



Castlebrook High School



● INSPIRE ● CHALLENGE ● EXCEL ●

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Acting Headteacher: Mrs S. Armstrong BA (Hons), NPQH

31st March 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

Spring term 2017 has been very busy and very productive. The staff here at Castlebrook have been working extremely hard to build on our existing good practice and drive forward standards across the school.

Punctuality

Our determination to secure 100% punctuality continues. Consequently punctuality to school is rapidly improving. All learners must be in the school building with time to spare, to ensure that they are at their form rooms by 8.45 am at the latest. All learners who arrive after the pupil entrance closes automatically at 8.45 am will be placed in break time detention that same day. Please support us to secure this school target by the end of the Summer term.

Attendance

Our challenging school target of 100% attendance is one we are determined to meet. Please make every effort to ensure your child attends every single school day. Each day missed is valuable learning lost. Please book medical appointments whenever possible in holiday time. If this is unavoidable, please book them so am and pm registration marks are not affected.

Behaviour

The school's unrelenting commitment to secure outstanding behaviour is unwavering. Standards of uniform are extremely high and our learners are taking a real pride in their appearance. Congratulations and keep this up!

Incidents of poor behaviour are rapidly reducing and we continue to work closely with the very small minority of young people who make the wrong behaviour choices. We expect all learners to behave in a manner which shows respect and dignity to others, with no excuses for inappropriate language and behaviour. Good behaviour choices, along with good punctuality and attendance are now inexplicably linked to our rewards programme which includes cinema sessions, Easter eggs, trips to Blackpool Pleasure Beach and even free toast for Year 11s at break time! This approach is securing good outcomes, as we celebrate the positive choices made by the vast majority of our learners, which in turn encourages the good behaviour of the very small minority who may have in the past considered negative behaviour choices as the way forward.

Enrichment

Our enrichment programme continues to grow. Events this Spring term have included the legendary Ski Trip, Comic Relief fundraising, History, Science and Food Technology clubs, Debate Mate, the Medical Science trip to Bury College to name but a few.

Please read our bumper Spring Term newsletter on the website (which includes a whole page dedicated to PE enrichment) for more details of all the exciting activities learners can get stuck into here at Castlebrook! Watch out for details of more enrichment activities next term!

Castlebrook High School

Staffing

Several Outstanding key teaching appointments have been made in preparation for the new academic year 2017-18. Joining us in September will be:

2nd in English – Miss Hurd

2nd in MFL – Mr Mulligan

English teacher – Mr Fuller

Maths teacher – Miss Pickles

All these new colleagues come to us with excellent credentials and their passion and desire to want to work here at Castlebrook is testimony to our thriving ‘can do culture’ which puts outstanding teaching and learning at the heart of school improvement.

Shortly after the Easter break, we will appoint a new Head of Physics with Miss Battye moving on to new adventures, but continuing to commit to teaching Year 11 Physics through to their final Summer GCSE exam. We wish her all the best for the future and thank her for all her hard work in the Science Faculty.

Academisation

The support we now receive as part of the Shaw Education Trust is already paying dividends. Directors of Standards across the Trust have been working very closely with leaders and teachers here at Castlebrook to drive up standards of teaching and learning, as well as financial ‘best value’ across the school. Colleagues in school have responded extremely well to the additional CPD and support provided by the trust, and value the input from our SET colleagues.

GCSE Exam Preparation for Summer Exam 2017

The countdown clock on the website is all too quickly counting down the time to the all important GCSE exam season, which begins with the first exam on Tuesday 16th May 2017. All Year 11 learners have been given an individual GCSE exam timetable. If they have lost or misplaced this timetable then they must ask Mr Hallam the examinations officer for a new one. A full list of all GCSE exams taking place this Summer is on the school website.

GCSE Revision Classes

These are taking place every night after school and all learners are aware of the need to prioritise English and Maths revision (Monday and Tuesday nights) as these are the subjects learners will have to re-sit if they do not secure a good pass this Summer. The school is also open throughout the Easter break for revision classes. A full timetable is available on the school website. All learners asked to attend must return the permission slip and sign in and out at reception.

After Easter the ILZ will be open every morning from 8.10 am to 8.40 am to enable Year 11 learners to fit in an additional extra half hour of supervised revision before school. All learners who wish to take advantage of this additional revision ‘slot’ are asked to ensure they have their parents’ permission to attend. Many Year 11 learners ensured their parents signed them up for this at the recent Year 11 Parents’ Evening. Letters are available from Miss Hughes (cover supervisor) in school who will be running this revision session. We thank her for this extra support.

I would like to take this opportunity to **really** thank all the teachers who are going the extra mile to ensure we secure the best possible GCSE results this Summer for all our learners. However, the teachers cannot do this alone. We therefore urge all our Year 11s to push on hard with their revision in these final few weeks before the exams begin. Put in the hard work and revise, revise, revise! They will never have this time again and we want them to be proud and thrilled with their exam results in August, not full of regret for what they didn’t achieve because they weren’t prepared to put in the effort during the build up to the exams.

Castlebrook High School

I would also like to thank the Year 11 parents as they support their children through this challenging time in their lives. Being a teenager is never easy and exams certainly don't help. I know you will continue to be supportive and remind them that once the hard work and exams are over, they can relax and have a fantastic Summer!

New School Build

Behind the scenes, a lot of work has been going on to design and plan a fantastic new school, one which will be and an outstanding learning and teaching environment and the pride of the local wider community. Many thanks must go to Mr Orrell, acting deputy head who has been a tremendous support over the last few months as we met with design teams and architects to secure the best design for our new school.

We expect to know which contractor has been awarded the contract to build the new school by mid April 2017. Once we know this we will share the plans with all key stakeholders. Please rest assured that, just as in the recent Elton High School new build, it will be 'business as usual' in the existing building, with the school community moving into the new building hopefully after the Christmas break in January 2019. More details will be released as I have them.

Safeguarding

Feedback from learners and parent/carers confirms that our learners feel safe in school. After the Easter break and during the first week back, Mrs Lawrence will lead assemblies across the school where the new NSPCC phone app called 'For Me' will be launched with all learners. All staff will also receive 'Prevent' refresher training during that first week of the Summer term.

Home School Agreement

Please note the Home School agreement has been revised and is available on the school website under Parent Zone. The main change is that it is acceptable for parents and carers to use social media to comment or post positively about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made on social media, the school will ask the parent/carers to remove the post and insist they come into school to discuss the issues in person. Any grievances must not be aired through social media. They must go through the school's complaints procedure accessible via the school website or the school office. I thank you for your support in this.

Summer Term 2017

This begins on Tuesday 18th April. Please can all parent/carers ensure that all learners return to school, dressed smartly in full school uniform including proper school shoes and braids on blazers. Full school equipment is also non negotiable with all learners having a clear pencil case which contains at least two pens, a ruler, a pencil, a rubber and highlighter pens. Calculators are also required for all maths lessons.

Have a wonderful Easter break. Enjoy what we hope will be lovely Spring weather, as well as the customary Easter eggs! Many thanks again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S. Armstrong
Acting Headteacher