



Castlebrook High School

● INSPIRE ● CHALLENGE ● EXCEL ●

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Academy Principal: Mrs S. Armstrong BA (Hons), NPQH

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Dear Parents and Carers

It gives me great pleasure to write to you all at the end of what has been a wonderful year here at Castlebrook. It has been a real privilege for me to work in partnership with yourselves, your children, our staff, our academy councillors and colleagues across the Shaw Education Trust as we drive forward school improvement. Our learners have worked exceptionally hard this academic year and their behaviour and conduct (and especially over the last few weeks during the heat wave) has been exemplary and is to be congratulated.

Staffing

This is the time of year when, as with all other schools, we say a fond farewell to several of our teaching and support staff who are leaving us, either through retirement, to take up promoted posts further afield, or to take up different career opportunities outside teaching. We wish them every success in their new ventures and thank them for their hard work and commitment during their time with us.

Eight new teachers are joining us in September, which is an ideal and healthy number at this stage of our school improvement journey. New high calibre teachers will join us in English, maths, Science, Performing Arts, PE and Geography. Of particular note is the fact that high quality permanent staff have now been recruited in the Modern Foreign Languages department. The only supply provision we will have in September will be one teaching post in Science and one in Construction, which is a real achievement given the challenges all schools currently face with regard to teacher recruitment. We have every confidence that these appointments will support us in our relentless drive to secure the best outcomes for all our learners. Our staff attendance this academic year has been the best ever, averaging out at 96% which is absolutely fantastic, amongst the highest across the country and a real credit to our highly committed team.

The Unsworth Way

Our whole academy has been working on developing an outstanding ethos, so that all members of our community consider what they want to achieve, how they want to develop and what we can put in place to support each other to be the best we can be. Firstly, learners worked in form for a morning, discussing in groups what they want their school to look and feel like, what we have rules for in society and what they feel our rules should be in school. Then all staff (teaching and non-teaching) looked at barriers to learning for children and how we best remove them. The learner council then worked on all the responses to come up with "The Unsworth Way". This code of conduct is based wholly on mutual respect and will ensure that safe, happy learning is everyone's absolute priority.

Core expectations

At Castlebrook learning comes first. It is therefore vital that learners' appearance is smart, professional and appropriate. As such I would like to remind Parents and Carers of our existing expectations, as well as outline some new ones.

From September 2018, no jewellery other than a wristwatch may be worn in school and learners wearing makeup will be expected to remove it immediately. Trainers (including any non-formal footwear) must not be worn other than for PE lessons. Learners will not be taking part in normal lessons unless their uniform is as outlined above; they will work in isolation.

Mobile phones (described in the DFE behaviour review of 2015 as an "irresistible distraction") must remain switched off and out of sight at all times during the school day, until learners have left the building.

Ready to learn / form time

From September, form time will be at the start of the day (8:45-9:05). There will be a structured programme of activities, building on news for the week, enhancing oracy, debating and literacy skills. This is an essential part of our curriculum, where learners will significantly develop their "soft skills", which have been cited by employers and university admissions tutors as the most important differentiator when selecting from candidates.

There will also be full equipment checks to make sure our learners are ready for a productive day's learning. All learners need to have an appropriate school bag (large enough to take A4 files / folders) and their own pencil case containing - pens and pencils (minimum 2 of each), rubber, ruler and pencil sharpener. Any learners without the correct stationery will be expected to purchase missing items from school; those arriving at school without bags will be lent a basic bag for the day and parents contacted.

Attendance

As you are all aware, the drive to improve the attendance of our learners has been a key whole school priority this academic year. We need all our learners in school, every single school day, in class and working to the very best of their ability. Whole school attendance is currently 94.5%, up from 91.6% this time last academic year which shows a significant upward trend and almost meets the government's minimum target of 95%.

However, our attendance figures have been hit this term by some families who have taken holidays in term time. I must remind you that this is something we cannot authorise and I continue to urge all parents to refrain from booking holidays during term time. Please can parents/carers also make every effort to ensure that their child attends every day. If medical appointments are truly unavoidable during the school day, then please ensure your child comes to school for 8.45am, signs out for the medical appointment and returns for their 12.00 noon statutory registration mark. This way full attendance for the day can be recorded and your child's attendance record will not be affected. The table below shows just how quickly a few days absence can impact on attendance and learning hours lost.

