



THE CENTRE SCHOOL
COTTENHAM

Astrea Academy Trust
INSPIRING BEYOND MEASURE

The Centre School

Newsletter - April 2022

Principal's Report

Welcome to our April Newsletter!

This has been a very busy half-term with lots of extremely successful trips and visits. Brenscombe, our residential trip, took place last week in amazing weather. There are pictures and comments from students for you to see in this Newsletter. A range of other visits have taken place including a trip to a Synagogue, the theatre and to a professional basketball match. It is great to see everyone having such a good time and participating positively.

At this moment in time the school is being inundated with requests for placements, both for an immediate start and for a September start. It is a great shame therefore that we will not be able to accept all these students when we have a handful of year 7 & 8 students that are proving to be a daily drain on resources. They do not want to learn or attend lessons. We are ever hopeful that we can change this behaviour but the impact on other students and their learning cannot be ignored.

Have a happy Easter and we look forward to seeing everyone back in April.

Sue Raven



National Recognition for the Centre School!



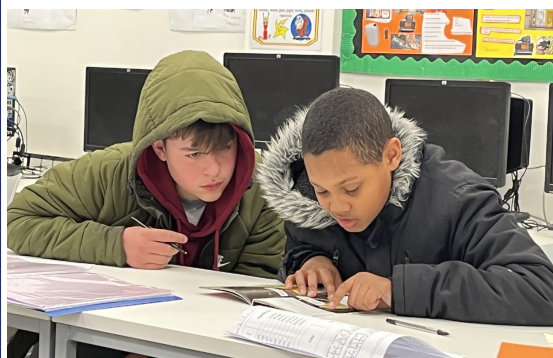
Staff from the Centre School (and from Astrea, our Academy Trust) were invited to attend an event at No.10 Downing Street recently to mark the efforts of schools during the COVID pandemic. In his speech, the Prime Minister singled out Stu (our PE lead and Orange House Head) for his commitment!



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.

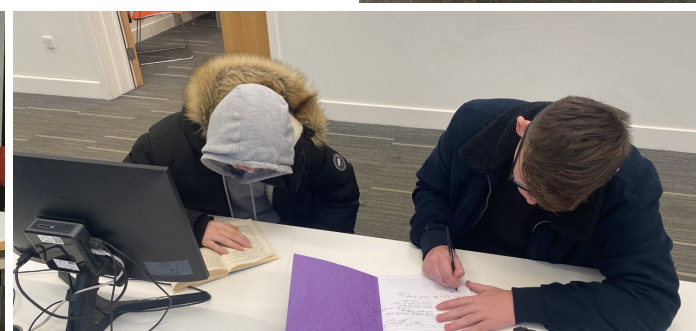
The school website is www.astreacentreschool.org

Reading at the Centre School — a new emphasis



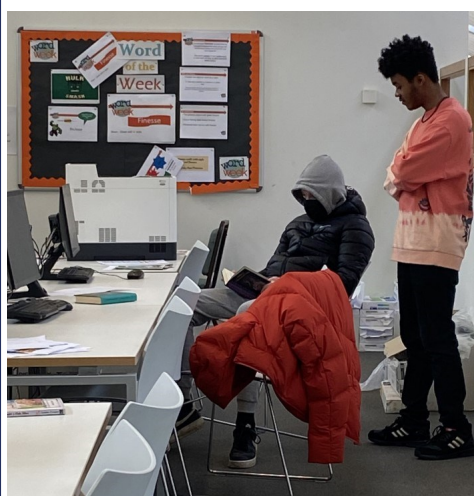
Since September 2019, the Centre School has increased our emphasis on reading. It's always been a very important area, as many of our students struggle with this; but we wanted to embed it more, and make reading a more natural and less inhibiting activity. We have increased the numbers of

books in school — partly thanks to a generous donation of books from the Emmaus charity at nearby Landbeach. They even gave us bookcases!



Subject leaders have looked at ways that we can increase the amount of reading that takes place in all areas of the curriculum, and the amount of time allocated to reading in our Basic Skills lessons has been increased as well. In CLM's group, the students have been reading playscripts — these are really funny and a good opportunity to practice putting some expression into our reading.

One of the big successes has been the paired reading, where more able readers work with their younger peers to support their reading. **Good work everybody - keep it up!**



Spring at the Farm



The Farm is a hive of activity on most days, and it is great to see how the site is developing. The horses and hens really enjoy the company of the students, and the planting areas are being set up. **To keep up, check out the weekly #FarmFriday posts on School's social media platforms.**



PE trips — and their place in the PE curriculum



This term, the PE team has taken some of the PE students to three different live sports events. First was to Cambridge United, then to see an ice-hockey match featuring Milton Keynes Lightning. Finally, just before the end of term, they went to see some basketball at the O2 Arena in London.

