



Founded 1863

De Aston School

Academy Trust

Company No 07533362
England & Wales

Willingham Road • Market Rasen • Lincs • LN8 3RF

Tel 01673 843415 • Fax 01673 840818

Email: enquiries@de-aston.lincs.sch.uk

Website: www.de-aston.lincs.sch.uk

Facebook: @deastonschool Twitter: @deastonschool

June 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

As we head into the summer term, I wanted to take the opportunity to let you know what has been happening at school and of a range of important changes to come for next academic year. There is a lot of information in this letter. All the positive news about achievements comes first and then all the positive news about changes comes second.

De Aston Success at the Lincolnshire Education Awards

I am delighted to tell you that the Lincolnshire Education Awards' panel has shortlisted De Aston in FIVE categories for the 2019 awards. That is likely to put us as one of the most shortlisted schools in Lincolnshire.

In 2018 De Aston won in three prestigious categories: Secondary Teacher of the Year, Writer of the Year and Performer of the Year. In fact, we won in all the categories we were shortlisted for.

In 2019 De Aston has been shortlisted by the panel in the following categories:

- Writer of the Year - Chloe Chuck Year 12 (staff nomination) – Chloe has been shortlisted for multiple awards both local and national, as well as being a finalist again this year's in Slam Jam. Chloe has won this title for the last two years.
- Performer of the Year - Tom Brack Year 8 (staff nomination) – Tom has taken lead roles in the De Aston Shakespeare Society and as part of the De Aston group involved in The English Speaking Union Performing Shakespeare at the Drill Hall.
- Community Champion - Abbie Mansfield Year 8 (staff nomination) - Abbie has been involved in a number of community projects as well as her work in cadets.
- Teaching Support - Denise Robson (staff nomination).
- Secondary Teacher - Sarah Peacock (parent and student nominations) – Miss Peacock was runner up for this award in 2016 and is the current holder of the title having won in 2018.

Extra-curricular success

Drama

- Ms Greenwood and Mrs Chapman took their Year 10 GCSE class and Year 12 Theatre Studies class to the Lawns in Lincoln for the Stephen Lawrence Conference. Year 12 opened the event with a detailed and intense summary of the Stephen Lawrence story, after which Year 10 provided dramatized scenarios of hate crime incidents which were then discussed at length by the delegates. The audience were incredibly impressed by the performance and improvisation of our students. Thanks to Ms Greenwood and Mrs Chapman for organising this event.

Headteacher Mr S Porter Deputy Headteachers Mr M Bray • Mr P Williams



English

- The De Aston Shakespeare Society performed 'An Inspector Calls' to all Year 10 and Year 11 students to help them with their exam preparations. The performers were all from Year 8 and it took a great deal of courage to perform to the senior students.
- Organised the Newspaper Day and produced the De Aston Voice with staff from Lincoln University journalism team. The De Aston Voice has also been shortlisted for school newspaper of the year in the Shine Media Awards in London. This is the first time in the school's history we have been shortlisted for this award since working with the University of Lincoln.
- Three of our students went to the Slam Jam performance poetry regional final with Miss Peacock. One of our poets, Chloe Chuck Year 12, has progressed to the final which took place on 20th June.
- Nine students went to Lincoln Minster School with Miss Peacock to compete in the Performing Shakespeare English Speaking Union regional final. Two students, Alicia Meredith and Charlie Newland-Shepherd, have progressed to the National Final and performed at a West End theatre in London on 21st June.
- Year 8 have a trip to York to see Twelfth Night on 15th July.
- Year 7 have a trip to Harry Potter World on 2nd July.
- English are also taking both Year 12 A level English Literature groups to Nottingham Theatre Royal to see Agatha Christie's 'The Mousetrap' as part of their study of Crime Fiction.
Thanks to Miss Peacock and the English team for organising these opportunities.

Mathematics

- Number Day: events were held during lunch including a bake sale celebrating number day with all the proceeds going to the NSPCC – over £100 was raised for charity.
- Intermediate Maths Challenge: over 50 students took part from Year 9 and 10.
- 20 students from Year 10 went to the Maths in Action day in London and took part in sessions run by some of the country's most inspiring lecturers, such as Philip Moriarty and Bobby Seagull.
Thanks to Mr Wood and the mathematics team for organising these opportunities.

