



Ramsey Voice

Updates Newsletter

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Notes From the Head

Welcome to the first edition of the Ramsey Voice of 2016. Even though this has been a short half term, there has still been a wide variety of activities and opportunities for our students.

Year 11 students are starting their final preparations for examinations and finalising their choices for next September. This has involved various presentations from local post-16 providers; interviews with a Careers Advisor and visits to a number of information events at different institutions. It is important for young people to make informed choices and gather as much information as possible. As a result we often host visitors, such as the chef from Colchester Institute, who worked with students in a practical skills workshop. This not only supported their GCSE studies but gave them a valuable insight into the nature of a potential career in the catering industry.

Progress towards our aim of 'being an outstanding school in the heart of the community' can be seen in the range of extra-curricular activities reported in this newsletter. Staff and students continue to raise funds and donations for local charities. The students of each House select their nominated charity and raise funds during the year. Mrs Tyler recently visited the PARC centre with students and they were delighted to present a cheque on behalf of the Endeavour House.

Two initiatives in particular have been a great success; the Greenfields Be Connected Project and the Halstead Community Choir. Both of these activities have attracted great interest and support. The feedback from all concerned has been excellent and the foundations for further development have been laid.

Congratulations to all those students who have excelled in various activities. Particular note should be made of the recipients of the Jack Petchey Awards, who were presented with their commemorative medals. This is an excellent recognition of their contribution to supporting others, their dedication and hard work.

One of our aims is to ensure all students understand the importance of their personal role in the local and national community. Developing well-rounded students is important, taking place in lessons, extra-curricular activities and within the community. We try to ensure that each student understands that they have particular strengths and not everyone is able to excel at everything. The quotation below from the Greek philosopher Plato encompasses this approach:

'Each citizen should play their part in society according to their individual gifts.' - Plato

- Mr R James

PARC Donation

The PARC centre is purpose built for children and young adults (any age from birth to 25) with additional needs, and provides a range of facilities including: an outdoor play area, main hall, soft play and ball pit area, sensory room, interactive projector room and kitchen area.

Your donations help over 500 families in and around Essex. At PARC they care for children with mild autism through to those with life threatening illnesses. Every child at PARC has at least 1 carer with them at all times. Remember - PARC is not a school; it's an area where children get to play and explore.

On 28 January we visited our sponsored charity to give them a cheque for over £1200 representing fundraising work that took place over the course of the year.



Colchester Institute Cooking Road-Show



A few weeks ago all the Year 10 catering students were visited by a chef from Colchester Institute and he showed us how to prepare and cook certain foods, even letting us try some dishes.

First of all he showed us how to prepare a whole chicken and all the different parts that we could use and eat. He showed us how to break the legs of the chicken and then separate them from the rest of the body. Then he put them all in a pile including chicken thighs, legs and breast.

After a break he showed us how to prepare a fish: it was fascinating to see how he took the fish scales off and how he removed the eyes and fins from the body. He gave us tips along the way to make sure the fish was fresh and ready to be cooked.

He then offered us a small dish of stir fry which was delicious, followed by some fabulous brownies.

In the couple of hours that we were taught by him, the whole class appreciated his skill and learnt new and different skills that we could use to improve our own dishes. I personally thought the food that he cooked was delicious and the whole thing was a bit of a learning curve because if I use his tips, along with cooking high-level dishes in my GCSEs, I think I can achieve a high grade.

All in all it was a great couple of hours during which we learnt many different things to try from a great chef. We also discovered potential college courses linked to catering and hospitality. - Brad Jarvis (Year 10)

Year 11 Leavers

Now is a very important time for Year 11 students, not only as they prepare for their exams but also as they attend their college and sixth form interviews and start making important decisions about their next steps. If any students have not yet applied to college, there is still time to do so. There is a wide variety of courses on offer for all levels of ability. It is recommended that students have a backup plan and therefore accept more than one college or sixth form place, waiting until their results are issued before making their final decision.

