



28th March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been another action filled half term for both students and staff. We hosted our second annual Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review. Challenge Partners are an educational charity dedicated to accelerating school improvement, leadership development and pupil progress by sharing excellent practice across schools and trusts through rigorous peer reviews. Our team was led by an Ofsted Inspector and consisted of a serving Headteacher, a Director for Learning for a Multi-Academy Trust and a Deputy Headteacher. We are very pleased to say that our overall provision was judged to be 'Effective' and for the second year running, leadership at all levels was deemed to be 'Leading' – the highest accolade given. We were also accredited a second 'area of excellence' and we can now add CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance), to our achievements alongside our award last year for Special Education Needs.

Please see the report [Challenge Partners QAR Report](#).

The team were unanimously complimentary about the school, the quality of teaching and learning and the behaviour of our students, which on more than one occasion was described as 'exemplary'. We constantly seek to improve as well as celebrate our successes and our commitment to 'Investing in each other to be the best we can be' is evidenced in our engagement with the Challenge Partners review process. We have shared comments from the team with our students and so, I am very pleased to share these with you:

'Leaders and staff take on board student views and provide enrichment opportunities which reinforce the school's character virtues. Participation is tracked well, with 99% of students this academic year involved in clubs or trips.'

'Careers and guidance are strong. Careers leaders have expert knowledge and communicate up to date information to students and families. There is a very wide range of support and provision. As a result, last year every student went onto employment, further education, or training.'

'Students know their learning routines. They behave very well and are respectful...The school takes a restorative approach, and students are able to take responsibility for their behaviour, which is consistently excellent.'

'Teachers know their subjects and students well. The character virtues underpin the well sequenced curriculum. Teachers often create interesting activities such as the 'chocolate bar' activity which encourages students to remember prior learning and to share their ideas together.'

'Students have many leadership opportunities such as character virtue ambassadors, reading mentors, student councillors and prefects. Staff actively encourage students to take leadership roles in a variety of contexts, and pastoral teams select students for leadership where they see potential.'

'Students learn the language of character education and rewards are highly visible, including badges and certificates. Students know how to be responsible citizens.'

Headteacher Mrs Colette O'Dwyer

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Events this Half Term

Students have had the opportunity to attend performances at the Royal Opera House and Cadogan Hall. At the RPO, students heard a performance of La Boheme by Puccini. The students were blown away by the grandeur of the venue and the beauty of the performances. In the words of one of the students: "That was decent!". At the Cadogan Hall, students heard a performance by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto and Scheherazade by Rimsky-Korsakov. The latter is serving as inspiration for an ongoing composer-in-residence project for the Year 10 GCSE class. Further concert visits are planned for next term.

On Wednesday 6th March, Y13 History students had the experience of hearing from Malcolm Gaskill, a renowned historian on the East Anglian Witch Hunts. As part of their A-Level history course, students study these hunts, and it was a fantastic opportunity for them to hear from him. Students also asked him a series of questions about the hunts and the witch craze, but also questions about his job as a historian and his methods of research. Malcolm Gaskill himself commented that 'It was a pleasure to meet you all. You asked some fantastic questions!'.

This year the school has entered the Goldsmiths Company Award for Community Engagement. Following a competitive round of heats earlier this term at which students presented a video recording, Park High were invited to present to an experienced panel. The students, from a mix of year groups, worked hard to prepare a presentation and answer questions. They had lots of examples ranging from work with feeder primary schools, our Foodbank Collection, charity work, work experience and volunteering as part of the Duke of Edinburgh programme. At the time of writing, we are waiting to hear if we have been successful in reaching the final round. Nonetheless, we are extremely proud of all our students who go above and beyond within and outside of the school gates showing integrity and compassion – two of our Character Virtues.

Sports News

It has been an exciting half term of sport at Park High, as many of the competitions are now in the latter stages. We claimed two Volleyball trophies as our U14s and U16s beat Salvatorian in their finals. Our U16 Netball team lost an epic final, by a single goal, and our other Netball teams (who have been superb in the 'tournament' format) all have finals or semi-finals coming up. It was a similar story on the football field; our U16 girls have their place in the final booked and our U13s might well follow them. We may have two final appearances for the boys (for a second season running) if the semi-finals go to form. Our U14 Badminton team claimed the borough trophy and all of our Table Tennis teams have qualified for their respective finals. Alongside a host of finals to look forward to, attention now turns to Cricket, Rounders and Athletics as we prepare for a fascinating summer of action.

New Parent Governor

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mr Eranga Fernando as our second parent governor. We welcome him to the governing body and look forward to working with him. Mr Fernando is the only candidate and so is appointed directly onto the board as per paragraph 56A of our Articles of Association.

Y11 Study During Easter Break

Please check your child's timetable on Arbor for any subject interventions that they have been invited to in the first week of the Easter break.

Y10 Mock Exams Start Tuesday 16th April 2024

Students have been sent an examinations timetable. All students should be in their normal lessons unless they have a scheduled exam.



Key Dates

First day of term for all students	16/04/2024
Year 10 Practice Exams	16/04/2024
Year 12 Practice Exams	16/04/2024
MFL GCSE Speaking Exams	29/04/2024
GCSE Dance Exam	30/04/2024
Year 7 Parent Teacher Evening	01/05/2024
Evening of Arts & Culture	02/05/2024
May Day Bank Holiday (<u>School Closed</u>)	06/05/2024
Year 11 GCSE Exams begin	09/05/2024
Year 11 & Year 13 Public Exams	13/05/2024
Year 13 GCE Exams begin	13/05/2024
Year 10 Parent Teacher Evening	16/05/2024

***All students have their own examination timetable**

Policies

A quick reference to our school policies can be found here: [Policies](#) . These policies are available on our school website too.

Student Wellbeing During the Holidays

We understand that young people may need to access some support for their wellbeing and there are a number of organisations signposted on our school website [here](#). In particular we would like to draw your attention to [Kooth](#), which is a free, safe, and anonymous online mental health service commissioned across the UK by the NHS, Local Authorities and Charities to provide free online mental health support. If you are worried about your child and would like further support, please contact your Pastoral Team when we return to school.

Vaping

Vaping seems to be an increasing problem amongst young people nationally and sadly we have noticed that trend at Park High, most worryingly amongst some of the younger children. As parents are probably aware, the legal minimum age to purchase vapes is 18. Unfortunately, we have become aware that some shops are willing to sell vapes to younger children. The Safer Schools Officers have been made aware. The BBC have picked up on this current social problem and this article on the BBC website will provide you with more information: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-62052286>

School reopens to students on Tuesday 16 April 2024. Hopefully, we will come back after the Easter holidays to some sunshine and glorious weather. In the meantime, I wish all our families a restful Easter break.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Colette O'Dwyer
Headteacher

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