

BURSCOUGH PRIORY SCIENCE COLLEGE



The Priory Spirit February Newsletter



'Together - Creating the World We Want'

8th February 2012

Dear Parents/ Carers

I am really delighted to write and make contact with you as the new Headteacher to celebrate the recent successes of our students and to inform you of our exciting plans for the future. Although I don't officially take up my post until after Easter, I am visiting regularly from my current post in a London Academy and taking an active role in transitional leadership. Therefore, I am in close daily contact and meeting regularly with my staff team and governors to develop a close working knowledge of the school and community. Mr Cunningham is now no longer involved in the school leadership and we wish to thank him for his contributions in assisting before my appointment.

Having already spent 4 days at Priory, I am excited by the genuine enthusiasm from all to take our school forward into the future. We are working very closely as a staff team to **aim for Outstanding in all areas** as we believe that our students deserve the very best. Your support is really important and invaluable in this drive forward to create the world we want for our young people. We aim to hold very tightly onto what is already outstanding about our school, while reaching out to take advantage of new opportunities and innovative practices. Our school community is really excited and positive about the future and we want you to be a close and invaluable part of that.

Therefore, I would like to **personally invite you to our forthcoming events** [see below], where I will be available to talk to you and hear your views about how we can work more closely together. I know that Priory has always openly welcomed parents/carers, but we wish to build on this further to ensure that we work in close partnership on a range of issues to support students' well-being, accelerate their learning and provide opportunities for success in their future lives. With the current national economic pressures, there has never been a better time to do all that we can, in close effective collaboration, to give our young people the tools they need to stand out and confidently take their place in the world around them.

Our main aim here at Priory is to provide a vibrant, engaging and family atmosphere, always focused clearly on the highest standards of learning and behaviour. Excellent attitudes towards learning, having respect for others and actively striving to help others, rank highly as our top priorities. Aware of this, we are planning an exciting learning trip to **Queen's College, Oxford University** in April to inspire students in KS4 to aim high and have confidence in their abilities.

Also, a weekend **Leadership Development Course run by The Outward Bound Trust to Loch Eil in the Scottish Highlands** has been booked for May. This will be for students from Years 8 and 9, to stretch their boundaries and strengthen resilience in the face of challenges [more details to follow].

Our staff here at Priory are highly committed, believing passionately in the development of the 'whole child.' We want our young people to be outstanding, not just in their academic lives, but in their attitudes, relationships and community spirit. This is very much a part of our school life. Priory students are buzzing with ideas and inspiration to change the world around them, to make it better for everyone. It is really inspiring to witness their determination to help others as, all too often, our young people are criticised. This week, our student Buddies came to request that we consider **hosting a Car Boot Sale** in order to raise money for charities such as Cancer Research and Age Uk. We are totally committed to facilitating them having opportunities for leadership in such worthy causes as we also want to work closely with others to be a thriving example of a community school working for, and fully active in, the community.

Finally, on behalf of all the staff and governors, I would like to wish you a relaxing, happy and productive February break. We look forward to students returning punctually from their half-term holiday on **Monday 20th February at the normal start time of 8.50am**, refreshed, enthusiastic and prepared for their new stage of learning.

A reminder that **100% attendance is essential** for optimal learning as there is a direct correlation between attendance to school and achievement. I am sure that you will agree that your child's learning must be a priority and, as attendance at school is a legal requirement, all holidays must be taken outside of term-time.

Thank you sincerely for your support of your school this term and I look forward to working closely with you in the future.

Warm wishes
Ms Catherine Edens

Headteacher Designate

Our Invaluable 'Friends'

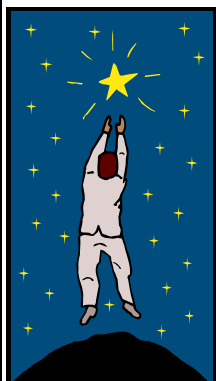
We are sincerely thankful for the continued hard work of **'The Friends of Priory'** who have generously given their time and energy to raise funds towards the cost of refurbishing the PE changing rooms and showers. This update is badly needed as our students deserve to have a good standard of facilities and the tired existing area desperately needs a facelift. Our 'Friends' have organised an exciting **Irish Night on Saturday 17th March 2012**. This promises to be a highly entertaining event with fabulous, plentiful food and a well stocked bar. I will be attending this exciting event and I hope to see many of you there supporting our efforts to provide even better facilities for our students. It promises to be a superb evening, with your support. If you are able to attend, please get in touch quickly before tickets sell out.