MFL

- The MFL teachers held a successful Year 5 languages day.
- In March the MFL staff took a group of Year 10 students on a trip to Hull University to meet Walter Luzzolino, the man behind the TV channel 'Walter Presents'. Students met Walter himself, listened to a Q&A session about the importance of language learning and cultural diversity, and then watched the premiere of a new Italian series.
- Izzy Fleming and Xavier Gasper competed against other schools in the 'Routes into Languages' Translation Bee regional final competition. Izzy scored her personal best score and Xavier narrowly missed out on a chance to take part in the national final, after competing in a tie-break round.
- On the 20th June a theatre production company came into school to perform a French play to our Year 7 students.
- We are taking a group of six Year 9 students to RAF Wittering on 27th June to take part in the 'International Space Challenge', to show students how the combination of languages and science can open up a wide range of future career opportunities.
- The German residential trip to Cologne departs in the last week of term.
Thanks to Ms Johnson, Miss Inkster, Ms Oliver and Mrs Bibby for all their efforts to expand the extra-curricular opportunities to promote languages.

Photography

- The Year 13 photography exam folders and final images have been completed and staff and parents have had the opportunity to view them displayed in the annual exhibition. Both parents and staff were impressed with the level of work and thought put in by the students.
Thanks to Mr Taylor for all his efforts.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

- Silver DofE had a very successful practise in April (four Year 12 students travelled to Carsington Water and Bakewell) and are due to complete their assessment soon.
Thanks to all the staff who support the DofE, especially to Mr Higgins for his time and organisation.

Sports

- Superzone district athletics is taking place on 27th June at King George Stadium, a large amount of our students will be competing.
 - PE Sport Awards are taking place on 11th July. This is a really important celebration of the outstanding quality of De Aston sport.
- Thanks to Mr Williams (Head of PE) and his team for all their efforts.

Year 7

- Year 7 visited Lincoln University, in partnership with DELL. Students spent the day using a variety of technology to create a gadget to overcome a problem faced by children. The winning group designed a hover board run on carbon dioxide which converts it into clean air. It has gone through to a regional competition. Thank you to Miss Barnes (Head of Year 7) for guiding them through their first year.

Sixth Form

- Congratulations to our new Heads of School team:
 - Head Girl - Chloe Chuck.
 - Head Boy - Eric Blair.
 - Deputy Head Girl - Molly-May Parkinson.
 - Deputy Head Boy - Max Robinson.
- Ex-student Harry Lancaster spoke to Year 12 criminology and Year 13 sociology/psychology students about his work with the Lincolnshire Police Cyber-Crime Unit. It is always great to welcome back Old De Astonians.
- 45 Year 12 students attended the UCAS HE Convention in Lincoln on 27th March.
- Jonathan Walker and Blaire Zalewska did a presentation to the Market Rasen Rotary Club on their RYLA experience.

Boarding House

- 17th to 23rd June was National Boarding Week. Arrangements were organised by Mr Quinlan (Head of Boarding) and his team, but also two boarding students Deyo Adelekan and Sam Oniru. Events included a Spanish Themed Day, Treasure Hunt, Mini Olympics, Boarding BBQ, Big Boarding Sleepover and a Paintballing Competition. De Aston is proud of its boarding tradition and we celebrate having boarders from all over the world, for the contribution they make to school life, not to mention providing most of our excellent basketball team!

Constantly striving to improve

I am driven to make De Aston a school that seeks to improve in every area. I believe in incremental improvement over time but this year we have been working hard to get lots of new improvements ready for September. These are just some of the areas we are working on to improve.

Online Homework

We will move to setting homework online, as well as supporting those students who find it easier to use a planner. More information on our new Homework App will be out soon. Thanks to Mr Healy (Assistant Headteacher) for leading on this.

Online Parents' Evening Appointments

We will also introduce another function for parents to make appointments online for Parent's Evenings rather than relying on students to carry around a list of times on paper. More information on this new App will be out shortly via Mr Healy.

Further Improving Behaviour Management

We have been working on a new Behaviour Management Policy which will be launched next academic year. The key foci of this policy are improved consistency, clearer lines of responsibility and positive relationships. The new policy will be informed by the recent report from the Education Endowment Foundation on what the evidence says really works in schools. Mr Bray (Deputy Headteacher) will be leading on the communication of this to students and parents.

Further Improving PSHE

I have asked the Heads of Year under the direction of Mr Bray (Deputy Headteacher) to update the weekly session on Personal Social Health and Economic skills. We are updating these sessions with new elements relevant to the issues in society and also adding more challenge.

