

insight

Newsletter • Issue 6 • December 2008

Welcome

Welcome to our 6th INSIGHT magazine. It seems a long time since our last edition and I am mindful that there are several items of good news that you may not have been aware of. Our year 11 boys performed exceptionally well in their examinations, exceeding all their targets. The overall headline figure was an amazing 57% of students achieving 5+A- C grades, with several students gaining A and A*grades in a variety of subjects. This result was almost double the targets set and the governors and staff were very pleased. Alongside the exceptional KS3 and Post 16 results this was a very good year for academic achievement at the Academy.*

Our Sports teams have continued to perform strongly in the leagues and our dance group has been successful in several competitions. The sports faculty will give a full report in the next edition. Enterprise week was also very successful and students in all year groups impressed staff and visitors with the progress they have made in developing their enterprise skills.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Carolyn English – Principal



The student Commission on Learning



On Tuesday 18th November a group of 10 students went to Harris Academy East Dulwich for the launch of the Student Commission. The intention of the Student Commission is to improve learning throughout the Harris Academies initially and then to spread this good practice globally. On this day we all met in the

dining area and set off for East Dulwich where on arrival we were allocated to different groups. Working with students we did not know enabled us to interact and work collaboratively. Dr. Moynihan came to address us and explain why the commission is so important as it has been set up to improve the learning experience



of students within the Academies and eventually, internationally. We have participated in assemblies all week and have already collected several sackfuls of suggestions from students on how they learn best. We are very excited about the prospect of visiting 10 Downing Street, America and Sweden in the near future and in fact we are meeting with Sarah Brown, the PM's wife in two weeks time, so watch this space!

Deniz Arslan year 10a

A Focus on the Curriculum

Faculty Fridays

From period 3 to the end of the Academy day all students in years 7-10 are engaged in learning new skills outside of the usual curriculum. Here are a few of those activities:

Geography

You will recall events of Boxing Day 2004 with a vividness likened only to the death of Princess Di and 9/11. Yet students in year 8 were only nine when South East Asia was plunged into chaos with sickening speed comparable only to the Tsunami that caused it. As a department it is our responsibility to raise the students' awareness of such key events. Faculty Fridays offer an opportunity to break from the sometimes limited horizons of the classroom objective, allowing teachers to spend a half day with one group to widen their understanding.

Students responded very well to the task of creating a presentation about the disaster, and in doing so developed their ICT proficiency as well as skills of social interaction through group work. Presentations followed, with classes critically assessing their peers. "The presentations were hard at first but you kind of get into it and forget people are watching" said one apprehensive student. In doing so, students developed the CORE skills that form the nuclei of Harris Academy discourse: Commitment, Optimism, Resourcefulness and Enterprise.

"I enjoyed learning something new about a place I probably won't get to see"
(year 8 student).



English

Yr 7 debating day:

After entering the Multi-function Hall in period 3, Year 7 were greeted by a panel of teachers chaired by Mr. Healey. The students were taken through a presentation on the uses of debating in the wider world, the skills needed for a good debate and ways in which these skills can be used in the workplace. The teachers then staged a mock debate, taking on the roles of Jessica (a year 7 girl), her friend and her parents. An organised debate was then held between the two sides. The following sessions allowed students to learn the terms used in debates, some rhetorical techniques and practise speaking to the class. Students were placed in teams and given current topics to debate. Each team prepared their speeches and in the last session, every student took part in a debate chaired by their teacher. The students all felt enthused by their foray into the world of organised debates!

Yr 8 Media Master class:

Students selected for the Year 8 Media master class on creating a newspaper were met with the theme tune of BBC news 24 as they entered the room. The class was split into 4 news teams responsible for producing a newspaper by the end of the day. An editor and sub-editor were elected by their teams, and from that moment were the link to the publisher (the teacher) for the rest of the day. Sessions included researching the stories, designing a logo, page layout and final presentation. There was even a moment where editors were called in to reveal a breaking news story to include in the paper. Students revealed a real enthusiasm for the enterprise skills they used and developed whilst working efficiently in teams. The eventual papers were of the highest standard yet.





Cross Federation Activities

Design & Technology: The Great Egg Race' Challenge

Eight of our most talented students recently took part in 'The Great Egg Race' Design Technology competition at Harris City Academy Crystal Palace. They rose to the challenge of the 'Wacky Races' theme producing excellent products in a range of DT disciplines, including a Penelope Pitstop cake in Food, logos for Graphics, and a wind powered car in Resistant Materials, all in the space of just a few hours.

We were up against four other Harris Academies and all students showed a great enterprising team spirit. Although we did not win the challenge, a thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all, proving to be a very successful enrichment activity.

Art & Design: Anthropomorphism



Over the course of the day, year 7 students learnt all about anthropomorphism. This is when we give non-humans such as animals human characteristics. For example, a cat can be angry, but a cat cannot be sarcastic. However, in cartoons, cats are able to show human emotions or facial expressions such as this.

Once the students had learnt about anthropomorphism, (and how to pronounce it), they got started on their masks. They made their masks out of plates, and loads of different materials such as fake fur, tinsel, cotton wool and glitter.