Furthermore, we are always looking for fresh members to enrich the already vibrant 'Friends of Priory' parents/friends group. If you have a desire to take an active part in developing your son/daughter's school through sharing ideas, fundraising and fellowship with like-minded others, then don't hesitate! Get in touch and you will be assured of a warm welcome. We don't expect you to attend every single meeting, but to give what time, energy and ideas you can, as we plan a series of interesting events throughout the year.

Talents, Contacts or Suggestions

If you have particular expertise or contacts in a specific area that might help our students, we would welcome your advice or talent. For instance, we would really love to get a **school mini-bus**, as this would allow us to set up frequent enrichment activities and build regular close working partnerships with other community members. For instance, our student Buddies have suggested **hosting events for our elderly and going into primary schools to hold buddy and literacy enrichment events**. If you have any links that might help to make our students' wishes a reality, we would be delighted to hear about them.

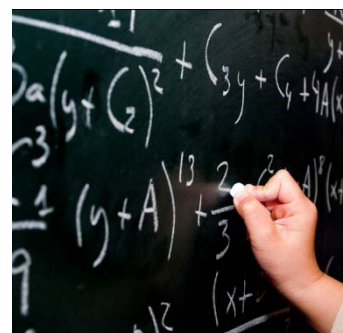


Meet The Head

I will also be **available to speak to all parents/ carers on Friday 16th March from 4-5pm** when I will outline to you more fully our priorities for the future and also award students who have made outstanding progress and shown exemplary attitude in going well beyond what is expected of them. On this occasion, I hope to feed back with a summary of your responses and views from the **attached questionnaire** and to consult with you on future exciting plans. Refreshments will be provided at this event free of charge, but donations are welcome.

Our Music and Drama departments hosted a highly successful **Tea Time Concert**. Held on 7th February, this was a great success with a range of entertainment including music, dancing and song, with an emphasis on music theatre. Our students were absolutely fantastic, performing before an audience of around 150 parents and students. If you didn't attend, you missed a super event where our students excelled and showcased their talents.

I am delighted to report that we have appointed a **new teacher of Mathematics**, Mr Paul Smith who will start in April. This new appointment is to cover the extra space left from the teaching responsibilities of our retired Deputy and also to provide some focused work for our more able students who are aiming for A/A* grades.



Y9 Options Evening was postponed while we review our curriculum to provide an even wider range of subject offers to students. This is still being developed, so I ask for your patience while we make some exciting adjustments to enable us to provide more choice to our students. We will contact you again with a new date as soon as details are finalised and we can unveil our amended curriculum.



Priory Stars - Special Commendations



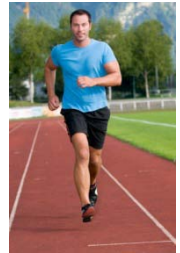
We know that all of our students show excellent qualities making it **extremely difficult to mention everyone**, but we would like a special mention for recent outstanding achievements to the following stars:

Year 7 student **Alex Davies**: 'saved a teacher' when Mrs Healey fell and was seriously injured in the snow – an example of exemplary community action.



Ryan Blackwell: selected to run for Lancashire in the national cross country championships. We are very proud of your accomplishments, Ryan and will follow your future with interest.

Priory Buddies: Harry Whitfield, Emily Collins, Katie Byrne, Robert Woods, Ashley Oshinowo, Nick Chadford, Andrew Jones, Georgia Cann, Sophie Appleby, Sarah Baker, Beth Gilbody, Jemma Clarke, Rebecca Menarry, Charlotte Menarry, Holly Macgregor, Becky Latham, Jack Winders, Ben



Lawrence, Sarah Parker and James Harrop. These students were persistent and determined to secure an impromptu meeting with the new Head to present their inspirational ideas for the future.

