



THE
VIEW
FROM
HERE



THE VIEW FROM HERE

Phew, what a term! Thank you to all colleagues for your hard work in support of our young people over the course of the last 14 weeks. Particular thanks to everyone who has thrown themselves into the numerous enrichment and cultural opportunities for example, sport, music drama, outdoor and adventurous activities, clubs and trips and visits. These are the features of school life that help to create that sense of belonging and attachment that we know are so important to pupils' enjoyment of school. As well as all the usual activities, we have also joyfully planned and shared nativities, concerts, pantomime, trips and visits at home and abroad and carol services alongside engaging our communities through parent meetings and other information evenings and celebrations.

At a recent meeting I attended to discuss the strategies that work with disadvantaged students, two strong protective factors were identified in relation to helping vulnerable students feel that they belong in our schools. The first was being able to have meaningful interactions with their peers; the second is having at least one good friend. We know that since the start of covid, the impact on disadvantaged pupils has been disproportionately negative. Getting these young people back into schools and ensuring it is a positive experience for them is crucial to building back post pandemic, improving their attendance and ensuring that they buy into all aspects of school life. Similarly undertaking meaningful work with our communities, listening to their concerns and being alert to their challenges mean that schools can impact positively beyond the school gates as well as within. To this effect, the very exciting work we have started in partnership with the Reach Foundation in Feltham, whilst in its infancy has the potential to be transformational for our schools and their communities.

The Autumn term is typically one of the most tiring in the school year and no more so than for our ECTs. If you are one of the many ECTs starting your teaching career at one of our schools, well done for surviving and I hope that despite the challenges, which I know at times can feel overwhelming, you have been well supported by your teams.

I would therefore like to wish all staff, families, volunteers, governors and trustees a very Happy and Healthy Christmas. Thank you again for your commitment and dedication to our children and young people and I hope that the Christmas break brings both rest and fun. Hopefully the experience will be equally positive for our pupils although we know for some that it may not. So, a particular thank you as well to our Safeguarding teams who are never truly off duty and who continue to help families navigate the most difficult of times.

See you in 2023

Lorraine

Chief Executive Officer, Uffculme Academy Trust



LORRAINE HEATH





There has been no let up in the vast array of events here at Axe Valley Academy. It is literally non-stop and we love every minute of it as a community.

Our Year 7s are well and truly part of the family here. With every event I see, I find it hard to remember a time when they weren't part of AVA life, whether it be music, drama, art, food, crafting or writing, they are absolutely throwing themselves into the activities here with gusto!

It has been particularly special this term to be able to come together as a school and honour traditional dates in the school calendar. Remembrance was a moving event. To see our school congregate in perfect silence was very special. We were proud of our students who honoured events in the community on 11.11.22. We received special recognition regarding the conduct of our House Captains Caitlin and Kyran in this letter, which was especially heartwarming:

Dear Mrs Jenkins

What a privilege and delight it was to have Caitlin and Kyran with us this morning. They were so polite and charming and ready to help.

Initially they availed themselves to ensure that everybody, we had 100+ plus, had an Order of Service (we ran out,) and then helped all the school children, representatives from the 6 primary schools within the area, to 'plant' the named poppy crosses into our Garden of Remembrance.

I was sorry that, after the photo shoot, in the mallei after the service, I was not personally able to thank them. Please do pass my very grateful thanks onto them.

Yours faithfully

Fr Geoffrey

Chaplain and Honorary Secretary RBL Axminster Branch



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Our second Christmas in the Quad, was a fabulous event and got us into the festive spirit from day one in December! Residents from our local care home enjoyed the performances of our choir and musicians. Our students did us proud by manning the craft stalls selling AVA wares. The hot chocolate and gingerbread stands were very popular once again. Our raffle had amazing hampers as a result of the generous donations from our community, This event is definitely set to become a regular for our calendars.

The last few weeks have been so incredibly busy with musical events, sporting competition, trips and preparation for our production of Bugsy. These photos and our buzzing social media should give you a snapshot of the wonderful things that have been happening here on a daily basis. Please do give us a follow! (Facebook | Twitter: @AxeAcademy | Instagram: @studyataxevalleyacademy)

We are also delighted to launch our new website: www.axevalley.uat.ac

Laura Jenkins, Headteacher



LAURA JENKINS





At Holyrood, this term has been challenging and successful in equal measure! We certainly come out of it in a stronger position than we went in, as our school improvement journey continues. We have focussed particularly upon provision and outcomes for PP and SEND students, certainty of behaviour systems and improving attendance to all aspects of school life (including extra-curricular activities).

