

MMC/GHR

21st April 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you enjoyed a lovely Easter break and that this letter finds you all well. We enjoyed a busy but fantastic end to the term prior to the break and the final week really encapsulated what we are as an academy. You will read below about events that seek to grow great young people full of empathy and social skills who are interested in bettering themselves through academia. The Year 11 cohort this year will achieve record breaking results, we are sure of that and there is no surprise that we had the greatest attendance to Easter revision session that we have ever had. The two things are directly correlated and there will never be a substitute for hard work. These young people are dedicated, and I thank staff for their commitment to support all STWA students.

Events/Enrichment

An Audience with Tim Peake

Dreams and aspirations are a huge part of the work that we do at Sir Thomas Wharton Academy. Our inaugural "Audience with" event with astronaut Tim Peake was designed to spark the imagination of our students, and it certainly didn't disappoint!

Local Primary schools, along with MLT academies, joined our amazing STEM club students for an afternoon of hands-on STEM activities and competitions along with shared letters written to Tim about the dreams and aspirations of our students.

Tim became the first British astronaut to visit the International Space Station and conduct a spacewalk during his mission. This is something that only a handful of people have ever had the opportunity to do, and Tim told us that this was the highlight of his mission. To bring the event to a close, Tim answered a wide range of interesting and thought-provoking questions from our students and was kind enough to have photos taken with students and staff.

We are proud to know that some of our students will talk about and never forget the "day they met a real-life astronaut"!

Easter Extravaganza

During the final week of term, we enjoyed our second family dining event to celebrate Easter. We enjoyed a picnic-style lunch, followed by an hour of tutor time activities that included a climate debate, writing a thank you card and playing bingo. Students were impeccably behaved and fully invested in the day's festivities!

The Easter and Christmas family style dining are key events in our calendar, we believe that they are an essential part of our curriculum. In today's age having structured time for young people to sit and eat with their friends minus the ever-present mobile phone is important. We give the students topic starters and watch them engage in conversation at the dinner table – as a parent of two young children I know how hard this is, so we want to build time into the academic year and engineer opportunities for it to take place. It is important that students appreciate gifts and other circumstances, we want to create empathetic young people and we believe that these events help us do that.

Gym and Dance Spectacular

On Wednesday 30th March 128 students performed in front of a sell-out audience of 270 family and friends at our annual Gym and Dance Spectacular. We encouraged and invited students of all abilities to perform under the spotlights, on stage in front a huge audience.

Students had worked extremely hard for the months, weeks and days leading up to the performance and showed immense resilience and amazing confidence to entertain for over two hours on the night with a variety of spectacular Gym and Dance performances. An extremely positive evening with everyone enjoying the event and students feeling very proud of themselves.

Year 11 Geography Coasts Fieldwork Trip

Year 11 Geography students travelled to Flamborough, Hornsea and Mappleton as part of their GCSE course. Whilst on the visit students collected a range of data looking at the different coastal features as well as how the coastline is protected from erosion. The students were able to practice skills that will be assessed in their paper 3 exam as well as seeing landforms and features assessed in paper 1. As always, the students on the trip were a credit to the academy in the way they behaved and despite some initial nerves, they were able to approach members of the public with confidence to ask them to complete some questionnaires.

Teaching and Learning

Year 11 Revision Sessions

During the Easter break, it was incredible to see over 70% of Year 11 students accessing Achieve sessions as we enter the final weeks of preparation ahead of coursework submission and final examinations. The level of investment during these two weeks was second to none, with students keen to respond to feedback from trial examinations in order to accelerate their progress and achieve the best outcomes possible. We are also incredibly grateful to the members of staff who gave up their time to ensure our students accessed bespoke and high-quality sessions.

Holidays

Whilst we appreciate that travel can be very educational for young people, it is only in exceptional circumstances that we are allowed to authorise holidays in term time and would strongly advise that they are taken in the school holidays.

PCAB (Parents and Community Advisory Board)

Thank you to our parents and carers who attended the PCAB session on 1st March. Your contributions and feedback around homework, enrichment and children's mental health is invaluable to us. The minutes from the meeting can be viewed on the PCAB section of the school website. The next meeting is scheduled for 12th July 2023. Please register your interest with g.harris@stwacademy.com.

Free Adult Literacy Classes

There will be a second meeting about the free adult literacy courses that we are offering through Doncaster AFCL on Wednesday 26th April. AFCL offer two courses – ASOL (Adult Speakers of Other Languages) or a functional skills for English course, which leads to the equivalent of a 4 (grade C) in English at GCSE. If you are aged 19 or over, live in the Doncaster area, and would like to join a course starting this Spring, or you know someone who would be interested, please email g.harris@stwacademy.com to register your interest and to advise of your attendance to the meeting.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr. M McDonald
Principal

