



July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

As the academic year draws to a close, I feel a great deal of pride for our school's collective achievements, including our outstanding Ofsted judgement in October 2023. Our students have shown exceptional dedication and resilience, exceeding expectations and seizing new opportunities. Their achievements are a testament to their commitment to learning. Thank you to you, the parents and carers, for your continued support and partnership, which has been a cornerstone of our success. I must also commend our devoted teaching and support staff, whose commitment to our ethos and aims have been instrumental in fostering our students' academic, emotional, and social growth.

Successes

The Castle School Pride Club has gone from strength to strength this year and has made great progress with the Rainbow Flag Award having now achieved five out of six of the criteria to become the first school in Somerset to achieve this status.

This academic year we have offered 309 clubs within our enrichment programme. Over 60% of students have taken part in at least one enrichment activity every week since the start of September. During our six enrichment days students have experienced: Wicked at the Bristol Hippodrome, Weymouth Aquarium, Exeter places of worship, Chepstow Castle, Bristol Aerospace, Bristol/Cardiff Art Museums, Blackrock Outdoor Ed, Pinkery and Exmoor as part of The Castle Challenge, Shepton Mallet Prison, Wimbleball Lake, University of Bath.

We have also had trips and activities to Bristol City FC, RAMM art trip to Exeter, The Brewhouse, ice skating trips to Clark's Village, Ninja Warriors at Cribbs Causeway, Bristol Old Vic – Metamorphosis, Bristol Hippodrome – Wicked, Poetry Live – Oxford, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Tacchi Morri – Spring Forward Dance, Glastonbury Abbey – GCSE History, Blood Brothers – Bath, Thorpe Park – House trip, Panathlon Athletics, Bristol Hippodrome – Hamilton, Eden Project – GCSE Photography, Pride Club prize giving at Exeter University, Lyme Regis, GCSE Geography. Residential: Pinkery – Year 7s, Rome - October 23, Immenstadt - Feb 24, Paris – March 24, Berlin/Krakow – April 24, Madrid – April 24, Courchevel – April 24, Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and students studying Mandarin have just returned from a fantastic trip to China. Thank you to our wonderful staff who enable these activities to happen, without their commitment and dedication these could not take place.

Arts news

In February we staged our biggest show to date at The Castle School – The Addams Family. We sold a staggering 1400 tickets, with 150 young people involved. The audience was blown away by the quality and professionalism. We hosted HM Royal Marines back in November, who wowed us with the drum corps pageantry. Surrounding schools visited to create a mass orchestra performance for our Year 7s. We were also one of only six schools to host The National Youth Orchestra 'Inspire' tour in July. The NYO performed to Year 7 and 8 and held workshops for our instrumentalists. A huge thank you to Somerset music for helping to organise these outstanding opportunities. House Dance 2023 saw Sandringham crowned winners for the second year running. Our dancers performed at Spring Forward in March. We have

welcomed practitioners in from Somerstage, CAT Swindon Outreach and Merge Dance Company. The annual variety show in December entertained our Houses with singing, dancing, tricks and traditional cultural entertainment.

Our Christmas concert was a wonderful evening full of incredibly talented musicians from Years 7 to 11 who put hours of hard work into creating fantastic performances from Orchestra, Mini Orchestra, Woodwind Group, Choir and Steel Pans. The hall was at capacity with friends and family who raised over £300 for Cancer Research UK.

The annual House art competition was also a resounding success.

The Castle Community Concert was a sell out with over 400 singers and instrumentalists from Castle and our local primary schools celebrating our relationship through music. May saw our rock and pop concert 'The Gig'. 12 bands performing classic hits to the delight of the audience.

Year 7s and 8s also took part in Gamelan Workshops with ActionTrack in November, part of our universal offer in performing arts.

We held the summer showcase last week in glorious weather, enjoying musical performances from our students, staff stalls with homemade cakes and the fair ground rides.

Sports news

In the autumn term we had success in hockey with Years 7, 9, 10 and 11 being crowned area champions with Year 8 as runners up. We also had a Year 7 and 8 mixed team win the County Cup for Hockey. Moving into spring we had great success in netball with all 5 years winning the district cup. The Year 10 girls won the County Cup tier 2 competition which included opposition from both state and private schools. In football we had Years 7, 9 and 11 win the District Cup and the 11s won the double, being crowned County Champions. We had success in badminton with the KS4 girls team becoming County Champions and the boys as runners up. In the summer term we had success as county winners in the Year 7 Softball County Cup and the Year 8 boys were runners up in the County Cup.