Maisie Britton: a particularly consistent and hard-working student in Year 10 who is an exemplary role model for others in giving 100%. Maisie, we have noticed you and you will do extremely well with your commitment to learning and excellent behaviour.

10X1 Physics students: decided to organise a student competition to design a mural for our school based on the theme of aiming high, reaching for the stars and collaboration to create the world we want. They created a PowerPoint and courageously presented their ideas before every Year Group assembly. They were the inspiration for the organisation of the forthcoming trip to Queen's College, Oxford University so they will be invited to apply for the special residential trip.

Hot off the press: Patrick Taberner won the Year 9 boys' Freestyle and Ben McKenna won the Year 7 boys' Butterfly at the West Lancashire District Swimming Gala this week, at Everton Park Sports' Centre.

Student Council members: Emma Smith, Harry Burns, Katherine Jackson, Ellie Johnson-Matthews, Esther Tuzio, Nick Chadford, Lorna Cooper and Adam Hope. We recognise their enthusiasm, energy, team working and pro-active commitment to gathering information from every student in the school. To achieve this they designed and administered a questionnaire about what they are proud of in their school and their wish list for further improvements.

'The school council has recently been involved with welcoming Ms Edens to the school and we have had several very positive meetings with her to discuss the improvements that could be made to Priory. We also regularly meet with the new

caterers to advise them on the changes they are currently implementing to the canteens and to express the views of pupils to the changes.

Finally, we will be regularly speaking in assemblies to keep everyone updated with what we're doing.'

Adam Hope in Year 11

Resistant Materials, Electronics Food and Graphic Products Update

Well done to all Year 7, 8 and 9 students on a very good term's work. Students have demonstrated that they are highly motivated and produce excellent standards of work in lessons. Also, well done to Year 10 students for starting the GCSE course with a high level of enthusiasm and commitment. We are confident that you will all achieve or exceed your expectations with a continuation of the same focused attitude. Finally, well done to ALL Year 11s who completed the practical work ahead of the expected deadlines. You have all done an exceptional job and should be proud, but now we know that you will be preparing hard for the forthcoming examinations and aiming for your aspirational targets.

School Dinners

Our catering staff are working hard to produce tasty, economic meals and I can personally attest to the **high quality of our food** and the extensive efforts made to supply a range of hot and cold snacks to suit all tastes. Our food prices are fair and in line with other educational price listings [I have checked, as I want our students and parents to have a fair price]. I know that some of you have commented on the recent increased cost, but I can assure you that the modest price increase is just to bring us up to date with new food prices. We have not altered our prices for a few years, but the recent budget cuts meant we could not continue to run at a loss. You can be confident that school lunch is still a nutritious, balanced and cost effective option and, in this cold weather especially, our students have commented on how tasty and warming the meals have been.



New Student Lockers!

An exciting update...governors have authorised the purchase of 400 lockers to ease the burden on our younger students who have a range of books and equipment to bring daily and carry around the building. This was a top priority for students and they are extremely excited and looking forward to this new facility. We eventually hope to provide a locker for every student in the school, but are presently limited by a lack of space. The school council students voted to prioritise the younger members of the student body to secure a locker in the first instance.



Heating Update

As reported in the previous Newsletter, the School is one of a number identified by Lancashire Education Authority for building development and refurbishment. This good news means new heating boilers have been fitted and work to the external fabric of the building, such as replacing roofs, doors and windows has already started with no disruption to learning. The **new boilers** are now in place and are providing much needed warmth and sanctuary for students and staff, particularly in this cold spell. Minor adjustments are being made next week to ensure that the heat is evenly distributed around the building.

London Trip

As part of our work in Life Studies, Mr Kenyon organised a trip to London. We left school really, really early and travelled through London on the Tube, which was very busy! We then travelled to Big Ben and The Houses of Parliament by Ferry for a tour of Parliament. After this was the best bit - The London Eye. The view was amazing and we also enjoyed the 4D Experience.