We are especially proud of our school's extra-curricular offer! Just under half of Year 7-9 students at Holyrood have been on a trip and attended a club this year, and it's only December. What is most pleasing for me is that our PP and SEND students are attending clubs and trips just as often as everybody else, which is absolutely excellent. I would like to thank every single member of staff who has organised or supported a trip or a club so far this year.

Equally pleasing is our new Sixth Form Enrichment offer, with every single Sixth Former having regularly attended an enrichment activity (or lots!) since September: languages to animal behaviour, Sport to EPQ. There's lots of interesting work going on at Holyrood Sixth Form. We are very proud of our students who are preparing for post-18 apprenticeships, employment or University. Isla Vincent recently had her interview to study Biochemistry at Oxford – we await the result eagerly and hope for the right result for Isla (and hopefully another feather in the cap for the school and Trust). Social mobility and social justice in action!

This week, we say goodbye to three staff who leave us for other opportunities. Angus Ferraro leaves us to join the Science Team at Queens College, Lizzy Bateson leaves us to join the team at Sky College and Katherine Laws leaves us for promotion to Assistant Headteacher at Bucklers' Mead.

All three colleagues leave their roles in far better places than they found them, for which we are very grateful. I must pay particular tribute to Katherine, who has been part of a real turnaround at Holyrood. Her assured, reliable and organised leadership has allowed our plans to come to life and it was particularly important and impactful during the pandemic. I don't quite know what we and indeed I will do without her. We are very proud of Katherine and wish her all the luck in the world – she will be great.



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Overall, this term has been a success here, with lots to celebrate: student led assemblies on anti-bullying, new Sixth Form and Music facilities, better links with our community and vastly improved SEND provision.

On behalf of all of TeamHolyrood, I wish our trust colleagues a very Merry Christmas and look forward to working with you all in 2023..

Dave MacCormick, Headteacher



DAVE MACCORMICK





This half term, Neroche has been full of Christmas spirit and enrichment opportunities. The staff have planned and implemented a wide range of opportunities that the children have benefited from. We have welcomed members of staff back to, and into the Neroche staff team, and the dedication of the staff and their commitment to the children has been commendable.

Our Infant Christmas productions were received well by parents and the community. Our youngest children in our Pre School and Reception class worked together brilliantly on a version of the Nativity story called 'Big Little Nativity'. Seeing our youngest children perform in front of an audience, some just 2 years old, was wonderful to see. The confidence and enthusiasm shown by our youngest children truly made the show and they certainly performed with great gusto. Our Year 1 and Year 2 children joined together and performed a production called Eddie the Penguin. This reinforced some important environmental themes alongside linking it to a wintery North/South Pole context. Again, the confidence of the children was amazing and the emerging drama skills of some of our children were wonderful to demonstrate to our wider school community. The commitment of our teaching assistants who were in charge of props for this production was amazing and certainly supported the impressive performance.

We were invited to perform some Christmas songs to a local older generation Christmas Party. Mr Smith took a small group of enthusiastic singers to the community party and they entertained some of the older members of the local community. Their performance was received well and people in attendance at the party were thrilled that they could perform to them. We were invited to take part in the Ilminster Christmas light switch on and joined some other local primary schools to perform to the wider locality, both of these events reinforcing Neroche as an important part in our Local Community.

Yesterday, the whole school went to the Octagon theatre in Yeovil to watch Dick Whittington, we were able to make use of a special school performance making pantomime accessible to all of our children when family finances are struggling this year. Every child was included in the trip and feedback from the children was positive, especially from our most disadvantaged children. Everyone was beautifully behaved and were a credit to the school. Children are already asking if we can go again next year and are trying to predict who their favourite actors may be in Cinderella next year.

Children loved their Christmas Lunch at school this week and the meal served by Innovate and their staff was really impressive. In previous years, catering companies that we used limited numbers of the Christmas lunch at school, meaning that some children have missed out. Once this concern was shared with Innovate as our new catering provider, a firm commitment to serve every child that wanted a Christmas Lunch at school was given and they certainly delivered on this commitment. We combined our school Christmas Lunch day with fundraising for Save the Children with children wearing Christmas



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or winter themed jumpers and mufti. The lunch hall was filled with Christmas music and feedback from the children was positive about their special lunch. We would like to thank Innovate for this as they really made a difference to our whole school with this commitment.

