



Longsands Academy Newsletter

www.longsands.cambs.sch.uk

From the Executive Principal

September 2011
at Longsands...

Welcome to the first newsletter for the academic year 2011-2012. As many of you will know, we aim to produce a newsletter immediately before or after each half term break or holiday. We hope that you will find the mixture of news, notices and other information interesting and informative.

Our application to become an Academy received approval on 1 August 2011. As I have explained in my 'welcome back' assemblies to students, most students, parents and, indeed, staff will not notice significant change. In essence, academy status provides a little more financial and other flexibility to help us fulfil our aims. It makes us even more responsible for securing good outcomes.

You may recall that the applications made by Longsands College (now Longsands Academy) and St Neots Community College (now Ernulf Academy) were linked to those of the other Huntingdonshire secondary schools. All have been accepted, and so we are starting this year well-placed to develop further our already strong working partnership.

This summer's examination results were particularly pleasing at GCSE and A Level, with the latter showing a marked increase in the proportion of students obtaining excellent grades at the various benchmark levels. Most students obtained their first choice university place, and we were especially pleased to congratulate Gavin Kirby on securing a place at Oxford to read Chemistry. Thank you again to all students and their parents for their hard work and support.

Many developments are already underway that will take us forward in terms of enabling our students to learn even more effectively. One that you may

hear about with increasing frequency is the VLE – our Virtual Learning Environment. This is an ICT-based system that goes considerably beyond email as a means of promoting communication within the Academy and, in due course, with you as parents. The developments in this academic year will form a first phase, with departments or individual teachers trying out new techniques and exploring the potential of the system. It is possible, for example, that some subjects may post coursework and homework tasks on the VLE. Initially at least, this will not involve all subjects as we need time to experience at first-hand what some of the benefits and potential problems may be. A more consistent approach will be considered for introduction in 2012-2013.

This first newsletter contains several notices about matters in which we need your help. Although we would all hope they will not be needed this winter, I must ask you to give particular attention to *Emergency Closure* and *Closure During the Day*.

Finally, our annual Open Evening will be on Tuesday 18 October. Formal lessons will end on that day at 1.00 pm, with buses at 1.20 pm. We look forward to many of our students returning in the evening as ambassadors for Longsands. We look forward to welcoming you, too, if you have a son or daughter who may be following the path established by your older child/children.

With best wishes to the Longsands community for 2011-2012,

Robert Whatmough
Executive Principal



Academic Planning Day - Advanced Notice

Building on the success of previous years' Academic Planning Days, we will be holding this event again on **Thursday 24 November**. Some interviews will also take place on **Tuesday 22 November**. Thursday 24 November will be a non-teaching day for all students. Students will have an appointment with their form tutor to discuss their progress so far this year and set targets for the rest of the Academic Year. Students will reflect on previous targets and set new ones for the rest of the Academic Year. Parents will be invited to attend their child's interview. A letter outlining more details of the day will be sent out later this month. This is a valuable opportunity for students to discuss their learning and to set new goals. We look forward to your support.



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MFL September Update

The MFL Department is delighted to report that the annual trips to Paris and the Black Forest have proved to be extremely popular this year with record breaking numbers participating. Over 160 students have applied for both the trips, that is over half of the Year Group! We would like to thank parents for their deposits and support. All students have been accepted on the trips and we would now like to remind parents that the next payment is due at the end of September. If there are any problems or if you would like a payment card, please contact the Finance Office or Mrs Thomason, Head of MFL at Longsands.

Longsands' Language Leaders

A reminder to Year 10 students that, if they wish to apply to be a Language Leader this year, they need to ask their language teacher for a letter, or contact Mrs Thomason. This is a great opportunity to work with the Department and Primary schools and achieve a qualification that is recognised by future employers.

Updates from Key Stage 4



The new academic year in KS4 once again includes the 'Golden Ticket' incentive scheme. The award of two Praise Postcards to any KS4 student gains them a 'Golden Ticket' to be entered into a draw at the end of each half-term. The winners of the draw, usually three students, are allowed to choose from a number of great voucher prizes. These are I-Tunes, GAME, Love2Shop, Topshop/Topman, Argos and Amazon. The winners' names will be displayed on the 'Golden Ticket' boards outside Mr Glover's

(Head of Year 10) and Mr David's (Head of Year 11) offices.

The move from Longsands College to Academy was the driver behind the new design on the KS4 Praise Postcard. The design shows a new logo and also the St Neots Learning Partnership (SNLP) logo. I hope you all enjoy the new design and will be receiving one very soon for all your hard work.



KS4 Team

Wakeboard Winner!

Katie Batchelor (Year 10) was crowned UK national Wakeboard Cable Girl Champion at the recent Wakeboard Cable Nationals.

She currently holds both national titles for cable and board wakeboarding. This win occurred shortly after her return from Milan, where she competed for England and came fourth in the World!

This is an amazing achievement, especially as she has only been competing nationally for just under two years.

Massive congratulations Katie!

Science Garden

The science garden has produced a medley of produce this year including pumpkins, tomatoes and a variety of flowers. Most of this has been with the help of the Science Garden Club members, who have busily maintained the garden and are now enjoying the fruits of their labour. If you are a student with an interest in growing your own food or cultivation then come along on Monday and/or Wednesday lunchtimes and get stuck in.

C Jackson & D Lovegrove

News in Brief

Vouchers for Schools

Many thanks to those of you who sent in Tesco and Sainsbury's vouchers last term. The Tesco vouchers were used to 'buy' three Canon cameras for Resources which are regularly used by our students to record their work. Although we don't have a local Sainsbury's, we still managed to collect enough vouchers for a three-man tent, which has been given to the Duke of Edinburgh co-ordinator for use by those who elect to undertake the D of E award.

