

North Oxfordshire Academy

Autumn 2016

Sixth Form

Newsletter



News

Welcome to North Oxfordshire Academy Sixth Form's first newsletter.

The sixth form at NOA has seen many changes in the eight years since it opened in September 2008. Perhaps the biggest change has been in our curriculum which has evolved from a fledgling one of mostly level 2 courses, to its current position offering high quality, level 3 academic and vocational qualifications in over twenty subject areas. Our vision is, and always has been, to create a sixth form that encourages its students to develop academic, vocational and personal skills which will help them grow and flourish in the opportunities they will go on to at the end of year 13.

The 2015/16 academic year was our second full year of A' levels since the switch from the International Baccalaureate programme in September 2013. One consequence of this change has been the increasing number of students gaining places at university in the last few years. This year, twenty five of our year 13s accepted places at twenty one different universities in courses including Law, Publishing, Theology, Veterinary Nursing, Music, Accounting and Nutrition. We were also proud and delighted to see one of our students gain a place at Oxford University: Katy Piper, who will study Law at Jesus College, is the first student from NOA Sixth Form to gain a place at an Oxbridge college – we are sure she will not be the last. However, central to our ethos is the idea that different individuals have different strengths, goals and aspirations and our vocational curriculum, with its strong links with local businesses, is valued as much by us as our academic one. This is why we also celebrate the 24 students who gained places on apprenticeship schemes or in paid employment. The autumn term will see the installation of an Apprenticeship Honours Board, listing all of our sixth form students who have succeeded in gaining apprenticeships in the last three years.

The curriculum, though, is not the only thing that has changed in the last eight years and we believe that academic success, though vital, is not the only goal a school sixth form should have for its students. We see the development of wider skills as just as important and have worked over the last few years to put together a tutorial and enrichment programme that will help our students to develop as people and will give them opportunities to take part in a range of fulfilling and enriching activities and events. In the past year, students from the sixth form have taken part in a range of initiatives including acting as

teaching assistants to lower school classes, running youth club sessions, supporting on the lower school camp and the school sports day, taking part in charity programmes, attending events on the Career Ready programme, completing a week of work experience and acting as buddy readers for year 7s. We have also organised trips to open days, career fairs and a range of subject specific training days and conferences as well as organising and running our own apprenticeship fair in March.

Our newsletter is an opportunity to showcase all of the amazing things our sixth form students do, and to inform parents of key dates for the upcoming year. We also use social media to keep students and parents informed and up to date, and in this newsletter you will find details of our Twitter feed and the sixth form website.

Lastly, at NOA Sixth Form we value a collaborative approach where parents and staff work together with students to ensure the best outcomes for them at the end of their time here, so please do contact us with any questions or queries you may have.

I look forward to a successful year ahead.

Sixth Form Team:

Head of Y12

Head of Y13

KS5 Practitioner

Attendance

UCAS Co-ordinator

Youth Work

Mr. Young

Ms. Hall

Ms. Neall

Ms. Tilocca

Ms. Brown

Mr. Davis

[@NOASixthForm](#)



Mr. A Leyburn
Director of Sixth Form

June was a busy month for students at NOA. With work experience, volunteering at the local church, and was a real test of the resilience of our sixth formers.

Media Gold Awards 2016

Every year the Y12 A Level Media students plan and stage an event to celebrate the fantastic work that happens in the department. Students were nominated and invited to attend the evening, which was presented by Chloe Green (Y12) and Josh Black (Y11). All students involved planned the event from start to finish and it was a great turn out from parents and nominees. Those who won were presented with their very own Media Gold Oscar, which every student held with pride. Many thanks to Gemma Robinson and Jo Pender who supported the students with the successful event.



Gardening: St Francis Church

During work experience week, Y12 students volunteered at St Francis Church, gardening with the help of Youth Work co-ordinator, Mr. Davis. Students worked exceptionally hard over the 4 day period to ensure the local church's garden was inviting for the community. Beds were created so that the volunteers at the church could plant vegetable seeds and enjoy a fruitful patch of home-grown goods. Students celebrated their efforts with an end of year BBQ at the church where they were awarded certificates for their hard work over the week. The BBQ was a lovely way to end the academic year.



