

The Thomas Aveling News



February 2007
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Dear Parents

As we approach the mid-point of the academic year we are able to reflect on the progress of individual pupils and the school as a whole.

The release of public examination data in January brought the inevitable wave of bad news stories where the new government benchmark of measuring GCSE grades including English and Mathematics highlighted the apparent disparity between the 'best and worst' schools. These disparities are further polarised in the tiny minority of local authorities where selective schools are retained, including Kent and Medway.

A far more relevant piece of information that is included in league tables and often ignored by the press is the 'value-added' or progress made by students in each school. A score of 1000 would indicate pupils have made satisfactory progress in comparison with children from similar backgrounds and starting points, with above 1000 indicating better progress and below 1000 indicating weaker progress. By this measure some of the apparent 'best' schools may not have added as much value, or progress, for children as those pilloried in the tabloid press as the 'worst.'

We were particularly pleased to note that Thomas Aveling, along with two other Medway High Schools featured in the top 100 schools nationally using this measure. This, along with our Outstanding Ofsted judgement, and further improved examination results has enhanced Thomas Aveling's reputation both locally and nationally.

The parental response to our annual academic tutoring day was very positive. The Tutor has a key role in drawing together both academic information and other data relating to pastoral issues such as attendance and conduct, and is in a unique position to help young people refocus their energies and studies at this time of year. We would aim to intervene to support any students who are not succeeding and I would again wish to emphasise our 'open door policy' for parents to make appointments to see staff at any time during the year if there are concerns about progress.

To ensure that young people do not miss out on lessons, Governors have adopted a revised policy on authorising time off for holidays during term time. From September 2007 no leave will be authorised save in exceptional circumstances such as representative sports, or family bereavements. This policy is in line with many other schools.

Pupils and students of all ages are currently preparing for examinations and working on coursework and module assignments. We remain very grateful for the enormous amount of parental support and involvement of parents to ensure that work is completed to the set deadlines and that schoolwork is a high priority in every home.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Hart'.

Richard Hart
Headteacher

If you are concerned in any way with your child's progress in any particular subject area, we would encourage you to contact your child's subject tutor to either talk through the issues on the telephone or, if more appropriate, to make an appointment to come into school and discuss any concerns you may have.

Mrs K Gunn - Deputy Headteacher

MOBILE PHONES



There have recently been a number of thefts of mobile phones within the PE changing rooms. Although the school takes reasonable measures to keep students' possessions safe and lock changing rooms during PE lessons, unfortunately these thefts have still occurred. The school does not accept any liability for the theft of mobile phones and students should not leave their mobile phones in the changing rooms. If students need to bring their phones to school it is strongly advised that they lock these items and other valuable personal possessions in their own lockers before going to P.E lessons. I would also like to remind students that mobile phones should be switched off at all times and not visible during the school day. Ipods and MP3 players should not be brought to school.

Mr T Neave - Assistant Headteacher

HEALTH AND SAFETY

As part of our commitment to the government's guidelines 'Every Child Matters', we are currently reviewing some of our procedures.

In particular I would like to take this opportunity to raise two health and safety issues with you:

- All students in Years 7 – 11 are expected to remain on the school site at morning break and lunchtime, unless they have been issued with a lunch pass. Lunch passes authorise students to go home at lunchtime only to be supervised by parents/carers.
- Smoking is forbidden. Cigarettes, matches and lighters are not allowed in school.

We propose to introduce sanctions for the very small minority of our students who smoke on or near the school site, and for those who go out of bounds at break/ lunchtime. In addition to this we are looking at ways of providing help and support for those students who wish to stop smoking.



We would ask for your continued support in ensuring that all students follow these important health and safety rules.

Mrs B Brocklehurst – Assistant Headteacher

Mon 12th - Fri 16th February (inclusive)
Spring Term Break

Mon 19th February
First Day of Term 4 (Week B)

Fri 30th March
Last Day of Term 4

Mon 2nd – Fri 13th April (inclusive)
Easter Holidays

Mon 16th April
First Day of Term 5 (Week B)

FAMILY LITERACY SESSIONS

A small group of year 7 students have been taking part in a Family Learning project in school since November 2006. The group includes students and their parents/carers who come along to support their children with their literacy skills. The sessions include a session just for the students, one for the parents, and one joint session where the students work with their parents to improve their skills. Students in the group feel that they benefit from Family Literacy and that their confidence is really improving.

Some of the students said, "We really enjoy the Family Literacy sessions. The teacher and our parents really help us to improve our literacy skills and confidence. Our favourite things about the sessions are that we get to do plays, scriptwriting and play games. We have also written thank you letters to members of our families, and produced some creative writing using sherbet lemons!"

The sessions will continue to run throughout the year, and it is hoped that the students will begin to see identifiable improvements in their own literacy skills and National Curriculum levels for Key Stage 3.

Miss S West - English Department
Harry Newberry, Nathan Wyatt, Royston Higgins, Terry Lewing, Jack Slaughter, Pauline Field, Liam Douglas, Rio Pattenden.

THE BIG HUSH

On the 26th of January, Year 8 students took part in a sponsored silence called The Big Hush.



I thought that having to be quiet for one hour would be hard, but the time flew by. During the hour, which took place in Year 8's English lessons, there were all sorts of activities provided. These included a story-writing competition and an activity work sheet, which gave facts about living with cancer.

