

Dear Parents & Carers,

As this term draws to an end, I want to provide you with an update about our progress.

Students have continued to make great strides this year with their academic studies. We've carried on with our mission to expand the range of subjects on offer across the school, from youngest to oldest, with plenty of scope for our young people to explore new areas of study. We know this will give every child more opportunities to discover topics and activities that really engage their interest and enthusiasm, which will ultimately help them towards setting and achieving life goals. This term, we've been particularly impressed by the way our older students have continued to demonstrate their growing maturity while sitting Functional Skills assessments.



Even though it has been a busy and exciting time, this Winter half term always feels quite long, with the days getting shorter and the weather chillier. Luckily our students have still been able to enjoy plenty of outside adventures, taking advantage of the new play equipment installed at the start of this academic year. Unfortunately, we have once again experienced a difficult time with regard to illness, with COVID infection rates rising, and staff and students succumbing to the usual Winter colds and virus infections. We've seen more cases across the school but will continue to make you aware of any issues and steps that can be taken.

We're looking forwards to 2023 and the opportunities the new year will bring for our school and our students, and look forward to sharing lots of new developments with you. Please take the time to read through this newsletter and look at the fantastic photos of the students working and having fun.

I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas break - and don't forget that term starts on Wednesday 4th January 2023!

Pete Jenkins,
Executive Principal

NEW STARTERS

We welcomed the following new staff to the school:



Janelle Penfold
Occupational Therapist



Louise Teague
Learning Support Assistant



Joe Hooper
Learning Support Assistant



Lily Higgins
Learning Support Assistant

A MESSAGE FROM LEWIS HARBEN



This half-term we have had the pleasure of seeing our students thriving in their learning across the curriculum. The school has come together to share multiple activities with one another including our Computer Science Day, when students shone at designing their own robots which they programmed to follow a course and detect obstacles. For our Outdoor Learning Day, the students communally built a welly shelter for our Forest School area. Individual classes have worked tirelessly to better themselves and I am extremely proud of the progress made by all.

Smoo Class have had a great half-term, building trusting relationships with peers and students. They have enjoyed story time and reading independently. We are also all very excited and looking forward to welcoming two new students into the class in January.

Cobra have enjoyed spending time at Equafinity this half-term becoming more confident with horses and developing skills with Sound Communities, exploring ways to create music and share this on the radio.



Beast Quest Class have really made the most of our outdoor spaces and enjoyed lunch time sessions with the coaches from Saints Southwest, where teamwork and determination has been a key skill in these sessions. I would also like to highlight the creativity and imagination that has been on display in their English lessons, studying *The Nowhere Emporium!*

Seuss Class have engaged in the Stone Age topic with particular interest in poem writing and developing an artistic touch. The students recreated their own Stone Age village with clay and the replicas and quite remarkable.

Asgard Class have become extremely resilient and developed their friendships within class. Some students have also enjoyed spending time at the Donkey Sanctuary and started to follow the wildlife and conservation programme. Academically, all students have continued to engage with their curriculum, working towards their Functional Skills qualifications.

We are all looking forward to the well deserved break over the Christmas holidays, spending quality time with families and recharging ready for next year!

Lewis Harben & the College House Team.

SMOO CLASS

Smoo class have had a fantastic half term! We have been continuing to develop relationships and friendships whilst completing lots of amazing learning.

We've been doing lots of reading, both independently and as a whole class. We've enjoyed *The Snowman* by Michael Morpugo – it has definitely put us in the Christmas spirit and wishing we had some snow!

As scientists, we have explored life cycles and particularly those of animals and plants. It has been fantastic to learn about cats, gorillas, butterflies and sunflowers... As budding chefs, we have thoroughly enjoyed our kitchen time this half term. We've made burgers, kebabs, wraps and much more. It has been brilliant to learn lots of new kitchen skills. This week, we will make our dessert for the Christmas Dinner

– we've decided to make rice crispy cakes! Wishing you all a lovely break and Merry Christmas!



SEUSS CLASS

It's been a busy and creative half term... In RE we have been learning about the creation story. We used artwork to show what happened over seven days.

We discussed the 'BIG' question, Have we spoilt God's good earth? We looked at the effect of Global warming on the earth and how it is damaging God's world and produced posters to show how the earth might feel.