All the year 7s got together at the end of the day, and showed off their masks in the Multifunction Hall. The masks were a great success, and some were very funny. We had the aforementioned sarcastic cats, a bull with a nose ring (a punk bull?), laughing pandas and loads of cheeky animals sticking their tongues out.

The masks will be used for a "Carnival of the Animals" scheme of work, for Drama and Music, in the Spring term.

Science

How does the design of a wind turbine affect the amount of energy it generates?

The science department recently had their first Faculty Friday with our new year 7's. The focus of the day was for students to work in teams, just as real scientists do, to design an effective wind turbine.

The day started with students researching energy resources and how energy is transformed into electrical energy. They also looked at the consequences of leaving TVs on stand-by and music playing when they are out! They were shocked at the rise in bills and were also able to relate it to wasting energy.

Students then researched some of the issues involved in building wind turbines – location, wind speed, design etc. Each team was given some straws, card, blu-tak, sellotape and wooden splints. They were not allowed to use anything else to build their turbine. At the end of the day, each class had a competition to see which design generated the most electrical energy. Students worked brilliantly on their designs and you can see one of the winning designs in the photo below.



28th Nov - 'Bike Day'



This day was organized by Mr. Harding to raise awareness of the benefits of cycling. The first 100 students to ride their bikes to school were given a bike lock free of charge. Students were also taught how to repair and maintain their bikes; design clothes for cycling in and how to stay safe on the road.

Two companies, BMX and 'Rollapaluzza' also presented workshops on the day.

'Thanks for inviting us to the Harris Academy... had a great day, lots of enthusiastic students. The two top girls times are amazing for this age group, they should definitely be encouraged to cycle.'



On 22nd October, eleven students from Years 8 and 9 along with Mr Hainey and Ms Moya-Sanchez left the Academy to go on the trip of a lifetime to China. It was an 11 day cultural visit being run by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. The students on the visit all study Mandarin and the aim was to encourage them to develop a deeper understanding of the Mandarin language alongside exposure to the brilliant culture and amazing sites that China has to offer. We arrived in Beijing after a 9 hour flight and were taken to our fantastic Hotel. The next day we attended an opening ceremony in Hanban to launch the visit. The first few days included visits to the Olympic sites where we watched a music extravaganza inside the "Cube", we visited the Great Wall and the Forbidden City. We then flew to Jiangsu (a two hour flight) where we were based for 5 days. We all attended the No 1 Middle School each day, where school starts at 7 am and finishes at 5 pm!! Our students benefited from lessons in Calligraphy, Chinese Art, Shadow boxing, Diabolo, Ping Pong as well as traditional lessons in language and Chinese characters.

Students also spent an afternoon and evening with a Chinese host family where they spent time putting into practice their new language skills and Chinese etiquette. It was an amazing 5 days at the No 1 Middle School and one of the many things we remember was the fact that the 2000 students that attended the school had morning exercises on the sports field every day, rain, hail or shine for 25 minutes. The sight of seeing everyone lined up and exercising in perfect timing was a sight to behold. Our students also had to take part. The food during the visit was an experience especially breakfast where rice, noodles and deep fried chicken are the staple diet of a Chinese breakfast. The Chinese hosts were so hospitable in all our Hotels, the Chinese people were fascinated to see British tourists especially with the hair styles of our students which they had never seen before!

We then flew back to Beijing for another 2 nights where we had a Cultural tour including visits to the Summer Palace, Tiananmen Square and the Temple of Heaven. By the 2nd November when we flew back on the 11 hour flight, we were all exhausted. It was a fabulous trip that we all thoroughly enjoyed. Our students were so well behaved that the host school and the other schools actually commented about how our students got involved in every activity. We hope to have another Chinese visit next year so watch this space.

Mr S Hainey – Vice Principal

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Spring Term 2009

January

Monday 5th: First day of term 8.30 am start

Wednesday 14th: Yr 8 Parents' Evening 4.30 – 7.30 pm

February

Monday 2nd: Yr 12 Enterprise Day

Wednesday 4th: Year 11 Parents' Evening 5.00 – 7.00 pm

Friday 13th: Staff INSET Academy closed

Monday 16th: Half Term begins

Monday 23rd: Academy opens 8.30 am start

March

Monday 2nd: Yr 12 Parents' Evening 4.30 – 8.00 pm

Wednesday 11th: Principal's breakfast

Wednesday 18th: Yr 9 Parents and Options Evening 4.30 – 7.30 pm early closure 1.00 pm finish

April

Friday 3rd: Celebration Assemblies early closure 1.00pm finish

Monday 20th: Return from Easter Holidays 8.30 am start

Term & Holiday Dates 2009/10

Autumn Term 2009

Term Dates: Friday 4th September
 Yr 7 Induction

Monday 7th September whole Academy returns

Half Term: Monday 26th October 2009 – Friday 30th October 2009

Spring Term 2010

Term Dates: Monday 4th January 2010
 Thursday 1st April 2010

Half Term: Monday 15th February 2010 – Friday 19th February 2010

Summer Term 2010

Term Dates: Monday 19th April 2010
 Thursday 23rd July 2010

Half Term: Monday 31st May 2010 – Friday 4th June 2010

The Academy will also be closed on May Bank Holiday Monday 3rd May 2010 and Monday 31st May 2010