



THE CENTRE SCHOOL  
COTTENHAM

Astrea Academy Trust  
INSPIRING BEYOND MEASURE

# The Centre School

Newsletter - December 2023

## Principal's Report



This has been a very long term and most staff and students are now ready for a break. Students coming in from Year Six have done particularly well as many of them were not on full-time programmes prior to starting here, and they also have long journeys to school.

Highlights of the term have been three successful residential which feature in this newsletter. Thank you to all staff that participated in these and made them possible. We have added some new ventures, such as Forest School, and of course we continue to grow and develop our amazing School Farm!

Several students have progressed on their journey towards gaining qualifications in Functional Maths and English—well done to them.

You will also be able to read about the amazing football match that took place on the Astro at Cottenham. CVC students on lunchbreak were supportive and encouraging, creating a great atmosphere for our players. There is a minute-by-minute account of the match on page 10 if you have the strength to read it all. Clearly Stu has aspirations to write for the Sun!

David and staff have done incredible work to create a Drama Studio out of a unused Hair and Beauty salon. We just need to get some stage lighting now!

I want to thank all staff for their phenomenal efforts in making The Centre School what it is. This Newsletter is evidence to all that we are providing an education that supports ALL forms of learning!



Sue Raven

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas & New Year.

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

**The school website is:** [www.astreacentreschool.org](http://www.astreacentreschool.org)







# Grafham Water Residential



In September, a group of our new Year 7s went on a short residential to the Grafham Water Centre. They had a brilliant three days in canoes, sailing, climbing the high ropes and trying their hands at archery. A great start to the school year, and to their school careers!







## Staff changes



**We have a few new staff this year, and we have to say goodbye to one to a much-appreciated colleague. But don't worry, he'll be back!**

**We welcome Emily Day, who says:**

I teach Basic Skills and PSHE at TCS. I taught in Primary for 10 years and I am loving being at TCS and haven't looked back! I am enjoying taking students out on Extended Curriculum as it is great to see students build their confidence and resilience whilst having fun.



**Hello everyone, I'm Sam** and have joined the Centre School to teach PE and support other lessons. I've worked in a range of jobs within sport including a lifeguard, personal trainer and an outdoor activity instructor across the country, but I have recently qualified as a PE teacher and I'm planning to stay in education now!



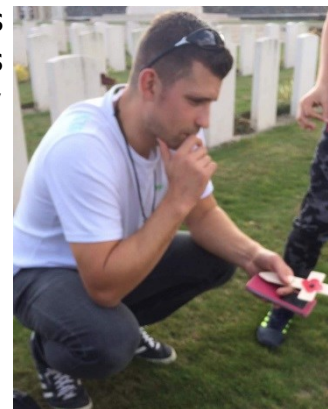
Jordan



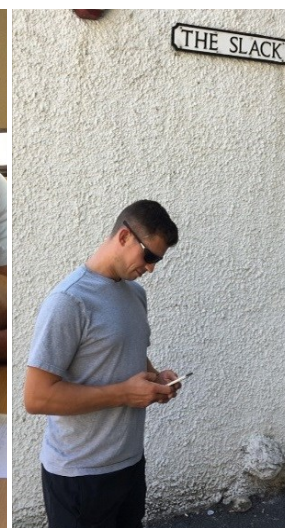
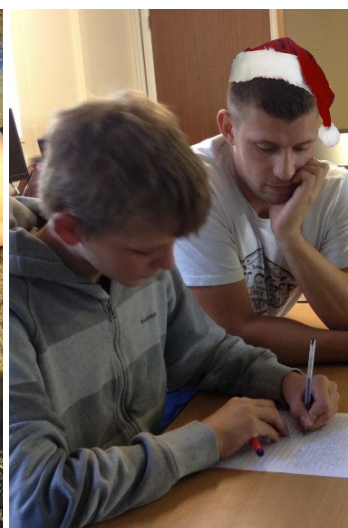
Iain



At Christmas, we have to say goodbye to **Rob Yeow**, who has been at TCS since 2015. Rob has always thrown himself into many aspects of school life. As well as leading Public Services and supporting in PE, Rob has been on a number of very memorable Residentials, such as Horseriding, Photography and the WW1 Battlefields trip in October 2018.



Rob's now a qualified driving instructor; he'll be working with some of our students in the future!