Career Ready Programme

With the support of our Business and Enterprise team, NOA Sixth Form students were given the opportunity to gain valuable work experience at leading providers in the business sectors.

Students are offered a mentor through the programme which aims to place students in successful apprenticeships over the summer where they can earn money and gain skills in the sector they are interested in. For some of our students, it was a great opportunity to get a foot in the door.

Josh Sole (Y12) gained an apprenticeship within a bank where he worked for 4 weeks over the summer break. This will help him with his application to university next year where he hopes to study finance at one of the leading universities.



Y12 Buddy Reading

Sixth Formers have been supporting Y7's with their reading throughout the year. Those who had a reading buddy met with their sixth former every week to complete reading in a bid to improve literacy and for sixth formers to lead on interventions.

Work Experience Week

Students in Y12 had the opportunity to gain work experience within an area of their choice for 4 days. The opportunity gave students an insight into the world of work and provided them with key opportunities and responsibilities in a range of roles including recreations, primary school teaching, SEN support, engineering and retail. Students were encouraged to find their own placements and visits were carried out by the sixth form team to see how they progressed in their roles. Some employers were so happy with the

way that the Y12's conducted themselves that some have been invited for further experience and have gained some invaluable experience.

Taste The World

Hospitality and Business students, as part of their courses, were given the chance to plan and stage an event for the evening where they served a range of dishes from all over the world. The event raised money for Banbury Homeless through a raffle and silent auction. Those who attended the evening paid what they valued the meal to be. Hospitality students provided table service as well as preparing the dishes and business students were great hosts.

Well done all those involved!



News: KS5 Results Day 2016

GCSE and A Level results days are always nerve-racking events. Those who are looking to attend Sixth Form eagerly await whether they have passed their GCSE's and our Y13's are ready to accept offers from universities based on their A Levels. This year staff and students were delighted with the results and as Sixth Form we have had record numbers accepting university offers.

This year students achieved an overall 98% pass rate at A Level (up 11%) and 87% at AS Level, which is an increase of 20.3% up on last year. Students were delighted with the outcome, with 24 of our Y13 students accepting university places. This performance is the best which NOA has seen in its short history with a Sixth Form.

Down with us on the day were HeartFM who were recording live and speaking with students and staff on the outcome of the results.

Director of Sixth Form Adam Leyburn said of the results: "This has been the most successful outcome yet for the Sixth Form and it's a testament to the hard work of our students and staff. I am exceptionally proud of where the Sixth Form has come in the last 5 years and am looking forward to where we will be going in the future".

Staff were also down celebrating with students as they opened their envelopes. Principal Sara Billins commented: "I'd like to congratulate all of them on this success which demonstrates a significant increase on previous years and which ensures that students will be able to take up places at their first choice of universities".

Below are some of the places students accepted with their results.

Julie Hodge (Y13) was delighted to accept a place at Leicester University to study Law after receiving A in English Language, B in RE and a B in Psychology.

Chloe Stallwood also accepted a place at Bedford University to study Sports and Education having secured a B in English Language and a Distinction in Sport.



North Oxfordshire Academy also celebrated with its first student to be accepted into Oxford University. Katie Piper received an A in Biology, A in English Literature, B in French and an A in Maths which secured her a place at the prestigious Jesus College to study Law.

A delighted Katie said: "When I logged into the UCAS website this morning, my whole family burst into tears. It is a mixture of relief, terror and excitement. I'm excited about bounding into the great unknown."



AS Results

A large amount of AS students also did exceptionally well, with an increase on last year's A-E pass rate.

Dominic Warner received 3 A grades for Maths, Further Maths and Economics plus a B grade in Physics. and couldn't believe the results he had achieved. Alongside Dom, fellow student Cameron Smith was delighted to have achieved an A in Maths and Further Maths, having scored 100 marks on his exam paper. Further Maths had a fantastic outcome with a 100% pass and 100% A-C grades. English Language was also celebrating the same success with 100% pass rate and 97% A-C.



