

CHEW VALLEY SCHOOL SCHOOL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2008

Ofsted Endorses Chew Valley School's 'EXCELLENCE'!

The vast majority of categories used to judge a school's performance were deemed "outstanding" in the latest Ofsted inspection of the School. Of 39 judgements, 27 were graded outstanding, whilst 12 were graded good in an unstintingly laudatory report. Students and staff alike were praised by the inspection team which concluded that the school "enables students to achieve well academically and provides for their personal development and well-being, which are outstanding."

The report pays tribute to the "confident, courteous and considerate young people whose contribution to school life is extensive." It also praises the fact that the school "works extremely well to ensure that any barriers to learning experienced by students are recognised and removed as far as possible." The Ofsted team were particularly impressed by the School and Sixth Form Councils, commenting that in their many inspections they had never seen anything comparable.

They highlighted the "outstanding curriculum" which not only enables students to succeed but also offers numerous opportunities to enrich and extend. The range of extra-curricular activities available to students is immense. The school's specialist status was described as having "a palpably strong impact on school life." The inspectors identified the students' "positive attitudes to learning" and described their behaviour as "excellent." In a school where the examination results are consistently well above the national average, inspectors sought to praise the performance of students with special educational needs. The progress they make was pleasingly recognised as "outstanding."

Her Majesty's Inspector, Wiola Hola, paid tribute to pastoral and curriculum leaders in the school and concluded: 'The school is extremely well led and managed'.

The report runs out of superlatives in describing Chew Valley's "outstanding sixth form". It praises the way that students are enabled to flourish both academically and personally and warmly endorses the exciting building plans for the new Sixth Form and Community Centre which will open in September. The report concludes that sixth formers "benefit from outstanding teaching, an excellent curriculum and very high levels of care, guidance and support."

The Ofsted Report reflects the ethos and character of our excellent school. But we won't be complacent. We want to challenge students and staff to even higher levels of achievement, without compromising the secure and affirming environment the school provides.

Head's Parachute Jump Postponed

Mr Mallett's parachute jump in aid of the 6th Form Block has been postponed because of lack of sponsorship. The jump scheduled for January 16th will not now go ahead because the amount of sponsor money raised so far has fallen very far short of the £5000 target – representing around £5 per pupil. The total raised to date is £775.

A renewed appeal will be made in the New Year with a view to the parachute jump taking place in March. Mr Mallett commented, "I'm relieved and disappointed in about equal measure! I wasn't looking forward to it – but was determined to overcome my cowardice for the good of the school. The credit crunch and gloomy economic prospects are making fund-raising very difficult indeed. Let's hope some New Year optimism will galvanise pupils and parents to meet the target so I'm compelled to make the drop!"

School Society News

Dear Parents,

We have recently joined a brilliant scheme to raise funds for our school.

If you shop online, the purchases you make could raise significant money for the school, on a regular basis, and it won't cost you anything extra at all!

PTA Planet is a website gateway to 800 or more online stores, like Amazon, Marks & Spencer, Next, Boden, Boots, PC World, Halfords and lots more of the places you may already shop. You simply click through to the stores of your choice through the PTA Planet website, and every time you make a purchase, we make a little money! You can even use it for your weekly food shop online.

It's really easy to shop *as you don't have to log in or enter any codes*. Every time you click on a link, any purchase made is tracked and the commission goes into the PTA Planet fund to be shared with all PTA Planet member schools.



Your support is the key to making this scheme work for us so please visit www.ptaplanet.com and check it out, and then just get in the habit of using it every time you shop online.

If we all do this, we can raise some very easy funds for the benefit of our children, at no cost to ourselves! What a great idea!

Many thanks for your continued support,
The School Society.

School Society Events

Many thanks to everyone who supported School Society's recent fundraising events. The Craft Fair held on 18th November raised £421 while the Christmas Bingo at the beginning of December raised just over £1,000. Thank you also to all the parents who kindly donated items for the prize hampers for the Bingo.

Events planned for next year include a Quiz on 11th March and a Race Night on 30th April. More details nearer the time.

Music Department News

Autumn Extravaganza Concert - 25th November 2008

The Autumn Extravaganza was a fabulous success and showcased the amazing talents of the many Chew Valley School students who took part. It was the first performance for the newly formed Chew Valley Orchestra, directed by Rhian Gordon. The Youth Choir, led by Beth Morgan, involved over fifty students and

was a breathtaking performance as was the ever popular Soul Band under the musical direction of Paul Stinchcombe. The evening was rounded off with a fantastic performance also by Rob Balderstone and Jon Cooke. The concert was extremely well attended, with over 200 hundred people in the audience.