## Brenscombe



**Brenscombe is a week's Residential on the glorious Jurassic Coast. It's an incredible opportunity for those selected to attend. Bel came back to help! Staff member David was there for the first time, and he writes:**

In October we took a group of year 9, 10 and 11 students to Brenscombe, located just outside the small town of Corfe Castle. They took part in several activities throughout the week ranging from archery to abseiling. We were due to take part in some water-based activities but when we arrived on the south coast it seemed to be a bit windy, 50mph winds to be exact! No surprise, then, that the watersports was cancelled, and the programme had to be reshuffled. The students dealt with the change incredibly well and the alternatives turned out to be a huge success. A game of man-hunt took place in the woods with some fire lighting, and a cup of hot chocolate was in order. Overall, the trip was a huge success with some amazing feedback from the students and instructors. We look forward to the next challenge at Brenscombe which will be taking place in March. Fingers crossed for some better weather!



**There are more photos of the October Brenscombe Trip on the school social media!**

*It was a fun trip, the food was alright. It was tiring, but worth it! I would love to go again! (MM)*







## A word from Chris Cassidy — our new VP

When I joined The Centre School as Vice-Principal in September 2023, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I joined the Trust in January 2022 as a Regional Vice-Principal, and since then I have supported at both Cottenham Village College and Ernulf Academy in St Neots. Before then, I worked in mainstream secondary education for 20 years having started out as a Science teacher in Essex. Despite all that experience, I have learned a lot in my first term at TCS! Firstly, I have learned just what an inspiring and valuable job the school does for the young people in its care. It has been a real privilege to work alongside such dedicated and expert colleagues, delivering a school curriculum that is quite unique in my experience. Secondly, it has been a hugely enjoyable experience working alongside our students and witnessing first-hand how they are growing and learning through the experiences and relationships they develop. I have hugely enjoyed teaching science, especially the practical stuff, and getting to know everyone - have never before been made so aware that I'm lacking hair on the top of my head! The challenges at TCS are not straight-forward, and our goals for each and every student are long term. That said, there is enough progress, joy and spontaneity in every day to reassure us that we are all heading in the right direction. I very much look forward to next term, new challenges and the opportunity to meet you all in due course.

## Online safety - from Annabel - Student Welfare.

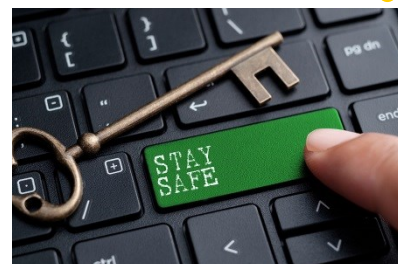
The internet is an incredibly useful learning tool but as we all know there is inappropriate material available online, therefore, as a school we have put measures in place to protect students from accessing and being exposed to such content.

The Centre School is equipped with Sophos filtering software which includes a firewall that monitors and filters incoming and outgoing network traffic. Sophos' main purpose is to allow non-threatening digital traffic in and to keep potentially dangerous digital traffic out.

The Centre School also uses NetSupport DNA monitoring software which monitors the school network and identifies when a user triggers terminology that could indicate potential harmful or risky behaviours. Should this arise, staff will deal with it appropriately; parents/carers will be informed.

Furthermore, as part of a whole school approach to personal development, of which e-safety is part of, pupils have PHSE lessons that help them to identify and manage the risks they may be exposed to via the internet, social media or their daily use of mobile communications. Staff also undertake regular safeguarding training which involves online safety so they can spot concerns and deal with them effectively.

If you have any concerns surrounding your child's use of the internet, please do contact us for support. We have highlighted a number of useful websites below that may be of use to families.



<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://www.childnet.com>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

<https://www.iwf.org.uk/>







# Battlefields 2023



**Sam Upton writes:** Having the opportunity to attend the 2023 Battlefields tour was an eye-opening experience! Visiting the graves and battlefields where soldiers gave up their lives in conditions that you couldn't even imagine really put things into perspective. To see all the names of the soldiers whose bodies were never found or even the unidentified graves really reminded me of how lucky we are to live in a time so different to those! For me it is an opportunity that I will never forget and would recommend it to anybody! **"Mind Blown..."** Elijah.





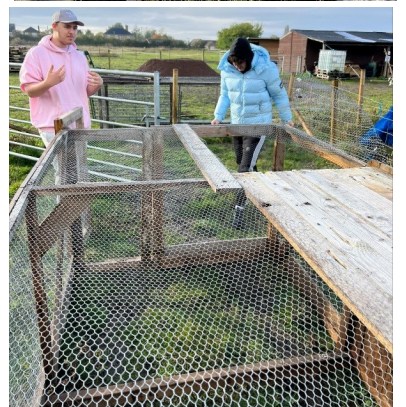


# School Farm



It's been a busy and amazing term at the Centre School Farm! We've had highs (visits from the Astrea CEO, other schools using the Farm, our new cabin arriving) and lows (another break-in) but more and more of our students are benefiting from being outdoors and getting on with some work. The animals are doing well, and are very popular!

