



Stour Valley Community School
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Headteacher Mrs Rachel Kelly BA (Hons)

20 December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Autumn Term 2022 has been the first 'normal' Autumn Term since the pandemic. We have had some staff absence due to COVID, but everything has run as per calendar, as planned.

The return from the record-breaking hot summer break was one of mixed emotions. The staff celebrated our best set of GCSE results since the school opened. It was also the first time we had come together as a school staff since learning of the tragic death of one of our Year 10 students Haydn Restarick, at the start of the summer holidays. We resolved to find a way to celebrate Haydn's life and we did so later in the term.

National Teaching Assistants' Day

A lovely touch early on in the term, was Mrs Chester (our new SENDCO) celebrating National Teaching Assistants' Day on 16 September. She asked the staff to recognise the valuable contribution that our TAs make by writing a short message to the team, or to an individual TA – staff wrote personal *thank yous*, shared memories or wrote general but heartfelt messages of thanks. Mrs Chester surprised the TAs by getting them all to go to the staffroom at breaktime where all the messages had been laid out and lots of cakes, biscuits and sweets were on offer for all to share. As you would expect, the TAs were delighted and very happy.

Memorial Garden – a tree planting

On 23 September staff and students came together to plant a tree in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Given the significant national changes and the end of an era, it seemed appropriate to create a memorial within the school grounds in memory of Queen Elizabeth II that would provide a focal point for students now and in the years to come.

The tree, which is situated at the front of the school, was also the site for Remembrance Day this year, providing the backdrop for the poppy wreaths which the students laid on 11 November.

Open Evening and Open Week

In early October Open Evening was buzzing with over 200 families through the doors that evening and during Open Week. There are some lovely photos on the website here: [Stour Valley Open Evening and Open Week - Stour Valley Community School](#) The staff and students really did the school proud.



Purple Day

Tuesday 22 November 2022 would have been Haydn's 16th birthday. The school community came together at the suggestion of his friends, to hold Purple Day which will become an annual non-uniform day to raise funds for the ward which looked after Haydn at Addenbrookes Hospital.

The afternoon saw a dedicated celebration event for Haydn's year group which was started by the playing of AC/DC, Haydn's favourite group. His keen interest in the armed forces was reflected by members of the Royal British Legion and serving army personnel from Rocks Barracks in Woodbridge leading a procession of the school community into the hall. The celebration of Haydn's life was conducted by Reverend Paul Graham with him making reference to Haydn's enjoyment of strategy games, Dungeons and Dragons and his sense of fun. Shared memories included times from primary school, reflections from Haydn's teachers and special moments recalled by his friendship group. We raised an amazing £880 which we have donated to Haydn's page - <https://haydn.muchloved.com/>

Suffolk Hope Award

A group of Stour Valley students, now in Year 11, won a HOPE Award for teamworking. The award is to recognise and celebrate the positive contributions that young people make in Suffolk. They led the school response to sexual harassment in schools and developed our school Code of Ethics, which all came from the data they compiled from questionnaires they devised to assess the extent of the issue. They are currently planning fundraising for victims and advice for young people on how to stand up for themselves and others.

Sailing Champion

Oscar Bush, Year 10 (and his older brother Toby) have been chosen to be part of the national team representing Great Britain at the Cadet World Championships in Melbourne, Australia this Christmas. They are already there to take part in training for the Australian National Championships prior to the event. We wish Oscar and Toby all the best for the event and look forward to hearing how they got on when they return next term.

Mock Exams

Year 11 students have been working hard these past few weeks and have all taken their mock exams. They should all enjoy a well-deserved break over Christmas before the work begins in earnest in the run-up to the final GCSE examinations. Thank you to Mrs Eady and her team of invigilators for running and organising the process so smoothly and efficiently.

Christmas Concert

The first 'live' Christmas concert took place last Thursday 15 December. It was a joyous occasion, with so many students living into our school value of being brave as they performed solos on the piano, violin, singing, clarinet, guitar, to name but a few. We also had a ukulele group, a Year 10 drama piece and violin and singing duets and a sneak preview of a Grease number – a teaser to the school production next February. The evening was topped off by a trio of kazoos – a wonderful evening with a lot of smiles from the students and the audience alike. Thank you to Ms Hutchinson (Head of Music) and Miss Duffy (Head of Creative Arts and Drama) for all their hard work in organising the evening.



Staffing Changes

Mr Leppard, Head of PE, got a job as Head of PE at County Upper in Bury and will leave us at Christmas. It is a larger school and a promotion. Miss North will take up the position of Acting Head of PE alongside Year Leader for Year 10. We have appointed a new Head of PE, Mr Thompson, who will start at Easter.

In addition, we have appointed Mr Chapman to teach Geography. He will also start at Easter.

Mr Nunn, Assistant Headteacher, has secured a promotion to Deputy Headteacher at Thomas Mills School in Framlingham. He will also leave us at Christmas.

Mr Nunn and Mr Leppard will both be missed. They are well-established, long-standing members of the Stour Valley staff. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all they have contributed and wish them well in their new roles.

We will advertise for an Assistant Headteacher (responsibilities to be decided) for an Easter start.

Changes to Responsibilities for Senior Team for the Spring and Summer Terms

Miss Bank will be Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding from January and will line manage the Year Leaders and the pastoral team. She will be lead on Behaviour and Attendance in this role.

I have appointed three staff to Associate Assistant Headteacher roles from January: Mr Jenkins, Mr Morris and Mrs Gill. These are fixed term roles, for the duration of the Spring and Summer Terms of 2023. They will each take a key School Development Plan priority for this year.

Mrs Stronach has been promoted to be an Acting Deputy Headteacher, alongside Miss Bank. Mrs Stronach will continue to take the lead on quality of teaching and learning, staff professional development and initial teacher training.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

All that remains is to wish you all a very Happy Christmas – from me and all the staff and governors at Stour Valley Community School. Students return on Thursday 5 January, a week A.