For any Year 11 students considering an apprenticeship now is a good time to start researching local vacancies. An apprenticeship is a way for a young person to gain fully recognised qualifications whilst being employed. Students need to be sure that they are ready for full time work and are confident that the type of work they are entering is suited to them. Students can choose to do an apprenticeship rather than full time college. Apprenticeships are available in all types of industries including: business administration, health care, childcare, graphics, marketing, mechanics, catering, sport etc.

For more information or advice please contact Laura Eaves in school: Leaves@ramseyacademy.com - Miss L Eaves

Community Choir

January saw the launch of Halstead Community Choir, a new and exciting project backed by Braintree District Council via their MiCommunity Scheme.

Run by husband and wife team, Hugh and Sam Conway it is open to all ages and abilities, providing an opportunity for members to be part of a social group, with the aim of performing at local venues and events. The choir sings a range of music from pop to gospel, with choir members encouraged to choose music and suggest performance.



The choir aims to teach musicality through exercises, but at the same time it is a place to have fun. Rehearsals have already been a huge hit, with over 70 people attending each Tuesday, with most people commenting on the enthusiasm and slightly 'off the wall' tactics of Sam and Hugh to get people singing in harmony.

We are still looking for new people to come and join in, so just pop along to the next rehearsal, or for more information visit www.facebook.com/halsteadcommunitychoir. Rehearsals run from 7-9pm every Tuesday and cost £2 per session with no joining fee or minimum commitment required. - Mr H Conway

Governor Pen Portrait - Malcolm Bailey

A number of people have said to me over the years, 'Why are you a School Governor and what are the benefits?' Good question, but easily answered.

I first became a School Governor at my daughter's primary school. She is now studying to become a Primary School teacher and I am still on that Governing Body having been its Chair for over five years. The role of Governor has changed a great deal over the years, but without doubt it is one of the most rewarding roles that I have taken on. There are over 300,000 school governors around the country, making it one of the largest volunteering groups in the UK.

I have recently retired after working over thirty nine years in the banking industry, principally for one bank, although for the last three years I have been at one of the new 'challenger banks', which was a very exciting time.

Governing bodies require volunteers that are able to bring various skills to help perform its core duties. You do not need formal qualifications to become a School Governor, just a good experience of life and a strong commitment to support the school.

One of the three core responsibilities of a Governor is to oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent and with my experience in this sector I can help support the Academy. Being on a governing body is now similar to being on a board of directors of a limited company. It is a Corporate body that has to fulfil its statutory obligations ensuring that the right questions with the appropriate level of challenge are made at the right time. But what other benefits do I also enjoy? One of the greatest areas of satisfaction is working with like minded people to positively impact the lives of school children.

I became a Governor at The Ramsey Academy nearly two years ago and I have thoroughly enjoyed the time that I have spent getting to know the school and the community. The school, under the leadership of Mr James and his team has continued the excellent work of the previous head and its success is evident in the positive ethos and commitment to learning within the school and in its results.

Each Governor at the school takes on an area of curriculum responsibility and I volunteered to take on a subject which was a passion of mine when I was at school: Mathematics. I have met with the Head of the Department a couple of times with another planned shortly and I find these visits very helpful in my role.

Undoubtedly, with the country still under the grips of various austerity measures there are a number of challenges that the Academy will face over the coming years but I am very confident that The Ramsey Academy will continue to flourish and be one of the best outstanding secondary schools in Essex. - Mr M Bailey



Big Bang STEM Event

On Tuesday 15 December 2015, a group of Year 9 students from The Ramsey Academy, Halstead, attended the BIG BANG STEM Event at The University of Essex. This was an exciting opportunity for our students to see how science and technology are used within various industrial and commercial environments.

One of these workshops included 'Life on Mars' during which we looked at some of the major obstacles that have to be overcome in order to live there. Learning how to survive on Mars was a fascinating adventure and made us all think.

Following on from this we attended a workshop on the spread of disease and the work being done by health organisations to slow down and eventually eradicate some of these conditions.



The final session of the morning was an interactive presentation delivered by the Ugly Animal Roadshow. This highlighted the importance of science and technology in the conservation of certain animal species and how they have adapted to suit the environments in which they live.

