



# Oakbank Newsletter

## Principal's Update

It has certainly been a very busy term for all of us at Oakbank. It seems a long time ago that we welcomed the new Year 7 students to the school. During those first few days of term there was some anxiety and uncertainty but now our Year 7s are full of confidence and have already become established Oakbank students!

We have been working very hard with our Year 11s this term, making sure that everything is in place for them to have great success in their GCSEs at the end of the year. You can see below the great success of the Hire Power Day, alongside this we also held a Careers Fair at which employers, FE colleges and 6<sup>th</sup> forms were able to meet the Year 11s and help them make decisions about their future pathways. As well as helping them to consider what they are doing after their GCSEs we have also provided lots of support to help them with their GCSEs, with extra after school classes in English, maths and science, as well as for their other option subjects. We have also given every student access to GCSEpod, a fantastic revision resource which you can find out about later in the newsletter and is available for every year group.

In the first few weeks of term it was a great pleasure to meet with many of you during our Meet the Tutor Evenings. Having good relationships between the school and parents is very important and these evenings gave us all the chance to meet one another with the common aim of helping your children flourish and succeed,

In order to further encourage and develop the partnership between parents and the school I will be holding the first Parent Forum on Thursday November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. During this evening we will be asking you how you want to be communicated with and what information you need to best support and help your child. We will also be discussing the role of homework and asking your opinion of the amount and type of homework you want for your child. If you are interested in coming along to the forum please do, all will be very welcome. I also continue to hold weekly parent surgeries on Friday afternoons from 3pm. If you would like to meet me to discuss any specific issues please contact Jo Rutland to make an appointment.

This week it has been very pleasing to see how well the Year 11s have been approaching their first mock exams. The mocks continue after half term so they will all need to be revising hard over the holiday, a perfect chance to use GCSEpod. I am looking forward to seeing the results of these exams so that we can provide the tailored support every Y11 will need to be successful in the summer.

As you can see from everything else in the newsletter, it has been a very busy start to the year and we are now looking forward to a well deserved half term rest, so that we are all set and ready for an equally busy and exciting new term.

## Hire Power Day



On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October dozens of volunteers, from a range of different businesses and charities, gave their time to give Year 11 students the experience of being interviewed. The Year 11s, smartly dressed and with CVs at the ready, were interviewed three times during the day with the interviewers giving individual feedback to show their strengths and

areas for development. All of the students showed themselves off to their very best and we had some fantastic feedback from the volunteers who were extremely impressed by everybody they interviewed, one student was so impressive he was offered a job on the day

## Year 9 and 10 Army Visit

Whilst the Y11s were busy being interviewed Year 9 and 10s faced a different challenge with a visit from the Army.

They faced a range of different challenges during the day all of which aimed to build their resilience and their team work. From being guided through a maze blindfolded to completing a giant Hanoi Tower the students were worked extremely hard.

The visit was a great success and we hope to welcome the Army back later in the year!



## The More Able Programme

The More Able programme at Oakbank this half term has got off to a flying start. The aim of the programme continues to be the nurturing of the aspirations and achievements of our most capable students whilst encouraging and supporting all students to strive for excellence in their studies.

In Year 7, our starting cohort of More Able students were identified and attended a meeting welcoming them to the programme.

In Year 8, a group of twelve students have begun studying after school on Thursdays for their Level 1 EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). If successful, these students will gain a qualification worth half a GCSE before they even start Year 10! There is still time to join the group if you feel your child would benefit from this experience. Please email Mr Ellis for further information (address below).

In Year 9, EPQ students have been working on their project presentations which will be delivered after half-term. Additionally, More Able students in Year 9 have been registering their interest for a mock trial competition and for a 5-year fully-funded scholarship at Wellington College. Also at Wellington College as part of Oakbank's ISSP (Independent State School partnership) membership, Year 9 students with a flair for Science, Maths and Technology attended a STEM enrichment day which included a talk from a University of Bristol lecturer and the chance to operate remote controlled robots by computer.

Finally, in Year 11, a group of students recently attended a day at Oxford University (University College) where they participated in a series of thought-provoking workshops, were given a tour of the facilities, and had the chance to meet and ask questions of university staff and current students.

Next half-term, the More Able programme will be organising its first round of excellence nominations for this year. All teachers are invited to nominate students that they feel are displaying excellence in their subjects. If a student receives four or more nominations, they are added to our More Able register. Please encourage your child to strive for excellence in as many subjects as possible. Additional information on how they can do this is available from your child's subject teacher or directly from Mr Ellis on this email address: [lellis@oakbank.education](mailto:lellis@oakbank.education)

## Music at Oakbank

Oakapella choir has formed in great strength and are sounding beautiful. The singers are busy rehearsing pieces for the winter concert on 18th December.