Attendance % for a year	Days absent	Hours of lessons missed
95%	9	45
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	38	190
75%	48	240
70%	57	285
65%	67	335

In line with Bury Council's Code of Conduct (September 2017), the issuing of a penalty Notice is appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Parentally condoned absences
- Unauthorised holidays in term time
- Persistent late arrival to school

Safeguarding

Responsibility for keeping young people safe lies with all adults who work in school. We have regular, robust training for all staff, making sure we are fully up to date with the most recent regulations and advice. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr Leyland) runs a team of level 3 trained pastoral leaders (without teaching timetables) who together ensure that information is gathered sensitively and recorded centrally. Where deemed appropriate, there is extensive work with outside agencies to coordinate appropriate intervention, ensuring our learners are kept safe at all times.

New School Building

The new build is on schedule and we cannot wait to move into our new school building in April 2019. To ensure a smooth transfer we have had to alter the school holiday pattern slightly for next academic year, so please refer to the details on the school website.

Moving into our new school building promises to be an exciting period of change at Castlebrook and a valuable opportunity to move into an even more positive future for our learners. It presents the ideal opportunity for us to re-brand our school, including a change in name and uniform.

New School Name - Unsworth Academy from 1st May 2019

When the school first opened it was called Unsworth Comprehensive. Then, when the school merged with Whitefield High School it was re-named as Castlebrook High School, a neutral name which we understand is the name of a local brook.

After consulting with all key stakeholders including staff, learners, parents and carers, academy councillors, Directors of Standards and the CEO at Shaw Education Trust, I am delighted to inform you that as from 1st May 2019, the school name will change to Unsworth Academy.

The key reasons for this change are as follows:

- Very few people outside the immediate vicinity of the school actually know where Castlebrook High school is. They do, however, know where Unsworth is. This school is in Unsworth. So we need the school's name to reflect this. The name change will put the school firmly on the Bury map, and beyond, also helping with our learner recruitment.
- We are proud of the local area and want our school to be truly a part of the Unsworth community. Parents at our parents' forum have told us how proud they are to live in the Unsworth community and they want the local high school's name to reflect this. The name change will help strengthen our link to the community, while demonstrating a fresh start for the school.

- We are an academy, I am the academy Principal and our governors are now academy councillors. We are proud to be an academy and especially one within the Shaw Education Trust's family of schools. Putting the word "Academy" in the school's new name confirms how delighted we are to be one.

New School Uniform from September 2019

With the new school building comes a new colour palette of predominantly heather/purple, grey and white. This move to our new building again provides a not to be missed opportunity to change our school uniform, giving it a more modern, professional and aspirational appearance. A new PE kit will be made in modern, lightweight and breathable material, as opposed to the heavy and dated PE kits our learners currently wear. We have worked very closely with our uniform suppliers to come up with the new uniform and PE kit and at the same time ensure that they are very similar in price to our current ones. Details will be shared with all key stakeholders at the start of the Autumn term September 2018. We look forward to seeing all our learners in the new school uniform, in the new building, from September 2019.

Curriculum Enrichment Offer

This year our curriculum enrichment offer has been broader and better than ever. We have seen new lunchtime clubs established including Reading Club, Film Club, maths club and Chess club. Educational visits have included visits to UCLAN (GCSE PE), Chester Zoo (Art and Photography), the pop up Globe Theatre in York (English), the Big Bang Fair in Liverpool (Science), Bolton School Reading Celebration (English) and the year 10 North Manchester Medical Day (Science). Next academic year and as part of our aspirational careers strategy, we aim to ensure that many more of our young people have the opportunity to meet employers, find out about apprenticeships and visit universities. A year 8 Careers fair and a year 11 mock interview day are also planned. A full school calendar of events will be on our website ready for September. Please keep up with our latest news and events throughout the school year on our website and via our twitter feed.

Learners as Leaders

This academic year has also seen a significant increase in the number of leadership opportunities we have been able to offer our learners. As well as peer readers, we now have maths leaders, drama leaders and a sports council busy organising inter-house competitions. The drama leaders have supported the Musical Theatre Club which runs on Mondays after school. This term members of this club helped to organise a fantastic night of "Songs from the Musicals", supported by Gemma Atkinson (ex-pupil) and Gorka Marquez, both "Strictly Come Dancing" stars, raising just over £1000 for Bury Cancer Support Centre. Well done to all involved.

Finally I would like to wish everyone a safe, relaxing and happy Summer break. We look forward to seeing you all in September ready for another wonderful year of learning. School will re-open to learners on Tuesday 4th September 2018. As in previous years Year 7's will start at 8.45am. All other years will need to be in school for 9.45 am.

Kind regards

Mrs S. Armstrong



Academy Principal