

HEADTEACHER'S BULLETIN

JANUARY 2024 EDITION

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the January edition of the monthly bulletin. I hope you and your families are well. Do enjoy reading about life at Ratton School this month.

January 2024 at Ratton School

Term 3 started with an INSET Day. During this day, staff worked on a range of initiatives to further develop our practice at Ratton School. A big part of the day was spent on our practice around oracy and how we can support our learners to develop their speaking skills. An external expert trainer visited us to deliver this training with us; teachers very much enjoyed the session and have been using the strategies shared in the classroom so far this term. The training ties into the work we have been focusing on, including written literacy and challenge across the curriculum. We are hoping that as an outcome, the quality and quantity of student talk in lessons will increase. As parents and carers, please do encourage your child to engage in conversation about their school day and what they are learning in lessons to help us develop these all-important skills.

Year 11 started their full suite of mock GCSE exams this week. I have been impressed with the number of Year 11 students attending intervention and tutoring sessions at all levels over the last few months to prepare for these exams. We'll be using the results to hone our approach over the next 4-5 months prior to the real thing, focusing on the areas for development the mock results suggest.

Year 11 students have also experienced mock interviews from local employers and community organisations to help them develop those all-important interview skills for college, university, and employment. The feedback from employers and visitors was brilliant – they were so complimentary of our students mature and engaged approach to this opportunity.

Mrs Papagna, Year 10 Leader, and I have been interviewing Year 10 students for the post of Head Student. We are looking for two students to take on these vital roles. We have been hugely impressed by the calibre of the interviewees and their thoughtful responses, and we are looking forward to the new generation of students taking the baton from our current leadership group in Year 11 who have done an excellent job, demonstrated our virtues of teamwork and compassion every day.

Candidates for Head Student also addressed students in assembly last week. I was wowed by some very persuasive campaign speeches delivered with clarity and passion. Our big vote was held on Friday of last week, where students were able to vote for their preferred candidate by placing an x on the ballot paper and placing it in the box. Look out for news on who was selected by the community via our social media channels soon!

Finally, earlier this month, our Local Authority Education Advisor visited lessons, examined our curriculum, engaged with students, and discussed developments in teaching and learning with school leaders. We always welcome regular external review to ensure that our practice is as good as it can be, and to benchmark our work against what goes on in other schools.

This visit was to look at the level of challenge across the curriculum, and how we can encourage students to learn and remember more. He visits many schools in his role as an HMI or Lead Inspector. So, it was lovely to hear just how complimentary he was about our students and how they had spoken to him so positively about their learning and experience at Ratton School – he really was impressed with the students' polite and articulate nature. It was also great to hear that he felt our curriculum was 'ambitious' and that behaviour in the lessons he visited was good.

Sporting Success

- A big well done to Theodore Y in #TeamYear7 who recently completed his next Karate grading, he is now a purple belt. Keep it up.
- Well done to Fin L-F in #TeamYear9 who recently competed in the Sussex Cross Country Championships, coming away with a bronze medal. This is a fantastic achievement, with another year ahead within the age group which he will continue to compete in and practice for. Keep it up.
- Well done too goes to Archie F in #TeamYear8, who has also gone from strength to strength with his running and practice. Archie undertook Parkrun, with an equally amazing time of 18mins 10seconds. We believe Archie also finished within the top 10 in the Sussex Cross Country Championships, well done.
- A huge WELL DONE to Amber C in #TeamYear10 who, earlier this month, had been chosen by Canton Martial Arts - Eastbourne academy as the 'Doshi Ryan' award winner. A prestigious memorial award and, as we are told by staff, a very worthy winner. Well done Amber.
- Our #TeamYear8 and #TeamYear9 learners took part in their interhouse competition earlier this month. They did us #PROUD once again, with all students taking part showcasing a fantastic attitude and representing their houses with vigor and enthusiasm. The weather was kind to us with bright winter sunshine and, albeit cold, our learners made the most of being #Active, taking the opportunity to enjoy being 'on the move' and getting some nice fresh air. Well done. Watch this space for the #TeamYear7 interhouse event coming soon!
- A huge well done to our girl's U14s football team, who secured a convincing WIN in their latest league match vs. The Turing School. Final score, Ratton 8 to Turing's 3. WELL DONE girls.
- A great achievement for Fin L-F #TeamYear9, Archie F #TeamYear8 and Katy, who raced in the Southern Cross-Country Championships in Beckenham the weekend before last, whilst representing Eastbourne Rovers. Fin had a superb performance amongst tough competition placing 11th overall in the under 15 age category. Archie achieved the silver team medal, an incredible result. He was 37th amongst the high calibre athletes. Then, Katy was in the under 15 girl's race. Who ran amazingly well, and the Eastbourne Rovers team claimed the bronze team medals. Well done all three of you.
- Earlier in the month 10 #TeamRatton students represented their school at the annual Sussex Schools Cross Country event in Brighton. Hundreds of children from across schools throughout the county took part which proved to be a very cold and demanding course. Each race had at least 300

runners competing, and we are really proud of all of our runners who gave 100% and ended up with some fantastic results. School news post pending!