Miss Griffiths has worked tirelessly to re-establish a PFA at Neroche this half term. She has encouraged parents and has managed to secure a new PFA committee. At very short notice, the new committee, with Miss Griffiths' help, has organised a Christmas Fayre complete with Father Christmas grotto for the school, and this has already encouraged wider parent interest to add to the capacity of the new committee. Miss Griffiths is keen to develop the PFA further and has encouraged the committee to think about new fundraising opportunities to support the school.

We now have a staff link to a charity called 'Never Such Innocence'. The charity provides tools for children and young people to reflect on the realities of war and conflict. The aim of the charity is to nurture the next generation of thinkers through the arts and is a charity that works all over the world. Every year the charity runs a poetry competition worldwide with successful winners having the opportunity to read aloud their poems at places of significance in the UK such as the Houses of Parliament or Buckingham Palace in London. Our Year 5 and 6 children benefited from a visit from Clive from the charity to reinforce their work on World War 1 and 2 and they produced some impressive poetry linked to this. The poems have been entered into the competition and we are excited to see how far our school entries progress. We would like to thank Mrs Whiteman and her family links to the charity and this competition is now something we will pursue in the future.

Our Year 2 children were excited to have a visit from Nurse Lucy. Nurse Lucy kindly came into school on her day off to reinforce comparisons that the Year 2 children have been making through time in history looking at approaches to nursing. They were able to draw on their historical knowledge of Florence Nightingale's approach to nursing, comparing it to modern day nursing practices from a first hand perspective with Nurse Lucy. The Year 2 children loved being able to ask Nurse Lucy questions and she thoroughly enjoyed her visit to Neroche.

Our Year 4 children have benefited from their whole class Ukulele lessons using the Somerset Music service. Weekly tuition as a whole class with an external music teacher has provided the Year 4 children with an opportunity to learn an instrument and develop an awareness of, and reading music notation. The children proudly organised a class concert for their parents to share their new skills. Next term, we welcome Miss Peat to our staff team who will lead music across the school for us. Due to the success with Ukulele this term, we will be developing our school music curriculum further with curriculum delivery being led through learning the Ukulele at a whole school progressive level.

At the end of another busy term, I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank the Neroche staff team for their continual drive to secure the very best for all the children at Neroche and wish everyone across the trust a very Happy Christmas.

Ali Collins, Headteacher



ALI COLLINS





UFFCULME PRIMARY SCHOOL

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the wonderful staff at Uffculme Primary School for all their hard work and dedication this year. 2022 has been a fantastic year for everyone and I cannot believe how much we have achieved. I continue to be proud of our staff here and their willingness to go above and beyond for our school and children, and my heartfelt gratitude goes to each and every one of you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a personal thank you for all the kind messages about my family's new arrival. It is safe to say that I am besotted with Zachary, who is now 6-weeks old. The lack of sleep certainly takes time getting used to, but I wouldn't change it for the world! I would also like to pass on my heartfelt thanks to Mrs Hayman who stepped up during my paternity leave, ensuring the school continued to run smoothly during my absence.

This term has seen an increase in parental engagement which is very timely now we are post-pandemic. We had an impressive turnout for our parent consultation evenings in October. These meetings are so important in the relationship between school and home, and for the wellbeing and progress of our children. Our November Open Mornings were also a success, and I would like to thank all our wonderful Year 6 tour guides who did a brilliant job of showing off the best of what our school has to offer. In conjunction with these Open Mornings, our new school website was launched. The web address is www.uffculmeprimary.uat.ac and is much more child and parent friendly. We also launched our new school vision and values for parents and our tagline, 'everything with HEART!'.

We are sadly saying goodbye to Lauren Tomkins-Smith at the end of term. It has been a pleasure to work with her and she has made much progress since she joined us last year as an ECT. I know that the children in Year 1 and all the staff here will miss her dearly. We wish her luck with her future endeavours, and we will make sure we keep in touch. Lauren was covering Alice Hughes' maternity leave, who we welcomed back to school last week. It has been lovely having Alice back and she is excited to be teaching Year 1 in January.

We have also welcomed Belinda Colgate as school administrator. She has settled well, and we are looking forward to working with her over the coming years.

The last couple of weeks have been exceptionally busy with the run-up to Christmas and the school have organised a wide variety of activities.

