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I hope everyone was able to have an enjoyable break and much needed rest over the Christmas period. Unfortunately we returned in January to some very sad news of the death in service of a long-standing colleague, Jacquie Wheatley who had been a Maths teacher at Holyrood for 31 years. This rocked the entire community – not just the school but the whole town where Jacquie was resident; active in the local church; and volunteering regularly, notably as a street pastor. I am very impressed with the way in which the school community came together to support one another and to mourn Jacquie. It is a horrible way to start 2022 and our thoughts are with everyone who knew Jacquie and worked with her.

In happier news we have welcomed Beth Warwick to the central team as Director of SEND. Beth has been a SENDCo in primary, secondary and special schools in Devon and Somerset and has considerable expertise to bring to our Trust. Beth's role is to support our SENDCos, develop their network, advise and support with casework, build capacity and develop training programmes – and where appropriate champion the rights of the young people and challenge the local authorities to provide additional resource if necessary.

I have also started putting together some ideas for our training day on July 1st. This will be our first Trust conference and I am really excited to think that we might at last be able to bring colleagues together from all of our schools. More on this as we firm up our arrangements.

Finally thank you again to all colleagues for managing the ever-changing landscape and covid safe guidance. I know we have had a challenging few months as new variants spread through our communities. Thank you to the secondaries in particular for enforcing the wearing of face coverings in classrooms – students have been exceptional in their acceptance of the measures and they deserve a great deal of credit for their mature attitudes. It takes leadership however to bring people with you and clearly this has been sensitively and effectively implemented.

Lorraine Heath
Chief Executive Officer, Uffculme Academy Trust



LORRAINE HEATH





Happy New Year (if we are still within the cut off for it!) It has, as always, been incredibly busy at AVA. It never ceases to amaze me that even in this exhausting term staff have been delivering lessons with enthusiasm and purpose whilst also squeezing in all manner of clubs and activities. We have had some really exciting enrichment already this term and this continues to grow. New clubs like aspirations club and competitive swim club spring up all the time and I am enjoying seeing these grow.

It makes me incredibly proud to say that we have had great sporting success in a range of areas because at the moment we might be small as a community but we are making a big splash again showing we are small but mighty.

Notable individual successes include Innes Fitzgerald, who competed at the Devon Cross Country trials at Exeter Arena on Saturday. A hilly, muddy course tested all the runners in terms of muscular endurance and resilience. Innes (Year 11) won the Inter Girls competition comfortably and goes on to Chippenham to represent Devon at the regionals. Ty Dibling (Year 11), who plays for Southampton FC, has been selected for the England U16 football squad. He trained with them over Christmas and scored in the game against Turkey.

Sporting team successes across the school with wins in football, athletics and netball. We have had some fixture wins and some fixture near misses but definitely more wins than ever before! Visiting coaches have really enthused our students and we are enjoying having extra skills to boost our already very talented PE department! Particularly popular are netball and girls cricket although lunchtime Dodgeball club is becoming the place to be.

Music also dominates at AVA. Gradually the music department are trying to take over the school growing into unused spaces and creating more community based opportunities like



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the newly forming Axminster Community Orchestra. More reach out community events are planned with music as plans are forming for another Orchestra for a Day workshop. This week we have seen a focus on Folk Music where students have learned about the history of the instruments and then have had a chance to try playing them. The results have been astounding. Further musical link ups are occurring with the Waffle House, in the heart of our town and we see growing participation from our students in Open Mic events. We really want to come back with a bang!

In the run up to Holocaust Memorial Day, we were honoured to have the chance to listen to a presentation from Holocaust survivor, Henry Schachter. Our Year 9 History students and Year 11s, listened intently, as Henry told his story of endurance at a time when the Nazis tragically persecuted millions of Jewish people. This was an incredible privilege. We are very grateful to Max Irvine for organising the event.

