



Dear Parents and Carers,

The first term of the new academic year has been both challenging and rewarding. We continue to face extremely low staffing levels, a combination of vacancies and sickness absence. This proves difficult for us on a daily basis as we are having to make the very hard decision to keep some students at home – I understand how frustrating and disruptive this is to both students and you, their families. Please be assured we do not take the decision to keep students at home lightly and it is always a last resort based on the safety of everyone at school. I thank you for your continued support and understanding.

As you know, Ofsted visited us a couple of weeks ago. The inspectors spent two days looking around, talking to students, staff and governors, observing lessons and delving into our curriculum offering. We received some positive feedback, along with some areas for development which we are already running with. The report will be shared with you, and placed on our website, once it is made available.

School life

It has been a busy term with the return from summer holidays, welcoming two new students, and the run up to Christmas.

The curriculum this year has continued to focus mainly on Maths, English, PSHE/PSD and developing life skills. We are in the process of introducing a new phonics and reading scheme across the school, and will be implementing this from next term. The Maths continues to be successful with students accessing and achieving well.

The new Sensory Integration room was installed over the summer holiday, and the students have been accessing this for the term. It is used to follow the individual OT report guidelines, as well as being used for more free exploration and regulation. This is a great addition to the school provision, and we are making firmer links with an occupational therapist who can come in and regularly assess how it is working. Some photos of the Sensory Integration Room are included at the end of this letter.

The past couple of weeks have had a Christmas focus, with students making some decorations to bring home, as well as the traditional Christmas Hoops to hang up in the hall, and enjoyed their Christmas lunch yesterday, beautifully prepared by Ian!

Staff news

Olivia, our Positive Behaviour Support Manager, left us earlier this term. During the two years Olivia was with us she had a huge impact on our school, she built strong relationships with each of

our students and many of their families. We will miss Olivia and wish her all the very best for her future.

Clarissa is leaving us to pursue other avenues. Clarissa has been a huge asset to our school and we will be sorry to lose her, but know she will be successful wherever she goes.

Dates for your diary

School closes for students on Friday 15th December and reopens at the usual time on Thursday 4th January.

Our next half term break is 12th – 16th February.

I am giving you advance notice that school will be closed on Thursday 2nd May 2024 due to be used as a polling station.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas! I hope everyone can enjoy some quality time with loved ones. We look forward to seeing you in the new year.

With very best wishes,

Steven Sneesby

Headteacher

Sensory Integration Room

