



2020 Christmas Newsletter



We started the year with 26 students on roll, far less than our usual number due in no small part to lockdown and an academic year like no other. Fourteen weeks later, we end the term with four students having moved on to their forever schools and a further two on **managed moves**. We have also welcomed new students, ending the term with **36**, a more 'business as usual' number for this time of the year. It is always sad to see students leave, but it makes the work we do all the more worthwhile and we look forward to hearing of **our former students' continued success from our partner schools**.

A word about our recently departed Year 11 students, who are of course now greatly missed. Congratulations to them on their successes in their exams last summer and in particular, the mature way in which they approached the additional unprecedented **pressures this year**. It was sad **not to see them on results day, or to be able to hold a Leaver's event, however we look forward to the time** when we can invite them back and in the meanwhile we wish them continued success in whatever their future holds. We are always interested in how they are getting on and we are still here to help if needed.

Our priorities remain to provide the best possible quality of education and personal development support to each and every student for the duration of their time with us and to assist students in making successful next steps transitions when the time is right. The Foundry education offer includes a rich diet of social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences and it is our expectation and hope that all our students will be able to participate in and enjoy these enrichment opportunities. Whilst Covid has also had an impact on what we have been able to offer, this term has seen a very welcome return to offsite activities, including Windsor Castle, as well as more local trips, such as Swinley Forest for mountain biking and Dinton Pastures. As I write, preparations are also underway for our annual Christmas lunch. Once again, it will be a truly homemade affair albeit prepared and enjoyed in a more socially distanced way.

So to this term and the big news...in August 2019 planning permission was granted for the development of Brambles for Foundry College and the building has, after what has been both a challenging and exciting year, finally be handed over to us in its entirety. At long last we have the space and facilities with which to deliver the breadth of curriculum our students deserve. We are sure that you will join us in thanking the Local Authority for prioritising the needs of Foundry College students and making it happen.

On the staffing front, as we end the term, we say goodbye to Vicky Lyall, who after many years working with Wokingham's more vulnerable young people and being one of the Foundry founding members of staff, is hanging up her teaching shoes, retiring and slipping on her dog walking boots. In January we will also be bidding a fond farewell to Amy Gooding who joined us as a Teaching Assistant in the primary classroom before her talents were swiftly recognised and she moved on to join the Primary Outreach Team. Amy leaves us to work more locally, having moved to the Swindon area.

In September, we welcomed Vikki Comley to the Maths teaching team and two new colleagues in the Tutor team, Alison Sellers and Annette Kenney. All have hit the ground running and proved themselves valuable additions to the team. We have also recruited a new teacher, Lucy Fennell, to start January, who will be taking responsibility for delivery of Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education and to complete the Foundry team, a new Finance Manager, Raj Arava, who will be supported by Donna Munday in a handover capacity. Thank you Donna.

As we turn the corner into 2021 and reflect on the year that was 2020, a personal and deep felt thank you from me and the SLT to all our staff for everything they have done to support our young people and each other. I do hope all our students will return with high aspirations and a determination to make the very most of all we can offer. The Spring Term resumes for students on Tuesday 5th January 2020. We look forward to continuing to work closely in partnership with all our students and their families. May I take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Jay



Occupational Studies

For most of our Year 11 pupils, Occupational Studies continues to have a practical focus with most students continuing or having started new Level 2 units this academic year. A brand new unit working with soft furnishings and upholstery is proving popular and is using the concepts behind the BBC shows 'Money for Nothing' and 'The Repair Shop' as inspiration. The aim is to take one or two worn out pieces of furniture or other equipment and re-engineer them into new items incorporating at least one element of soft furnishing. These ideas can be further developed through the production of cushions or other elements of soft furnishing. So far students have created plans for, and started work on, bedroom chairs, bar stools and an outdoors sofa. The aim is to give the students an opportunity to plan and manage a project from start to finish alongside the idea of upcycling products which is very on trend, environmentally friendly and sustainable. Other students have been engaging in, and have almost completed, units based on developing horticultural skills. Most of our newer students are working towards the now well established, Plumbing and Hand Carpentry Skills Level 1 units, we hope that with the opening of the new workshop we will be also be able to offer courses in Floor and Wall Tiling and Introductory Plastering Techniques early in the New Year. As we move into Spring the plan is to get the students out and about, putting their new-found skills to use in the community.



Windsor Visit

3rd December 2020

Would we? Wouldn't we? The lockdown meant there was uncertainty over our planned trip to Windsor Castle. Eventually the day came, lockdown ended and we were off. The bus was sanitised and so were we. It was a wet and cold day. What could go wrong?