We welcomed M&M Productions to the school as an early Christmas treat for the children on the 25th of November. The performance was Cinderella, and it was lovely to hear the hall full of laughter, familiar songs and, of course, the classic pantomime line... 'he's behind you!' Much to the children's delight, Karen Yells and Amanda Kerslake were dragged up to the front for a dance off...and performed with fantastic rhythm!



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Last week saw both the Year 1 & Year 2, and the Reception Christmas performances. The Year 1 & 2 performance of 'Lights! Camel! Action!' was fantastic. The children were outstanding: they all sang beautifully, spoke with loud voices, and acted with great confidence. They played in front of two sell-out audiences and there were no nerves to be found anywhere!

The Reception version of the Nativity story was another brilliant school performance. Their confidence has grown so much over the year so far and it was a real 'lump in throat' moment when the children took to the stage to perform.

The children are such a credit to the school and seeing all their smiles and waves to those parents in the audience made all the hard work worthwhile. Thank you to those of you who could make these events, they were certainly special!

I would like to say a special thank you to the staff within those year groups who worked tirelessly to arrange the productions. Kathryn Moss, Bekah Wright, Lauren Tomkins-Smith, Jo Tate, Amanda Kerslake and Debbie Hands worked wonders with the Year 1 & Year 2 children. Becki Sharpe and Anouska Blake worked vigorously, and with great patience with Reception Class – the performances were amazing!

Last week also saw the Key Stage 2 Christmas Fair taking place which was incredibly well-attended by the wider community. The children's arts and crafts, not to mention the edibles, were very popular and raised a whopping £550! The children also raised over £200 for the Trust-wide fundraising efforts for Bristol Suicide Prevention.

Speaking of fundraising, a huge well done to the school community for raising a massive £313 for the British Royal Legion's Poppy Appeal. The school was informed that we raised more money than all the other schools in the local area, even more than the local secondary schools who have more than five times the number of children. A special mention must go to Rae in Reception who raised £80 herself towards this charity. The Royal British Legion were so touched that they came and presented Rae with a special certificate during our weekly celebration assembly.

We still have plenty of events this week to end the term on a festive high, including Christmas Dinner, the KS2 Carol Service at St Mary's Church and the Christmas Sing-along assembly.

As you can see, it has been a very busy, but enjoyable time of year and I think everyone deserves a long rest over the coming fortnight. We would like to wish all our colleagues across the Uffculme Academy Trust a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Fraser Wallace, Headteacher



FRASER WALLACE





As we come to the end of the first term of the academic year, it's good to look back and see that our students have been able to experience the full range of activities and events, including residential, for the first time since the outbreak of Covid 19. These are so important in helping to build friendships and relationships with staff that will last throughout the students' time at Uffculme and beyond.

Our in-school activities have included a fantastic new house competition which looks set to become a firm favourite. The first round of 'Who wants to be a millionaire' saw teams from Year 11 competing to win house points, ably supported by house team teachers as 'phone a friend' (all stood up to the pressure and got their questions right!). The huge audiences cheered Yondercott to win, getting to within 2 questions of the million-pound jackpot! The next round, for Year 7s, is now underway.

We have also had the annual 'Love Languages Week' which is an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of languages around the world and within our school community. As well as a variety of language-based house competitions, a group of bi-lingual students presented wonderful assemblies to promote the importance and benefits of learning another language – they presented in German, Polish, Turkish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Ukrainian and Russian and inspired students and staff alike.

Another annual event, the Cameron Cup for Writing, has also been held this term. Pupils were asked to describe a place where they felt happiest: the variety of choices and settings was incredible and judging was, as always, very difficult as each shortlisted entry was full of joy and heartfelt sentiment. The overall winner went to the entry that the judges knew, deep down, Mr Cameron, the inspiration for the house competition, would have selected. As a lifelong football fan and a historian he would have chosen the homage to happy times experienced watching his favourite team by Sam Parker.

Earlier I mentioned that our residential are back and it has been wonderful to follow the blogs (<https://uffculmeschool.uat.ac/blogs>) from the students who have been enjoying:

Year 11 History trip to London with activities such as The City of London Police Museum and the London Dungeons, supporting the 'Crime and Punishment' module of their GCSE course.

Year 9 and 10 German Christmas Markets Trip to Cologne where students sampled the delights of the markets, the chocolate museum and Germany's oldest theme park, Phantasialand, whilst taking the opportunity to practice their German.



