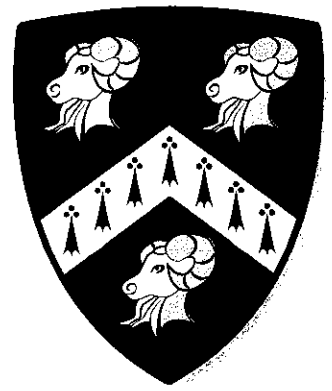


The Ramsey Academy, Halstead

Colne Road, Halstead, Essex CO9 2HR. T: 01787 472481 F: 01787 474267
E: office@ramseyacademy.com • W: www.ramseyacademy.com



Headteacher:
Rob James

September 2015

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to the start of a new academic year. We have had a positive start to the term, with new Year 7 students quickly settling into the routine of a new school supported by staff and older students. My apologies for the length of this letter but there is a large amount of information that I need to share with you at the start of term.

Examination Results

Initially we must offer our congratulations to the Year 11 students who have left us. Their examination results have allowed the majority to move onto their first choice of further education, training or employment. Whilst the headline figure of 48% A*-C including English and Maths was slightly down compared to last year, it was broadly in line with the predicted results based on the ability of the cohort. However, the progress and value added results were the best ever recorded. This means that the majority of students made more than expected progress in a wide range of subjects compared to the national average. This is vitally important, allowing students to gain good qualifications in a range of subjects.

New Staff

We welcome a number of new staff this term including, Mrs Price (Head of RE & PSHE), Mrs Stenson (Learning Support), Mrs Elliott (MFL) and Mrs Rawlings (Catering).

Other new staff working with the students include a number of trainee teachers, from the Mid Essex Initial Teacher Training (MEITT) programme, who will be completing their training in a number of subjects. This is an exciting development in the Academy this year and vital to support the development of new teachers into the profession. If anyone may be interested in training to become a teacher please contact the school for further details.

Improving the learning environment

During the holidays we have continued to improve the learning environment and resources for our students. Fourteen teaching rooms were refurbished, including re-decoration, new carpets and furniture. New encased display boards were placed in the canteen to showcase artwork.

Work also continued to improve the access to IT resources. New computers were installed in a number of Science laboratories and around the school many machines were upgraded to improve the speed and capacity. We also purchased 32 iPads to allow greater flexibility for learning experiences and research.

This term we will re-submit a bid to allow the re-cladding work to be completed on the Tower block.

Future Plans

Our School Improvement Plan Summary outlining our priorities for the year is available on the website. Everything we do contributes to our over-arching vision to be an:

‘Outstanding school in the heart of the community’

One of the key areas we wish to improve include the development of the Growth Mindset approach to learning; which involves encouraging students to take risks and challenge themselves.

The approach suggests as an individual we either possess a ‘fixed mindset’ or ‘growth mindset’.

In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, such as intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time assuming their intelligence or talent cannot be improved whatever they do. They also believe that talent alone creates success – without effort.

In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for achievement. Virtually all successful people have these qualities and we want to develop this approach to learning with all of our students.

To support this approach we are introducing the ‘Ramsey Achievement Award’. To achieve the Award students will be required to make sufficient progress in a variety of subjects, have attendance above 96% and complete the PiXL Edge programme.

The PiXL Edge programme supports academic performance but develops a range of life attributes including, leadership, communication, resilience, organisation and initiative. Students will be required to select and complete a number of tasks demonstrating each of these life skills, either within school or as part of their activities within the local community.

We hope this initiative will allow us to celebrate and recognise student achievement in the diverse range of activities in which many of them currently participate, but also motivate everyone to try something new and develop valuable ‘employability skills’ to complement their academic qualifications.

Expectations

We would like to ask for your continued support to reinforce our expectations regarding uniform, attendance and behaviour. Whilst the vast majority of students are well behaved and presented, there are a small number who do not adhere to the basic expectations. We would much rather the time it takes to deal with these issues be used more productively on positive initiatives. If you need clarification of the uniform expectations please contact the Pastoral Office.

Pupil Premium

Each year we receive additional funding to support Pupil Premium students, i.e. those who are eligible for free school meals, looked after or from services families. If you think you may be entitled to apply for this funding please complete the relevant application form as this additional funding is vital to provide extra resources to ensure every student achieves their potential. If you require assistance to complete the forms please contact the school.

Home – School Communication

Last year we completed a number of Parent Voice surveys, held several meetings and introduced the Ramsey Voice half termly newsletter. These will continue but we would like to improve communication further expanding the use of a system called 'Schoolcomms'. Attached to this letter is a reply slip which should be returned by Monday 21 September.

To keep your child/ren safe and ensure their well-being, we are constantly looking for ways to improve our links with you and keep everyone up-to-date and well informed. As sending written information home is sometimes unreliable; we have decided to implement Schoolcomms Online Reporting. This is a system that will enable you to see valuable information about your child at any time either online or if you have an Apple or Android device, on your smartphone.

You will be able to:

- Keep up to date with the latest information about your child/ren
- View achievement, behaviour and attendance information about your child
- Notify us of any reason for absence
- Check and update your contact details
- View the latest news from School

We can:

- Send real time notifications to you when new information is available
- Save money on admin time, printing and paper
- Ensure our contact details for you are up to date

Next steps:

1. In order to view this information you will need to register for a School Gateway account - This can be done via www.schoolgateway.com or via the School Gateway app
2. Upon registration you will be asked to enter your email address and mobile number. The school will use the email address and mobile number that we hold for the Priority one contact(s). If you are not certain that we have your correct details, please use the reply slip provided
3. To register via the School Gateway website, go to www.schoolgateway.com and select the "New User" tab; enter your email address and mobile number that we have on record for you. Select Send PIN and a PIN number will be text to your mobile phone
4. **If you do not have an Apple or Android device, skip to step 7**
5. To register using the School Gateway smartphone app, go to your app store and search for "School Gateway" or navigate to www.schoolgateway.com/apple or www.schoolgateway.com/android on your phone and download the app
6. Once downloaded, select the "I'm a New User" button; enter your email address and mobile number that we have on record for you. Select Send PIN and a PIN number will be text to your mobile phone
7. Log in with your email address and the PIN, your account is now active and you will receive instant notifications of any new information in your notifications bar
8. If you change your contact details please let the school know as soon as possible- you can check and send us an update via the "About Me" section

Schoolcomms is registered with the Data Protection Act. All information you provide will be kept private and will not be passed on to any other organisation. Your details will only be used for the purpose of school business. You will not receive any SPAM or marketing material.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Mrs Jupp (Data Manager).

Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to meeting many of you during the course of the year.

Yours sincerely



Rob James

Headteacher

To: Mrs Jupp, The Ramsey Academy, Halstead

I give/do not give (**delete as appropriate**) permission for my email address and mobile number to be used to receive information from school.

Parent name

Student Name(s) Tutor Group

..... Tutor Group

..... Tutor Group

Email address

Mobile telephone number

Signature Date