Sian Stevenson in Year 8

Spanish Play



A theatre company came into school to present a play called 'Primera Cita' to pupils in Year 8 and Year 9. The play was great fun and pupils were able to identify some of the words they have been learning recently. Pupils, and Mr Collier, said that they were amazed how much of the play they could understand by picking out the words they already know. A great learning experience for everyone!

'An Inspector Calls'

A group of Year 11 pupils attended the National Theatre production of 'An Inspector Calls' at 'The Lowry' in Manchester. The performance was superb and helped pupils to further develop their knowledge of the play in preparation for the final English Literature exams in May.

Rock and Roll Pantomime

A large group of Year 7 pupils went to see 'Cinderella' at 'The Playhouse' in Liverpool. This was a loud, lively and hilarious evening and everyone had a brilliant time! Please can we go again next year!!



Sam Learning - To Promote Independent Learning And Engagement

Successful students are able to work independently and study without relying too much on teacher input and direction. Therefore, we are encouraging our students to develop their independent learning and have purchased a new and highly effective online tool called 'Sam Learning'.

This resource can be accessed directly from home and is directly linked to their curriculum learning. Never again will students be able to lament that they are bored or have no homework to do, as they will have, at the end of their keyboard, an outstanding software package that even assesses their level of learning and provides instant feedback. In the coming weeks, students will be issued with their own personal login details and password. For those students who may have difficulty accessing a computer at home, we are looking into extending computer access outside normal lesson times before and after school hours. More details to follow and watch the school website for details. If you want to have a look: <https://www.samlearning.com/>

Literacy and Successful Learning

What is your child reading? Please help us to develop a strong reading culture as independent reading is the key to success academically. Students who read regularly, get books from the library and who are encouraged to read at home have much higher attainment levels than students who don't. Please take an active interest in your child's reading habits and perhaps this might be a good time to introduce them to the joys of Dickens as his timeless topics, in books such as *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*, continue to inspire younger generations as well as providing exciting and challenging reading material. The Guardian has some good links to look at regarding resources for discussing Dickens. They also have a page called Dickens at 200 with many interesting facts and activities, including maps of Dickensian London.



<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/feb/06/charles-dickens-teacher-resources>

Challenges to our school

Finance and resource cutbacks nationally have impacted on us. Like all schools nationally, we are now having to cope with a 5% cut in our budget for this coming year. Departments are taking the initiative to raise funds for extra essential materials to support the curriculum. For example, the Technology Department has held a successful cake sale this week so that we can purchase materials for the rest of this financial year, but this won't cover everything. Any good suggestions please, or offers of help will be greatly appreciated.

Important Exam Dates and Tips

1. **Don't try to cram all your studying into one session.**

Successful students typically space their work out over shorter periods of time and rarely try to cram all of their studying into just one or two sessions. If you want to become a successful student then you need to learn to be consistent in your studies and to have regular, yet shorter, study periods.

2. **Plan when you're going to study.**

Successful students schedule specific times throughout the week when they are going to complete their studying -- and then they stick with their schedule. Students who study sporadically and whimsically typically do not perform as well as students who have a set study schedule.

3. **Study at the same time.**

Not only is it important that you plan when you're going to study, but that you also create a consistent, daily study routine. When you study at the same time each day and each week your studying will become a regular part of your life. You'll be mentally and emotionally more prepared for each study session and each study session will become more productive as you will feel in control.

4. **Each study time should have a specific goal.**

You need to know exactly what you need to accomplish during each study session. Before you start, set yourself a manageable goal so that you will have a clear sense of achievement when you complete it.

5. **Never put off your planned study session.**

It's very easy, and common, to put off your study session because of lack of interest in the subject, because you have other things you need to get done first or just because the assignment is hard. Successful students DO NOT keep putting off their study sessions as this leads to last minute rushing and cramming. Pace yourself and keep to a study plan.

