



The
Bulmershe
School
INSPIRING POTENTIAL
ACHIEVING TOGETHER

Bull's Eye

The Bulmershe School Newsletter

February 2017

EXCELLENCE REWARDED

Current Year 12 and last year's Year 13 students gathered just before Christmas for the annual Awards Evening, kindly hosted by Oracle UK at their Thames Valley Business Park campus.

The venue was suitably festive with Christmas trees on either side of a stage, on which a table displayed a host of shiny trophies.

This annual event not only gives students the opportunity to collect their exam

certificates and catch up with friends whom they may not have seen since the summer, but also to celebrate their magnificent academic achievements in the past year.

Alice Grout, a member of The Bulmershe Ensemble, started the evening by performing a song, accompanying herself on guitar. Alice also collected a trophy for her outstanding contribution to Music in Year 11.

Students then stepped-up to collect their exam certificates from Headteacher Ms Reynolds.

Simon Singh, author, TV producer and journalist, kindly gave his time to attend the evening to present the awards and also deliver a



fascinating and highly amusing address.

Simon is also working with the school on an exciting maths project and you can read more about that on page 2.

Twenty-eight very deserving award winners were then invited onto the stage to accept their awards from Simon, and listen to citations written by their teachers. Many students had brought members of their family who looked on proudly.

And finally; a group photograph in front of the Christmas tree; a glass of Prosecco and a mince pie; and then it was all over for another year.

Congratulations to all the award winners. A full list of them can be found on the school website.



Above: Chris Faulkner, who won the Headteacher's Award, with Simon Singh



More on these stories from the school website: www.thebulmersheschool.com

SCHOOL WORKING WITH SIMON SINGH TO DEVELOP SUPER MATHEMATICIANS

Simon Singh (pictured right) is a successful author, journalist, television producer and director of programmes such as *Tomorrow's World*, *Horizon* and others with a science theme.

His books are all about science and he has particular interest in mathematics.

His most recent book is *The Simpsons and Their Mathematical Secrets*, in which he sets out to prove that the popular cartoon's creators are, 'deeply in love with numbers, and their ultimate desire is to drip-feed morsels of mathematics into the subconscious minds of viewers.'

We were honoured to welcome Simon to the recent Annual Awards ceremony, where he presented the trophies and made a thought provoking speech.

We are also honoured that he is working closely with The Bulmershe School on a

project to develop our best young mathematicians.

Simon is chair of *Good Thinking*, a non-profit organisation promoting curiosity and rational thinking and actively encouraging excellence in the teaching of maths.

Bulmershe is one of four schools being supported in a national project to develop and stretch the capabilities of the most able maths students. *Good Thinking* has given The Bulmershe School a grant, which enables it to fund an additional teacher for this elite student set.

The project has started with Year 7 students and it is hoped that they will continue to be stretched throughout their years with us.



Youth Cabinet election success for Bulmershe students

Four Bulmershe students have been elected to the Reading Youth Cabinet.

The Cabinet, which has been running since 2005, is a group of 22 young people, aged 11 to 19, who have been elected by their peers from schools around Reading, to make the views of the young people of the area heard.

The elections were run in December, and for most students this was their first democratic vote. The Bulmershe School had over 600 ballot papers counted and elected four candidates, who will be in office for the next two years.



They will join our two existing cabinet members, who were elected in 2016. Bulmershe School reps now make up 25% of the cabinet.

The Youth Cabinet will be working with the Council to represent the views of Reading youth on issues such as social mobility, *Vote @16*, youth provisions, mental health and many more topics throughout the next two years.

The successful candidates, (left to right) Finnuala O'Higgins, Alice Burnish, Juwariah Imran and Nicole Calogero



Moving on up... year 7 students share their experiences at local primary schools

Year 7 Bulmershe students returned to their primary schools recently to give Year 5 and 6 pupils the lowdown on just what it's like moving on up to secondary school.

At Beechwood (pictured above left) they presented to more than 60 Year 5 and 6 pupils, sharing their personal



experiences and answering questions about Bulmershe.

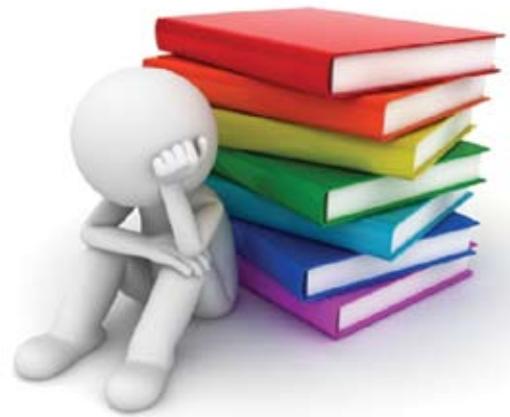
More Year 7 students visited St. Dominic Savio primary school (pictured right) to deliver a similar presentation, sharing their experiences with more than 60 pupils.

Our transition Ambassadors will visit many other local primary schools in the next few weeks, aiming to make the move from primary to secondary school that little bit easier.

How to help with revision and exam stress – a guide for parents

Bulmershe students are about to take mock examinations and will soon be revising for the exams proper. The next term is likely to be a stressful time for many of them. Here are some tips for parents to help reduce the stress.

