their mark on a school mural. The *Shout Out* is to encourage students to work together to express their creativity. The mural will replace the blank wall in the New Hall that once had a big painting of a city landscape. To make your mark, simply fill out one of the Shout Out forms in the library and put it in the box. Then **you** could get to paint your idea on the wall, along with other students' pieces.

James Allwright



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Longsands Road
St. Neots
Cambridgeshire
PE19 1LQ



through the voucher scheme.

As before, shoppers at Tesco will receive a voucher for every £10 spent in store or on petrol.

Tesco for Schools & Clubs is back for 2010 with vouchers available in store and with online grocery orders from **Monday 1 March**.

This year, the catalogue is jam-packed with even more equipment and resources than ever before. There are more than 1,300 items to choose from covering the entire curriculum for secondary school students.

Once again, Longsands can benefit from the massive selection and can get additional equipment and resources we need

Over the years, the College has collected enough vouchers to purchase about 20 computers and, more recently, we have had cameras for use by students. So please, collect vouchers and leave them in the collection box in the library.

Vouchers found from previous years are sadly no longer valid, so please don't send them in.

Mr Hynes, College Librarian

Film Club

Later this month, students will have the chance to watch some of the country's most celebrated movies at the Longsands' Film Club.

The KS3 film screenings, organised by Miss Jan Mohamed and Mr Hynes are a series of films from different cultures once every three weeks, on Wednesdays after school. Films are aimed at students in Years 7 to 9 who are able to bring any snacks they like, except for sticky popcorn!

On Wednesday 24 February, the classic British animation 'Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit' will kick off the film season when it is shown in the library, from 3.20 pm until 5 pm.

So far this year, the Film Club has shown all sorts of movies, including 'Coraline', 'Elf' and 'The Girl Who Leapt Through Time'. *"The most successful film so far has been 'Coraline'. The films are a chance for students to have some fun after a hard day's work!"* commented Miss Jan Mohamed, who along with Mr Hynes and Miss Plowman organises the event.

'Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit' has won a number of film awards including the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

Reporter: Joanne Childerley

Year 6 Visit Longsands

Year 6 pupils from our partner primary schools have been invited to spend a day in Longsands' Media Lab to edit a short film about a shark dive. We interviewed **Chloe** and **Alex** from Priory Junior School during their visit to the College on Friday 5 February. **Alex** commented, *"I've learnt lots of information about sharks, and how to edit a film on iMovie and make my own DVD."*

We also asked **Chloe** if this has changed her view on Longsands and made her less nervous. She agreed saying, *"Yes, I now think it will be better, and I will be fine when I start next year."*

Mr Gamby the College's Media Technician told us that many of the Year 6s spend a day at the College to do the Shark Project. *"Pupils use a basic film editing programme called iMovie HD and leave at the end of the day with a DVD of their work. It is basically an introduction to Media at Longsands. We believe that this is a good way to welcome the new Year 7s to Longsands."*



Reporters:
Kate Amos & Emily Hooker

Befrienders..... is a new lunchtime club opening after half term for Key Stage 3 pupils who might benefit from the support and guidance of Sixth Formers who have been trained as counsellors. Befrienders aims to provide a relaxed environment where pupils feel they can talk to a Sixth Former in confidence about any problems they might have about which they would prefer not to approach a teacher or family member. The lunchtime club will be open on Mondays and Fridays after the half-term break in F3 (near the Year 7 social area). Due to the limited space we have, places will be by invitation only - form tutors will be asked to suggest pupils they believe will benefit from the club. The Befrienders team have spent this term ordering games and furniture, designing room decoration and planning activities which will take place during these lunchtimes. It is hoped that the club will be a great success, offering another layer of support for students lower down the school.

Gemma Bleakley



Key Stage 4

On Monday 11 January, Longsands held a successful Year 11 into 12 evening. Many parents, students and visitors attended the event and presentations about entry into the College's Sixth Form in September 2010. The evening was very well attended and we anticipate a large increase in applications to the College. The closing date for applications into the Sixth Form will be **Friday 12 February**.

Students who are not intending to stay at Longsands, and are continuing their education elsewhere, will need to submit their applications for courses according to individual college deadlines. By the end Friday 12 February, all students should have had their destinations interviews with a senior member of staff. If Year 11s require further advice, they should see Ms McCusker, who will arrange further interviews and advice through Connexions.

Year 10 charity fundraising events will continue in March and will include a sponsored walk.

Mr Rowe

Language Leaders

There are currently eleven Year 10 students participating in the Language Leaders' project. In the Summer Term, the students visit our local feeder primary schools to deliver 'taster' language lessons to Year 6. Currently, the Language Leaders are studying other countries' traditions. Their next project is to make a film in a foreign language with English subtitles to show the Year 6 students before their primary school visits. They have even helped some teachers to develop their language skills by helping them to learn some Spanish! Our Language Leaders also help at other events such as Longsands' annual Open Evening by designing language games to play with prospective Year 7s.

Language Leader Oliver said: *"I enjoy doing the project and teaching the Year 6 pupils new things."*

Reporter:
James Allwright

Effort to Attitude to Learning

Before the recent change, students were graded on their effort. Teachers believe that attitude affects a student's learning and reflects their personal input far more than 'effort'. The effort an individual puts into a piece of work relates to how much they have attempted to make it good. Attitude is whether a student is *engaged* in their learning and motivated to do their work. The new system will inform us how our attitude towards our learning affects our progress. We interviewed Mr Carroll and he said, *"The previous effort grade system told us how a student was doing but did not tell them how to move forward and improve. This system is by no means perfect and I hope we will work to improve it by personalising it to individual departments"*.