6. **Start with the most difficult subject first.**

As your most difficult subject will require the most effort and mental energy, you should start with it first. Once you've completed the most difficult work it will be much easier to complete the rest of your work. Believe it or not, starting with the most difficult work will greatly improve the effectiveness of your study sessions and your academic performance.

7. **Make sure that you have the mark scheme and course requirements.**

It is really important that you spend all your time and energy studying the correct part of the course and at the level you need so that you have the correct tools at hand.

8. **Make sure you're not disturbed while you're studying**

When you're disturbed while you're studying you (1) lose your train of thought and (2) you get distracted -- both of which will lead to very ineffective studying. Before you start studying, find a place where you won't be disturbed and enlist the support of a parent/carer to supply you with TLC and nutritious healthy snacks to feed your mind.

9. **Use A Study Buddy**

Pair up with a friend to challenge, test and discuss the topics to fill in blanks and extend subject knowledge. Make sure that you stay on task though and aim for the highest grades as you will pick up some star tips along the way!

10. **Review your notes, schoolwork, study guides and other class materials over the weekend and holidays.**

Successful students review what they've learned. Also, they develop independent learning and revision habits without relying on teachers or parents to nag or cajole them into action. **We're certain that if you develop the habits outlined above then you'll see a major improvement in your academic success and confidence. But most importantly, you must believe in yourself and seize your inner confidence.**



MARCH		SUBJECT	DURATION	NO. OF PUPILS	EXAM BOARD
Thursday 1st March	a.m.	Science BLY1BP + CHY1BP + PHY1BP	3 x 30 mins	Year 11 (98 pupils)	AQA 4405
Friday 2nd March	p.m.	Maths Paper 1	1 hour 30 mins	Year 11 (60 pupils)	Edexcel 1380
Monday 5th March	p.m.	Maths Paper 2	1 hour 30 mins	Year 11 (60 pupils)	Edexcel 1380
Monday 5th March	p.m.	Maths Unit 1	1 hour	Year 11 (14 pupils)	AQA 43601
Tuesday 6th March	a.m. +p.m.	ICT Level 1 + 2 Functional Skills	2 hours	Year 11 (127 pupils)	AQA 4527 + 4528
Wednesday 7th March	a.m.	Maths Unit 2	1 hour 15 mins	Year 11 (10 pupils)	AQA 43602

Update From Our Governors

Our new Head has asked me to write a brief article on Governance.

Firstly, we are all volunteers, from all walks of life, some are involved in education, some have a financial background, and some are in managerial positions. Hopefully we bring a wide range of talent and experience to help challenge and support the Headteacher and her staff.

We have three formal meetings each year – one per term, all Governors attend these, we are also split into four committees with each Governor being a member of at least two committees. The committees focus on:

- i) Pupil Progress: Attainment, Achievement and Well-Being.
- ii) Teaching and the Curriculum.
- iii) Leadership and Management: Governance, Staff, Safeguarding and Well-Being.
- iv) Leadership and Management: Finance, Environment, and Community.

Governors are appointed to a four year term of office and fall into a number of different categories: **Parent Governors**, as the name suggests are normally parents of children who are either currently at or have recently left Priory, they are elected by current parents.

Authority Governors, these are appointed by the local authority and should normally reflect a balance of the political parties.

Staff Governors, one teaching and one non-teaching.

Community Governors, these are appointed by the rest of the Governing Body and are usually people who may not have a direct connection with the school but are considered to be an asset to the running of the school by virtue of their experience or position.

We undergo training by the local authority on a wide range of subjects that will strengthen our role and our primary aim is to ensure that our pupils get the best possible education and opportunity at Priory and that the staff have the necessary training and facilities in order to deliver this.

We have a very varied remit which includes maintaining and raising standards in school, overseeing buildings maintenance, negotiating rates and standards with cleaning and catering suppliers, also recruiting, interviewing and appointing staff.

I would encourage parents to watch out for vacancies arising and actively participate in the education and well-being of your children.

Pen Portraits of the current Governors can be seen on the school website.

Michael Forshaw
Chair of Governors.