



Stour Valley Community School
Cavendish Road, Clare
Suffolk CO10 8PJ

01787 279342
info@stourvalley.org
www.stourvalleycommunityschool.org

Headteacher Mrs Rachel Kelly BA (Hons)

19 July 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

It has been another busy term. In this letter I will reflect on the highlights, tell you about staffing changes and look forward to September.

Ofsted

Ofsted visited and the school has a report to be proud of.

Students were exceptional and this was reflected in the Ofsted comments: 'Pupils and staff forge positive and supportive relationships. Pupils feel comfortable to talk to staff. Pupils experience a culture where their well-being is prioritised. This includes access to mentoring and counselling. They value the range of different ways to report any worries, including anonymously. Consequently, pupils feel happy and safe.'

Staff were also recognised in the report: 'Positive relationships and engaging lessons ensure that pupils' learning is rarely disrupted. Leaders provide tailored support to help pupils address any root causes of behaviour issues.'

Finally, the governors, and their role in supporting leaders was recognised and commented on by inspectors: 'Leaders, including governors, know the school and take effective action to bring about improvement. They engage effectively with staff to ensure that any concerns about workload or well-being are well supported.' The Trust was ably represented by Suzanne Goldsmith.

Gold School Mental Health Award

I am particularly proud that the school has received the Gold School Mental Health Award from the Carnegie School of Education and Excellence in Mental Health. Miss Howard, our Mental Health Lead in school, has led a team of people towards this outstanding achievement. Our whole school approach was recognised including mentoring, many methods of collecting student voice, website and support systems, as well as the fact that our Code of Ethics work has been shared nationally at the Schools and Academies Show Conference in May 2023. A case study of this will be published later this month and other schools are starting to implement the same idea, supported by us. I am so happy that we have achieved this award and grateful to everyone who helped and supported this achievement.



SVCS Climate Emergency Committee – net zero goals

The SVCS CEC have been driving forward with new initiatives and campaigns this term.

Since May half term, students and staff have been encouraged to bring in containers for takeaway meals from the canteen or sit in and use a plate. This is to reduce the amount of packaging used by the canteen and to reduce the amount of litter around the school site.

Since half term the number of students bringing in containers or eating off a plate has more than tripled. Ms Chappell has been awarding eco points to every single student doing this.

Phasing out plastic bottles is the next thing, so students will need a reusable bottle too. There will always be jugs of water in the hall during break and lunch times.

SVCS are also collaborating with Clare Primary School to roll out a 'Seven Ways to Change the World' initiative. Mr Davies has run this successfully at the primary school and Ms Chappell loved the idea.

Every Monday, tutors have been reading out the week's challenge to their tutor group. This was a challenge students could carry out at home. The CEC members then collected names at the end of the week of those students who completed the challenge. They all got eco house points and were entered into a prize draw. The idea was to get students to think about and action ways that make an impact.

We want initiatives such as these to be positive experiences for our students, where they feel empowered to be driving change on a personal, community and global level.

Year 7 Thriftwood Camping Trip

Over the three days of the 24-26 May, 84 students and 12 staff took part in the Year 7 residential camping trip to Thriftwood Scout Campsite near Brentwood. The weather was perfect with warm sunshine during the day and temperatures being not too cold in the evenings, perfect camping weather.

Students on camp follow the three key rules of camp:

1. Listen when any adult is talking to you.
2. Give everything a go, push yourself, step out of your comfort zone.
3. Have fun, but not at the expense of others.

The students really took these to heart, encouraging each other (by quoting rule 2 to each other) and achieving things themselves that they never thought possible.

Students ate plenty of tasty food and took part in professionally led activities ranging from climbing and abseiling to kayaking and zip lines and not forgetting the popular archery and axe throwing. Students also thoroughly enjoyed the campfire entertainment on the Thursday evening which rounded off a great three days.



Year 10 Work Experience

Year 10 students completed two weeks of Work Experience and returned to school with confidence, maturity and most importantly employability skills to take forward and use in the future. We have received so many positive comments from the employers. We are very proud of them.

Sports Day 2023

This year's Sports Day was organised differently to previous years to include every student in Year 7, 8 and 9 in a range of activities. We had a mixture of team games, individual sports, traditional matches and unique activities throughout the morning with athletics track and field events in the afternoon. Rain stopped play at lunchtime on our first attempt at Sports Day so we completed on a different day with the relays and tug of war competitions.

Participation rates were high and students were brave to tackle new activities, working collaboratively to organise their teams and demonstrating kindness to each other as events were won and lost. SVCS staff had fun too, joining in with rounders and other sports as well as a staff tug of war. In Year 7 Orwell House won; in Year 8 Deben and in Year 9 Kennet. Overall winners were Orwell.

Rewards and Awards

Waveney House were overall winners in the House Competition this year. They were rewarded with an afternoon off timetable to have fun on inflatables and eat sweets.