- In the U16's girl's football tournament last week against St Catherine's, it was a point each after Ratton hosted SCC in a league game last week. The final score, 3-3. Well done girls. School news post pending!
- A huge WELL DONE to our #TeamYear9 Sports Leaders for their exceptional efforts in hosting this year's KS1 Primary Football Festival very recently. Over 130 Yr1&2 students took part from schools across the town 30 of our #TeamYear9 Ratton Sports leaders helping to organise and run the event. The biggest of the year for them! There were lots of parents in attendance, with our brilliant PE staff on-hand to support our sports leaders at the event. It really lifted both players & sports leaders. We are informed that our Ratton Sports Leaders were great role models and ambassadors for their school, in supporting the young children and demonstrating skills and responsibility throughout the afternoon. A huge WELL DONE to them, our staff and of course Mrs Upton for her continued dedication in this area. School news post pending!
- A great achievement for Harrison B in #TeamYear8, who was very recently chosen to represent the U13s Sussex hockey academy, for both on pitch and in goal for the team. He has successfully made the Sussex championship squad too. Keep up the great work Harrison! School news post pending!
- Well done to the U14s girl's football team, who last week clinched a winner in the last 5 minutes in a well battled, competitive game away at The Eastbourne Academy. Well done girls, keep it up. School News post to follow!
- Finally, a big WELL DONE to Alex T in #TeamYear9 who, at the weekend, achieved a unanimous win whilst representing his club (and our school sponsors/community champions!) Eastbourne Boxing Club! Well done Alex, keep up the hard work. Your coach has said how proud he is of you, which is always lovely to hear. School News post to follow (*already on Instagram, tag from Club!*)

Well done #TeamRatton, another fantastic run of sporting success – and it's only January! Keep up the good work all of you.

Reminders around communication

For new parents and carers, and a polite reminder for existing families, some information and tips regarding talking about any concerns you have about your child at school are below.

It is helpful if you can:

- check Edulink regularly for messages from teachers, view homework set for your child and any updates around reward or behaviour points – 'how to' guides can be found on our website here: <https://www.ratton.co.uk/parents/edulink-one>
- keep in touch regularly with your child's tutor or year leadership team. Raise any concerns with them. Your relationship with your child's tutor and their year leadership team is important.
- reassure your child that you will speak with the school. Talk to the school first. Then you can advise your child with a complete picture of what happened.

- ask for an appointment to talk to teachers. It is not always possible for school staff to meet parents immediately. If it is helpful, they may invite a senior teacher or other key staff, such as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO).
- give staff a chance to respond to messages about concerns before taking further action. Depending on the nature of the concern or incident, schools may need a few days to respond after investigating and gathering information.

Staff will aim to respond to emails within the hours of 8am and 5pm and within 48 hours if your question is not urgent. Do check the Edulink app regularly for updates on achievement points and messages from individual staff.

Reminders around attendance for the new year

At the beginning of the new year, I'd like to highlight the importance of good or better attendance of your child at school. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you of data generated regarding attendance and our GCSE results earlier this summer. Students in Year 11 whose attendance was above 95% achieved almost a grade higher than target on average. Attendance between 90.1% and 95% gained just over a half a grade higher than target on average, but attendance below 80% meant that GCSE grades gained on average were up to 1.5 grades below target. The evidence really does prove that good attendance means good GCSE outcomes.

Staying with attendance, I would respectfully and politely remind all parents and carers that holidays are not permitted in term time. Government guidance states that we are no longer able to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances (and family holidays/trips do not fall into this category). I know it is difficult when holiday prices rise during school holidays, and with the current pressures with the cost of living rising, but we have a duty to follow this guidance.

The consequence of your child taking an absence/holiday during term time is that it will be recorded as unauthorised, and we may request a Penalty Notice to be issued by the local authority should the child be absent during the requested period. Please note that if a Penalty Notice is issued, this will be to each parent (for each child) incurring a fine of £120.00 which decreases to £60.00 if paid within 21 days.

Thank you for your support around attendance. At present, our school attendance is above the national and East Sussex averages. Do look at NHS advice from medical professionals here: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-topics/child-ill-for-school/) if you are unsure in which circumstances you should send your child in.

Reminders around uniform

I would like to remind parents and carers that hoodies and branded jumpers are not part of school uniform. Students may wear these items on their way to and from school but should not wear these inside the school building or during breaks. Students will receive a signature on their timetable card

for each occasion they are wearing a non-Ratton branded sweatshirt or hoodie. Uniforms have looked good so far this term, with students looking smart and ready to learn; don't forget we now have the new click and collect service through Sussex uniforms if you need to purchase any further items throughout the year.

Reminders around mobile phones

We have recently seen an increase in students using mobile phones at school. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind parents and carers that we do not expect to see students using mobile phones at school; if we do, they will be confiscated and stored safely until the end of the day for students to pick up before they leave the school site.

The vast majority of students work with us on this to keep school a safe place and free from any negative interactions on social media, or disruption to lessons during the day. If a student needs to make a call home in an emergency, we can always facilitate this; if you need to contact your child urgently, please phone via reception and we can find your child to speak with you. We would urge you to support us in reminding your child that if there is an issue in school during the day that they speak with a member of staff in the first instance rather than use a phone to contact home.

Upcoming Events

I am looking forward to welcoming as many Year 10 students and their families as possible to our Year 10 evening on 1st February. This will be a crucial opportunity for parents and carers of young people in Year 10 to gain some feedback on how they started their GCSE and equivalent courses this year. If you haven't already booked, please check Edulink messages and book via the app.

Term 3 ends on Friday 9th February and Term 4 starts on Monday 19th February with an early closure for staff INSET at 1.30pm. Good luck to all students and staff taking part in the ski trip over the half-term holiday; I hope all involved have an enjoyable experience.

We are all looking forward to our school production of Fame at the Royal Hippodrome Theatre, running from 20th –22nd of February, tickets available here: [Events for 1st January, 2024 – Royal Hippodrome Theatre](#) Ticket sales are moving fast so do act as soon as you can to secure a seat for what promises to a fantastic show. Year 7 and Year 8 students will have the chance to watch the show during the school day on Tuesday 20th February.

In the meantime, keep well, stay safe and please don't hesitate to contact us if you need to.

Best wishes,



Mr Peevers
Headteacher

