

Dear parents and carers,

As another calendar year draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to say how proud I am of the students at Chesterton. As I walk around the school every day, I am impressed not only by how hard students work but also how mature and helpful students are to one another. Students at Chesterton are a huge credit to themselves and their parents. What is particularly noticeable is the number of students who take part in the wide extra-curricular offer. In the last 10 days over 200 students have performed in a drama production and a similar number were involved last night in the annual carol service at St John's College.



Chesterton is of course so much more than student outcomes but you may have seen in the press that once again the school is in the top 1% of schools nationally and number 1 in Cambridgeshire based on student progress. This is a tremendous achievement and is a reflection of the community as a whole, students, teachers and parents working closely together.

There are a few staff changes starting in January which I wish to share with you. Sophie Baywater is leaving Chesterton this week and is taking up a position as English teacher at Sawtry Village College which is considerably closer to her new home. Michaela Wickes is going on maternity leave and we look forward to her return next year. Lettie Buxton-Witt is taking on the role of Assistant Head of English in Michaela's absence. Jake Lawrence is taking up a senior position at Downham Market Academy as SENCO. James Mephram will replace him as Assistant Head SENCO which means Ed Bowles will be the sole Director of Sixth Form working alongside Naomi Brown (Deputy Head) who has a lot of experience in running a sixth form in her previous school in London.

Wishing you all a very restful break!

Rolf Purvis
Executive Headteacher

Photography Lecture

Last Thursday we welcomed local photographer, Andrew Wilkinson, back to Chesterton. He kindly gave us his time to give a lecture to our GCSE Photography students on the theme of "My life as a professional photographer". This was a very inspirational talk for our year 10 and 11 Photographers showing them the power of photography. Students listened wide eyed and mouths dropped as Andrew talked about his life experiences on his photography journey; encouraging them to make the most of opportunities. Students saw a wide range of Andrews photographs and how important the message and meaning is in a photographers work. The lecture finished with this thought provoking quote "We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are". A huge thank you to Andrew Wilkinson for giving our GCSE Photographers this valuable experience.



ELA Newsletter

Please see our Winter 2024 newsletter for a roundup of all the news from across our family schools [here!](#)

'Finding Nemo' – a Fish in Full Water!

Huge congratulations to the company of 'Finding Nemo' for a quartet of fin-tastic performances on the Atrium Theatre stage this week. Putting the all-too-tempting sea-life metaphors to one side, 'Nemo' really was joyous to behold. With over 100 students involved in the production, it would have been easy for individuals to merge into the background, and yet, every single member of this inclusive company had their moment to shine, and seized it with infectious energy and enthusiasm.

There were some astounding moments of magic – the entrance of the jellyfish and the reunion of Nemo with their dad being two of this writer's favourites – and it's certainly the case that we have some sensational musical theatre talents in Chesterton Youth Theatre! A special mention must go to Carla who won 'Best Ensemble'; Sara who won 'Best Newcomer'; Annabelle who won 'Best Company Member'; Emilia and Leila for 'Best Lead'; and AJ who won an award for being 'In the Moment'.

What was so impressive and uplifting about the Show was the way the company came together, with a team of students operating lights, sound, projections, stage management and photography for the production, allowing the adult creatives to take a step back on the night! Students in year 10 also assisted in the choreographic and directional elements, demonstrating the way their own performance skills have developed over the years. We couldn't be more proud of the way Chesterton Youth Theatre has moved seamlessly from the tragic depths of 'Lord of the Flies' to the heart-warming heights of this new Disney musical. Well done to its wonderful cast and crew for giving it heart and – sorry but I've got to do it – sole....!!! Bring on 2025 and the range of productions we have in store for the year that forms CYT's 10th anniversary!! We're going to be taking the advice of Dory to 'Just keep swimming'....

Photos by Felix Goff, year 10



District Cross Country Success!