We arrived at the castle to find that everyone was waiting for us. Stewards were everywhere in black and red uniforms. Even the Queen was in residence, the royal flag flying. However, there was an unfamiliar quietness. We were offered guided tours for free and several times we were asked if we would like to use a room for lunch. Then all became clear. Foundry was the only school to have a visit that day. Other than a dozen or so other tourists and a few hundred official staff, we were on our own. The state rooms, the stairs, the artwork and all the history was ours to enjoy for the day.

Enjoy it we did. We were all amazed by the amount of gold leaf in the walls and ceilings and enjoyed spotting secret doors and passages. We discussed the feelings of awe that the castle inspired. We examined the weapons and Henry VIII's armour, then spent time gazing at the paintings of Holbein and Van Dyke. Often they were of faces we recognized from History lessons. The fabrics and the furniture all drew our attention and we wondered at the lifestyle of the people who lived here. We saw rooms where our present Queen and her sister Margaret played and the dining room where kings and presidents have sat and been entertained.

It was too cold and wet to spend much time in the grounds, but we did go in to see St George's Chapel, the resting place of kings and queens and other nobles. It was a quiet peaceful place but again it spoke to us of the power and wealth held by the rulers of the country.

Leaving the castle grounds, everyone thought it was well worth the visit and decided we would like to return, perhaps in warmer weather. We had a walk around the town to look at some of the facilities that are provided to tourists and considered how you may get a mortgage on a crooked, leaning house. A slightly late break for lunch in Pizza Express was very welcome and we sat for a while and enjoyed each other's company before it was time for the short journey home.



Science

With our fully equipped classroom, students at Foundry College are enjoying the opportunity to experience practical science. For many of our students there may be limited experience of experimentation in science and it has been wonderful to watch curious minds at work! Crucially, we are able to support our KS4 students with the required practical element of their curriculum which is so important when it comes to taking their GCSEs.

Some of the practical work done so far this term has included observing displacement reactions, experimenting with different rates of reactions, investigating the action of enzymes at different pH and temperature and predicting the products of electrolysis. Students have taken care in their practical work showing respect for their own and others safety and pride in the results of their investigations.

The full KS3 and KS4 science curriculum is available to ours students with KS4 studying the AQA trilogy course.