The final event was a careers market place; this allowed the students to discover how various industries apply science and technology, with many of us coming away with a new insight into potential career paths.

All in all this was a very rewarding experience for us and we have gained a valuable insight into the world of science and technology. - Josh Lingley and Scott Firman (Year 9)

Christmas Present Appeal

To celebrate Christmas, Ramsey students came together to collect presents for elderly people who live on their own and perhaps have to celebrate Christmas alone.

This included gifts such as hats, scarves, biscuits and much more. In total, we collected around 200 presents which were then distributed across the local area.

Gifts were wrapped in house colours and carefully logged to match the type of person who would receive them.

All the support from students, parents and teachers meant that people who were on their own had a present to open on Christmas Day. - Sophie Ford and Jack Hawes (Aspiration House Captains)



Christmas House Parties

In the midst of this year's Yuletide festivities, the three Ramsey Academy houses: Diversity, Aspiration and Endeavour celebrated Christmas in their own traditional way with a whole house Christmas meal.

'Before the Christmas holidays, Aspiration had their annual Christmas meal. This involved the entire house coming together at lunch to eat party food, share a cracker and even had a surprise visit from Santa.'

This is a fantastic time of year for everyone in the house as both students and staff sit down together to talk and have fun on the busy and fun-filled run up to the Christmas holidays.

With a large and diverse buffet on offer, students had the chance to enjoy a range of food and drink in surroundings covered with decorations and enough tinsel to adorn even the largest of Christmas trees.

Christmas music was playing, crackers were pulled and we even had a visit from Santa himself, bringing with him some presents to hand out.

As in previous years, 2015 celebrations featured the infamous raffle, offering the chance to win many treats and prizes for lucky ticket holders. Students had an opportunity at the end of the meal to have photos with the main man in front of a festive and fun wintry backdrop.

'There was a photo booth set up so that students could take photos with their friends.'

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the students who attended the meals as, without you, these events would not be possible. I would also like to thank all parents/carers who allowed their children to attend and have shown their support to the school this term.

'Everyone really enjoyed themselves and it was a great way to end the year!' - Mr A Lugton with quotations by Sophie Ford and Jack Hawes - Aspiration House Captains



Strasbourg Visit 17- 21 July 2016

Plans are well underway for the next trip to France and Germany for the Year 10 students! As there are still a few places available, the trip has now been offered to Year 9 students who are contemplating French or German as a GCSE option. If you are interested, you need to see Mrs Sims as soon as possible!

We will be staying in the beautiful city of Strasbourg and visiting the magnificent European Parliament building as well as going on a river cruise to see the sites. The students will also have the opportunity to visit the futuristic Mercedes Benz museum in Stuttgart, Germany as well as spend some time in the city of Stuttgart. The final day will be spent experiencing the thrills and splashes at the Europa Theme Park in Rust, Germany.

A letter and forms for completion by parents have been sent home with students, which include details of the following important dates for your diary:

Monday 22 February - Next interim payment £80.

Monday 21 March - Photocopy of your passport to Mrs Sims.

Tuesday 3 May - Final payment due.

Tuesday 24 May - Parents' Information Evening 6pm Main Hall.



Growth Mindset - Year 8 Parents

Year 8 students asked their parents to reflect on a personal goal or achievement they are proud of and to capture the 'how' of their achievement in a single word or short phrase. The display below reflects the outcomes of this work. - Mr P Taylor



Jack Petchey Awards

Congratulations to our Jack Petchey winners who received their medallions at the Braintree awards evening on January 20. The winners included:

- Lewis Crow - for his major contribution to organising and leading activities for the school community.
- Halimah Babor - nominated by her peers for all her commitment in extra-curricular activities and helping younger students.
- Dylan Peakall - for volunteering in his own time to organise and lead a community football club for younger students in our local area.
- James Donald -received the awards for his commitment to the school's gardening club.
- Terry Shortt - for his dedication to working in the music department in his own time.
- Ruby White - through her hard work and perseverance she has made outstanding progress both academically and personally.
- Hannah Milton - gained recognition due to her volunteering and commitment to the school's extra- curricular Drama as well as community projects.
- Max Ralph - gained the award as he volunteered and committed himself to the primary school science club.
- Chloe Winter - was recognised for her commitment to catering and leading small groups of students in her own time.



