



Chew Valley School

Learn

Grow

Achieve

Newsletter October 2016



From the Headteacher

I have really enjoyed my first term at Chew Valley School and I have used it to get to know the staff and the students at work. It was lovely to see all of the students in my first week in assemblies where I was able to get over my message of a modern education set in the old fashioned values of mutual respect and positive relationships. I have had the privilege to visit many lessons and see at first hand the commitment and dedication of the staff which is matched by the keenness of the students to learn. In addition it has been great to watch all of the activities away from the classroom which has shown many of the students in such a great light.



We held our Open Evening early in the term which gave the opportunity for potential students and their parents to come and view the school which left me feeling very proud. This was followed by our Open Mornings where many of the same visitors came back to see the school at work through a normal day. There were many positive comments about our Year 8 students who acted as guides. I have also had the chance to work with our feeder primary schools in the valley and with other stakeholders as I am acutely aware that the school is part of a close community.

There is never a dull moment at Chew Valley with so much going on. It is a testament to the dedication of the wonderful staff that I have the honour to lead. All of the staff give so much to the young people in our care and so often go well beyond the expectations of other schools which is great to see. Chew Valley really is a very special place.

I am looking forward to working with all stakeholders so that we can together continue to give the young people in our care the best experiences we can. I am so lucky to have the job I have at such a great school. I do wish all of the staff and students a good half term and I look forward to seeing them all refreshed after the break.

Gareth Beynon

Diary Dates

Term 2 begins – Mon 31st Oct
School Society AGM & Governors' Report – Thurs 3rd Nov, 7pm
Year 12 Tutor Evening- Thurs 3rd Nov, 4-6.00pm
Sixth Form Open Evening – Thurs 10th Nov 6.30-9pm
School Society Christmas Fayre – Tues 15th Nov, 7pm
Year 10 Parents' Evening – Thurs 17th Nov, 4.00-6.30pm
GCSE Presentation Evening – Tuesday 22nd Nov, 4.15pm

School Society Meeting – Mon 5th Dec, 7.30pm, The Pelican
School Society Bingo Evening – Wed 7th Dec, 7pm
Carol Concert – Tues 13th Dec, 7.30pm
Term 2 ends – Fri 16 Dec, midday

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Sixth Form students spend a day with the RSC



On Wednesday 7th October, Chew Valley School's A level English and Drama students spent the day at The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in Stratford, attending a King Lear conference and performance organised by The RSC.

The day began with a presentation from Dr Nick Walton of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, who examined the original performance conditions of the play. By looking at how different these conditions were, our students were able to gain a clear picture of how King Lear might have been staged when it was first performed at The Globe Theatre in 1606.

Further insight, crucial to the students' studies came during a workshop with Assistant Director Anna Girvan and two cast members, who discussed the key themes and issues that this particular production focussed on. This session not only ensured students were aware of the director's concept but, more importantly, allowed our students the chance to direct and appear on stage with Paapa Essiedu (Edmund).

The actors were both gracious and encouraging and it was incredible to see how subtle changes could be made to a speech following a specific piece of direction. The actors and director also confirmed that each production is different, depending on the reactions and energy of the audience.

A two hour voice workshop by Kate Godfrey, The RSC's Head of Voice, saw the students exploring King Lear's famous 'Blow winds'; trying the exercises that the professional cast used, examining how certain words and vowel sounds could be emphasised to communicate meaning more effectively to an audience.

As the conference drew to a close, we met Kelly Williams and Natalie Simpson, the actors who played Regan and Cordelia – Lear's youngest daughters. Along with Anna Girvan, they discussed the role that the three daughters have in the play and how this production communicated this.

The insights gained during the day meant that when the students watched the evening live production, it was incredible.

This was a long but extremely worthwhile and enjoyable day. It was fantastic to have access to so many members of The RSC and a pleasure to spend it in the company of such an intelligent and enthusiastic bunch of students – to one of whom Paapa Essiedu asked, 'Have you ever thought of becoming a theatre director?'
- *Head of Performing Arts, Steve Conway*

Exam Handbook/ Essential Reading

All Year 11/12/13 students have been emailed and handed an Exams Handbook and essential JCQ information relating to their Coursework/Controlled Assessment/Non-Examination Assessments and Social Media Policy.

This information is also available on the school website under the Student tab and we would encourage all students and parents/carers to have a read through so they're aware of what is expected. There is quite a lot of material but all information is critical for success in the summer exams.

Sixth Form Open Evening

All current Year 11 students and their families are invited to attend the Sixth Form Open Evening on Thursday 10th November.

The evening provides an opportunity to see what the Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' Chew Valley Sixth Form has to offer, the wide range of Level 3 courses on offer as well as the extensive list of activities and extra-curricular experiences that students at Chew Valley Sixth Form.

To find out more about life in the Sixth Form come along on Thursday 10th November 6-9pm.