These were not just “jollies” as the visits form an important part of the Centre School’s new Gold Award scheme. This is being rolled out across the curriculum, and provides additional opportunities for students to progress and achieve.



Starry Night — Art lessons go Van Gogh

In Art this term, the students have been studying Vincent Van Gogh, and have produced a piece influenced by the techniques used to produce his famous work — Starry Night.

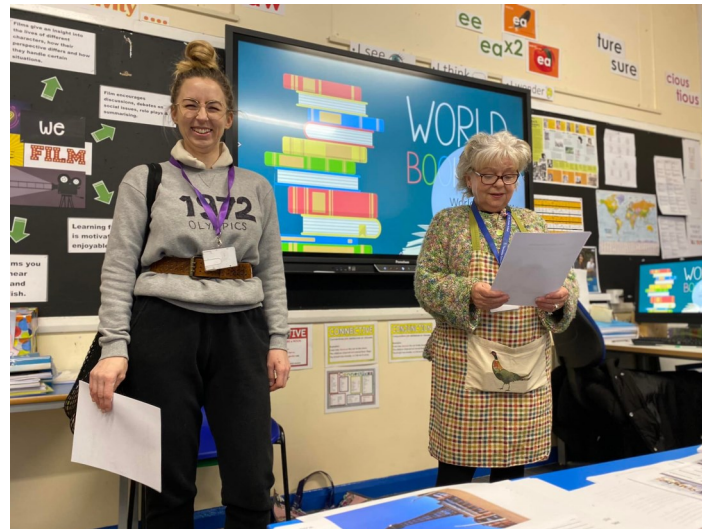
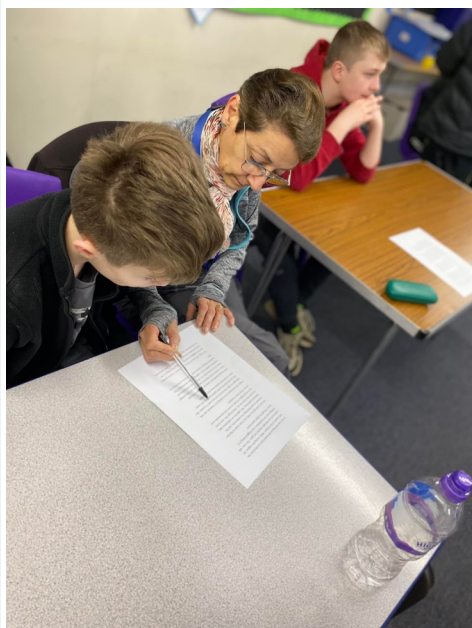
The students were told they were not allowed to use a paint brush. They were instead given palette knives, and were told to paint using the painting technique impasto, which means applying paint in thick layers.

The panels were produced by TJM, AH, EO, HG, CM, DG, JW, SB, TMc, HW, JC, HE, JY and WBa.



Centre School Lessons

A few photos from different lessons, showing some of the range of activities going on in classrooms around the Centre School.



Public Services get the Army in!



Ryan writes:

On Tuesday the 15th of March, the sound of boots marching towards the centre was heard by all. Staff Ryan had called in backup for the day and had four instructors from the 7th Infantry Brigade come into school to run activities for our Public Service students and those that would enjoy the experience.

Focused on teambuilding and leadership tasks, the students conducted a number of engaging activities including BATAK (reaction game), bridge building, Jungle Maps, Top Trumps, Tug-of war and physical training.

Students were also able to get hands on with some of the kit that the modern soldier uses and were all shocked at how heavy it is. They also got to try military rations and many of the students took the opportunity to pinch a bag of hot chocolate to take home!

The day was full of energy and fun, with many students going home looking rather muddy (sorry parents!).

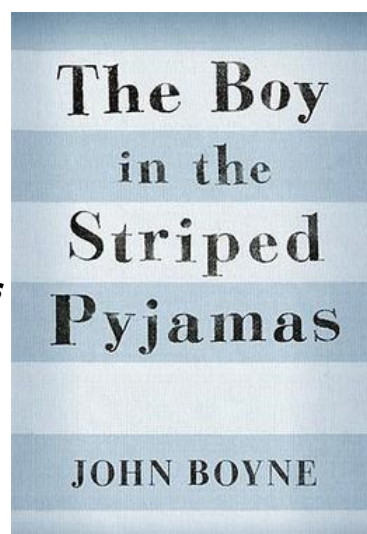


Boy in the Striped Pyjamas — cross-curricular topic

There are three English groups teaching Year 7 and 8 students, and this term they have been using ***The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas***. This is a book by John Boyne, and it was later made into a film.



The story is fiction, and is not based on a real story. Some of it is not very historically accurate, but ***The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*** is a good way of introducing the Holocaust and the persecution of the Jews (and other sections of society) under the Nazi regime from 1933 and into World War Two.