This year Julie Edwards won our adult leader award. Julie is a parent and won the award for all her hard work and commitment to running the school's successful orienteering club. All the students really enjoyed the presentation evening; it's always an event that motivates our students and makes the family members extremely proud. The organisation has been fantastic to the school,

providing funding for table tennis tables; subsidising the cost of educational visits and providing the regular £200 to reward and recognise our students' efforts.



We are always proud of our Jack Petchey winners. I really think it's a special award as they are nominated by their peers as well as the teachers and other adults within the school. It was also great to see our students performing at the event. This year a group of 7 students from key stage 3 and 4 performed a dance from the musical, 'Chorus Line'. This is a great opportunity for them to develop their confidence on stage and show off all the hard work they have put in during and after school.

The performance was outstanding and a great way to start off the event. We look forward to the nominations and presenting awards to the next 6 winners over the rest of the academic year. - Mr P Taylor

Year 8 Quill Making

Year 8 English groups were studying a pre 1900 novel and one group studied 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. The students wanted to learn about quills as they were interested in older forms of writing. I gathered some turkey and goose feathers and we went down to the technology department and used the cutting equipment to make our own quills.

Students enjoyed dipping their newly made quills in the ink pots and writing in some interesting cursive styles. This opportunity gave them an insight into how people wrote in previous centuries and made them think about their own written styles. - Mrs S Muir



Greenfields

Three students from The Ramsey Academy, Halstead are the proud winners of an essay writing competition about their experiences of taking part in the "Community Connect" scheme with residents of Symonds Court and Gladys Malpass older persons' scheme in Halstead.

Around 20 pupils volunteered to teach some of Greenfields' older residents how to get online; in exchange the residents shared stories about their own lives as teenagers, helped by their new ability to search the internet to instantly find images and videos to bring their stories to life.

Other activities have included: designing Christmas cards online using their own photographs; watching You Tube videos to follow instructions for creating decorations, and learning how to take 'selfies'.



Sholanda Barker, 15 Leanne Bedlow, 15 and Ashley Mills, 13 each won shopping vouchers which were presented to them by Phil Adams, Greenfields' Chief Executive.

Sholanda said: "Overall it was an eye-opening experience of what we take for granted. I would love to carry on the course as I'm enjoying it very much and I'm developing as a person; learning more about the history of the world through their eyes."

Leanne plans to use her volunteering experience to go towards her Duke of Edinburgh award, whilst Ashley is equally enthusiastic about the project: "Wow, where can I start? I love to help elderly people with anything I can, but to tell them about the internet was amazingI feel like I have helped people to experience what the internet is actually like."

Val Thompstone, Greenfields' Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator, is leading Greenfields' Be Connected Campaign, which aims to reduce the number of residents who lack basic online skills.

Val said: "We want to get the vast majority of our residents online so that they can open up their world in many ways whether it be getting discounts for services; keeping updated with news and events; discovering new communities or meeting people with shared interests. The role of myself and that of my volunteers is to increase the skills and confidence of those who aren't online so that they can see how rewarding and enjoyable it can be."

One resident who has been attending Greenfields' Be Connected workshops, said: "Since attending the workshops, I have learnt how to email my friends and family; see where my lifelong pen-friends live by using Google Maps and, at our next session, I am going to learn how to Skype my son in Australia. I never thought I would be able to do any of these things - I am so proud and can't thank Val and Greenfields' Digi-Pals enough." - Greenfields



Gardening Club Update

The year has started well for our group of intrepid gardeners! The greenhouse has been spring cleaned and put into a semblance of order. Seed trays and pots have been washed to prevent transference of bugs and bacteria from last season.

Joe Firman has led a small team and dug over the raised beds in our allotment area. Once we have given them a good dose of soil improver, they will be ready for planting in March/April. As soon as the weather has dried up a bit we will turn over our compost heaps, and check on our bags of leaf mould.

