

21 December 2017

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I know you will be pleased to receive, enclosed, a copy of your son/daughter's Praising Stars© 2 report. We do not have a Parents' Evening as part of the Praising Stars© 2 cycle but please do not hesitate to contact the academy should you have any concerns with specific subjects that you would like to discuss with us. Students right across the academy are making very good progress in all lessons. I am fortunate to share lunch, once each half-term, with some of our students who have been commended to me for their effort grades across all their subjects. Congratulations to those students and also to the many Year 11 students who have received a special commendation this term. I hope to see lots of new faces at these events in 2018. Our Year 11 students really do deserve a special mention. They are exceptionally focused and working so hard to get the very best grades for themselves.

It has been a fantastic term at Outwood Academy Shafton. Please follow us on Twitter or join our Facebook page. Almost daily, we post about some of the exciting things happening in the academy and we share our students' successes. This term there have been a number of visits to universities and other higher education colleges. We are absolutely determined to open doors for our young peoples' futures and to show them some of the possibilities that their hard work might bring. We are currently involved in a number of very prestigious programmes aimed at supporting students who might be the very first in their family to attend university in the future. This is a very important part of our work. We are also beginning to build stronger partnerships with local businesses in the South Yorkshire area to support our students in securing apprenticeships and to increase their awareness of employability skills.

A very special mention this term goes to our ever-popular Science enrichment club. After entering the Big Bang Science show for the first time, not only did we win a full suite of awards, but two of our students were invited to present their ideas and innovations at Parliament. They were incredible ambassadors for our community and for Barnsley, overwhelmingly impressing CEOs from across science and technology industries. We will be keeping everything crossed for their continued success in the national finals at the NEC, Birmingham, in the Spring term.

I am proud, every day, to be Principal at this amazing academy and to work with these fantastic young people. However, I am never prouder than to see our majestic Mission Christmas tree. This year we were a registered community drop-off point. We are completely in awe of your support and generosity towards those less fortunate. The students always treat the presents with such pride and great respect.

I would like to finish by thanking all of our families. You send our students looking so incredibly smart to the academy each day, you support us in our high expectations and you place your trust in us. A reminder that you are invited in to visit the academy at any time. We operate an open door policy to tour the academy and look at the great teaching and learning taking place.

When returning after the Christmas break, please be aware that the academy will no longer allow smart watches of any kind. These have caused some minor disruption that we are not happy with and are also banned by all examination boards.

On behalf of all the staff at Outwood Academy Shafton, I wish you a wonderful Christmas and very Happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming all students back by 8.25am on Monday 8 January 2018. Merry Christmas to you all!

Yours sincerely,

Cara Ackroyd
Principal