BANES Christmas Showcase at the Bath Forum - 5th December 2008

Thirty Chew Valley School students represented the school in various groups including; The Symphonic Wind Band, String Orchestra, Cantilina and of course the Chew Valley Soul Band. Particular mention should go to Josh Tyler, Ed Brown and Henry Russell for their participation in several of the above ensembles and stunning vocal performance, in the Soul Band, by Maria Montague.

A Level String Quartet Masterclass

Four teachers from BANES Music Service made up the quartet and were as follows; John and Ann Fowles, Rachel Bowers and Louise Jenkins. They spent a morning assisting 6th Form music students on their coursework. This enabled the students to hear their own compositions played professionally and was a vital way of assessing their own work.

Beatbox with Gavin Tyte

Workshops were held with Year 9's and a session was given in Assembly for Year 8's and Year 9's. A brilliant demonstration of Beatboxing was given by Gavin Tyte which the students were thrilled with.

Dance News

On Wednesday 22 October the GCSE and A Level Dance students took part in a workshop led by a member of the Rambert Dance Company Education Department. We were taught two dance phrases from the piece Swansong which we are currently studying. In groups we created movement based upon the choreography we learnt earlier in the day. We learnt a lot about technique and got a better understanding of the professional dance works.

On Thursday 6 November we went to see Rambert Dance Company perform at the Theatre Royal, Bath. They performed three dances including Swansong. It was really enjoyable to see parts we had performed during the workshop and everyone found it interesting to see it performed professionally.

Thea House 10A

Spanish Students' University Visit

On November 26th, as AS Level Spanish students, we visited the Department of Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin American Studies at the University of Bristol.

We were welcomed by Rogellio Vallejo, the director of TALLER, a project involving learning languages through drama and art, followed by an interesting conversation about our studies and the forthcoming Latin Film Festival. We then participated in a session of Language Through Theatre with second year university students. Our first activity was an amusing pronunciation exercise where we practised a variety of different Spanish sounds and lastly, saw a sneak preview of what will be their final assessed performances.

As new members of the class, we felt welcomed and comfortable and, as language learners, we felt encouraged to continue Spanish and intrigued by how a university class functions. We were also impressed by the level of ability of the students and how they worked together and helped one another in the learning process.

After our visit, we ended the day with a tapas meal at the El Puerto restaurant along the waterfront. This was a new experience as we all tried a variety of native foods to round off an interesting day.

We look forward to returning to the University in the Spring term to see the students' final presentations.

Sophie Webb, Megan Chastney & Beth Perry

Year 7 News

As Christmas approaches, the year 7's are becoming increasingly excited. Now that they have been at Chew Valley for two terms, most of them have well and truly found their feet!

We have entered a national competition run by the Times newspaper. It is called "The Times Spelling Bee". All year 7 students have taken part in an inter-form spelling bee and our school grand final will be held in January. This will decide our final team of three students (plus one reserve) who will go through to the local heats and then (hopefully) to the regional heats and possibly the grand final to be held in London next June.

As well as the sports clubs that have been established since September and take place during the lunch hour, we now have a thriving year 7 chess club each Thursday and there is also a drama club for the students each Wednesday.

Noah Tyler and Joe Torrible successfully auditioned for the Lower School production "Ubu Roi", originally written by Alfred Jarry. They have landed the lead role of "Pa Ubu" which they will be sharing. Many others in our year group will be involved in this exciting production.

Vicky Vipond (7L) finished fifth in the BANES cross-country trials and has been selected to represent BANES at the county championships in January. Well done Vicky!

Shannon Jones (7L) is currently performing in "Cinderella" at the Bristol Hippodrome and will also be performing in "Joseph" later on in January, also at the Hippodrome. We wish her every success!

A great many of our year group continue to get involved in many of the sporting activities on offer. Since the last newsletter the netball team have played three matches, winning twice and losing once. The "girl of the match" awards went to Josie Pemberton (twice) and Megan Abernethy-Hope.

Jemima Gregson, Lauren Weaver, Becky Fenn, Vicky Vipond, Josie Pemberton, Jess Lacey, Megan Abernethy-Hope, Ashleigh Ridding and Anna Moorhouse recently took part in the BANES district netball tournament and played to a really high standard. They finished as runners-up. Well done girls!!