Keeping a Steely Focus on Attendance

For a student to be classed as persistently absent from school their attendance has to fall below 90%. Having 90% attendance sounds good but the reality is that the 10% missed over time will result in a significant drop in achievement. That is why we are placing a real premium on students being in school. Thanks to Mrs Chatterton (EWO) for her work on improving attendance.

Most Able Learners

We have a tradition at De Aston of high achievement. Only recently we have had students speak at the House of Lords, gain scholarships to the likes of Harrow School (Winston Churchill's school), and in sports go on to gain contracts with the likes of Leicester Tigers and Nottinghamshire Cricket Club. We have invested in a new plan to further improve the progress of our most able learners with Mrs Davies (Assistant Headteacher) leading on this.

Literacy and Numeracy

We have put in place new support for those that need help with literacy and numeracy. We have dedicated teaching staff doing extra work in the mornings to help boost confidence and skills. We will continue to further develop our approaches next year.

Sixth Form developments

We will be making sixth form a major area of development over the next 12 months. I will be leading a drive, along with Mrs Rivett (Head of Sixth Form) and a couple of other key staff, which will see big reforms to further improve what we offer in courses, teaching and wider experience. The key factor will be a strong academic focus.

Uniform

The Heads of Year supported by Mr Bray (Deputy Headteacher) will be contacting parents regarding uniform standards. They will also be speaking to the students to ensure that standards are upheld across the school. The same applies to standards of dress in the sixth form.

Careers Hub

De Aston has been chosen to be a local lead school for careers. This is a great honour for us and recognition of the work lead by Mr Willars (Head of Vocational Studies) and supported by Mr Williams (Deputy Headteacher).

IT Investment

We are making a substantial and timely investment in our IT infrastructure across school. Mr Davies (ICT Network Manager) and his team are improving the whole system to help systems run more efficiently. This may not be something that is easily seen but it will mean better reliability and speed going forward for our staff and students.

Development of a New Social Area

With help from the money raised by the Wold Walk, we are developing a new outdoor social space. It will be an area designated as a place of reflection and a peaceful place to go during break and lunch. A lot of groundwork is underway. Thanks to Mr Shaw (Premises Manager) and his team, especially Mr Drewitt, for their efforts and also to the Wold Walk Committee that are providing an input into the project.

Developing Staff Support Skills

We are investing in trauma training for our staff this summer and next October. School staff constantly deal with a lot more than just educating young people and we believe in ensuring we have the right skills to support our students too.

New Reporting System

We are looking at making our reporting system more effective. Changes will be announced for next year; in the meantime, parents have access to a range of information via ClassCharts, etc. It is time for us to review what we send home to parents regarding progress. More information to come. Thanks in particular to Mrs Davies (Assistant Headteacher) for her work on this.

Examinations

May and June have been dominated by public exams for our older students. Our exams' team have done a fabulous job at making sure that all runs smoothly. Special thanks to Mrs Young (Exams Officer), the invigilators and Mrs Davies (Assistant Headteacher) for all their work. Mention must also be given to the site team for setting out; and the ICT team for ensuring the access systems work. The work of the SEN team, under the direction of Mr Cutts (SENCO), is also to be noted in supporting those that need additional help at a stressful time. Finally, thank you to all those staff who gave up Saturdays, after school and lunchtimes to teach extra hours to help the learners get the best possible grades.

Further Improving Teaching and Learning

I am passionate about teaching. In the modern world it is highly unusual for a Headteacher to have a regular teaching commitment but I am a head *teacher* after all. I believe it is important that I lead from the front. I am leading a teaching and learning revolution at De Aston, promoting evidence-informed teaching across the whole school. I have been running training throughout the year but I will go on to lead training in effective teaching practice for all teaching staff through next year.

Improving road safety

I am working very closely with John Matthews (senior governor and Mayor of Market Rasen) and also Cllr Stephen Bunney to improve road safety at the front of school. I thank them both for their support.

House System

From September we will be introducing a new revised and reinvigorated House System into school. This will enhance the sense of community and add a further boost to participation in extra-curricular. Thank you to Mr Williams (Head of PE) for his input into this.

Parent View

I am very pleased to say that our approval rating on Parent View is currently, as I write this, 96%. Thank you for your endorsement of us as a school.

There will be lots of staff who didn't get a mention specifically in this letter who have also worked incredibly hard in their own areas. Thanks of course goes to all who have given so much to the school, both in teaching and support roles. May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your support. A school cannot function effectively without that constant dialogue with parents and carers. Rest assured we are committed to constantly improving the school.

Believe. Strive. Achieve.

Have a restful summer break.

Yours sincerely



Simon Porter
Headteacher