In History we have learnt all about the Stone Age. We know how hunters made weapons and how cave art developed. We looked at Stone Age houses and replicated them out of clay.

We have been working collaboratively to develop our communication skills. We sat back to back and gave clear instructions to describe each other's drawings and then tried hard to recreate them!

We created a 'random acts of kindness' box for anti-bullying week, making sure that we think about how we can all be kinder to one another, all year round!



ASGARD CLASS

Asgard have had a great end of term! The students have made a lot of progress in their social skills and ability to manage unfamiliar social situations around the school. It has been great to see the class interacting with their younger peers and becoming more confident members of our school community. We have all been enjoying our interventions this term including BTEC Catering and Forest School as well as offsite sessions at Sound Communities, Dyno Climbing and The Donkey Sanctuary! We hosted a bake sale for the school as part of a maths project and worked well as a team towards a common goal - this was a particular highlight for me!

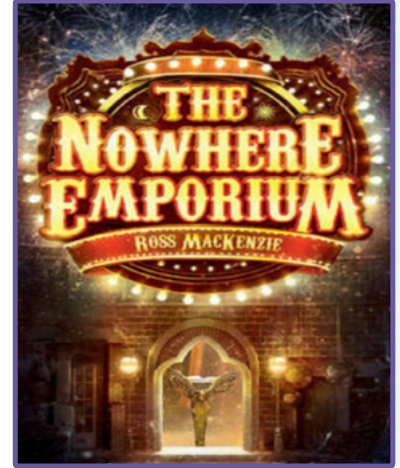
I have really enjoyed teaching Asgard this term and look forward to supporting them with their new teacher in January! Have a great Christmas holiday!



BEAST QUEST CLASS

Beast Quest class have been exploring the Nowhere Emporium by Ross MacKenzie this term, letting our imaginations run wild creating our very own room of wonders! We've continued exploring our new adventure play area, and spent lots of time enacting fantastical role play and practicing our gymnastic skills in the hall together.

Our new laptops have been put to good use writing our own stories and learning how to code programs. We've continued to develop our skills in the kitchen, making delicious burgers amongst lots of other tasty treats.



COBRA CLASS

What an amazing half term of learning Cobra class have had. Our alternative provision opportunities have enabled us to continue to visit Equafinity every Thursday and we have also begun our Donkey Management Programme, at the Ivybridge Donkey Sanctuary, every Friday morning. This provision enables students to work more holistically towards developing life skills while educating them on donkey care and welfare through a hands-on approach.

On Wednesdays, we welcome Mark from Sound Communities where we create music, make podcasts and record DJ episodes to share with adults and other students on-site. This is proving to be a great session each week and we always look forward to seeing what new and exciting things Mark has planned for us.

Last week we celebrated Computer Education Week by engaging with a STEM/Computing workshop that inspired us to build and programme our own Lego computers. We all thoroughly enjoyed this session and hope to feedback to the school council about how amazing it would be to something similar again soon.

We have also been completing our reading, writing and maths learning jobs that are helping us to apply all our learnt skills independently. We have earned a lot of Dojo points recently for our hard work and perseverance, which has made all the adults feel very proud.

Cobra class would like to wish all our families a very happy Christmas and look forward to another great term of learning after the holidays.



A MESSAGE FROM LUCY GRENEN

As the autumn term comes to a close, I just want to thank all of our wonderful parents and carers for their continued support this half term.

We have welcomed 2 new LSAs this half term – Joe and Louise who have settled in really well, supporting our students every day. They bring a range of experience and have been working across all classes, meeting all the students. Our Year 9 students have been accessing Combe Pafford where they have been part of the catering team in their Yellow Frog Café. Our Year 10 and 11 students have taken their first exams for the academic year and we are really proud of them. They have been working really hard and have been taking the small trip over to College



House to complete their papers.

Our classrooms and support rooms have had a move around, creating more spaces for our larger classes and for children to access. We have created a library and intervention room where Natalie has been working hard on RWI interventions for students, as well as our Beachcomber room where Tess provides arts and crafts for the children.