Notable individual achievements

Edward 7Y who competed for the south west in the national athletics championships. Ed is the second fastest to run the 1500m in his age group in the county. Ed has also completed the London mini-marathon.

Rosie and Elena have enjoyed swimming, athletics, biathlon successes (Biathlon and regional open water swimming competitions).

Sophie 9R1 - Playing netball at county level, competing in a netball tournament in Jersey.

Nate 9R1- Qualified to compete at county level multi events and qualified to compete nationally for discus.

Oscar 7R- Competed in a water polo tournament.

Hannah 8O won a silver medal in the Girls U14 Sabre category in Sheffield at the BYC. She was also selected for the U14 England Fencing squad to fence at the European Fencing Confederation U14. Alivia in 7O gained a place in the south west Regional Squad for trampolining.

Lillia Mae 7M2 took part in the National Schools Trampoline Championship Finals in Telford and took home the GOLD MEDAL in Cat 1 Elite School Years 7-14. She is now National Schools champion in her category!

Annabel in 8O won the 'Play your way to Wimbledon County Finals'. Oliver in 8B1 finished second at the National Schools Equestrian Championships at Hickstead.

James in 10G1 has been elected to the Somerset Youth Parliament.

Modern Foreign Languages

MFL students have visited Paris, Madrid and Germany this year. We have had another successful year with the Mandarin Excellence programme, which moves into its fourth year from September. Eleven students have just taken part in a 2-week study trip to Shanghai and last week we hosted a dozen Chinese students in school. We are grateful for the support given to our Year 9 and GCSE language students by visiting native speakers from Taunton School and by our native speaker volunteers – Ati and Belle. We took part in the ‘Host a German Teacher’ programme - Frau Jaworek – for two weeks in January - supporting students with German. We then hosted 21 students from Frau Jaworek’s school in March.

Maintaining our strong links with Richard Huish College and good numbers of our students continuing a language to A level - RHC staff have given assemblies for Year 9/10 languages students. Also, a number of our Year 11 students visited Richard Huish to take part in an A level German lesson. We enjoyed a theatre performance in French by the Onatti theatre company for students of French in years 8-11.

Other news

The Computing Department has been busy recruiting new Digital Leaders who completed digital leader training and created a whole school assembly for Internet Safety Day. A team of Year 8 students entered a Cyberfirst competition and the school hosted an ‘Ibelong in Computing’ event with five other Somerset schools taking part.

Earlier in the year we saw Grace in Year 8 compete in the Junior Bake-off which was shown on TV. It was wonderful to see her journey on this and she did so well, getting to the semi-finals.

Work experience continues to go from strength to strength. This is so beneficial for our students’ own personal development but also for developing strong relationships with the community. If you are able to accommodate our students or know of employers who could accommodate our students next year, please do contact the school.

In June 2024, Year 11s (2024 Leavers) left us after a wonderful prom. They have been such a wonderful year group not only in Year 11 but during their 5 years with us. It is such a privilege to see them grow from children to the fine young adults they are and to have the chance to celebrate their time here. We wish them well and will welcome them back for their GCSE certificate presentation evening in November 2024.

Congratulations to Lancaster for winning the House Trophy for the fourth year running. Following our sports day last week, ‘O’ celebrated their House Trophy win by having Periods 4 and 5 off timetable on Wednesday 17 July; having fun on the ‘Sizzler’, the dodgems, ‘Energiser’ and the inflatables. Some records were also broken on sports day, these names will go on our Honours boards:

Sports Day School Records 2024

Rounders Ball Throw Boys

Yr 7	55.90	B Hook	2024
Yr 8	60.90	L Woods	2024
Yr 9	73.20	J Collins	2024
Yr 10	72.70	T Vestey	2024

Rounders Ball Throw Girls

Yr 7	50.70	G Lawton	2024
Yr 8	38.40	B Silsby	2024

Triple Jump Girls

Yr 8	10.65	A Wright	2024
------	-------	----------	------

800m Girls

Yr 8	2.22	B Silsby	2024
------	------	----------	------

800m Boys

Yr 7	2.20	E Salter	2024
Yr 9	2.07	Z Jones	2024

1500m Boys

Yr 7	4.37	E Salter	2024
Yr 10	4.12	T Vestey	2024 (Shared)

