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Headteacher – Mrs Kelly Osborne-James

**8<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I have been afforded the privilege and pleasure this week to see the students use their talents as a blessing to others.

Ephesians 2:10, 'For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do'.

In the Christmas Concert on Tuesday, (POAP Priority 4), our young people entertained us in dance, drama and music. To see such enjoyment and confidence brought much joy. The comradery of the students, from those supporting backstage as well as those providing the light and sound, showed a compassion reflective of The Deanery school family. A thank you to all of the students who participated, the staff who supported and yourselves, for your constant encouragement and positivity.

The Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust (DBAT) encourages all its staff and students to 'let your light shine'. During our Community Christingle event yesterday evening, (POAP Priority 4), children of all ages enjoyed the making of the Christingle, writing prayers which adjoined our Christmas tree. There was a distinct feeling of unity as representatives from both schools and our Academy Council sang carols together to celebrate this special time of year. Reverend Owen led the prayers which we extend to all families – to know the true blessings of this season, and the real gift of Jesus Christ and all this means to us.

Christmas jumper and lunch yesterday helped both staff and students alike move festively into the last week of term, sharing conversations and good food together in an ethos of cheer and compassion.

Using our gifts and talents was also true of the Sport Faculty this week (POAP Priority 4), with fixtures including the below, a sincere well done to all who took part.

- U14 boys county cup football team beat Nova Hreod 5-1 to progress into the next round.
- U14 girls football team represented in a football festival at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy on Tuesday
- Multiple Y7,8 and 9 students who have been attending enrichment have passed their level 1 fencing award.
- We played two basketball fixtures against Bradon Forest this week, both sadly resulted in narrow losses.

Following on from last week, Year 7s have been enjoying writing pen pal letters (POAP Priority 4), and making Christmas cards with our French language assistant, Miss Robert, who will send them to her younger sister's school in Normandy! Joyeux Noël!

Y11 students were offered a GCSE pre-mocks session to support them in revising purposefully and effectively. Students who attended enjoyed a pre-session buffet as well as high quality practical advice, activities and resources.

(Priority 1 and 4) Our Head of Science, Mrs. Hockin, has been working with representatives from Bristol University to secure the opportunity to participate in a STEM competition. Students in KS3 and a number of Y10 students will be working with the Engineering department on a robotics project.

Such wonderful opportunities do not happen without the sheer dedication and care of our school staff so a sincere thank you to them for making a positive difference in the lives of our young people.

(Priorities 1 - 6) Members of the Trust's Education Team attended with the School Improvement Partner, Mr. Del Planter to conduct an autumn term review. This happens in each of the fifteen Trust schools. The focus areas included Maths, English and Attendance as well as identifying the progress made against the Post Ofsted Action Plan (POAP). There are many positives to share and celebrate with an acknowledgement that we are moving the school forward. More information to follow once we have received the final report.

#### Attendance—Ms. Woodfield

(POAP priority 3) Due to rigorous monitoring, lateness in the morning and to lessons has significantly improved. Overall school attendance to date has increased and sits just below the national average for secondary schools. For schools in Swindon the average is 91.4%. Our focus for 2024 is to match or exceed the Swindon average – thank you for your continued support with this goal.

#### Pastoral – Ms. Parry

This week we have awarded over **12000** house points across all the years. Year 9 has received the most with over 3400 but Year 7 have the best positive to negative balance.

We have started our Christmas celebrations with Christmas lunch and Christmas jumper day on Thursday as well as a fantastic Christmas concert on Tuesday evening. We continued the celebrations into the final week of term with Rev. Owen Green leading Christmas services on Wednesday for all the year groups.

After the Christmas break, we will be looking to tighten up procedures for detentions and reflection. As part of this, the restorative justice practices will continue to be developed with our Assistant Heads of Year completing further training next week. More information will be sent out in due course to explain what this will mean for detentions and the reflection room, but we continue to ask for your support in encouraging students to attend detentions to ensure these are not upscaled.

As we end this working week, I offer my gratitude for your continued support and encouragement.

I hope you have a blessed weekend,

Mrs. Osborne - James