Much excitement has been brought about this week as we prepare to watch Marcus Wyatt, who attended Axe Valley Academy, at the Winter Olympics in Beijing. He has recently been selected for the GB Skeleton Bobsleigh Olympic team. His coaches have asked us for good luck messages to show him. Staff and students were only too happy to oblige and we are hoping that our videos might be seen on the BBC as he competes in the coming weeks

Laura Jenkins, Headteacher



LAURA JENKINS





I write this entry with a sense of pride in what our school community has achieved in the early part of 2022, but also with immense sadness as we learned of the death of one of our team.

Jacquie Wheatley was a Maths teacher at Holyrood Academy for 31 years and during this time, her infectious passion for teaching, her subject and for young people in general touched the lives of thousands of people. As if this wasn't enough, she also volunteered as a Street Pastor and played a central role both in Chard Methodist Church and in Churches Together across Chard and the surrounding area. Jacquie devoted her entire adult life to the service of other people and for this, the Holyrood community will always be grateful. We will take time to plan a permanent memorial to Jacquie, but for now we are getting ready to remember and celebrate her on 1st February. Her funeral will take place at 12:00 at Taunton Crematorium and 15:00 at Chard Methodist Church followed by refreshments at Holyrood Academy. Please do keep us in your thoughts over the coming days and weeks.

Despite this loss, our staff and students continue to work tirelessly to make our school even better. It was great to see over 50 students turn out for Netball training this week - a brilliant chance to join in – and to see our Grease! rehearsals in full swing. The Woman in Black trip to London was also a particular highlight. I am very grateful to all our staff who have offered clubs and in particular to Sam Davison who is taking all manner of opportunities to engage our parents more regularly and to expose our students to the widest range of cultural experiences.



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Sam has established a youth council with the local town council where students are consulted ahead of council meetings on arising items on the agenda. We are taking a leading role in the partnership work around the banners of Chard project and are seeking to establish a cultural partnership with our Portuguese community in the near future. A number of artist residencies have allowed our students to engage in Gamelan Music, Eastern European folk music with the Turbans, and to take part in a community textiles and arts project. In addition, these projects have benefitted a large number of our Year 6 children in primary feeder schools. We look forward to welcoming the Opera project in March where we are again facilitating both our students and primary students to access ambitious and aspirational experiences. We extend a warm welcome to colleagues from across the Trust to attend our first PTFA event in February – a quiz night, and to our long-awaited production of Grease in March.

Dave MacCormick, Headteacher



DAVE MACCORMICK





We have had a busy start to 2022 at Neroche with staff working hard to develop and refine our curriculum and subject leaders looking at enrichment opportunities to bring the curriculum to life. We returned to school to a Kick Start experience where the children enjoyed a cross curricular enrichment week that provided them with opportunities to revisit key messages about keeping fit and healthy and healthy eating choices. The children enjoyed additional PE sessions and taking part in a range of cooking and food nutrition activities to reinforce the messages. Sensible food options in packed lunches was a key focus and how sweets and chocolate should be avoided as school packed lunch items, being saved for home treats instead. It was lovely that the School Council were instrumental in this week and had raised concerns through child voice about lunchbox items they had seen.

Our Year 6 librarians have been busy encouraging our school community to donate books to our reading book library. We have been taken aback at the number of donations and everyone's kindness. Some of the books received appear almost brand new and we are very grateful for these valuable additions. Not only has this idea boosted the number of quality reading books available to support the children's love of reading but it has also linked to our school Eco Council's message of reusing items no longer needed.

We have been pleased to be able to start our Government funded after school tutoring sessions this half term. Two of our support staff have successfully completed the specific training and are now qualified to deliver the tutoring sessions four days a week increasing the learning time at school for a number of children. We have already received some really positive parental and child voice feedback regarding these sessions and we are glad they are proving popular.



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We have a brand new PTA and were grateful to their hard work organising their first event. We all enjoyed the interactive family quiz that they organised using a local quiz master. Using the local pub as the venue integrated the school into the local community and families who attended were really positive. The PTA are hoping to develop a series of events to help fundraise for the school and we are all really grateful for their support.

We have welcomed new staff and we are all looking forward to the term ahead.

