



THE
VIEW
FROM
HERE



THE VIEW FROM HERE

Welcome back to everyone after the Easter break – for what will be a short but intense half term as we hurtle towards the exam season. Thank you therefore to everyone who is currently preparing pupils for examinations. SATS start this week in our primary schools, swiftly followed by GCSEs and A levels in the secondaries. I am under no illusions what an uphill struggle it has been with many of our children and young people, some of whom will have been quite ok with “flexible working” during the periods of lockdown and might not be quite as invested in their results as their teacher are. We mustn’t however also forget those students who have worked diligently and perhaps with some anxiety over the last two years and who need our support and encouragement to keep going and pace themselves. Our A level students particularly, who missed out on GCSEs, have a real challenge to rise to. Good luck to all and thank you once again to all of you who have worked so hard to get them where they need to be. If colleagues have children in your own households embarking upon SATS or public exams, I would also like to send you all my best wishes and positive thoughts. Being a parent at these times is not easy!

Thank you also to everyone who has filled out the staff survey that your Headteacher will have sent you. There is still time to answer if you are yet to do so. The results will give Heads and governors an insight into how colleagues are feeling and where some of the upcoming priorities might lie. The board and I are also keen to take the temperature of staff morale and wellbeing across the trust and will very much be looking at the aggregated results. The more responses we have, the more representative the results will be. Great places to work and learn is one of our key mission statements and we are genuinely invested in ensuring that this is true.

As I start to look back on everything we have achieved this academic year, it is with a real sense of pride. It feels important to get this year under our belt in the attempt to return to normality but I cannot forget how hard it has been. Many of you have been unwell, many have put in supreme efforts to cover and fill gaps and in a year when standing still would have been progress, it feels like we have accomplished so much more. I particularly want to congratulate all of our colleagues at Axe Valley because for the first year that I can remember (and I have been in Devon for 14 years now) it is full and oversubscribed in Year 7. This means that every one of our schools is full with a waiting list. I cannot think of a better testimony to your hard work than the fact that parents are choosing our schools.

Lorraine Heath
Chief Executive Officer, Uffculme Academy Trust



LORRAINE HEATH





My piece begins with a genuine thank you to the staff at AVA for their relentless hard work. Our children are very lucky to have them fighting their corner. We had a large group of Primary Heads in over lunch and touring the school last week. I want to share some of their thoughts, because these comments show this is working. We are building a fantastic reputation in our community. We are making other schools ask what we are doing and how we are being successful. We have taken on the challenging situation post pandemic and carried on moving forward despite how challenging it has been/is. I acknowledge just how hardworking the staff at AVA are and it was really lovely to hear the comments:

- It is no surprise that we are full with a waiting list in September as the perception in the community is that AVA is a school that is fighting to be excellent and has changed hugely.
- What a lovely school with kind and polite students.
- The teachers at AVA have a reputation for high standards and loving their subjects.
- Children at AVA look smart and happy.
- Parents are scared their child won't be able to get in because it is the first choice.
- The social media really highlights what a fantastic school AVA is.
- The enrichment and trips and visits offer seems vast.
- The school is so calm and settled.
- Students are just all in their classrooms – I didn't see anything but excellent behaviour.

I do not take enough opportunity to step back and look at just how far we have come. I was so proud of everything I heard and it was that stunning because of what everyone does everyday.

To add to a fabulous first week back, the students returned from a trip to 'Joseph' in Plymouth. A member of the community felt compelled to take to social media and flag up the model behaviour of our children. The comments that followed were equally flattering and I really feel it worth celebrating.

We were delighted to welcome Kier Construction to talk with our Year 9 groups on their STEM day. The students designed either a school or hotel. It was great to see how they embraced the need for break out/chill zones in their designs, as well as considering sustainability.



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House assemblies have resumed this week. As we are one year in to our House System launch, in what has been a difficult year for assemblies, we are really ramping up the competition levels and hope to create that real sense of team and belonging in the coming term.

Ty Dibling, our Year 11 Southampton FC player has become a social media sensation in the last week. He scored three identical goals against Newcastle. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vc5fCr1JrA0>

We obviously seek every opportunity to promote ourselves alongside the positivity surrounding his sporting ability. It really is another chance for us to market our #smallbutmighty hashtag.

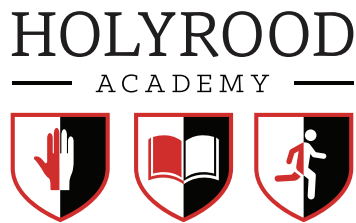
On that note our reception area is being updated. We have our core values; integrity, kindness and perseverance, displayed above the reception desk, a sleeping giant beneath our remodelled trophy cabinets and a cheeky Banksy rat outside my office. As ever, a warm welcome awaits our visitors.