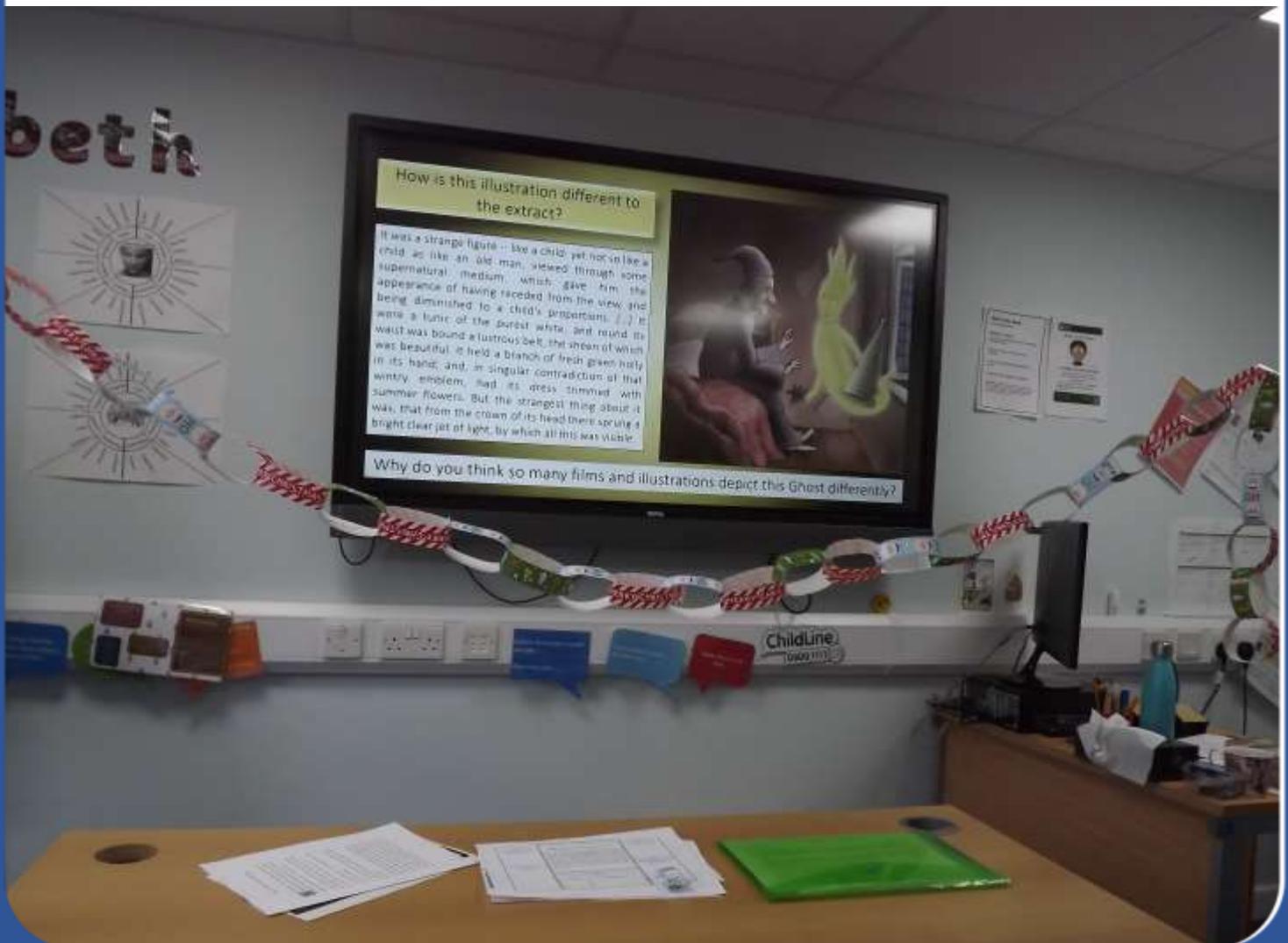


English Department

The English department has been very busy this term preparing our Year 11 students for mock exams and ensuring that they complete their coursework for their iGCSE. Meanwhile our Years 9 and 10 have completed a short course on a Christmas Carol which they thoroughly enjoyed, especially when they had to demonstrate their knowledge of the book by writing key moments, themes and quotations on paperchains.

One of the pieces of coursework we ask our students to complete, is a response to an article in The Times which suggests that Pupil Referral Units are nothing more than ‘gang grooming units’ and students who are sent to them are likely to experience; ‘... pupils lashing out at staff, swearing, going missing, setting off fire alarms, fighting, having to be restrained and roaming corridors’.

This task is always popular with our students as it angers them and they love to present their perspective. Their responses are always worth sharing and even though we included a student response in last year’s newsletter, we felt that the most recent piece of coursework on this topic deserves to be read by a wider audience.



Dear Ms Griffiths

I am writing in response to your article; 'The Scandal of School for Knife Crime' in which you stereotype Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) as 'gang grooming units'. Whilst reading your article I was outraged because your biased opinion about PRUs is going to influence readers into believing that students who come out of PRUs will be dead before their 25th birthday. Your statements present an extremely negative point of view and I would like to defend PRU pupils and explain my point of view from the perspective of a current pupil.

My experience of a PRU has been positive because I get a chance to build a relationship with my teachers therefore giving my teachers a chance to provide bespoke lessons. Consequently my learning is improving and my behaviour is calmer. Since I have been at my PRU I have never witnessed pupils lashing out at staff or swearing or any students going missing as you stated in your article. However, when I was in my mainstream school there were fights every day, the fire alarm was constantly being pressed, there were constant confrontations between staff and students and there was a lot of violent language. Clearly you have never even been in a PRU or a mainstream because if you had, you would have experienced the same things that I have outlined. Another reason my experience in a PRU has been more positive than in mainstream school is that in my PRU relationships with teachers are important so that there is an understanding of how students learn, which enables growth and as a result, students feel more comfortable working in the class therefore succeed. However, in my mainstream school relationships with the teacher were not seen as a priority and if a student had bad relationship with the teacher in most situations you would not be given a chance to fix the problem

The reason for my outrage is that your article neglects to talk about the positive results and outcomes of being in a PRU and instead showcases a negative point of view which stereotypes all PRUs as being 'sin bins for excluded children.' This article is an insult to both staff and students at PRUs and as previously stated, only presents one point of view. Also, whilst gang/drug involvement may be true for some students, the majority of other students are not involved and this is the case in multiple PRUs. However, in mainstream schools' students can be exposed to multiple gangs or other illegal activities that couldn't happen in PRUs due to a larger staff to student ratio. My experience in mainstream school has been negative because my mainstream lessons were often the same structure and didn't support my educational needs, in addition my mainstream teachers didn't focus on my actual aspirations whereas the teachers in my PRU focussed on each students' unique aspirations and this is the case for multiple students.