- ❑ All students sometimes fall behind, feel demotivated or overwhelmed, or struggle with the balance of social, work and school demands. When your child feels like this, berating and threatening them will not help. Talk to them about the issues, acknowledge their feelings and adopt a sensible attitude to finding a solution.
- ❑ Be flexible – use the 80/20 rule. If your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time, they will be doing alright.
- ❑ Agree with your child a balance between work and social life and stick to the agreement. Again flexibility is key – if a special night comes up, agree that they can make up the work at a specified future time.
- ❑ Teenagers often take an all or nothing approach to difficulties – 'I've messed up this essay, I might as well give up.' Encourage them by helping them to see their difficulties in perspective.



From the Headteacher

Good luck to Year 11, 12 and 13 students for their second round of mocks just after the half term holidays. In this newsletter parents can find some useful hints and tips about how to support young people with revision, managing stress and maintain a healthy lifestyle during periods of prep and revision for exams.

The Ivory Centre is always open as a place where students can drop-in to talk through their anxieties and worries in the run up to exams.

Dates for your diary for next term:

Monday 20 February, 8.30am: term four starts

Tuesday 7 March, 6pm: Parents' Forum in the Sixth Form centre

Thursday 9 March: Options Evening for current Year 8 - chance to meet teachers and talk through your child's GCSE choices. We also offer every Year 8 student and their parents an individual interview with a member of the leadership team for a more in-depth discussion about options. You will receive dates and times for this next term.

Other dates to note are:

Thursday 16 March: Year 10 Parents evening

Friday 17 March: Year 7 and 11 school photographs - perfect school uniform please.

Friday 31 March: break up for Easter holiday at 12.20. We return to school on Tuesday 18 April.

We have distributed a survey, via our weekly email to parents, asking for opinions on the Woodlands Avenue entrance to school.

With increasing numbers of students and vehicles entering school by this entrance, I am very keen that the local authority should ensure the area is well maintained and safely signposted.

If you have any further comments about traffic or parking in that area, please forward them and I will share your views with the transport services at Wokingham Borough Council.

Also on road safety, it is pleasing to see so many students cycling to school. However road safety is vitally important so, over the summer term, we will be running a series of workshops and assemblies to underline the importance of wearing a cycling helmet and awareness of traffic on the road.

Finally, I wish you a restful half term holiday.



Emma Reynolds
Headteacher

IGNITING WRITING!

Alex Baker, who runs a creative writing workshop at Wokingham Library, was welcomed to the school recently to run an after-school workshop for some of our keenest writers.

All our budding authors found the workshop enjoyable and useful and Alex was impressed by their enthusiasm and imaginative ideas.

If you would like to attend one of his workshops, they are held at Wokingham Library on Saturday mornings, 10:30am to 12:00pm. To book a place, call Wokingham Library on 0118 978 1368.



Children's Mental Health

Bulmershe to help as DfE drafts new policy on children's mental health

The work Bulmershe School has been doing to help students with their character development and wellbeing has been recognised at national level.

Bulmershe staff took part in a recent workshop run by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) in collaboration with the Department for Education (DfE), on supporting children and young people's character development and mental health within school. This followed the school's participation in an NCB study into the challenges schools face in supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.

Now Bulmershe staff have been asked to be part of a group advising the DfE as it drafts a

new green paper on children's mental health.

Mr Hulley, Head of SMSC Education at Bulmershe said, 'the workshop was a great platform for us to raise the opinions of our staff, students, parents and carers with the DfE.

'As well as a great chance to showcase all the work we do at Bulmershe and learn from our peers, the day allowed Bulmershe to be a school at the forefront of the development of education in the UK - a great position to be in and an accolade to the school for all the hard work and innovation happening within our community.'



The Bulmershe School will be supporting Mental Health Week (6-12 February), which is designed to raise awareness of children's mental health problems.

During the week everyone will be encouraged to be kind to each other, to help our school community realise that small acts of kindness can make everyone happier and less stressed.

The Bulmershe School is working with Place2Be, a charity that deals with children's mental health problems by providing access to therapeutic and emotional support. The charity says the UK faces a growing problem: rates of depression and anxiety among teenagers have increased by 70% in the past 25 years and now one in ten 5 to 16 year olds has a mental health problem.



Place2Be works in schools, where it seeks to help children with issues such as bullying, family breakdown and dealing with anger or anxiety.

It does so by one-to-one counseling, work with small groups, on subjects, such as how to deal with exam stress, and through 'Place2Talk,' a self-referral service for students run in break times.

It also offers support for parents and consultation and advice for school staff.

ANOTHER SPORTS HONOUR FOR ROSS

Bulmershe student Ross Wheeler has been honoured again for his success in kick-boxing.

Following his award at the Wokingham Sports Evening last term, he has now been declared the Male School Personality of the Year at the Reading Sports Awards, held at the Reading Hilton Hotel last month. He was in exalted company at the ceremony, with awards going to Olympians and

professional sportspeople, as well as the best from local schools and clubs.

Our nationally famous Ensemble was also there (pictured below) to entertain the guests during the interval. You can see their performance on the *GetReading* website.

Ross is pictured right with his award and Team GB rower Sam Townsend.

Our grateful thanks to Peter Bloodworth and GetReading, for the pictures.



The Bulmershe School

Inspiring potential

Achieving together