Laura Jenkins, Headteacher



LAURA JENKINS





From tree planting in the community to sowing in the Chard Banners Project and from DofE Gold practice to the Mock Bar Trial; this past few school weeks have been varied, exciting and full of opportunities for Holyrood students to join in!

It has been lovely to see our students return from the Easter holiday with a sense of normalcy – I suppose it is what it used to feel like before we came back from holidays to mass testing and uncertainty.

I would like to pay particular tribute to the Holyrood Eco-Committee who are growing in number and impact at school as they take responsibility for promoting better recycling and bin use around our beautiful site. Inside the buildings, another group of student leaders continue to spruce up, redesign and lift areas of our school: our fantastic Graphic Design Team (or GDC as they prefer to be known!). These great examples of student leadership really fill me with pride, as do the record number of Prefect applications at Holyrood this year. Our incoming Year 10 Prefect Team will be a force to be reckoned with and I look forward to working with them over the next year.

The summer term promises to bring lots of change and improvement at Holyrood. We are pleased to see the progress of our new building which will provide us with a much-needed new Dining Hall, 6 additional classrooms, a student entrance, student reception and additional office spaces. The building is due to open at the end of March 2023 (fingers crossed!) and will be a huge asset to our school. Over the summer holiday, we will also see our Sixth Form Centre refurbished to provide a truly aspirational, inspiring and focussed independent study environment for our students. In addition, we are looking to convert our old hardcourt spaces into something more modern for the students to use at lunch time and for the community to use in the evenings – watch this space for more details.



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Finally, thank you so much to all colleagues who helped us to share our advert for our Assistant Headteacher – Head of Sixth Form vacancy. We had a very strong field of applicants and we are delighted that Jonathan Gaskell, currently Head of Sixth Form at King Alfred's in Burnham-on-Sea, joins us in September. He comes with a strong track record of improving student outcomes and recruitment and we are looking forward to working with him to improve our Sixth Form provision.

Wishing all Primary Colleagues 'Good luck in SATs week' and all Secondary Colleagues 'Good luck as we approach exams'. Here's hoping for a successful exam season for all of our schools.

Dave MacCormick, Headteacher



DAVE MACCORMICK





We have all been enjoying the school grounds with the warm weather at Neroche. Children have enjoyed using the field at break times, and we have been able to utilise the grounds for a range of activities. We were lucky enough to secure some trees to plant to acknowledge the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Our Forest School groups have identified and planted these around our school site. We were gifted Silver Birch, Beech trees some of our school favourites. Children across the school are also working on some art work that we have been invited to display at Monks Yard as part of a gallery to mark the Platinum Jubilee and we are all looking forward to seeing the art work in situ.

Our Forest School sessions are developing all the time both on and off site, also utilising the local woodland area. The groups have been testing new campfire recipes and have enjoyed trialling their new ideas. Pancakes and bacon sandwiches have been the biggest successes so far. We are very lucky to have a highly skilled and qualified Forest School Leader as part of our staff team and the sessions are often identified as a favourite part of the curriculum by our children. Our outgoing PFA kindly gifted us a sum of money to improve our Forest School provision and we are working with the site team to turn our ideas and plans into a reality.

We have been excited to welcome some new children into our school family. Children, who have joined us from the Ukraine. The Neroche children have been so welcoming and have verbalised that it is a real-life example of our No Outsiders, everyone is welcome approach. Our Year 5 children have been so keen to help and organised an Easter community event over the holidays led by Kaitlyn. Kaitlyn's efforts raised over a thousand pounds to help the situation in the Ukraine, and we are all very proud of her and what she has achieved.

The list of our new September intake has been shared with us and we are excited to learn who will be officially joining our school family in September. Welcome postcards have been sent out and we are working on our transition program to ensure our new intake feel as prepared as possible to join the school community.

We had a visit from the Noodles, ice cream van last Friday. Noodles offer free school visits and provide free ice creams for all. One of our parents originally nominated us and we were selected for a visit. The sun was shining and it was an amazing experience for the children. The house captains proudly collected their members and walked them in mixed year groups out to the van to collect their ice cream. Poldens, as the winners of the House points last term, led the way.



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At the end of last term, our Year 4 children practised their persuasive letter writing skills and wrote to a range of supermarkets sharing their views on recycled materials. They were thrilled to receive a letter back from Co-Op praising their efforts and a phone call from TESCO's community champion inviting the whole year group to the local store to see recycling in action and can promote bags for life in the store. They are all very excited not only to have the opportunity to visit but that their persuasive letter writing was successful.