Ali Collins, Headteacher



ALI COLLINS





UFFCULME PRIMARY SCHOOL

It has been a slightly turbulent start to the term with Covid cases rising within the school, but due to the incredible resilience of our children and the flexibility and togetherness of the staff, the children's learning remains unaffected and the quality of the learning within classrooms remains high.

The two Inset days at the beginning of term were incredibly fruitful, with teachers working hard on reviewing the current curriculum offer, creating subject Intent documents and mapping a progression of skills. Teaching Assistants worked with experts from the Autism Education Trust, developing their knowledge of autism and sensory processing.

We had some exciting news at the end of last week. The school has successfully met the criteria for the British Council International School Award (Intermediate certificate). We are extremely pleased that the school has been recognised for the range of activities we seek to develop and the fact we embed a whole school commitment to international teaching and learning. The assessor stated that it was evident that the school has a 'whole school approach to making global connections through your work with Nigeria and your interesting activities with France; this work, along with the excellent Harvest project, will help young people better understand global challenges and interconnectedness.' This was a real team effort from everybody at the school over the last couple of years, but I would like to personally say a huge thank you to Amanda Weldon, Anna Lee and especially Bekah Wright for ensuring we achieved this accolade.



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Well done to all those children who entered the ABN Mill Calendar competition – we had well over 100 entrants. The school council helped to judge the competition, and gift cards were given to all monthly winners, as well as a larger gift card for the overall winner, Mia (Year 6), who had her winning drawing on the front page (see above).

Year 5 had a special visit from Ollie Turner who gave a workshop on body percussion. Ollie used to be in the group called Stomp, and the children thoroughly enjoyed their special music session. We have also finally welcomed back our peripatetic music teachers after such a long period of time away. The lessons have proved popular and are a welcome additional to our already exciting extra-curricular offer.

On the sporting front, our school High 5 Netball and Basketball team have qualified for the next round. As well as congratulating the team on their sporting prowess, I would also like to praise their teamwork and sportsmanship, which the team display in abundance. It goes without saying that our children are only afforded these opportunities due to our dedicated staff, especially Aaron Carpanini, who organises and accompanies the children to these events.

Fraser Wallace, Headteacher



FRASER WALLACE



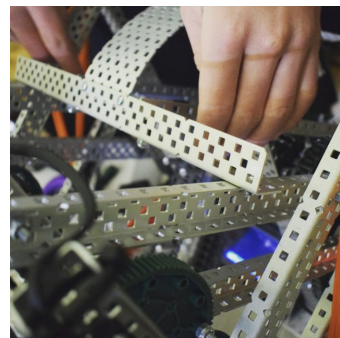


Already this term our Year 10 students have had two marvellous opportunities to enhance their understanding of their set texts, with those who study a 'Christmas Carol' being treated to a live performance in school by Quantum Theatre Group and those who study 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time' going to Wembley to see the play.

In Sport, the girls' basketball team had an outstanding result in Round 1 of the National Cup, beating Bristol Met Academy 70 – 44. Congratulations also to all the 12 Uffculme students who were chosen to represent Exeter and East Devon schools in the Devon Schools Cross Country Championships on the 15th January and particularly to Samuel Williams, who came second overall in his age group and now progresses to compete in the South West Schools Cross Country Championships in February.

Year 10 students in the Uffculme Robotics Team competed in their first Vex World Championship tournament at Stowe School in Buckinghamshire. The competition was fierce, but our Team were able to win 2 of their debut matches. They are now looking forward to their next tournament matches on the 10th February at Colyton Grammar School.

Our outdoor activity programme has had a busy start to the term, with ever-popular caving trips and the first 10 Tors training walk of the season. Though the number of walkers was slightly depleted through the impact of Covid there were still 2 teams of Year 11 students training for the 45-mile walk and 4 teams of Year 10s for the 35-mile walk. Our thanks go to the staff and adult volunteers (23 were on Dartmoor at the weekend for the training day) who so willingly give their time to enable our student to have such wonderful opportunities.