The geraniums given to us last year by 'Halstead In Bloom', are covered in bushy leaves! Are we green fingered or what? In the greenhouse we have planted garlic in pots and are chitting potatoes in egg boxes. The potatoes will be grown in big plastic recycling boxes (donated to us), and we are trying Duke of York red and white first earlies varieties.

We look forward to re-commissioning the polytunnel, and filling it with plants in April/May time. Once more,

new members are always welcome. Astronaut Tim Peake is currently looking after our Rocket seeds at the International Space Station. They will be parachuted to us after Easter for us to plant and observe. - Mr S Pittuck

Easton and Otley College Trip

I went on this trip because I'm interested in possibly going to college to do a course on construction. We got to the college and went on a tour of the animal centre; the staff there really got us involved by giving us a quiz to fill in whilst walking around so we would really take it all in. Current Otley students were really helpful as we asked them more personal questions about the course that they were on and how they managed to get places.

After this, we had more of a tour of the college and went to a room while the Head of Admissions at the college told us about how we would get to the college; bus or train times; counselling services; different types of courses offered and loans (if money will be a problem).

We went to the workshop for construction; had a tour and were given timber to make joints so we could have an idea of the tools that are used while on the course. After lunch we did some activities run by some students doing the new course offered by the college - public services. Doing a construction course in college is not like doing product design at school because it's on a completely different scale.

After the trip to the college; seeing the workshop and talking to the man who ran the course about what it involves, I am really sure that is what I would like to do. A few other people that went on this trip for construction, horticulture or animal care now have more of an idea whether this is something they would like to do after leaving Ramsey. I am really grateful I got to go on this trip as I am now a lot surer about my future. - Erin Helmer (Year 10)

Orienteering Latest Scoring Update

British orienteering ranking for 16 year olds: Lucy Edwards = 5th, Callum Turner = 11th, Thomas Lock = 14th

Essex League Rankings: Team position = 2nd

Year 11/12/13 boys: Thomas Lock = 3rd, Callum Turner = 4th

Year 11/12/13 girls: Lucy Edwards = 1st, Emma Gooden = 3rd

Year 9/10 girls: Beth Lucas = 5th, Hannah Peters = 6th, Shadelle Nelson = 7th

Year 7/8 girls: Hannah Wallace = 5th

Year 7/8 boys: Thomas Turner = 4th



Ramsey Academy Table Tennis Squad Update



Congratulations to students who represented the school at a number of table tennis competitions recently.

After winning the local School Games table tennis competitions, the under 13 boys, under 13 girls' and under 16 boys' teams competed in the Essex school games team event. All of the players played extremely well.

The under 13 boys were in a tough group and, after some extremely close matches, just missed out on a medal position. The under 16 boys managed to pick up team bronze and the girls' under 13 squad won the event and were crowned the Essex Winter Games Under 13 Team Champions.

The girls then went on to represent Essex in the regional finals, competing against schools from Hampshire, East Sussex and West Sussex. After a day of closely fought matches the girls came away in 3rd place.

In the individual competitions both Molly Gerrard and Harry Tarbin represented the school in the Essex school competition at BATTs in Harlow.

Harry played extremely well, winning 50% of his matches and just missed out on a semi- final position. He was up against some tough opposition with some of his opposition having high ranking positions within Essex.

Molly also played extremely well and managed to win her competition and was crowned Essex Under 13 Girls' Champion.

The table tennis club continues to run on Monday evenings after school and students of all ages and abilities are welcome. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dean Andrews, our coach, for all his extra effort and hard work, as well as Thomas Gooder from Chelsea foundation for all his help with funding and providing opportunities for the club.

Finally, well done to all the students who continue to commit to the club and are making excellent progress in the game. - Mr P Taylor

Dates For your Diary...



15 Feb - Half term week

15 Feb - Ski Trip

22 Feb - Ugly Animal Road Show

3 Mar - Year 9 Parents Evening

7 Mar - Endeavour Charity Week

10 Mar - Year 10 Parents Evening