We are unfortunately saying goodbye to the amazing Kirsty who is moving onto a new school closer to her home. We have loved having her and are going to miss her very much. We will be welcoming our new teacher Jan in January. Jan will be taking over from Kirsty in our Year 7 class. Jan has been working in Primary Schools for 16 years as a Teaching Assistant, a Teacher and a Deputy Head and has worked with children of all ages. He is particularly keen on History & Geography, Maths, Art and PE. Chloe will also be moving from her Pastoral Role. Chloe will be working with our new charity, Life Chance Trust, to support students 16-25 so will continue to work with our KS4 students to provide support post 16.

We look forward to next term and from everyone at Place House, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

Lucy Grenen and the Place House Team

DART CLASS

Year 11 have had a really successful term this term, and we are prouder than ever of the resilience and kindness of the boys. This term we have picked up Entry Level Science GCSE and have been focused on cells in Biology; next term we will be learning all about forces in Physics.

The boys have also finished off another set of exams – we will find out the results of these in the New Year. We have enjoyed starting cookery in Forest School this term, and are looking forward to continuing this when Paul returns – there is no one else that runs the sessions quite like him!

LIONS CLASS

This term we have started to settle into our new classroom and make it our own! In History we have looked at the Romans and learnt a lot about how they lived and who they fought against.

We have had lots of fun in swimming lessons, food tech and forest school. Finally, in maths we have looked at symmetry and reflections and in English we have done lots of work on Flotsam.

We hope everybody has a lovely holiday!



SKY CLASS

This half term in Sky class, we have been spending a lot of time with Mikki in the kitchen cooking and baking. The students have been making pasta using our new pasta machine.

The students have also been working on their Inspiring Talents projects which for some has been spending time with Tess in the arts and crafts room.

We have now split the class into 2 which has been really beneficial and has meant we have more room for students to access their learning.

Merry Christmas from Sky Class!



PARRETT / YEAR 10 CLASS

Another busy term for Year 10 with us working towards our functional skills qualifications. Our students travelled over to College House for their exams and despite the change in environment and staff, they all responded really well. This certainly bodes well for the future!

We have been writing our biographies this term for History, and students have been researching The Night Witches, the Unkillable Soldier, Sophie Scholl and Anne Frank. Students have worked incredibly hard and will continue with their work on Nazi Germany next term.

Students have engaged well in forest school making fajitas, whittling hammers and making Christmas tree decorations. In food technology, we've made macaroni cheese, fancy burgers (even fussy Gem ate them) and a variety of pasta dishes. Buon Apetito!

In PSHE, students have been learning first aid, and how to keep themselves healthy. With the help of knowyourlemons.com students learned how to identify signs of breast cancer. Gem was incredibly proud of how maturely students behaved during these sessions. To learn more about future careers, we also had a visit from Anthony at Hyett Education and we learned how to fly drones.

We finished our term with a trip for Trago Mills and a budget of £3 per student to buy a classmate a Secret Santa Present... Lego lobster included...

Well done Year 10, we continue to be very proud of you!



GRYFFINDOR CLASS

Another fantastic few months in year 9! We have been focusing hard on our reading and writing skills, and our maths skills. Combe Pafford has also been a success! This term we have been focusing on catering and food preparation skills. We have some excellent chefs in year 9 and some great waiters and waitresses too!

Year 9 have been putting 100% effort into their learning and overcoming new and different exciting obstacles. All staff are all super proud of you all! And finally, we've spent some time building robots and learning all about what goes inside of them. Super fun!

Keep it up year 9 and have a fantastic Christmas holiday.



CHRISTMAS CREATIVITY

Huge thanks to the students who took part in the Christmas Card Competition. Our winning entries are shown below... these have been included in a mini video sent out as our Christmas 'e-card' and they have also been printed into cards which the students can take home so their friends and family can appreciate their talent!



Caleb



Ryan B



Maisie



Liam



Ryan W



Lola



Marshall

A MESSAGE FROM JULES SANDERS

It's been a busy autumn term and MDT have been continuing to support our students with their social, emotional and mental health needs by providing speech and language support, delivering Creative Arts Therapy (CAT) sessions, ensuring IPPs target areas of need, through interventions focusing on areas such as self-esteem and providing mental health support, for example through trauma focussed CBT session.