There have also been 'flash rewards' throughout this term, for students with no behaviour points and other positive things to celebrate.

Years 7-10 students who have shown excellence and gained the most achievement points throughout the year are also being rewarded. Mr Mansfield, Head of Year 9, cooked pizza for his top 20 students and played games out on the field to celebrate their success.

Mr Prendergast, Head of Year 8, took his top students to Clare Country Park for a treat at the Platform 1 Café.

Mrs Plumb will be taking the Year 7 top students to the beach at Frinton (now planned for September) and Miss North will be trampolining with the top students in Year 10 in early September.

On the last day of term there will be Rewards assemblies for all year groups.

New Prefects for 2023-24

Congratulations to our new prefects: Oscar Down, Arthur Dubery, Matthew Habel, Cornelius Barksfield, Austin Taylor, Eleni Wood, Thomas Kuyper, Charlotte Farrow, Kaycee White, Layla Mayes, Charlotte Duhy, Kaelan Restarick, Louise Golding, Charlotte Young and Daisy Bowden.



Trips and Visits

Some of our Year 9 students went on a Science trip to the SUEZ waste recycling facility in Great Blakenham. They had a really good day and learned lots about recycling and what happens to our waste here in Suffolk.

Some of our Climate Emergency Committee enjoyed a day at Suffolk's first ever Youth Climate Conference. They met the BBC presenter and zoologist Megan McCubbin from whom we received a signed copy of her new book for our library. There were also workshops on biodiversity, green careers, eco anxiety, t-shirt making, virtual reality and flag making.

The Year 10 DT students went on a trip to the Design Museum in Kensington, London. They explored exhibits and found inspiration for their assessed designs to be completed in Year 11.

A group of 47 Year 8 and 9 students went on a trip to London to experience life in the West End. They started at Danceworks Studios near Oxford Street and made their way through professional auditions and dance lessons to their own private studios. They spent the morning learning stage techniques and professional choreography from Disney's Frozen with West-End tutors. This is not an opportunity open to the general public and the choreography is top secret, so no filming was allowed. They then made their way to Drury Lane's Theatre Royal and were treated to a matinee performance of Frozen.

Stour Valley's Got Talent

Our final event of the year was Stour valley's Got Talent, featuring dance acts, drama pieces and a charity 'Express Yourself' fashion show organised by Year 10 students in aid of Centre Point. On Tuesday afternoon, the students of SVCS took to the stage for the final time this year in Stour Valley's Got Talent. We had the biggest range of talents ever entered and it was an afternoon of entertainment, fun and courage. SVGT was followed by an evening extravaganza of creativity, with over 45 students involved.

Staffing Changes

Mrs Stronach will be leaving us at the end of this year. She has secured promotion to a deputy headship in a larger school in Felixstowe. I am sure you will join me in wishing her well for the future.

She will be replaced by Mr Nick Mussett. He is currently a deputy headteacher at Paxman Academy in Colchester. He is an experienced deputy and he is looking forward to joining us to continue to drive school improvement through the same set of responsibilities that Mrs Stronach has held.

Miss Duffy, Head of Creative Arts and teacher of Drama, is also leaving us. She is moving to be a Head of Performing Arts in the private sector role – Gosfield School. She is very excited about the new opportunities and scope of the role. Miss Duffy has poured her heart and soul into Stour Valley for the past eleven years and the Creative Arts department is a vibrant place with a lot of students who have developed a love of drama in her care. She will be missed.



We have appointed Miss Wright to replace her. Miss Wright has been already teaching some drama lessons at Stour Valley.

Mr Hudson, Maths teacher, will also be leaving us. He is moving to join a new school opening in Colchester. We wish him well in his new job. Mrs Clark and Miss Kornasova will be doing a job share to replace him.

I am happy to say that we are fully staffed for September.

Expectations reminder for the new start in September

All students must come to school equipped with the following:

Pencil case, with their name on containing a

- Ruler
- Minimum of 2 HB pencils
- Minimum of 2 black or blue biro pens
- Pencil sharpener
- Eraser
- Scientific calculator
- Reading Book

Miss Bank sent out a letter at the end of June (link below) about uniform expectations.

[SVCS Uniform Update September 2023.pdf \(stourvalleycommunityschool.org\)](#)

I would draw you attention to this paragraph in particular:

Skirts *From September 2023 all skirts worn must sit and remain on the knee or below. Cotton jersey and thin lycra will not be allowed and the policy will be re-worded to reflect this clarification. There are acceptable skirts available through our uniform suppliers, Price and Buckland, or you can purchase a similar style from any other supplier.*

Please ensure that your child is fully equipped and wearing uniform that follows our school policy on their return in September.

Thank you for your ongoing support throughout this year and always. I wish you all a good summer and we will look forward to seeing your children again on Wednesday 6 September.

With kind regards

Rachel Kelly, headteacher