3000m Boys

Yr 10	9.06	T Vestey	2024
-------	------	----------	------

Girls 200m

Yr 8	25.86	A Wright	2024
------	-------	----------	------

Boys 300m

Yr 9	38.31	Z Jones	2024
------	-------	---------	------

Girls 300m

Yr 8	43.57	A Wright	2024
------	-------	----------	------

Girls 100m

Yr 8	12.60	A Wright	2024
------	-------	----------	------

Boys Discus

Yr 9	39.94	N Stuart	2024
------	-------	----------	------

Girls 50m Sprint

Yr 9	7.31	Mali	2024
Yr 10	7.13	Ami	2024

Capital projects

Over the last year there have been a number of works around the school site, such as: repairs to the roof of the Tower block, fitting new external windows along the Science corridor to improve the appearance and energy efficiency of the area, upgrading IT hardware in three of our computing classrooms, replacing our lights with modern LED alternatives which are better for the environment and more cost-effective and refurbishment of the Drama facilities. In the coming months, we have the following additional works planned; renovations to the roof of the Jubilee building, completing the improvements to the Science corridor that started at Easter, installing new LED floodlights at the astroturf and modernising the school heating system.

Farewell to Staff

This year we say farewell a number of staff. Mrs Daniels, is moving to Richard Huish College as a learning mentor. Mrs Trust, will continue to work at Millfield next year. Gemma Scott has been appointed Head of Art at King's College. Mr Bird is going to study Psychology at university. Miss Corrie is going to train to be a teacher. Mr Smith is also moving to Richard Huish College to teach Art and Photography. From September Mrs Morris is going on maternity leave and Mrs Stone is returning from maternity leave.

Whilst we will miss our colleagues and friends, we are always able to recruit outstanding new staff and this year has been no exception. We have some wonderful new colleagues joining us this year. New staff are: Miss Foster – Teacher of English, Mrs Gavin – Deputy Headteacher, Miss Hartwell – Teacher of MFL, Mrs Miles – Teacher of Maths (Maternity Cover), Mr Mckie – Teacher of Science (Maternity cover), Miss Sastre - Teacher of Art, Mrs Sennah Office Manager and PA to the Headteacher and Mrs L Smith - Safeguarding and Welfare Officer. Mrs Newman-Turner - Cover Supervisor, Mr Cox – Teaching Assistant and Mrs Cox – Teaching Assistant.

We have three colleagues retiring this year. Mrs Broadway, Office Manager and PA to myself, who has worked at the school for 19 years and as Office Manager since 2012. Her support and commitment to the smooth running of the school has been invaluable. From completing and checking every risk assessment to helping cover the tills at lunchtime; this epitomises her humility, care and desire to ensure the students get the best possible experience in school. We are indebted to her and she will be missed. Mrs Horsley is retiring after 10 years at the school. Her safeguarding knowledge and relationships with many families is irreplaceable. She will be missed, and we wish her well in her retirement. Finally, Mrs Murphy, who ends a 33 year teaching career of which 12 were with The Castle. I have never seen a more enthusiastic maths teacher than Mrs Murphy. She inspired so many students to take Maths at post 16 but also her excellent pedagogy, caring and supportive approach has ensured consistently excellent exam results for many years. I am sure you will appreciate and thank all three members of staff for their unwavering commitment.

September 2024

A reminder that Year 7s and 11s are due back to school on Wednesday 4 September. All year groups return to school on **Thursday 5 September.**

Timings of the School Day September 2024

8.40 am	School begins
8.45 am -9.10 am	Registration
9.10 am – 10.10 am	Period 1
10.10 am – 11.10 am	Period 2
11.10 am – 11.30 am	Break
11.30 am – 12.30 pm	Period 3
12.30 pm – 1.30 pm	Period 4
1.30 – 2.15 pm	Lunch
2.15 pm	Warning bell for end of lunch
2.20-3.20 pm	Period 5
3.20 pm	End of School

Uniform

I would like to reiterate that we expect uniform always to be worn correctly. I thank you in advance for your support, as you know, I feel a smart appearance is important, but also it keeps that sense of belonging and encourages a sense of community, identity and pride. We expect trousers, skirts and shoes to meet that standard – ie no Lycra skirts or trousers, or jeans, or anything stretchy or clingy. Non-uniform skirts are not acceptable and students will be sent home to change or to buy the right skirt. Shoes must be black leather or leather-look, as defined in the Uniform Policy (attached).

I have enclosed a copy of the School Academic Year Diary 2024/25. Some dates may change throughout the year, so please check the school website for the most up to date information. All letters for parents are also on the website, so I would encourage you to check every week to ensure you know what is happening.

I extend thanks to our entire school community for your continued support, trust, and collaboration. I wish you all a safe, joyful, and relaxing summer break.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mr Lamb', written in a cursive style.

Mr Lamb
Headteacher

Encs (Uniform Policy, School Academic Year Diary)