

Our ref: CAc/SPh

Dear Parents and Carers,

July 2018

We have had an incredible year! To those who follow my blog on our website or follow us on various social media platforms, you will know that there are just far too many achievements to sum up in one end of year letter. Outwood Academy Shafton has simply gone from strength to strength. We feel proud and privileged to serve this wonderful community and thank you for your constant support throughout everything we have done this year.

Never was this support from our community more evident than when the Academy once again supported Hallam FM's Mission Christmas back in December. Our atrium became a local drop off point and it was incredibly moving to have so many members of the community dropping by with gifts. In total you made a difference to the lives of more than 500 young people living in poverty in South Yorkshire. What an incredible achievement! Through our Student Voice Charity Committee we have also been able to support a number of other charities this year including Macmillan Coffee Morning, Bluebell Wood and Brain Cancer Research with our 'Wear A Hat' day.

The New Year brought our long awaited Ofsted visit. When OGAT first came to work with Shafton ALC four years ago, the school was in "Special Measures" with outcomes for young people that fell well short of the national floor standard and simply were not good enough. We were absolutely thrilled that the Inspectors shared our view on the rapid transformation of all aspects of academy life and judged the academy to now be "Good" in every category stating that, "As a result of the increasingly aspirational culture, pupils are growing in confidence as learners and young people" and that "pupils are proud of their school". Every family plays a huge part in this achievement through the support and encouragement you give.

There have been trips and visits almost every week this year. Many have been aimed at raising students' awareness of the possibilities for them in Higher Education with a number of visits to Universities including a trip with other Outwood academies to the University of Cambridge. Experiences such as this, along with increased opportunities to meet with real-life employers, will be a continued focus in the new academic year. We were also fortunate to be able to run two brilliant trips abroad, our ski-trip and the art trip to Barcelona. The recent visit by our Accelerated Reader superstars to Harry Potter studios was a massive hit and we hope to be able to make this an annual event.

The achievements of many students in sport and academia were celebrated over the last few weeks in our Sports Personality of the Year evening and our brilliant Academy Awards. There has been much to celebrate in sport with our gymnasts winning the OGAT competition, some amazing performances in athletics and football and a group of our students being selected to represent England North in indoor kayaking at Loughborough University this summer.

As well as this, it has been my absolute pleasure to welcome groups of students every week for Hot Chocolate with the Principal for a huge variety of reasons and to reward effort through Praising Stars at a special afternoon tea each time reports come out.

We opened our doors to around 600 members of our community during Graduation Week, celebrating the effort and maturity of our Year 8 students, and of course, our annual Prom Breakfast was one of the biggest highlights of the year. Simply breathtaking! We look forward, of course, to results' day in August when we will see students' hard work, resilience and determination come to fruition.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank every single member of staff at our academy. Their commitment to putting students first is the reason we are able to offer the experience that we do to our young people. This year we marked our thanks by celebrating national 'Thank A Teacher' day with a week long programme of events aimed at promoting teaching as a profession. The finale of the week involved every student in school in a special service of thanks. The conduct of the students was impeccable and they really did us all proud. We used the opportunity to recognise a lifetime of work and commitment to this community from five members of staff who leave us this summer: Mrs Bretton (who is thankfully staying with Outwood), Mrs Dodd (who has retired but came back to help us all year), Mr Schofield (whom I hope will still come back to us during his retirement), Mrs Tucker (who is moving just down the road to Outwood Academy Carlton) and Mrs Gash, our brilliant DT technician. These people epitomise the dedication that all our colleagues have to transforming the lives of our students. They have given around 130 years of service between them to this community. Incredible! They hand the baton on now to new teachers who join us in September and to the brilliant colleagues who remain. We also revealed at this event that Miss Grace, Teacher of Physics, has been judged as a national silver award winner by Pearson Teaching Awards. We cannot wait for the televised awards in October this year to celebrate her success. The future looks very bright!

Lots of families will be out buying uniform etc for the return to school in September. Our uniform policy has been updated regularly on the academy website and there is also a section showing recommended shoe styles. We have staff around all summer, so please keep a receipt for a purchase that you are unsure of and pop in and see us if you need any guidance. We would ask for your commitment to ensuring students have a pencil case with equipment, a bag big enough for A4 folders and full PE kit. This makes a massive difference to ensuring that every lesson gets off to a quick start and not a second of learning time is wasted.

We have already been blessed with such gorgeous weather throughout the summer term and long may that continue into the summer holidays. I wish you all a wonderful and safe summer break and I look forward, with excitement, to the achievements and experiences that next year brings.

We look forward to welcoming back our students on Tuesday 4th September: New Y7 and Y11 ready for Period 1 and all other year groups at 11am.

Yours sincerely,



Cara Ackroyd
Principal