The Oakband have resumed rehearsals and are also looking forward to performing some music you might recognise from the big and small screen!

## Black History Month at Oakbank



Students at Oakbank recognised Black History Month with an Assembly on the Windrush generation of 1948 and the Windrush scandal of 2018. Students were encouraged to reflect on the feelings and experiences of the black people who arrived in Britain in 1948 to start a new life. They were told about the scandal of 2018 and the public outcry that followed. In both stories, students were asked to think about what it teaches them regarding our community at Oakbank and two key themes emerged: the importance and value of welcoming newcomers and the responsibility we have within a community to look out for one another.

## The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Training

On Thursday 3rd October, a group of Oakbank's Student Leaders attended the Diana Award Anti-Bullying Training at Yateley School. It was a dynamic day where students learned a lot about bullying, how to identify it and how to create a positive atmosphere in their school. The day empowered students to not only know more about bullying, but also to help and support their peers. Josh, a Year 11 Ambassador, said "the Diana Award training was good because we learned how to help other people and how to make them feel better."



Student Leaders are hoping that they can spread what they learned around the rest of Oakbank. Chris, Deputy Head Boy, said "We hope that we can educate everyone about the different types of bullying, as there is not just one type. We feel it's important to do that so that staff and students can spot it easily. If we can all spot it more easily we can manage it more easily and Oakbank will be safer and happier."

Our Student Leaders were very impressed with their experience of the day. Sophie, a Year 8 Prefect,

said "it showed me how, from just a few students, anti-bullying messages and strategies can spread around a whole school and incidents of bullying can go down."

The Diana Award is one of the leading organisations for anti-bullying training and this is the first year in the organisations 20-year history that they have been able to offer this training free of charge, as it is now sponsored and funded by Facebook.

## Eco-Club

We have recently established an Eco-Club at Oakbank and are working with students to lead a number of initiatives around the school site in order to make Oakbank more environmentally friendly. One of these schemes is to begin recycling for Terracycle, a scheme that is organised by one of our Year 7 parents. The scheme pays for the materials that we recycle and should bring in much needed additional funding to the school. Please check your emails for a comprehensive guide on what can be recycled and how we intend to launch this scheme to the Oakbank community.



Many of you have also signed up to the Wokingham Borough Green Redeem Scheme which rewards you for your recycling. I am pleased to announce that we have just received £247 from this scheme thanks to your contributions. If you are a Wokingham Resident and have not yet signed up to Green Redeem I would encourage you to go onto their website and join!

## World Mental Health Day



World Mental Health Day was on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October and we all wore yellow. Here is Mr Kidd with his Year 7 Class looking very yellow. Altogether we raised £462.30 for the charity!

## IMPORTANT – DIARY DATES

 November

4 <sup>th</sup> November	Return to School
4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> November	Y11 Mocks
11 <sup>th</sup> November	Armistice Day
12 <sup>th</sup> November	Study Sensei
13 <sup>th</sup> November	Y8 Zoolab
14 <sup>th</sup> November	Parent Forum 6pm
21 <sup>st</sup> November	Blood Brothers Drama trip – depart 5pm
29 <sup>th</sup> November	Inset Day

2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Inset Day
4 <sup>th</sup> December	Oakbank's Got Talent
18 <sup>th</sup> December	Carol Concert
20 <sup>th</sup> December	Last Day of Term – 3pm finish

6 <sup>th</sup> January	Return to School
-------------------------	------------------



**gcsepod**  
education on demand

## SUPPORT YOUR CHILD ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Your child's school has invested in the award winning resource, GCSEPod, to help your child reach their goals! Join the thousands of parents encouraging their children to use GCSEPod to support learning, homework and revision.

“  
I found GCSEPod especially useful to compliment my knowledge and I'm certain it helped me secure the grades that I have been so happy to receive.  
Student

“  
My daughter used GCSEPod for her GCSEs and was very successful with her results, she absolutely loved your Pods and this style of revising.  
Parent

“  
The correlation between success and failure was made almost 100% clear by the use of GCSEPod.  
Head of MFL, Yateley School

- ✓ Proven to increase results
- ✓ 25+ exam mapped subjects
- ✓ Available online and offline
- ✓ Audio visual content
- ✓ Builds confidence
- ✓ Use on the go, anytime, anywhere



For more information please visit [www.gcsepod.com/parents](http://www.gcsepod.com/parents)