

Christmas Newsletter 2014



Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a very happy Christmas and a successful New Year. May I also thank you for your critical support during this first term of rapid transition from our two predecessor schools to the new Blackpool Aspire Academy. Everything we have achieved together is extremely significant at a variety of levels, some will be evident from this letter but other successes can easily be seen within school and the surrounding community. We may not, as yet, have got everything absolutely right, but there is now a real understanding and willingness to make sure we will get it right as soon as possible. There is a now a new 'partnership' emerging between students and staff which is long overdue, but is now clearly visible. This is due to the first rate staff attendance this term ensuring students' learning has not been disrupted by absence and the employment of supply teachers. We do have some additional teachers employed to reduce class sizes and improve learning in many year groups, particularly in Maths and English in Year 11.

The majority of students are really 'buying in' to our big corporate messages and are starting to believe that they can be successful and do as well as other good schools locally and further afield. The recent Year 11 Mock Exam Results Day on Friday, 12th December gave a good indication of the students' potential for summer 2015. We have been set a challenging school target of 57% 5+ A*-C grades including English and Maths for next summer, which seemed unachievable last term. However, the 'tide seems to be definitely turning' and what once seemed unreachable is suddenly a distinct possibility by this extremely able and talented year group. We must remember that these 230 students have arrived at Aspire Academy from different schools and have merged to form a determined and resilient group of young people who, with plenty of hard work, we feel could achieve 57%. It is now up to them to turn 'their dream into reality'; come on....you can do it!

We also know by talking to a cross section of students that they now feel much safer in school and that issues such as bullying and harassment are less common and are dealt with quickly and effectively. This is due to the establishment of a separate Student Services area. It is run throughout the day by skilled and experienced personnel including caseworkers and additional support staff and led by Mrs Shuttleworth-Brown (Vice Principal), Mr Oldham (Child Protection Officer), Miss Bishop (Director of SEND) and Ms Royds (Assistant Principal-Attendance). They have transformed the way the Academy handles and responds to attendance and behaviour issues; students now know that there is somebody always available to listen and handle their problems. However, they are not a 'soft option' and will ensure that Aspire Academy's culture and ethos is not eroded but is enhanced through their work to build resilient young people and to work closely with their parents and carers.

All Year Groups continue to grow and flourish within the Academy's 'new world'. Year 10 are a very able year group who need to become more mature early next term. They need to focus on their Maths, English, Science and key options in order to achieve personal success in summer 2016. They have the ability and next term is the time to start to use it to the full. Year 9 will have some big decisions to make early into 2015, when they have the opportunity to choose their option subjects for their

final 2 years. Similarly, Year 8 will also choose their options next term for their final 3 years at Aspire as part of the Academy's plan to give this year group an earlier start. Finally, Year 7 will need to step up their efforts in the New Year in order to significantly improve their levels, particularly in English and Maths. We hope all of these young people respond to these challenges and make 2015 a year to remember for each of them.

It is important to inform you that we are sad to lose the services of our extremely talented and dedicated English teacher, Mrs J Morris, from 31st December 2014. She worked mainly at the former Collegiate High School for the past 20 years before becoming Director of English at Aspire Academy in September 2014. Her post will be taken by Mr R Hughes who will now become Acting Assistant Principal, responsible for English and Maths. We feel this will further strengthen our English and Maths departments by bringing a far more coordinated and consolidated delivery of these key subjects.

Please remember that the start of next term is **5th January 2015**. We look forward to seeing all the students back well rested and ready for the academic challenges ahead!

Yours sincerely

Colin Simkins
Principal

Attendance really matters – please make sure your child is in so that they achieve “success, nothing less!”