Recently, we introduced whole class guided reading to our school curriculum. This has quickly become a firm favourite among the children and so we made the decision to include our early years children in the approach as well. Our Pre school and Reception children already love the approach and will be focusing on a book every half term with the aim of being able to perform it off by heart to others by the end of each half term. The Pre School children were excited to share their first book and loved being able to have their own copy to use. After just a week, they had remembered key phases and enjoyed sharing their favourite parts. Our Reception children are also enjoying the approach and have demonstrated care with the books and a love for the new approach.

We are looking forward to the rest of the term and the opportunities it brings.

Ali Collins, Headteacher



ALI COLLINS





UFFCULME PRIMARY SCHOOL

I cannot quite believe we have reached the Summer Term already. Where has this year gone?

We had a very busy end of Spring Term, with numerous activities celebrating Easter and our Run for Ukraine. Our caring and compassionate nature as a school community meant that we felt it was our social responsibility to support those children and young people whose lives have been up rooted and forced to flee Ukraine for their lives. A huge well done to all the children who took part in the run. Collectively, they reached their target number of laps. A special thank you to the Reverend Gudrun Thomas and our Year 5 children for our Easter Service. The Year 5 children spoke with such maturity and confidence with their retelling of the Easter story. Although the service was held via Microsoft Teams, we are now back to holding assemblies in person in the hall and what a wonderful feeling this is. Things are now finally starting to feel 'normal' once again.

We also managed to raise £300 for the PTFA through our Easter Raffle which was a great effort from the school community. A special mention also needs to go to those children who entered our Egg Decorating Competition – there were some fantastic entries this year, including 'Egg Sheeran,' 'Eggie the Eagle' and 'Eggs-eter Football Club'!

As we begin to look ahead to next year, we are delighted to share that we will have 30 on-roll in Reception Class once again. A comprehensive transition plan has been put in place, and we are excited to welcome our new parents and children into the Uffculme Academy family as they start their educational journey with us.

The first part of the Summer Term inevitably means that the focus in Year 2 and Year 6 are the imminent SATs tests, and in Year 1 and Year 4, the focus is the Phonics Screening Check and the Multiplication Check. We would like to wish all our children, and those across the Trust, the very best of luck as they approach the exam season. Our staff have ensured that children understand the importance of trying their best, but they have not put any pressure on the children. We are not a school who narrows the curriculum and despite these tests, children are still have a rich curriculum diet.

The Summer Term is not defined by the tests mentioned above, and staff have been busy planning a broad range of activities throughout the proceeding weeks. Our Year 6 children have already been visited by the Head of Year 7 from Uffculme School, Vicky Bartlett, in which she explained how things will be at secondary school, whilst also reassuring the children that their needs will be met. The children are now becoming increasingly excited to continue their journey in a secondary setting.



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Our Year 4 children had a fantastic time on their Year 4 Wildside Residential. For many, this was the first time that they had spent time away from their parents, but all children rose to the challenge and excelled throughout their two-day adventure, spending the night in tents. They learnt all about local wildlife and had the chance to feed some of the animals, including ponies, pigs, and chickens. Children also enjoyed the zip wire, night walk and various nature trails. It is fair to say that they were exhausted on their return home! A special thank you to the adults who accompanied the children, giving up their time to ensure the children gained these life-long memories.

There have also been some recent sporting events, reflecting the range of opportunities that are offered to our children. Massive Congratulations to everyone who took part in the Culm Valley Sports association second round of Cross Country. Out of the fourteen schools who took part, we were able to finish in first place overall as a team. This was an amazing achievement. A special mention to Fred and Alyssia who finished first in their respective races. Well done also to all the Year 4 children who took part in an Athletics event at Uffculme School against other schools in our primary cluster. Our 'A' team managed to finish in second place and qualify for the East Devon finals. Finally, ten of our Year 4 children were lucky enough to take part in a beginner golf workshop event at the secondary school recently. The challenges involved learning how to 'putt' and 'chip' whilst controlling distance and direction. Overall, our Year 4's came second, which was incredible achievement considering many of them had not played golf before.

Fraser Wallace, Headteacher



FRASER WALLACE





One of the challenges that all our schools have faced since the pandemic has been re-energising our respective school cultures, with students once again throwing themselves into the opportunities we each have to offer, and getting back that sense of excitement and being a part of something. The House System at Uffculme School plays a big part in reinforcing our ethos of community, belonging, fun, low stake-competitiveness and making fond memories of school, and although it is has continued throughout the past two years, it is only been over the past few months that it has really come back to life adding that additional dimension to the school.