As a conclusion, I understand that there are rare cases PRUs can contain certain misunderstood children who have limited options other than to just join gangs or sell drugs but this is the outcome of out casting and stereotyping teenagers with difficulties. I believe your article is wrong and offensive.

Secondary news

Mountain Biking



Over the last six weeks a number of Foundry College students and staff have been attending Swinley Forest on their mountain bikes to enjoy the thrill of rushing through the trees and getting their wheels off the ground over the jumps. We have had a varied set of weathers which in previous years would have put our students right off but not these boys.

The poor weather has only increased their resilience and determination to enjoy themselves. This excellent attitude has seen the boys who have consistently attended, improve both their bike handling skills and their fitness. As a group we have explored the forest extensively trying out new trails as well as the more familiar. Whilst our biking skills have improved, our geography and map reading skills have not, resulting in us getting lost on a weekly basis with a mad dash to the buses at the end of the session.

Despite this, in the words of Harley, 'no matter what, we are pushing ourselves to get better. We take the time to help each other out along the way if our bikes need to be fixed or by waiting for each other. It's really good fun and we can't wait for the weather to be sunny when the trails are dry and we can really show off our skills and what we have learned.'

Origami

Tyler, who is tutored by myself and Alison Sellers, has discovered a love of origami. This came about when, on Teams, as a break between Maths and Literacy, I suggested an online Youtube tutorial on how to make a paper aeroplane. Tyler loved it and most sessions since, he has wanted to do some kind of origami. We recently had the opportunity to meet up in a park recently and fly our planes. Needless to say, Tyler won!

Julie Clays—home tutor.



Thank you!

I would like to say thank you to all the students who have participated in the LIFE programme. The new system of recording our work in the old fashioned way of using exercise books has proved to be positive, students have welcomed being able to look through their books and marvel at the amount of work they have achieved, so well done to you all. I recognise that it has been a difficult time for many of our students but I'm pleased with the various coping strategies they have adopted.

There are several highlights for me this term:

The way new students have been welcomed in by the already established students.

The wonderful smells emanating from Richard's Food Tech room.

The positive way in which each student has entered into the spirit of the mentoring sessions.

The unlikely scenario that new trainers will never get crease marks on the top and watching our students walk like robots for a few days after buying new trainers!

Enjoy your Christmas and remember those less fortunate than yourselves.

Vicky Lyall

Life programme.

Christmas Enterprise 2020

This year has seen Covid-19, Lockdown #1 and #2, Clap for Our NHS, changes in circumstance, and variations in community care, with ever-changing moods and changing directions for many.

As such, to end the Christmas term students were tasked with supporting a local charity through an enterprise project to share Foundry College goodwill and take part in positive festive fundraising at a time when many charities are really struggling.

The challenge was to work effectively as a team throughout the completion of ten tasks (+ 1 optional), with the primary aim to be the team that raised the most money for their chosen charity / created the most successful enterprise. Tasks included choosing a team name, designing a logo, deciding on the winning recipe/ decoration to market, writing a press release and undertaking a number of maths challenges along the way for good measure.





This year it was the turn of the secondary students to create a decoration for the Wokingham Town Centre Christmas tree, taking on the mantle from Primary. Three Art & Craft students were given the challenge and set about using their many talents to turn Foundry's new logo into a Christmassy design. There was a definite consensus for glitter to add some sparkle, and stars to represent our dreams and hopes. The end result was deemed to be a success and delivered to the Town Hall to be hung on the tree.

We received a lovely video from the Mayor showcasing our and other schools' decorations which can be viewed at www.wokinghamadvent.org.uk or www.facebook.com/wokinghamadvent, as well as a thank you letter and personalised card from the Mayor and Mayoress.

A big thank you from me to the three students, Maisie, Olivia & Leon and Mrs Eighteen for her huge support.