All the money raised by the year group for the sponsored silence is going to the chosen charity, Macmillan Cancer Support. **Charlotte Harvey 8A2**

For GCSE Geography we went on a trip to see a project called "Belonging" on Refugees at the Museum of London. Forty students and three teachers, Ms Gooch, Mr Jones and Mrs M^cMahon, got on the coach at 8.30 am. We set off on an hour and a half journey but got stuck in traffic.

Once we eventually got there we went straight to the "Belonging" exhibition with our clip-boards and questions. It was quite small but with a lot to do. We had to walk round and answer 21 questions about the project. We looked at video clips of people, tapes of people talking and loads of information about how they lived.

After lunch we walked round the rest of the museum, looking at how London has evolved. Then we went in the shop but we were only able to buy a lolly as goods were over-priced. We left at 2 pm and sang the whole way home on the coach.

The trip was very good and interesting and will help us with our GCSE grades. Thank you from all of Year 10.

Kelsey Smith 10A & Katherine Smith 10T

"PARENTS AND THE GIFTED AND TALENTED" CONFERENCE

**Saturday 17th March 2007
at**

Canterbury Christchurch University, Kent

The above conference has been arranged by the University for parents of Gifted and Talented Students in Medway and the South East.

If you are interested in finding out more please go to the following websites where details can be found together with relevant application forms for both parents and students, who have their own activities for the day.

- www.medway.gov.uk/march_event_programe.pdf
- www.medway.gov.uk/march_event_letter.pdf
- www.medway.gov.uk/application_form_for_parents-3.pdf
- www.medway.gov.uk/application_form_for_students.pdf

**Ms A Blunt
Gifted & Talented Co-ordinator**

OLD SHIRTS OR T -SHIRTS



The Art department would welcome any old T-shirts or shirts for use as painting shirts. Thanks.

The Art Department



If you've watched 'Strictly Come Dancing' and think it looks easy then this is the chance for you to come and show your silky skills on the dance floor. Ballroom dancing includes styles such as Tango, Waltz, Salsa and Rumba. This could be your stepping stone to promotion at work in the

future because you could impress the boss with your twinkle toes!!!

Dancing starts at the beginning of Term 4 and is open to Years 7, 8 and 9, especially Gifted & Talented students.

Miss J Mash - Subject Leader for Dance

SPORTS RESULTS

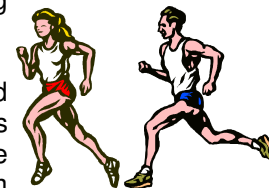


While the Medway football league has gone into hibernation until next term, the Year 9 and 10 teams have still been in action in the Kent Cup, with the Year 9 team eventually being knocked out by a large school in Sidcup after reaching the last 16 and then the Year 10 team narrowly losing 4-3 to Holmesdale. It has been an outstanding effort from

both teams.

Hockey has also continued to flourish with outstanding results. In recent weeks Year 7 have beaten Gravesend Grammar 2-0, Year 8 beat Maplesden Noakes 5-0, Year 9 beat Greenacre 3-0 and Year 10 narrowly losing to Maplesden Noakes 1-0.

Netball fixtures have carried on the Thomas Aveling winning ways with the Year 9 team beating Rainham Mark and the Year 10s beating Walderslade Girls.



A number of students represented the school in the District Cross Country Championships at The Maths School. The girls' team finished champions in the Intermediate event and there were outstanding performances from **Charlotte Hayes 9L** and **Charlotte Griffiths 11A**, who together with **Craig Evans 10L**, **Josh Elderfield 10E** and **Simon Almond 9N** have subsequently been chosen to represent Medway in the County Championships.

The PE department would like to remind all students of the school's policy regarding not bringing valuable items into school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

Mr A Moss - Subject Leader for PE

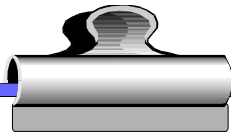


BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Calling all band members...

February is the time when all musicians dust off their amplifiers, dig out their drumsticks, get together with friends and form a band. We will be launching the Battle of the Bands event and taking applications from bands. You need to form your band from people from within your key stage category, so years 7 - 9 or 10 -13. There will be one winner chosen from each key stage with the chance to get their music recorded onto CD in the studio. Application forms will be available from Miss Voice or the 6th Form team from the 5th February and **must be returned by the 1st March.**

Miss J Voice - Music Dept.
Kelly, Tom, Tim, Sam, Lisa, Matt, Damien,
Sammy and Callum



EXAMINATION INVIGILATOR VACANCIES

We are seeking a number of
parents/friends to act as paid

Invigilators in our school
examinations.

Training will be provided.

If interested, please contact

Mrs D Van der Tak,
the Examinations Officer,
on **01634 823127**
for more information.



- **Students with a disability**
- **Parents of those students**
- **Parents who are disabled themselves**
- **Disabled members of the community**

If you are interested in joining a working group to develop the Disability Equality Scheme for the school, please contact:

Ms K Johns, preferably by e-mail,
at kjohns@thomasaveling.co.uk

Ms K Johns
SENCO

TRAINING SCHOOL NEWS

Training
School

Nine teachers from schools in Kent and Medway recently trained at the school for two days with Mervyn Wakefield on how to construct a timetable. This course is normally held in London so it was helpful for local teachers to be able to train in their community.

Our congratulations go to **Mrs Hellyer** who has recently successfully completed her npqh course – a course for headteachers of the future – and also to **Mr Forcella-Burton** who has successfully completed his Masters in Education.

Mrs B Levick
Assistant Headteacher
and Training School Manager

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Working and Learning Together for Success