The girls' hockey team have played once, winning away at King Edward's School. The "girl of the match" was awarded to Vicky Vipond.

The competition for house point certificates is hotting up with many, many students having been awarded bronze and silver certificates (for 25 and 50 house point respectively) and some students receiving gold and even platinum certificates. The commendations are also coming in thick and fast with many students being rewarded for all their hard work.

All year 7 students were invited to enter a competition as part of the "AntiBullying Week" initiative in November. They were asked to design a poster or write a poem. The winners were Rob Wembridge, Lauren Durnell, Shayna Chaplin, Georgina McKeown, Sam Hunt, Joanna Shaw, Leah de Boer and Vicky Vipond.

Our Christmas carol service will be held in Chew Magna church on Tuesday December 16th. This should be a lovely occasion

with students having the opportunity to contribute to the service by making a "Christmas wish".

Year 8 News

All students received their Monitoring reports earlier this term. It appears that the students are on target and have settled into Year 8 courses very well.

House matches this term will see the Rugby and Netball teams in action so pray for dry and crisp weather so that they can have the support they need from the whole year group. The teams have had a successful season against other schools so far with record wins for the Rugby team and solid performances for the Netballers as well. Let's hope this continues next term with the other teams.

Joe Martin in 8C has been involved in a scheme at the Arnolfini in Bristol. For the last three weeks Joe and students from other schools in the area have been attending the Arnolfini on Saturday mornings. This has been to complete a project on Supertoys. It has been a challenging and wonderful experience for all involved and the exhibition is still running at the time of going to print. There is also a website where all of us can find out about the Supertoys project....well worth a visit to either venue! The feedback from the Arnolfini has been excellent for all involved.

On the last afternoon of term this year, Year 8 will be attending the Sixth Form review for the first time. This is a tradition that is well established here in school and an entertaining way to finish the year. Of course good behaviour is the order of the day at the end of term so that both staff and students can enjoy one another's company.

Year 10 News

There were an impressive 26 students present at the first training session for the Ten Tors competition, a hike in the Brecon Beacons. Miss Hibbert has the unenviable job of paring these down to the final six for the actual competition in May – thanks to the many staff who gave up a day to lead the expedition.

Talking of expeditions, there are ten or so intrepid explorers who have committed to spend four weeks in rural Zambia in the summer of 2010. Expertly guided by Miss Straw, they are currently engaged in a multitude of fund-raising events for the trip. The first cake sale raised an impressive £133.75 in just ten minutes. Students will also be packing Christmas bags at Marks and Spencer in Broadmead, selling and delivering Christmas cards in school and organising a disco next term. A large part of the challenge is to organise themselves and to raise the money independently. There will certainly be some serious growing-up over the next 18 months!

Tom Hope spent half term in Brighton, recording a dramatisation for Radio 4. Look out for 'Coram Boy' in the listings around Christmas – the character Thomas Ledbury is our Tom! April Wilson represented her country at the Northern Ireland International Horse Show, and England won the competition in the Mounted Pony Games. Meanwhile, Lucie Minty travelled to Shropshire to represent King Edmund Acro-Gymnastics Club in a national competition. The sport combines dance, tumbling and partnering skills that involve dynamic (aerial) and balance (posed) movements. Lucie will be competing in Portugal in the Spring.

In amongst all of the frenetic activity, we managed to squeeze in our first GCSE Science modules exams, retained our cool after

the exam board misprinted the answer sheets, and now look forward to the results in January.

On the sporting front, there have been 'Player-of-the-Match' awards to Jason Foster, Calum Davis and Frank Read in rugby; and to Claire Newman in hockey. The most exciting match came in the County Football Cup at Backwell School. We were behind three times, drawing level at 3-3 right at the end of extra time, two of the goals from Tom Blanchard. In the gathering gloom the penalty shoot-out went to sudden death, Brandon Marshall pulling off several fine saves. It fell to Tom Hunt to slot the winner and be swamped by his team-mates. The euphoria was not a good enough excuse for Mr Edwards to get lost on the way back (from Backwell, via Bristol?) Well done to Emily Abrahams, Mollie Stone, John Pearce, Jordan Griffin and Jamie Batt who ran mature races in the district cross-country event at Bath University.