Outside Learning

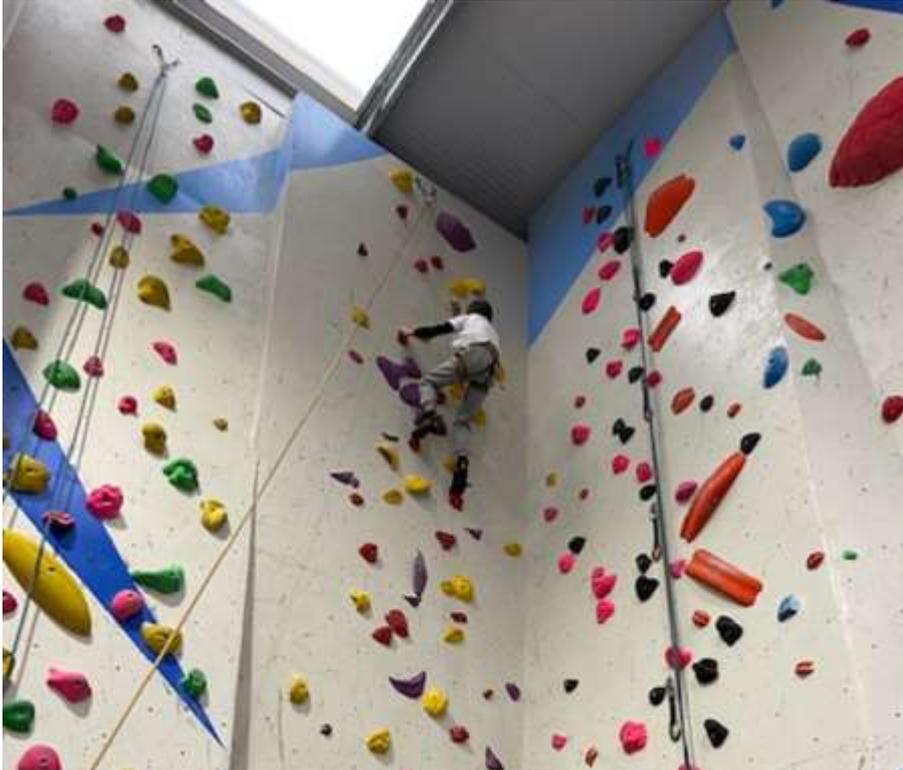
This term, team Primary have swapped learning in the classroom for learning outdoors at Dinton Pastures. Activities have included measuring the sizes of trees, tree rubbing, data collecting and team building activities. My personal favourite was when the boys were set the task of estimating how old a tree was using just a measuring tape. I know that sounds impossible but the boys found a way. Other memorable moments include walking around the lake completing a scavenger hunt with everyone in the team coming back exhausted, cold and muddy but with a real sense of achievement. Alongside the educational benefits of outdoor learning it has been wonderful to watch their social skills develop as they work and play together in the woods creating real life games of Minecraft even getting me to join in and role play Shrek, "Get out of my swamp!".

After all that hard work, it was crucial to sample our local parks finest play equipment, just to make sure it's up to scratch!



Oakwood Climbing Centre

The primary pupils have had great fun getting to try out a new skill at Oakwood Climbing Centre. The boys all put their Spiderman skills to the test when they got to enjoy roped wall climbing as well as bouldering. Now that indoor leisure facilities have reopened, we can't wait to get back there and scale those walls again!



Wokingham Library

Authors into School

Alli Bydon

As part of the 'Authors into School Programme', organised by Wokingham Library, the primary class took part in a virtual author visit. We listened to Alli Brydon talk about her first children's book, 'Myths and Legends' from which she read two stories from around the world. From Asia – Lord Ganesh from the Hindu pantheon and from Australia, The Rainbow Serpent.

Brian joined in with the illustrating activity and created his own god, 'Monkey Cat'. Well done Brian! This was a great opportunity during these strange times and it was wonderful to see so many Wokingham Schools taking part.





Primary Class Outside Fun!



Foundry Allotment

Foundry College are very fortunate to have an allotment in Wokingham.

The Primary children have worked tirelessly preparing the soil for planting and organising the raised beds. We are yet to sample our produce, however, we are looking forward to growing potatoes, leeks, carrots and we already have some herbs and radishes flourishing in the beds. We are very impressed with the way primary pupils have embraced and engaged with this activity. Foundry Farmers Market coming soon!





Master Chef in Primary

The primary children have been learning new cooking skills and produced some amazing dishes.

Brian especially enjoyed his full English breakfast!

TERM DATES

2020 – 2021

Spring Term 2021

Monday 4 January 2021 - Friday 12 February 2021

Half Term

Monday 15 February 2021 - Friday 19 February 2021

Monday 22 February 2021 – Thursday 1 April 2021*

Summer Term 2021

Monday 19 April 2021 - Friday 28 May 2021

May Bank Holiday - Monday 3 May 2021 - College Closed

Half Term

Monday 31 May 2021 - Friday 4 June 2021

Monday 7 June 2021 – Wednesday 21 July 2021*

* College finishes at 12.30pm on last day of term

Inset Days (College closed to pupils)

- Monday 4th January 2021
- Wednesday 21st July 2021