

Principal's Report

I'm pleased to present our Easter Newsletter — it's shorter than usual, but we didn't manage a newsletter at all this time last year!

This has been an extremely tough few weeks for staff. Our usual facilities have not been available to us, even for lessons, and it has been a daily struggle to maintain our expected and usual level of service.

We are nearly at the end of this stage of the lockdown, and hopefully when we all return in April we will be able to restart at least some of our activities.

Staff have worked tirelessly to enable students to participate in lots of different activities despite the restraints imposed on us all. This newsletter will show how inventive the staff have been to find new things for the students to enjoy.

It is essential for mental health and well-being that opportunities take part outside where possible, so activities like taking part in walks and sports, and being with peers are available for all our students.

Well done to everyone, a great team effort.

Have a wonderful holiday!

Sue Raven

A lovely comment sent to our Facebook page in February.



Just want to say thank you to Sam and Nat for all their help with my son this term with the online learning and helping me get through it. It's been tough but the help and support I've received from them both has been amazing and I can't thank them enough. Have a great half term everyone and enjoy the break!

There are lots more photos and info on our Facebook page, Twitter feed and Instagram page. You can get to these from the home page of the Centre School website.

The school website is www.astreacentreschool.org

Online Learning

During the latest lockdown, we have had to provide remote education for up to 49 students that were unable to attend school. This had to go hand in hand with lessons still being delivered on site to students there.

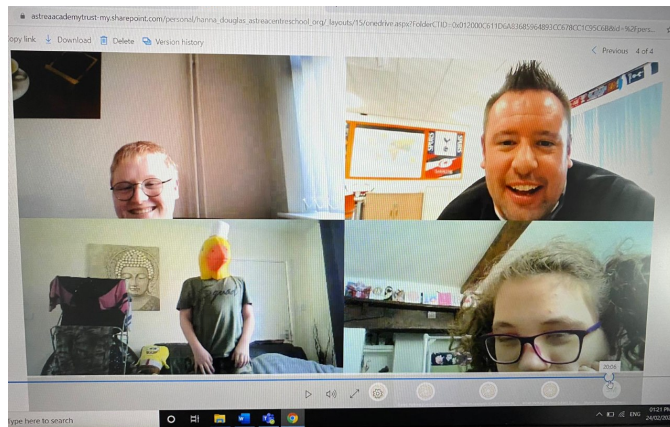
Sue L, Barry and a team of six other staff spent every afternoon creating, marking and delivering online content, in line with the curriculum being delivered in school. Many students engaged in the online lessons and enjoyed seeing and speaking to their teachers and peers daily.

We would like to thank everyone who helped with the success of the online learning, including families, colleagues, and the generous donations from **CamCab**, who helped us to provide laptops for students who didn't have access.

As Covid-19 looks more and more likely to be beaten, we hope to see all of our students safely back in school and enjoying their education with us.

As the photo shows, the lessons were often a lot of fun! (The student in the chicken head knows who he is!!)

We have received some great feedback from parents, and an example of this is on the front page of the newsletter.



Dog Walking

Aleksey, Matthew and Tayla-J write:



Dog walking is a great opportunity to get close to nature – we even like to walk in the rain!

We get to know each other in a social situation.

After the walk, we have a drink and sometimes play board games like UK Trivia Junior or Snakes and Ladders.



Angling grant to Centre School for students hooked on fishing



A Centre School student holds an impressive pike

STUDENTS at The Centre School in Cottenham are getting hooked on fishing – thanks to a grant from the Angling Trust, which has donated just under £3,000 to ensure that fishing, a popular activity at the school, can be further developed.

The school has delivered 'Hooked @ The Centre' fishing activity to students for a number of years, and seen many positive effects on students.

Benefits include reducing stress, improving concentration and growing self-esteem from the thrill of a great catch.

Student Max said: "I really enjoy going fishing at school, it helps me with my anxiety and anger issues."

"When I am sitting on the riverbank, I really enjoy just chilling out and enjoying the fishing. When I catch a big fish, I get a big adrenaline rush and feel really good about myself."

Extended Curriculum in Lockdown!

Lockdown Three has been very challenging for everybody; in school, the workload for staff has been pretty intense at times. Teaching staff have continued to provide face-to-face lessons for all those students still in school, whilst also planning and presenting on-line lessons later in the day.

Our student numbers have gradually risen over the term, so the 8th March school return date didn't make a lot of difference - except that we lost the use of Cottenham Village College sports facilities, making finding places to take students even more difficult!

Because many venues we use for sports, horse-riding, photography and visits etc are closed, we have had to find other ways of getting our students off-site and engaged. We are very grateful to Stretham Youth Club for allowing us to use their facility, and also to Oakington Parish Council for the use of their MUGA - meaning Multi-Use Games Area.

Magnet fishing has become a popular activity, often carried out along the River Cam near the Museum of Technology. Bikes are a common find, as you'd expect in Cambridge!

We have bought some scooters (and the appropriate safety equipment of course!) and we are finding that the local skateparks are a great place to run off some student energy! Plus all the benefits of just being outdoors!

We have recently been able to purchase a drone, and we are beginning to investigate the amazing photographic effects that can be achieved.



COVID-19 Testing

Part of our "new normal" in school (and at home now as well!) is routine testing for COVID-19 using the Lateral Flow Tests.

Current government guidance requires staff and students to be tested twice weekly. Despite anxiety from both students and staff, testing at TCS began in January. We are now testing the majority of the students and all staff twice a week.

The attitude of students towards this regular testing has been amazing; they have adapted to the testing, week in and week out. As a staff team we have been very impressed with their positive attitude in taking responsibility for protecting others by being tested regularly. Testing continues after the Easter break.



The new Sensory Room

We have been given 2 grants to develop a sensory room, which is taking shape in a former office in the Atrium building (formerly the Sixth Form block) The room has been fitted out with a range of calming lighting and sound effects. I think staff are looking forwards to it more than the students!



Kia's Easter Treats!



Dates for next term

There is a Training Day at the beginning of the Summer Term, and our staff will be coming out for Home (**Garden!**) Visits on **Tuesday 13th April** .

Times of meetings, and the staff coming to see you, will be on the letter sent with this newsletter.

Training Day: **Monday 12th April 2021 (closed to students)**

Parent Visits: **Tuesday 13th April 2021 (closed to students)**

Term Starts: **Wednesday 14th April 2021**

Half-term: **Monday 31st May to Friday 4th May 2021**

Centre Celebration — The Nash Bash: Thursday 24th June (TBC: Subject to Covid regulations)

Training Day: **Friday 25th June 2021 (closed to students)**

End of term: **Thursday 22nd July 2021**