Kiran Karim obtained a B in English Language alongside her vocational subjects, which she was very pleased with.

AS students will now move into their second year and begin their studies on A level courses alongside their vocational choices, too. With such great results from their first year in Sixth Form it will be exciting to see where we are this time next year.

Students were quick to thank staff who had helped them achieve their goals:

Megan Benham: "I want to thank all my teachers but especially Art because they always had a place for me to go to when I needed"

Nathan Moore: "I want to thank all my Maths teachers"

Sophie Cunnold: "I want to thank Mr. Leyburn for being a great teacher and helping us through Psychology and English Language"

Abbey Wood: "Thanks to Ms Paris and Mr. Stevenson who have listened to me when I have been stressed or struggling"

Assessment Centre Day

As part of the ongoing information and guidance we provide for our students, the assessment centre day gave students opportunities to develop skills, in a range of engaging activities.

Mrs. Thorne, who runs the Business and Enterprise here at the academy, works closely with employers across the county (from various sectors including retail, HR and market research) networking to ensure that students can access opportunities. Last term, Mrs. Thorne organised an Assessment simulation Day which was offered to Y12 and Y13 students at the academy. In an attempt to prepare students for the world of work, students were required to take part and lead in activities which simulated a real assessment day which employers use during interview rounds. Activities included one to one interviews and group discussions which tested potential employees' competencies in the following areas: customer service, planning and organisational skills, problem solving and self motivation.



Assessment Days are increasingly popular amongst retail employers and customer service providers. It is an opportunity to really see how potential employees interact with other people and use their skills in a variety of situations.

The assessment day was accompanied by a feedback session, where students got detailed feedback on their efforts. This, a crucial part of the process, will

help students recognise where their strengths lie and where there is still room to make progress.

Mrs. Thorne was impressed by how mature and professional the students were on the day: "they maximised opportunities and were fantastic".



Those looking to go into employment, either after sixth form or as a graduate from university, will now understand the process involved during a recruitment process. Y12 students are currently writing personal statements for their job and university applications, which will now include their experience of an assessment day and be attractive to potential employers.

Head Boy and Head Girl

Every year two sixth formers are picked from the student body to represent the school as Head Boy and Head Girl. This year, 6 students were asked to apply and the final 4 where students were required to present themselves to the Senior Leadership Team through an interview. All of those who applied will be part of the prefect team, which will assist with school events, duties and mentoring of younger year groups as well as guiding new Year 12's in their first year of Sixth Form.

Congratulations to Dominic Warner and Jess Hughes who were selected as Head Boy and Head Girl.



Dominic is currently studying A Levels in Maths, Further Maths, Physics and Economics.



Jess is studying Economics, English, Maths and EPQ.

Both candidates were passionate about developing the ethos of the school and suggested ways in which the Sixth Form students can extend their presence as role models.

New Committees

Social Committee

This year the Sixth Form will have its first social committee who will work alongside sixth form staff and the prefect team to promote the school ethos through charity fundraisers and RAG weeks. A huge part of the committee is building relationships between both year groups in and outside of sixth form.

The team will meet once a term to discuss ideas and put these into place over the academic year.

Student Council

Alongside the social committee we also have those representing the student voice in the form of a Student Council. The aim is for the council to work alongside staff and students to get an understanding of how the community and spirit of the Sixth Form can be improved through termly meetings. One student will represent each tutor group and collect ideas from tutor sessions to bring to the meeting with the lead chair, Mr. Young.

Sixth Form YW Space

Following previous student voice, we have now opened the academy's Youth Work space at lunch times for students to relax in. The building hosts a pool table and lounge space which is often used for Youth Work clubs after school, but we have opened out to sixth form students so they can have an extra place to relax during lunch times.

16-19 Bursary

Students who are in full time education and who are aged between 16-19 are entitled to apply for the bursary fund to support their learning.

The bursary fund can be used to pay for course related resources such as books, clothing, trips, transport or courses. Those who are eligible need to ensure that they pick up an application form at the start of Term 1 and complete all personal details plus add the resources they require to support their learning.