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The School Council members in Years 7 to 10 have taken part in a team building event at school, designed to help them learn to work together through fun and adventurous activities. They certainly rose to the challenges set them!

On the academic front students from Year 11 and 10 have just started their Mock Exams with three weeks of assessments ahead of them. Revision sessions in preparation for these were hugely popular with the highest attendance we have seen. Hopefully this will translate into positive results that will help to encourage the students for their final push towards the summer.

Alan Blackburn, Headteacher



ALAN BLACKBURN





Welcome to our new Early Career teachers (ECTs) at Holyrood, Neroche and Uffculme School. We hope that you are settling in well and I look forward to meeting you in person soon. Our current ECT cohort who started in September have all just successfully completed the first part of their induction process (progress review 1) – a huge well done for all of your hard work so far and many thanks to the mentor team who have supported them so well through their weekly instructional coaching interactions.

It is SWIFT Mental Wellbeing Week coming up and after the success of last year's programme, the team at Kingsbridge have put together a series of online webinars and sessions from a range of top-quality speakers, all delivered by experts in their field. As SWIFT members, these are FREE for all staff. From, online interactive family cookery classes to mindfulness, strategies to reduce stress to nutrition podcasts we hope that there is something that will interest you. <https://www.sw-ift.org.uk/mentalwellbeingweek2022.html>

Line Managers –

The feedback from last year's event indicated that mental wellbeing was an area that you would like further development in. On Wednesday 16th February, Psychology associate Dr Karen Kershaw will be running a session to support line managers in becoming more confident in having open, safe and honest conversations around mental wellbeing, how to signpost colleagues to appropriate avenues and to feel more comfortable with suggesting support strategies.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdXQ-eWQN2ptiBo9v2FLPqMUfts6EyTY7EVilPCkKbb0NLLuw/viewform>

SWIFT MENTAL WELLBEING WEEK Monday 14th – Thursday 17th February 2022 | Online

We are pleased to be joined by a range of top-quality speakers, all of whom are experts in their field; and so we are confident that you will find the sessions both enjoyable and useful.

The sessions include a series of podcasts:

- The newest Eating for Mood
- Managing Health and Wellbeing
- Interactive cookery session for all the family
- Introduction to Mindfulness

Facilitators include:

Dr Karen Kershaw, Psychology Associates
Jen, McDiarmid, Nutritionist
Helen Williams, Open Minds
Amanda Tyler, Sunrise Psychology
– to name but a few

**COST: Free for SWIFT member schools
£50 for non-members**

Sign-up is per school, which allows all staff access to all of the events.





OTHER UPCOMING CPD COURSES: FREE FOR ALL UAT SCHOOL STAFF

Secondary Food Professional Community – Assessment of practical skills in Food

Wednesday 16th February 2022 | 4:00pm-5:00pm
Online. BOOK: <https://bit.ly/3GGhfzz>

Secondary Computing Professional Community

Thursday 10th February 2022 | 4:00pm-5:30pm
Online. BOOK: <https://www.stem.org.uk/cpd/505904/assessment-secondary-computing-sw-ift>

Computer Science Accelerator Programme – Develop/refresh subject knowledge up to GCSE

For new/aspiring or more experienced teachers | Up to £1800 bursary available to support learning <https://teachcomputing.org/cs-accelerator>

SAVE THE DATE!

Secondary MFL Professional Community – Metacognition in the MFL classroom

Thursday 31st March 2022 | 2:00-4:30pm | Online

Secondary Maths Professional Community

Tuesday 8th March 2022 | 3:00pm-5:00pm | Online

Secondary PP Professional Community – PP & Metacognition

Friday 11th March 2022 | 1:30pm-3:30pm | Online



JEN KNOWLES



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Do take a look at the following:

www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk/workshops

Please also remember we have individual help and advice through our **WELLBEING SERVICE**. All accessible through set referral using the booking link:

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/UATWellbeingService@uffculmeschool.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>

Amanda Woodward, Director of Wellbeing



AMANDA WOODWARD





www.uffculmetrust.org