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Year 10 London Trip. HMS Belfast on the River Thames was the accommodation for a stay in London exploring the sights of the city including a visit to the Houses of Parliament.

Year 11 Ski Trip. On Saturday over half our Year 11 students set off for Austria for a week of skiing. Relationships will be built which help them through the crucial last 2 terms of school.

The start of the Christmas activities at Uffculme School saw the return of the PTFA Craft Fair. This was the biggest and best yet, raising an incredible £10,500, and is a testament to the fantastic support we have from our parents and wider school community. Huge thanks go to the PTFA team who put so much hard work into arranging such a successful event, the proceeds of which will benefit the students in many ways.

We have also had the 'Twelve Days of Uffculme' Christmas concert when students from across the school performed a wonderful, feel-good evening full of fantastic music to a very full house in the Venue.

We are now looking forward to the final few days of term, with Christmas lunch and carol services, and I wish all our students and school community a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Alan Blackburn, Headteacher



ALAN BLACKBURN



Happy Christmas from Charlotte and I at WCTSA. With the end of the year looming, it's been a great opportunity to reflect on the past year.

We have really enjoyed working with and supporting the 17 Early Career Teachers across UAT. It's been an absolute pleasure to get into the classroom and watch them in action. Each and every one of them has taken great leaps in their professional development, making a real difference to the lives of our young people. Every ECT could not speak more positively of the support they are receiving from their incredible team of mentors and induction tutors - thank you for everything that you are doing - your dedication and hard work has been so instrumental to their development. On top of the UAT ECTs, we are supporting almost 1000 across the SWIFT area which has been keeping us busy!

We have had a successful year of ITT bucking the national trend of reduced applications and have had a really strong start to our recruitment for September 2023 starters. It's been great to have our School Direct Distance trainees in school and we look forward to welcoming our @ Exeter trainees for the official start of their induction in January. We sadly lose Hywel our Geography lead mentor at Christmas but look forward to continuing to work with him when he is at Great Torrington as their school join us as one of the partner schools for our School Direct trainees.

UAT staff have immersed themselves in CPD this year enrolling on NPQs and participating in subject leader briefings, professional communities, subject masterclasses and much more. We have enjoyed organising the MFL and Science masterclasses and 10 subject professional communities and it's been great to have a strong UAT presence at these. We have continued our partnership with Tom Sherrington engaging with almost 200 Headteachers, senior leaders, coaches and teachers as part of the SWIFT WalkThrus programme. There is already lots of CPD released for the Spring term, so please do have a look at the SWIFT website to see what is on offer

<https://www.sw-ift.org.uk/cpd-view-and-book.html>

As we look to the year ahead, we aspire to continue to embed our ECT support and look forward to exciting ITT developments resulting from the recent ITT reaccreditation process. Wishing you all a happy Christmas and New year. Thanks again for all of your support of the training school this year.



JEN KNOWLES



THE VIEW FROM HERE

WHAT
MAKES A
GREAT
TEACHER?



WE DO

Skills such as communication, listening, collaboration, adaptability, empathy and patience are just a few of the attributes every good teacher needs to thrive in education. If you think you have what it takes to start a new career as a teacher call **01884 842908**.

wctsa.org

West Country
Training School Alliance



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A fabulous new addition to our Wellbeing offer... Reflexology

Not sure what it is? Read on...

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You know that great feeling when you've cleared out the garage, under the bed, the attic... Reflexology offers you that same feeling in body, mind and spirit but without all the hard work!

Where has it come from?

Reflexology has been around for thousands of years; used in ancient Egyptian, Chinese and Indian medicine. It is becoming a widely used therapy in Western cultures and is frequently used alongside conventional medicine.

What are the benefits?

- Improved cardiovascular and lymphatic circulation
- Better sleep
- Relief from muscular aches, pains and tensions,
- Help with hormonal imbalance
- Stress and anxiety release
- Improved digestion and relief from digestive disorders
- Stimulation of the nervous system
- Improvement in cognitive health

How do I book?

The treatments are bookable (free of charge) using the Wellbeing booking link. All I need are your bare feet – leave the rest to me.

www.uffculmetrust.org/wellbeing

But I've got horrible feet...



“

The human foot is a masterpiece
of engineering and a work of art.

”

Leonardo da Vinci



AMANDA WOODWARD





www.uffculmetrust.org