Sixteen Year 10 house captains help lead the system (four from each house) with them not only driving engagement of their houses but also increasingly taking ownership for the activities and competitions that take place. These include recent additions such as the 'Finish the Lyric' competition to the usual calendar of house events and competitions such as Winter Art, DT Design, Young Writer's Poetry and Inter-Tutor Group Basketball. Another addition has been the new Geography Award which was launched very successfully with students taking part in some stunning virtual field trips: they've dived beneath the waves on the Great Barrier Reef, walked with elephants in Kenya and braved the Arctic winter to visit Lapland, and at the same time gained house points.

Some of our biggest annual House Events are still to come and we are all really looking forward to being able to run them again after the two-year hiatus due to covid restrictions. Many of our students have never experienced a proper Uffculme Sports Day, the epic House Music week or even the stunning Uff-Fest in all its glory. But these events are all back this summer – bigger and better than ever!

Another vital way in which the school's ethos is strengthened is through our Personal Development curriculum.

- Year 7 have been focussing on relationships, diversity and language and linking expectations to our school values of respect, tolerance and courtesy. Before Easter we finished these lessons with a whole school focus on Autism Acceptance week and inclusion for all. This term they are focusing on Self Esteem and introducing skills to help them see the positives about themselves in all aspects of their lives.
- Year 8 have looked at kindness and empathy with a particular focus on isolation and its impact on their peers linking directly with our school values and inclusion. Additionally, they have had visitors from the magistrates and the Police to complete topics on Law and Order and Drugs and Alcohol. Before Easter as part of National Science week they had a visit from an explorer from Antarctica, which was fascinating!
- Last term Year 9 had a focus on careers giving them the opportunity to start to think about the next steps (including options choices) and their future options. They also took part in National Science week dealing key topics on the Human Genome and Eco-farms. We have also been looking at the skills for independent learning as this is a key skill for their GCSE years. In addition, they welcomed an external speaker who delivered a workshop on Sexual harassment, to build on their education around acceptable behaviour and boundaries. It was an interactive session that illustrated to our students that harassment is not just physical it can be verbal and non-verbal actions. This education continues through all their time at Uffculme.

We are really pleased to have launched our tailored programme of personal development for our SEND students. Working closely with our learning support team, these lessons are fortnightly and are an opportunity for our SEND students to have 1 to 1 session with dedicated support. We are very grateful to our TAs for all their support with this – it is making a real difference for those students involved.

KS4 students are now mostly doing private study in preparation for their mocks and final exams but Year 11 recently had a session on First Aid and CPR (photo attached) which they really enjoyed and later this term Year 10 will have a 'safety day' looking at many different topics around drugs, relationships and water safety.



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Our students took part in a number of exciting activities at the end of last term, including a marvellous evening of music put on by our talented musicians who have been nurtured by the teachers, including peripatetic staff. The evening started with a relaxed Acoustic Live Lounge followed by a more formal Music Concert. The standard of performance was tremendous and there was such a sense of fun and enjoyment evident from everyone. (photos)

A number of our Year 10 geographers went to North Wales at the end of last term – amongst other activities they all successfully made it to the top of Snowden (and also back down!) with the local mountain leaders full of praise for the students. As you will see from the photos, they experienced Snowdonia at its most beautiful and thoroughly enjoyed the challenges presented by both the terrain and the weather.

Just before the Easter holidays, six very talented linguists represented Uffculme School in the South West Schools MFL Speaking Competition based at Pilton Community College. They had to give a short presentation in their chosen language from memory on a range of topics. They were competing against six other schools and across two different categories (non-native and near-native) at both KS3 and KS4. They had very little time to prepare this year but it was an absolutely fantastic opportunity and achievement for them all. They were able to spend a day immersed in the languages of French, German, Spanish, Italian, Polish and Mandarin. They all showed a huge amount of bravery and commitment and were fantastic ambassadors for the school. They also scooped up many awards! At the end of the day, they were tasked by the Head Judge to go home and research the word “PEACE” in as many different languages as possible. A great day to celebrate diversity, humanity and courage.

Alan Blackburn, Headteacher



ALAN BLACKBURN



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"I have an ongoing battle with depression which can make life and work a real struggle. Seeing Amanda helps me to navigate a path through these times."

"I felt stuck and demotivated at work. My sessions with Amanda have allowed me to re-evaluate my strengths and succeed in achieving the promotion I thought I'd never get."

"Having struggled for years with health & weight issues I feel like a new person. Amanda has gently and carefully helped me to lose weight, start exercising and feel well!"

AMANDA WOODWARD





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