When you receive your next assessments, make sure you read the key on the back of them.

Reporter:
Sarah Humphrey

Bazaar Charity Earners

As we reported in the last newsletter, Longsands students celebrated Christmas at the annual Christmas Bazaar. Each form in Key Stage 3 made a stall to raise money for the school charity –

The Upside Down Swimming Club. This charity is designed to enable disabled children to take part in sports such as swimming. There were many stalls in the Sports Hall where the event took place. On one of the stalls there was a competition of 'who could eat the most lemons in 60 seconds'; even the teachers took part. Having eaten some lemons, a student commented, *"It was really hard, but fun. It was well worth 20p!"*

Mr Whatmough said, *"I thought the Bazaar was a huge success. Well done to all the students who took part"*.

After a fun day of money-raising we managed to accumulate about £650.00 with over 15 stalls. It was a great day for Longsands.

Amongst the stalls was the legendary teddy tombola, cake stalls, tin can alley and even a

Nintendo Wii. These were some of the more memorable stalls.

As the students wandered around the hall, the school orchestra, led by Mrs Pearcey, was playing tremendously.

Overall, the Christmas Bazaar was a great success and everyone had great fun. We are sure that it will be just as good, if not better, in the years to come.

The atmosphere was great. There were decorations everywhere and the music was fantastic.

The more successful things were the parents coming and the amount of students who spent money on the event for charity.

Reporters:
Beth Cole, Grace Lemin, Leigh-Anna Murley, Katie Wanless, Rosie Eida, Lauren Darling, Aaron Din, Holly Stent.



Year 7 Japan Week



For one week each year at Longsands, students say goodbye to several normal lessons and say *konnichiwa* to Japanese culture.



This year was no exception and throughout the school Year 7 pupils were enjoying some of the many activities that Japan Week had to offer, including Japanese drumming, Haiku poetry, podcasting and Anime/Manga. The Manga workshop was organised by Year 8 pupils, **Sarah** and **Marielle**, and Year 12 student Kaya, "We were teaching Year 7s how to draw Manga art. There will be displays up some time soon. We, along with Kaya, are also running a Manga Club on Wednesday lunchtimes for anyone who wants to learn the Japanese art."



Manga is a Japanese cartoon art that has been used in animations from some time shortly after World War II. "We both started Manga drawing about three years ago, and are self-taught," said Sarah and Marielle. "We like it because it's cool and pretty."

During the week, students also had the opportunity to have a

go at Taiko Drumming, which is an art form used in Japan. Hugh, a Year 7 student who took part in the drumming, said: "I enjoyed it because I am a fan of drumming, and it was a good experience. I also took part in Origami, but I wasn't good at it, I much preferred the drumming!"



Year 7s also learnt about the breathtaking views and mouth watering foods of the country, making advertisements for trips to Japan using video and audio clips.



Miss Sutton, who is an Art teacher at the college, ran a club on Sumi-e art, which is a type of traditional Japanese painting. "A few students came to see me after school in Japan week to learn how to do sumi-e art, which uses very few lines and simple brush techniques."



The week was full of fun activities for everyone, and we can't wait for next year!

Reporters:
Kate Amos & Emily Hooker

Excellence in Enterprise

Longsands' Business & Enterprise Department was *thrilled* last month when it was given a national enterprise award.

The Excellence in Enterprise Award, which was presented to the College by Warwick University, has been designed specifically for schools who are interested in developing enterprise. The College has been working towards gaining the award for roughly seven or eight years.

The university produced this award for excellence in enterprise, which looks at learning that can prepare pupils for later life.

During the visit in early January, a representative from Warwick University interviewed Mr Whatmough (Principal), Miss Burt, and Mr Seery (Head of Enterprise).

Mr Caroll added: "I think it's great that we were given this

amazing award. I think a number of staff and students really deserved it, as it reflects on their hard work." Mr Seery said: "I was absolutely chuffed to bits to be presented with such a brilliant award, as we are one of only two schools in Cambridgeshire to receive one of them."

The award is kept proudly at the school in the reception area. Over the last five years, enterprise has been enhanced across the school and has been rolled out into different lessons and other activities.

Reporters:
Ella-Louise Parker & Ellie Sadler

Casanova

If you are a music fan, you might have heard of **Tom Dinsdale**. The Year 11 student has a single out on iTunes called *Casanova*. We asked him a few questions about his new release. "I started playing guitar when I was about 12 and I'm self-taught. I write my own songs. My inspirations are probably bands like Coldplay and The Beatles. I think my album will be more Indie. I write my music because I like it, not because I want other people to like it."

We also asked him if his fans had done anything crazy. "Some Year 8 students made me a cake the other day!" he said.

Reporters:
Kate Amos & Emily Hooker

Year 9 Have to Choose!

In the next few weeks, Year 9 students will be deciding their future at Longsands by choosing their additional subjects.

The Options process, which started with Parents' Evening on 4 February, will soon be followed by a booklet and personal letter from Mr Watson, which will tell us to which route individuals are best suited. The three routes have been colour-coded into the blue, yellow and orange.

The Options, fitted around the core curriculum, will be mostly exam or coursework based and will make up nine hours in the timetable. Year 9s will also have a one-to-one interview with a senior member of staff to help us decide what options we should take.

Reporter:
Isaac Sutton-Wild