We understand that studying at KS5 level does include wider reading and compulsory trips which benefit students' experiences here at sixth form, but come at a cost. The Bursary is to support students and parents with these costs to ensure that all students can reach their full potential.

What do we need to do?

Students need to collect an application form (and guidance notes) from the sixth form office and complete information on the following:

- personal details
- resources they need with ISBN numbers (of books) and descriptions of what funding is required.
- cost and quantity

What if I have already bought resources but I am entitled to the bursary?

Students can claim this money back, providing they have receipts to support their application. If tickets for trains have been purchased, please photocopy and attach.

How will the money be paid?

Payment will be made by BACS to parents or students' accounts, if bought in advance. If resources have not been purchased, we can do this on your behalf.

How will I be assessed?

Students behaviour and attendance is taken into account when applying for a bursary fund. Evidence of parents' income or tax credits/benefits will need to be provided to ensure you can receive the full amount. We prioritise those whose parents are on benefits or lower incomes but the vast majority of students

receive payment.

I applied last year, do I need to apply again?

Yes, we get a bursary fund every year. Every year new resources are needed, so please apply.

I forgot I could apply - is it too late?

Ideally we would like applications completed by the end of September so we can get payments out quickly but there will be a second opportunity to apply in January.

I need a sport kit for FA Elite. Is that covered?

Yes, that will be covered by the bursary if you complete the Bursary form.

More information on the bursary fund can be found online through the school's website where you can download an application form, or through the government website below:

www.northoxfordshire-academy.org

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview>



Subject Focus: Economics



A Level Economics interests a lot of students, but often choices can be difficult. Our subject focus each term will give students and parent and insight into what we have on offer here at Sixth Form; this is Mr. Young who teaches Economics and Business at the academy.

What is Economics?

When most people are asked what they think Economics is, their response is normally one of two things. Either a subject to do with business and money, or in truth they just don't really know! In reality Economics can be defined in a variety of ways and historically there have been numerous approaches to what in essence, is a study of the economy. For now, we will say that Economics is a social science that studies how individuals, businesses, governments and nations make choices around the allocation of resources to satisfy their needs and wants. It serves as an interesting study into the big picture of global economies, right down to the narrow perspective of individual consumers like you and me.

As a subject goes, the greatest advantage to studying it is the knowledge you gain that will help you understand and form opinions on what you see in the world around you every day. Full of real world application, you will be able to discuss topics such as the global financial crisis, decisions around the government's spending budgets and the recent EU referendum, with much more confidence and accuracy.

Some of the questions you will be able to answer...

- What is the nature of economics?
- What determines the demand and price of a good or service in a market?
- How do we measure the economics performance of developed and developing countries?
- Is income the same as wealth?
- What are the causes, costs and constraints of economic growth?
- What are the macroeconomic objectives of government?
- What is government failure?

Some light reading...

Economics: The User's Guide by Ha-Joon Chang – A compressive introduction to the basics of economics. An engaging book that is both detailed and simple to understand at the same time.
Freakonomics by Steven Levitt – A funny and engaging book applying economics to a variety of real life situations, showing that Economics is always relevant.

A little challenge...

The UK Government's fiscal budget outlines where their income comes from (mostly tax) and where they plan to spend it. See if you can find out what the three biggest areas of expense were in 2015. How much was spent on those areas? And do you agree or disagree with that allocation of money? Thoughts on a postcard...

UCAS: Application Process

Life beyond Sixth Form can be an intimidating prospect for some of our sixth formers. Often, students are unsure whether they want to go to University or find full time employment. Our tutor programme aims to support all pathways for students and incorporate sessions that focus on application processes, interviews and funding for different routes.

Term 5 and 6 saw Y12 students completing their personal statements, which accompany any university or job application. For students and parents, the application process can be daunting, so we have consolidated key information so you can keep track of what happens when students apply for university in Y13.

Open Days

Universities will host open days throughout the academic year. These are a great opportunity to see what the campus is like and meet tutors on courses. UCAS host a range of events where a large amount of universities showcase. Sixth formers are authorised to take days off to visit open days.

