

October 24th 2023

Dear Parents & Carers,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you in order to share some thoughts on the first half-term of the year and also to give you some information regarding our Praising Stars I reports.

All schools in the country received their Year 11 performance data from last year's public exams a few weeks ago. This is the first opportunity to judge our students' performance against everyone else in the country. I am sure that you will be as pleased as me that our students achieved so well in comparison to both regional and national standards:

Measure	Outwood Academy Newbold	Derbyshire Average	National Average
<b>Attainment 8</b> (An average obtained when you add together the best 8 grades for each student - English & maths count twice)	47.7	44.8	46.2
<b>Progress 8</b> (A comparison between the grades a student has achieved and the grades they were expected to achieve)	+0.19	-0.16	-0.03
<b>Basics at 5+</b> (The number of students who passed English and maths with a grade 5 or better)	51%	43%	45%
<b>Basics at 4+</b> (The number of students who passed English and maths with a grade 4 or better)	72%	64%	65%

We are delighted with how the year has started for all of our students. We have an incredible school in which students work hard to meet the high expectations that we have for each of them. I am privileged to lead a group of teachers and support staff who are highly trained and experts in their roles. They provide a high quality education every day, and all of our internal measures are suggesting that the standards of learning are getting better every week.

I would like to thank all of our parents and carers for supporting the academy in ensuring that students attend every day. We have seen a hugely significant increase in attendance levels this year which places us well above regional and national levels. We still require your help in ensuring that all students arrive on time to the academy, as lateness is the most common reason for issuing a sanction at the moment.

There has been a 33% reduction in the number of sanctions being issued in the academy compared to the same point last year. In particular, the 77% reduction in students accessing the reflection room is evidence of the improvements that we have been striving for in relationships between students and students, and students and adults. In addition to this we have issued 16388 praise points over the last 6 weeks in order to acknowledge the outstanding work of our students. This has been an area that we have invested lots of time, energy and training into, and I now feel that the culture within the academy is as good as or better than anywhere I have experienced before.

Today we are issuing our Praising Stars I reports to all students. You may notice that the style of the report has changed in order to be an easier document to read and understand. In every year group we are now predicting the grade that we think a student will achieve at the end of Year 11. We know that this will be much more accurate for students in the older year groups than those in Year 7 or Year 8. However, we think that it gives parents better information than the one-word description that we used in previous reports. If you have any questions about the predictions then I would encourage you to contact your son/daughter's learning manager.

The effort grades are a good indicator of how hard a student is working. Teaching staff have been asked to be honest with their students and not to award an effort grade on how pleasant the student is - they relate to how hard the student is working both in class and at home. It is important to point out that a student who is doing well and trying hard will be achieving an E3, this is not a negative outcome. In order to be awarded an E1 or an E2 a student must be working beyond the minimum expectations. The effort grade "re-sets" at the beginning of each half-term and therefore a student can choose today to become an E1 student and nothing from their past will prevent this from happening.

I am always keen for parents and carers to come into the academy and experience what we offer to your sons and daughters every day. We hold forums every half-term, but anyone is welcome to come and have a look around the academy at any point - there is always someone available to show visitors around. We are incredibly proud of what happens at our school and would love to share it with you.

The academy closes for the half-term holiday at 14:30 on Thursday 26th October and re-opens at 08:00 on Monday 6th November. I know that the students are ready for a break and are looking forward to spending time with their friends and family. I hope that all of you have a restful break and find time to wind-down and relax.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Southern