If you want to see more about life on the Farm, have a look at the regular **#FarmFriday** posts on the school's social media platforms.







## Diwali day



We came off timetable to celebrate Diwali - India's biggest and most important holiday of the year. It is a festival of lights that celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil and the human ability to overcome. Diwali has become a national Indian festival. Outside of India, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and others across the world celebrate the holiday.

Our students created Diyas (candle holders), made and decorated Rangoli patterns and other artworks, cooked a variety of Indian food, created beautiful street art and played cricket!

It was a great morning! We all learned new things, tried something different, and enjoyed ourselves!







## Dishing up Diwali in the Bungalow...



Along with the rest of TCS, the students in the Bungalow celebrated Diwali. Sam who has been cooking up a storm recently with some impressive lunch creations opted to cook food inspired by Asian herbs and spices.

**Sam wrote,** "I decided to cook Bombay spiced potatoes and a chicken curry. First, I peeled potatoes and cut them into wedges. Then I seasoned them with salt, pepper, herbs and spices, and put them in the oven for about 30 minutes. Next, I started on the chicken. I chopped the chicken into chunks and then I chopped up the onions. I added curry spices and coated the chicken. I chopped fresh chilli, garlic and ginger and stir fried all the ingredients. Next, I added some plum tomatoes and cooked it all up. After everything was cooked through, I served it all on plates for Tyreece, Matthew and myself."



Matthew said, 'The chicken was a bit spicy, but the potatoes were delicious'. Tyreece enjoyed his plateful. Whilst Sam was cooking Tyreece and Matthew made a desert of Iced Rangoli Biscuits. Everyone enjoyed the Indian Sweets called Jalebi!



## Afloat in a life boat!



In October, a small group of students had a fantastic and very different experience! We headed to Wells-next-the-Sea on the North Norfolk coast for chips and a bit of crabbing, we made our way down the quayside to find a very special vessel.

**Lucy Lavers** is a wooden lifeboat, built for the RNLI in 1939, and she had a long and successful career as a lifeboat around the East Anglian coast. However, her most famous exploit came in May 1940, when she was one of **Dunkirk "Little Ships"**. She spent several days rescuing hundreds of stranded British soldiers from Dunkirk beach in France, ahead of the approaching German forces.

Our trip was 90 minutes around Wells Harbour, and we saw seals and lots of different types of birds. We learned lots about the lifeboats of Wells (our guide was a serving lifeboatman) and found out more about Lucy Lavers' time at Dunkirk. The weather was amazing - warm and calm - and everyone in the group recognised how therapeutic it was being out on the water in the sun. Excellent for good mental health. An experience to remember!







## Football: TCS v Olive

## Report from Stu!



The first game of the year resulted in a pulsating encounter that had the capacity crowd on the edge of their seats, two titans of the footballing world clashed in a breath-taking display of skill, determination, and sheer passion.

From the first whistle, it was evident that this was going to be a contest for the ages. The players, fuelled by the deafening roars of the capacity Cottenham Village College crowd, put on a mesmerizing show that showcased the beautiful game at its very best.

The deadlock was broken in the 15th minute when captain Rhys M, the talismanic midfield maestro for The Centre School, showcased his clinical finishing. A perfectly weighted through ball split the opposition defense, allowing Rhys M to calmly slot the ball past the onrushing goalkeeper. The eruption of cheers from the fans was thunderous.

However, the visitors responded with equal intensity. Olive's number 7, a midfield magician known for his vision and precision, orchestrated a breath-taking team move that culminated in a stunning long-range strike. The ball sailed into the top corner, leaving TCS goalkeeper Ben with no chance.

The seesaw battle continued, with both teams creating chances and testing the opposing goalkeepers. In the 35th minute, it was Kimani's turn to leave his mark on the match. A swift 1-2 and a finish Thierry Henry would have been proud of put TCS 2-1 up at the break.

However, the resilience of the away team was on full display once again. Number 7, living up to his reputation as a big-game player, netted his second of the night with a well-taken shot from close range equalising for Olive soon after the half time interval.

As the second half unfolded, the intensity only intensified. The capacity crowd was treated to end-to-end action, with both teams refusing to take a backward step. TCS were on the offensive, but, shot after shot sailed wide and over. It was surely only a matter of time before TCS got another. But then, disaster struck, Ben had been truly heroic in goal, making save after save, but a long clearance was caught in the wind, and beat Ben for Olive to take the lead. The capacity crowd was momentary silenced.