We have been fortunate enough to appoint a new Occupational Therapist and are delighted to welcome Janelle Penfold to the team. Janelle started work with us this week and will be providing support for our students sensory, regulation and OT needs. Janelle is a very experienced Occupational Therapist who specialises in paediatrics but also has previous experience of working in mental health.



Although Christmas can be an exciting time it can also be challenging for a variety of reasons. We will be sending out a helpful factsheet from Beacon House in the near future which offers thoughts and ideas about how to support children and young people who have experienced trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) over this festive period. Please do look out for it on Class Dojo.

Our family worker, Fay, has also created a very useful list of activities which may be helpful for those wishing be busy and active over the Christmas break, which is also available on Class Dojo.

We wish you all a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas from MDT and look forward to seeing you again next year.

Optimus Award for Wellbeing & Mental Health:

As you are aware, we have been working towards achieving the Optimus Wellbeing Award for Schools over the last year. We have made brilliant progress towards evidencing our whole school community approach and will have our final verification visit in February 2023.

In supporting student wellbeing, we continue to work together on the student council and our representatives have been amazing in bring and sharing thoughts on things that affect the whole school. We are working on nominating a student wellbeing champion on each site to work alongside the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead in the new term.



For parents/carers we have been providing Tea and Talk once per term. Each Tea and Talk has a wellbeing theme woven in and we would be happy to take feedback on what may be useful to discuss next, please do get in touch!

We have updated our website to reflect our ongoing commitment to wellbeing and will soon be adding more signposting and resources. Watch this space!

Best wishes, and don't forget you can get in touch: info@sfit.org.uk

Megan Hornsby

(Please note that from January, I will be using my married name, Megan Harben.)

Life Chance Trust news



This month we welcome Chloe Sutcliffe, who needs no introduction for most of you! We're excited to have Chloe on board, bringing her experience of supporting young people and links across SfIT. Chloe's focus will be on developing our youth engagement and our 'mentoring plus' offering, including motivating activities, wellbeing and life skills and community connections post-16. Please let Chloe know if you think there's someone we should meet / partner with / or an event we should have a presence at in 2023.

We're now recruiting young people to our **Young Advisor Board**, with two of our newest trustee volunteers, Sophie Wakefield and Hal Davidson, working alongside Chloe to shape and facilitate a group of 8-10 amazing 16-25 year olds who are ready to bring their lived experiences to help shape the future of our charity. You can discover more about all our trustees [here](#).

Cost of living crisis: For young people and families reeling from the aftermath of a crisis, or in dire financial need, there are various grants and support available and for over 16s, the Trust can help with applications for household essentials, travel costs and education grants.

Please contact Chloe for more info - trust@lifechance.org.uk.

Run, Run, Run!!!

We're gearing up for our first ever community events - will you be there to support staff and young people...? Please let Chloe know! You can find out more [here](#).

Sunday 14th May - RunPlymouth:
5k, 10k and half-marathon, plus helpers and supporters needed

Sunday 21st May - Exeter's Great West Run:
Community / Family Mile, 10k and half-marathon, plus water and cheer point helpers needed!



Research support: At the end of last term, 'Dr Sophie' (pictured right) visited to speak with some of our older students about their life experiences and what services and support are helpful (or not), to help improve the way health and social care services are planned and run in England. In return, students received a shopping voucher - well done to all who contributed, you never know what might change because you spoke up!



Easy ways to support young people without spending ££!

- **Easyfundraising** - sign up [here](#), and every time you shop online with over 7,000 brands, we'll get a small donation!
- **Amazon Smile** - have you made us your default charity yet? [Click this link to sign up](#) - and everytime you buy on Amazon, we'll get a donation.
- Tell everyone you know to buy a copy of **One More Life Chance!** Our founder, Mark Escott, has revised and updated his book, and it will be available on Kindle for just 99p on 26th & 27th January 2023. He's very kindly donating all money from sales of the book to Life Chance Trust, so as well as a great read for you, it's a win-win for us!

12 Smartphone Online Safety Tips

FOR CHILDREN WITH NEW DEVICES

The Christmas season has finally arrived and soon many of you will be opening your presents in the hope that Santa has listened to your request for the latest mobile phone or smart device. Owning a mobile phone can be fun, but it's important to use it safely and responsibly. By following our safety tips below, you can make sure that you set up your phone securely, keep your personal information private and enjoy using your phone in the healthiest way possible.