Students meet author Susin Nielsen

Chew Valley students meet author Susin Nielsen at Sidcot School.



Author Susin Nielsen meets Chew Valley School students and signs her book for them.

A group of fourteen lucky students were invited to Sidcot School recently to meet the author Susan Nielsen who was visiting Britain to promote her latest book.

The students, who were participants in the Centurion Award and Carnegie Award reading groups, travelled to Sidcot where they listened to an informative and entertaining presentation during which Susin Nielsen talked about her childhood in Canada and her career writing for Canadian television shows and scriptwriting for films.

She then went on to discuss a number of teen issues which are the dominant themes in her novels. After an insightful question and answer session, during which she passed on advice to budding writers and revealed which authors had inspired her, she signed books.

As Year 9 pupil Daisy Tiller said: "she is a very interesting writer and it was great to meet her!"

We look forward to extending our relationship with Sidcot School by collaborating on more author events in the future.



Students with their signed copies of We are all made of molecules.

Climbing Club

Eight lucky students begin learning the ropes as Chew Valley School Climbing Club gets started.

Held after school on a Tuesday afternoon at Redpoint Climbing Centre, students receive coaching from Chew Valley School staff who also happen to be British Mountaineering Council SPA qualified instructors.

Whilst British climbing started as what British Mountaineering Council chief executive Dave Turnbal called 'a Victorian pursuit with Victorian gentlemen and the occasional lady going off to the Alps and getting guided up mountains', in recent years it has gained a strong following in the UK. There are five million climbing wall users in the UK and climbing will be an Olympic sport in 2020. Chew Valley Climbing Club members certainly see the appeal of this confidence building and problem solving sport.



Year 11 Alexandra Rosler takes to the wall at the first Climbing Club session at Redpoint.

Parent Governor Vacancy

Are you interested in becoming a Parent Governor? We currently have one vacancy on our full governing body which meets six times over the school year.

For further information please contact Julie Seeley, Clerk to the Governors, either by email jseeley@chewvalleyschool or by phone on 01275 332272. We look forward to hearing from you.

Valley Arts' Free Fringe Festival

Valley Arts staged its first ever free fringe festival in October with over 350 people of all ages taking part in three days of live theatre, comedy and music.

Chew Valley School's Main Hall proved the stage for Fine Chisel's family show 'Flit, Flap and Fly'. The award-winning theatre company transformed the hall into a 'nest' for the day on Saturday, providing entertainment for some of the valley's youngest residents.

Chew Valley's Performing Arts students also took to the stage in a special 'Play in a Day' workshop led by Bath Spa University. Other performances at the sell-out free mini-festival included companies, Fine Chisel and Living Spit, playing to a packed, enthusiastic audience at Yeo Valley's HQ in Blagdon. The mini fringe festival was a huge success, with brilliant feedback from audiences of all ages as momentum for the Valley Arts project continues to build. You can find out more by visiting www.valleyartscentre.co.uk.



Fine Chisel perform in the school hall

Upcoming Valley Arts Events

The Valley Arts AGM takes place at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 8th November in the school library. All welcome.
Packhouse Ceilidh November 26th – book now! Valley Arts fundraising event at the Community Farm, Chew Magna, with live band 'Lupercalia', an expert caller for Ceilidh novices and organic supper from Better Food. Tickets just £15 per head plus booking fee from Eventbrite.co.uk. Search for Packhouse Ceilidh.

School Launches Shoebox Appeal

To help supporters afford to put together a packed box bursting with goodies. Go to our website at www.linktohope.co.uk to find out how easy it is to spend very little but create a fantastic gift for a family at Christmas time.

Follow us on:
Charity no: 1069722

All this for less than £10

This year we are asking tutor groups to contribute items to a shoe box that we can send to Eastern Europe to help families and elderly couples in need this Christmas.

B&NES E-Teams Equality Event

Members of Chew Valley's award-winning Equalities Team hosted a recent equality event at Bath's Guildhall in conjunction with B&NES Council

10 secondary schools came to October's e-team equality event organised by Chew Valley's Equalities Team and Louise Murphy, Equalities Officer for B&NES Council.

Year 13 student Holly Dando opened proceedings and then there were addresses from Counsellor Alan Hale, and Richard Baldwin, Head of Children's Services. Lizzie Howie (Year 12) introduced the launch of the Equalities Team's new video about the impact their work is having, which received a really positive response from the audience at the event.

After presentations the visiting schools attended a series of workshops, these included CAMHS's Positive Mental Health in Schools, a Black Families Education Support Group workshop, and Chew Valley's Equalities Team workshop on making a visual impact in school to raise awareness of equalities issues.

"I think it is fair to say that everyone had met some new friends, been inspired by people's ideas and was ready to go back into school and carry on making school a safer and more equal place for all students and staff," explained Head of PSRE Louise Pope.