In English, the students have looked at the education difference between children in WW2 and our education today. Richenda completed a talk about Auschwitz using photos from her trip in 2019. This created great conversations for speaking and listening within English. Students have also been looking at descriptions from the book and drawing what they think things look like (such as Auschwitz and the Jewish people within the concentration camp). We have also looked at characters, and thinking about fact and opinions. We then watched the film. The final piece is to write a diary entry as Bruno or Shmuel.

In Art, the students have been looking at images relevant to the topic, and producing artwork based around the striped uniforms worn by prisoners at Auschwitz and the other camps. Other themes include barbed wire, and the Star of David.



In History, students have been learning about Jewish life before the Holocaust, the persecution of the Jews (and other groups) by the Nazis, the establishment and liquidation of the Ghettos, and the setting up of the concentration camps and the Death Camps. We have used testimony from Eva Clarke and her mother Anka - Eva is a friend of the Centre School and



has visited us several times to tell her family's story. Eva's mum survived the Holocaust, thanks to a series of miracles, and gave birth to Eva on the ramp at Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria — just as the Nazis dismantled the gas chamber and left the camp.

Boy in the Striped Pyjamas — cross-curricular topic

We visited the Beth Shalom Reform Synagogue in Cambridge, and were made very welcome! We learned about the Shabbat, and how Jewish families celebrate and worship. We saw the Torah Scrolls, and found out about the items that decorate the scrolls. Eric even sang in Hebrew!



Aga, who led the visit, was very kind about our group in an e-mail after the trip:

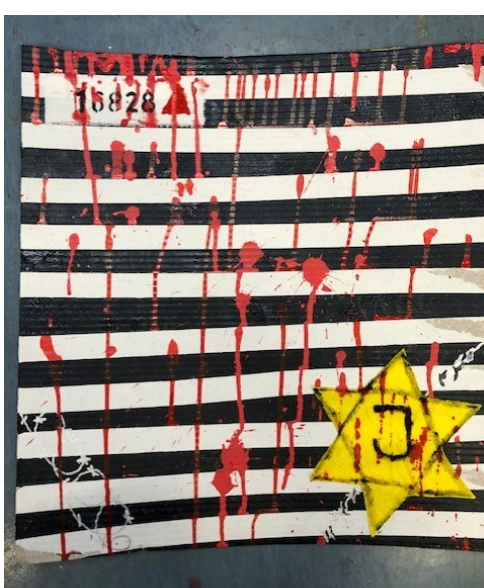
It was a real pleasure to have you there!

The kids were just adorable and asked some wonderful questions.

The adults as well, of course.

I think you are doing an amazing job!

Here are some of the completed artworks from this topic. All the photos will go on the school's social media platforms.



Brenscombe Residential



Brenscombe Residential

"I was scared to climb the tall beam of the high ropes, but because people were encouraging me and cheering me on, I managed to overcome my fear and get to the top!"

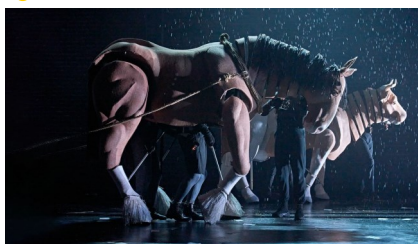
"It was brilliant to have the chance to share new experiences with the kids at our school that you wouldn't normally talk to."

"I don't like talking to people who I don't really know as I am a shy person, but being at Brenscombe made me come out of my shell. I feel like I have made new friends."

"It was nice when you came downstairs in the morning because it didn't matter who was there as you always felt like you had someone to talk to."



Theatre visits



We were lucky enough to have tickets for the Cambridge Arts Theatre pantomime donated to us, but the performance was cancelled. Luckily, we were able to transfer tickets to other productions!

A small group of Year 7-8s saw a fantastic performance of Orwell's ***Animal Farm***, which tied in with their study



of the Russian Revolution. The puppetry was amazing, and the story was very powerful.



A larger group went to see a wonderful production of Michael Morpurgo's ***Private Peaceful***, which is partly set during the First World War. Many of the



students who attended will hopefully be going on Battlefields trips in the future, so the themes of the play will become very familiar.



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 Visits on **Wednesday 20th April**.

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

Training Day: **Tuesday 19th April 2022 (closed to students)**

Parent Visits: **Wednesday 20th April 2022 (closed to students)**

Term Starts: **Thursday 21st April 2022**

Half-term: **Monday 30th May to Friday 3rd June 2022**

Centre Celebration — The Nash Bash: Thursday 16th June (TBC: Subject to Covid regulations)

Training Day: **Friday 17th June 2022 (closed to students)**

End of term: **Friday 22nd July 2022**