1 ALWAYS SECURE YOUR PHONE WITH A PASSWORD

This will help to keep your private information safe and won't allow others to access your phone without your permission. Make sure your password is memorable and personal to you but something which other people can't guess, and always share it with your parents just in case you forget it.

2 DISABLE LOCATION SETTINGS

This can usually be done from the device's privacy control settings. Disabling location settings means that your phone can't be tracked by others and strangers can't tell where you are when you're using it. It also helps to save battery.

3 ALWAYS USE A SECURE WIFI NETWORK

When you use your WIFI at home usually it is a secure network that only you and your family know the password to. Public networks, like those in coffee shops, can be accessed by anyone which means that people could potentially hack into your device and access your personal information without you realising.

4 ONLY PAIR WITH BLUETOOTH DEVICES YOU KNOW

A Bluetooth connection with another device means that you can send and receive data wirelessly. For example, you could listen to music wirelessly or receive pictures and videos from your friends. However, pairing your phone with a device you don't know means that you could be sharing personal information with a stranger or could leave your device open to receiving viruses.

5 ONLY USE APPS WHICH YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH TO USE

Before downloading any new apps, always check the age-rating of the app. If you need help, ask your parent or carer to make sure that the app is safe for you to use and never download anything which you are too young for as it may contain things that aren't safe for you to see.

6 BEWARE OF BECOMING ADDICTED TO YOUR PHONE

Your phone can be fun to use and it's easy to become too attached, whether it's keeping in touch with friends, discovering new features or downloading the latest apps. Remember it's always good to talk in person, go out and have fun and get regular exercise. This will keep you fit and healthy and make you appreciate there's more to life than just your mobile phone.

7 LIMIT YOUR SCREEN TIME

Using your phone for too long, particularly in the evenings, can make you feel tired at school, affect your concentration and make you lose interest in other things in life. Only use your phone at certain times of the day and don't use it close to bedtime. You can set a 'screen time limit' via the settings on your phone. This will help you stay fit and healthy and means that you will still be able to focus and perform well at school.

8 THINK OF OTHERS WHEN TAKING PHOTOS

Don't take embarrassing photos of other people on your phone. If other people get access to the photo and share it with more people, it could make that person really upset and treated as a form of bullying. Always be mindful of the photos you take using your camera and who you share them with.

9 MAKE SURE YOUR PARENTS SET UP 'PARENTAL CONTROLS'

This means that you will be able to use your phone safely and securely and won't accidentally do things you shouldn't do. The best time to do this is when you get a new phone or device so that you're protected from the very beginning.

10 ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR PARENTS IF YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE

Sometimes, even though your phone is really secure, you might see something you don't like, or someone might contact you who you don't know. If this happens, always tell your trusted adult like your parents, carers, other adult family members or a teacher, all of whom will be able to support you and advise you on what you should do next.

11 DON'T TEXT AND WALK

This might seem like a strange thing to say but it can be dangerous to stare at your mobile phone whilst walking outside alongside busy roads or bicycle paths. In some cases, children have been knocked over by cars or cyclists because they haven't been aware of their surroundings whilst texting or playing games on their mobile devices.

12 DON'T SHARE YOUR NUMBER OR YOUR DEVICE WITH PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW.

Never feel pressured into sharing your phone number with people you don't know and don't lend your phone to strangers or keep it where others could get hold of it. Look after your device and always keep it hidden from sight to avoid it being stolen or broken into.



Term Dates 2022 / 2023

September 2022

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

October 2022

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

November 2022

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Term Lengths

- Autumn Half Term
- 7 Sep - 14 Oct
- Half Term to Christmas
- 31 Oct - 16 Dec
- Winter Half Term
- 4 Jan - 10 Feb

December 2022

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

January 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

February 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12

- Half Term to Easter
- 20 Feb - 31 Mar
- Spring Half Term
- 17 Apr - 26 May
- Summer Half Term
- 5 Jun - 21 Jul

March 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
27	28	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

April 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

May 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

June 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

July 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

August 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Key

-  Holiday
-  Bank Holiday