UCAS Website

The UCAS application process starts with students completing their personal details online. From here, students then enter their qualifications and choices for university.

Once completed, students will then need to attach a personal statement and include references. Teachers and tutors in Sixth Form will be used as referees and students will need to ensure they have made a payment for their application, online, before their application is forwarded to us.

Students may well receive offers based on their predicted grades, which are 'conditional' or they are accepted on the basis of their application - 'unconditional'.

Funding

Students can apply for a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan, which will help students during their time at university. In order to get money in

time for the start of courses, students must apply by 31 May 2017. Students can apply via the Student Loan website, which will be in the handbook.

Important Dates

- Friday 7th October 2016 to meet Oxbridge, medical and veterinary deadline of October 15th 2016
- Friday 21st October 2016 - Any applications fully completed by this date will be prioritised and sent off first.
- Friday 9th December 2016 – All applications need to be **FULLY completed** by this date so there is time to check the entire form, qualifications and add the reference in time for the January 15th deadline.

UCAS booklets are available for students, which include all the key dates.



Tutor Programme

Every student in Sixth Form is allocated a tutor, whom they meet with once a day during tutor time to discuss any concerns or achievements that they have. Tutor time is also an opportunity for us to focus on areas which don't fit into their subject choices - such as finance, safety, UCAS, study skills and debates.

Tutors are experienced sixth form teachers who build relationships with students and parents over the two years of their time here. As well as using tutors to support and guide students, we also like tutors to act as mentors for those who perhaps need some extra support with behaviour or attendance. We value the relationship between parents and staff and see tutors as a bridge for parental engagement. Our sixth form team is essential to the running of programmes, interventions and tutor time and students receive the best support from these sessions. Tutors are also essential for collating the references for students in Y13.

Term 1

Study Skills

Y12 students will be focusing on study skills to ease their transition from KS4 into KS5. Level 3 subjects are a huge jump from GCSE and we need to prepare students. Topics include: metacognition, note taking, referencing and assignment writing workshops.

UCAS

Y13 students will focus on UCAS applications and personal statements. This will also be an opportunity to get references from teachers and tutors.

Term 2

Ethics

Y12 Students will be developing their debating skills and engaging in topics surrounding ethics.

Finance

Y13 students will find out more about the cost of university alongside expenses in the world of work. Tutors will deliver sessions on credit, tax and student loans.

Who are the tutors?



Mr. Judson (Head of Music)



Ms. Neall (KS5 Lead Practitioner)



Ms. Bookless (Hospitality)



Mr. Murphy (Head of Engineering)



Mr. Yeomans (Maths)



Mrs. Paris (Head of Drama)



Mrs. Robinson (Head of Media)

Sixth Form Calendar 16/17

Month	Event
September	Apprenticeship Visitor (19th) Voting in the new Sixth Form Council (Y12 & Y13)
October	Drama trip (Y12+13) Oxford Playhouse (Wednesday 5th) Sixth Form Open Evening (Thursday 6th) Sixth Form weekend residential* UCAS Exhibition (4 October) Halloween Dress Up RAG (Monday 31st October)
November	Safe Drive Stay Alive Trip (Y12 & Y13)* Drama trip - Milton Keynes (Y12-13) Mocks (21-25th)
December	Christmas Show (Thursday 8th) Christmas Jumper Competition and Party (Wednesday 14th) Parents Evening/Morning (15th -16th)
January	Charity events*
February	Tutor Quiz University Challenge Final (6th February) RAG Week (6 - 10 February) Y12 Mocks (20th - 24th February)
March	Y13 Mocks (27th Feb - 3 March)
April	Head Boy/Girl Applications Open (Term 5) Parents Evening/Morning Thursday (6th- 7th April)
May	
June	Head Boy/Girl take over Term 6 UCAS convention (Y12) Y13 Leavers assembly* Y13 Leavers meal*
July	Summer Show (Thursday 5th July) Parents Evening (Thursday 13th July) End of year BBQ and celebration assembly (Y12)
August	AS/A-Level Results Day
* Dates TBC	