Last Thursday, more than 40 Chesterton students participated in the District Cross Country event held at Netherhall, competing against schools from across Cambridge. Students from Years 7 to 11 represented our school with great determination on a challenging circuit that included a steep hill! Congratulations to Maja, Genevieve, Hamish, Lars, and Hannah for their fantastic performance and for advancing to the next round! Well done to all our runners for their hard work and perseverance!

Football County Cup Update!

Before the Christmas break, our football teams had impressive victories in the County Cup! The U14 Boys secured a comfortable win against Ely College, sending them through to the semifinal round, where they are still awaiting confirmation of their opponents. Meanwhile, the U14 Girls triumphed over Linton Village College with an away win, earning their place in the quarterfinals. They will face either St. Peter's or Ernulf Academy in the next round. Well done to both teams, and best of luck in the upcoming matches!



GCSE Drama Beyond the Stage

Drama isn't just about being on stage, but spectating theatre and experiencing the process of development as an actor. It's been an intensely fruitful term in this regard for our GCSE drama students, who have been to the ADC Theatre to see Cambridge University's 'The Crucible' in November, as well as the Cambridge Arts Theatre to see the current UK touring production of '1984' in October.

Students have come away from these productions expressing critical astuteness, showing a profound sense of passion for the plays as distinct from these particular interpretations, and articulating their knowledgeable appreciation of design elements that were incorporated. The GCSE cohorts in Year 10 and 11 also did themselves proud in a workshop with local actor Martin Maynard last Friday, who came to teach them an introduction to the techniques of Sanford Meisner.

Meisner took the work of the legendary 'father of naturalism' Konstantin Stanislavski in a new direction, focusing on the actor's sense of the 'other', and demanding total presence of mind in a scene. Martin was hugely impressed by the students' responses to the techniques he taught them, and it was delightful to behold both cohorts discovering their powers as actors in the studio, where experimentation, courage and vulnerability are essential if one is to truly 'grow' as an artist. We can't wait to see what they produce in Year 10's own production of '1984' in March, and Year 11's Examination Showcase shortly after the New Year. We are very grateful to Martin from Corkscrew Theatre Company for inspiring them to 'Seize the moment...!'. You can see Corkscrew's 'The Winter's Tale' at the ADC Theatre next week!

Tree Planting

Following a donation from the Woodland Trust year 7s planted 100 trees in the school grounds. It also marks the end of their first term. Well done year 7.



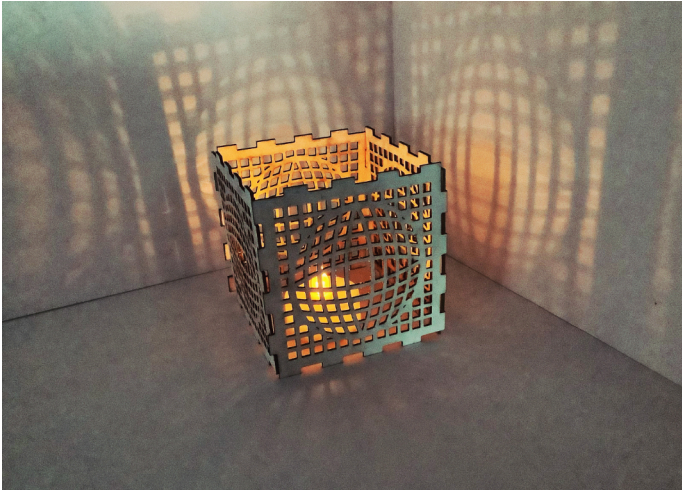
Seat of Learning

Year 8 design students have been enjoying their 3D design rotation this term. They have designed and made chair prototypes inspired by the Bauhaus and contemporary designer Yinka Illori.



Illuminating Designs

Year 10 3D design students have been designing and making tea light holders using computer aided design and the laser cutter.



Brushing Up

Year 10 and 12 art students took part in a 4 week extra curricular series of oil painting workshops run by Mrs Murray Williams and Miss Kelly. We look forward to them taking their new skill further in their project development in lessons.