Three students gained valuable experience in the English-Speaking Union competition at Clifton College. Will Saunders argued forcibly (and amusingly) that country life is overvalued, while Jim Huntley and Kit Lawson-Johns supported a motion that the gun culture is impossible to stop. A big 'Thank you' to Ms Powell for organising the team – they will be even better in Year 11.

We are a very musical year group. Lorna Inglis, Kieran Jay, Harry Pledge and Tom Dean had a unique opportunity to work with a leading pianist from Birmingham Conservatoire, who has performed as recitalist and concerto soloist worldwide in many major concert halls. They composed a brand new piano concerto which was then performed in the Guild Hall at Bath. Year 10 have also contributed hugely to the school orchestra and to the Soul Band which performed so memorably at the Bath Forum recently.

As ever, the year group has been so active in so many ways (with love seeming to be flourishing too, and it's not even Spring yet!) They need the Christmas break to recharge their batteries. Happy Christmas to all students and the parents of Year 10.

Year 11 News

Year 11 are currently busy taking their GCSE mock exams. Hopefully the results will reflect their hard work.

Three Year 11 pupils Adam Rush, Stuart Rush and Lucy Blackwell have been awarded the Princess Diana Award for Children. This will be presented to them in an assembly in the New Year.

Chew Valley Sixth Form is OUTSTANDING

There are so many things to celebrate about the recent Ofsted inspection that it seems a little invidious to single out any individual aspect. However, to have the Sixth Form described as "Outstanding" is a magnificent accolade for the school. It reflects the quality of our students, not just as learners, but also as young people with the wider skills and values to make an impact in life.

Post 16 education poses many challenges for students fresh from the rigours of GCSE. They have to make the difficult transition from being teacher-led to being accomplished independent learners. This not only requires academic ability but also confidence and maturity. The success of the Sixth Form confirms that our students possess all of the qualities needed to achieve the "outstanding" grading awarded by the HMI.

The different relationship that exists between the students and their teachers is key to their success. The Ofsted Report draws attention to the "outstanding teaching, an excellent curriculum and very high levels of care, guidance and support".

The leadership potential of our Sixth Formers is clearly reflected in the acknowledgement that "students play a hugely valuable part in school life as a whole, working at times with younger students, and enhancing school development and leadership through the school councils".

The new Sixth Form Centre, due to open in September 2009, will be a more fitting base for the senior students in school. These young men and women have so much talent and contribute so much to the school community as a whole. It is so pleasing and rewarding to have their achievements so highly praised by an HMI who has the opportunity to evaluate one institution against another. The opening line to the Report states:-

"In this outstanding Sixth Form, students flourish in many ways, academically and personally".

I am certain that we will continue to hear so much about so many in the future.

J C Hack

Senior Maths Challenge

Year 13 maths students took part in the recent UK Senior Maths Challenge joined by volunteers from year 12. Six students received national awards. Special congratulations to Matt Eagon from Year 12 who was awarded Gold and "Best in School". Peter Kelly achieved the best result in his year group. Well done to everyone who took part.

Year 13 Drama – Endgames Festival

Our Year 13 Drama students were recently asked to close the 'Endgames' festival at Bath's Egg Theatre. The week-long festival was a showcase of the best theatre, devised by 'A' level students from across the region.

The project began with a professional director spending the morning in school with our students as they started the devising process. He helped the group to shape their ideas and suggested ideas to explore in more detail. We then had 2 further sessions at the Egg working with a range of technicians, actors and directors who helped the group to prepare for their final performance. This was all paid for by our Specialist Status as a Performing Arts School.

The day of the final performance required us to be at The Egg nice and early for a technical and dress rehearsal where, again, feedback was given on what was now clearly a very strong piece of theatre. We then had our own rehearsal and dressing room for the rest of the day.

Being asked to close the festival was a great honour and a reflection of the standard of the performance but it did mean the group had to wait until 9.00pm before performing. Nerves started to creep in but the group remained focussed and, once on stage, were a credit to themselves and to the school. Final feedback from the panel of experts reinforced this with one commenting that the piece was, 'Stunning'.

Thanks to all the staff, students and parents who came to support the project and congratulations to all of the performers and technicians involved.

Contacts for the School Society

Joint Chair -- Hannah Curry (01275 474166) and Carol House (01275 472245); Vice Chair - Mary Douglas-Jones (01761 490473); Secretary - Anne Collier (01275 331227); Newsletter Editor – Liz Dagger (01761 453210) & email liz@lowernorthend.wanadoo.co.uk