We look forward to your continued support later this academic year when the schemes restart.

Learning Support

is pleased to welcome 5 new TAs: Mrs Clark, Miss Crook, Mrs Khoo, Mr Marsh and Mr Mayes.

The department will again offer a number of interventions in basic skills, social skills and curriculum support. Parents of students who might benefit from these programmes will receive information in the coming weeks.

If you have concerns about your child's additional needs, please contact Mrs A. Brodie (SENCo) by email or telephone.

Cycle Safety

We are very pleased that so many of our students are cycling to and from school but we need to emphasise that students have a responsibility to help ensure their own safety on journeys from and to home. Therefore, as a minimum requirement, students must:

- wear a cycle helmet;
- Be Seen – wear reflective clothing and/or reflective strips - Be Safe;
- uphold basic requirements for safe and legal cycling.

Emergency Closure

We expect to operate similar procedures to last year for emergency closures, eg as a result of adverse weather conditions. While we have established the possibility of contacting parents by email or text message, this may only be possible if particular staff can get into school. For that reason, local radio is likely to be the principal means of communication. We may also use the front page of our website.

The decision on whether or not to close has to be based on the likelihood of sufficient staff being able to get to work for us to be able to deliver a reasonable curriculum. Because many staff live some distance from the Academy, conditions in St Neots are usually not the determining factor.

These are the key points from previous issued advice:

Emergency Closure Before School

If the school is to be closed, we inform the local radio station at the earliest opportunity. Our main line of communication will be through Radio Cambridgeshire on 96.0 FM.

Closure During the Day

It is essential that each student knows what she or he is to do if the school has to close suddenly in the interests of safety. The temptation is to say, "Wait at school until I can pick you up." However, if roads are blocked or trains cancelled, this option can be far from satisfactory. For most young people, waiting for you to pick them up in the warmth of a friend's home in St Neots where telephone contact is relatively easy and there could be a bed for the night is a far better prospect.

The health and safety of students will always be our first consideration. However, experience tells us that students get very anxious indeed when they are left in school. The situation of staff who stay behind to look after students but who also have families waiting for them needs to be borne in mind.

Sometimes coach companies ask for students to be released early – a request that has to be met in fairness to the drivers and the majority of students living in a particular location. In this case, students need a refuge near home if they cannot gain access to their own house.

Please could every parent discuss with their son or daughter what you wish them to do in the kind of circumstances outlined above.

Behaviour Management Policy

We are required to draw the attention of students and parents/carers to the Academy's Behaviour Management Policy.

A copy of the policy is available via our website by following the links for Parent Information and then Policies. The policy on *Preventing and Responding to Bullying* is also available via this route.

Please note that the Policy is under revision as part of our regular review of all such documentation. We anticipate that the new version will be available by the end of November.

Paper copies of policies can be made available on request.

Open Evening

Our annual Open Evening for parents considering Longsands Academy as the secondary school for their son/daughter is on Tuesday 18 October 2011. Many students from across the Academy will be returning in the evening to assist in subject areas and act as guides.

Timings of the day will be adjusted as follows:

1.00 pm	:	lunch available and formal end of school
1.20 pm	:	buses arrive
1.30 pm	:	buses depart
1.30 – 3.30 pm	:	study facilities available
5.45 pm	:	student helpers in position
6.15 pm	:	start of Open Evening
8.30 pm	:	end of Open Evening

The Academy's Published Admission Number (the limit of its intake) is 290 students.

Students' Personal Belongings/Entertainment Equipment

Students are responsible for their personal belongings. Expensive items including large sums of money or personal entertainment equipment should not be brought into school.

The Academy is unable to take responsibility for the loss or theft of any item of personal property or sums of money. We therefore must strongly recommend that students do not bring valuable items or large sums of money to school.

Personal entertainment systems (including Ipods, MP3/4 players etc.) and mobile phones can be particularly disruptive to learning. Students can expect to have any equipment confiscated if any learning activity is put at risk. To avoid this, no such equipment is to be used in lessons.

Students wearing headphones or distracted by personal music and/or mobile phones at breaks and/or between lessons may not be able to hear instructions or pay due care and attention to the needs of others in the vicinity. For these reasons students choosing to use such equipment in corridors at these times can also expect to have it confiscated.

Personal items are not covered by our insurance.

DESTINY AFRICA IN ST NEOTS

It is with great excitement that the St Neots Learning Partnership will host a workshop with the world class African choir 'Destiny Africa' at Ernulf Academy on Tuesday 20 September to start our annual Arts Synergy Programme for this academic year.

Children of 'Destiny Africa' will be working with students from the partnership during the morning in a singing workshop to prepare for an evening concert to be staged in the Ritchie Hall at Longsands Academy at 7.00 pm. Students from Longsands, Ernulf and Eynsbury Primary school will participate in the performance.



The production is billed as an exciting and uplifting musical production featuring the gripping stories of the children who have been displaced by war and poverty in Africa. These children have now found a new life at Kampala Childrens' Centre in Uganda, and their performance will be filled with contemporary and traditional songs, drumming and dances.

At lunchtime, students from both academies and the 'Destiny Africa' Choir will perform in the centre of St Neots to promote the evening concert.



Advance tickets for the evening concert by 'Destiny Africa' are available from the Longsands Academy Finance Office. Adults £5.00 and Concessions £3.00 on 01480 353353.

Have a look at the PowerPoint presentation on the St Neots Learning Partnership website to learn about the children from Destiny Africa.