The clock ticked down and the scoreboard remained deadlocked, the team's fate seemed to rest on a single play. That moment arrived when Kimani, with an eye for precision, intercepted the ball near the halfway line. With a deft touch and a quick glance, he saw an opportunity unfolding.

Kimani, possessing an unparalleled vision for the game, spotted Peter G making a decisive run towards the opposing goal. The defenders, momentarily caught off guard, struggled to keep pace with the speed and agility of Peter G. Sensing the urgency of the situation, Kimani executed a sublime pass, perfectly weighted and timed, threading the needle through the opposition's defence.

The ball sailed gracefully through the air, landing at Peter's feet with surgical precision. As if in a choreographed dance, Peter G controlled the ball flawlessly, and smashed it home. **3-3** game on...

But then disaster struck again. Mainstreams lunch ended. The teachers had to ask the ref to pause the game whilst they moved the refusing CVC students back to their lessons. Without the hostile crowd, Olive went for the kill. More world class saves from Ben and some last ditched tackles from Will B saved the day for TCS. TCS had been ravaged by illness in the days before the game. Had Olive slipped a dodgy lasagne into the TCS kitchen echoing Tottenham in 2006? Realistically not but the TCS PE staff had questioned it in the build up. The makeshift TCS team stepped up, gave everything in the dying minutes and held on for the draw.

**TCS SCORERS:** Rhys M, Kimani, Peter G

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Ben B (GK)







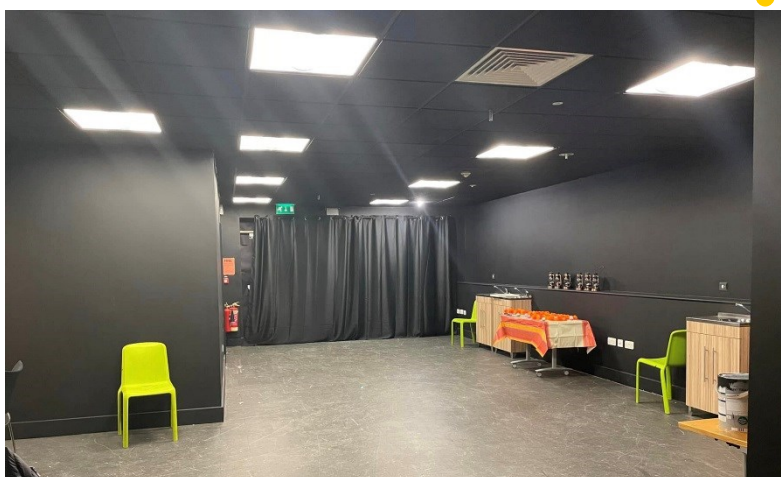
## The Drama Room



When we became an 11-19 provision a few years ago, we took on CVC's 6th Form building, and the Atrium is now a vital part of our operation. One of the facilities that we didn't expect to use was the Hair and Beauty room, but then staff member David started teaching Drama in there!

### David writes:

This term we have seen the drama room transform from a neutral, disused hairdress-  
ing salon to a functional and professional space. This has helped the students to really invest in the subject and allowed them to experience how being on a stage or in a studio can help and improve their performances. I'd like to thank everyone involved in the transformation, both students and staff. Everyone has given a tremendous amount of effort and it is appreciated by both me and the students in my class. We look forward to continuing working in this space and see the true potential that drama can have!







## We went to the Panto (we're behind you!)



**Leo M writes:** Nat, Emily, Aaron and David\* took a large group of students to see the Mother Goose pantomime at the Cambridge Arts Theatre. We had good seats and were able to see the stage really well! Braden, one of our newer students, was invited up on stage to participate in the panto!

I really enjoyed the panto—it was really funny. I'd love to go again if my friends were going!

**\* Him again? Been in this newsletter more than anybody else!!** Editor



## Dates for next term

There is a Training Day at the beginning of the Spring Term, and our staff will be coming out for Home Visits on **Friday 5th January 2024**.

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

Training Day: **Thursday 4th January 2024 (closed to students)**

Home Visits: **Friday 5th January 2024**

Term Starts: **Monday 8th January 2024**

Training Day: **Friday 16th February 2024 (closed to students)**

Half-term: **Monday 19th February to Friday 23rd February 2024**

Training Day: **Friday 8th March 2024 (closed to students)**

End of term: **Thursday 28th March 2024**.

