



PLATANOS COLLEGE

An outstanding school for
pupils of all abilities

E-Newsletter

Monday 9th December 2013

Issue 8

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

Welcome to our December 2013 Newsletter.

I am very pleased that we were able to meet so many of you at our Academic Review Day on the 6th December 2013.

In this edition of the Newsletter you will find the following:

- Details of the Grammar School Pathway (GSP) tests.
- Details of the end of term arrangements.
- Details of the start of term arrangements in January 2014.

The new Achievement Magazine will be sent to you at the end of December 2013. It is a very good read.

MAKING LEARNING GAINS COUNT

It is right that we continue to set the highest expectations for all our pupils in all subjects as well as socially and morally across the school. We intend to continue to work with you in order to focus on increasing the rates of progress of ALL pupils in all year groups, especially in Key Stage 3. Over a three year period we intend to set systems in place to ensure that as many pupils as possible make five (5) levels of progress in English, Maths and Science in Key Stage 3.

These expectations are higher in English, Maths and Science because they are the core subjects. We also accept that the process of learning is not a simple exercise of tick sheets where pupils learn one thing and then move to another level.

We have started this process and intend to continue over a three year period to give ourselves time to fully embed new systems. It is our intention to further devise ways of assessing pupils, if necessary by developing new tests for them to consolidate their learning.

Over this three year period we would like as many pupils as possible to be ready to start their GCSE subjects in Year 9.

Many of our pupils start from a low base and we believe that by setting higher expectations and systematically focusing on their learning gains, we can ensure that most of our pupils achieve more than the expected levels of progress.

EXTENDING LITERACY AND WIDER KEY SKILLS

Pupils have responded well to our extended Literacy programmes this year. All Key Stage 3 pupils do a "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) session at the end of the day for at least fifteen (15) minutes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

We know from the initial data that the majority of pupils are making good or better gains in reading.

The drive on improving punctuation and spelling (including the regular tests) has been effective because of the evidence we have seen in many lessons as well as the initial test results. We will communicate the results of the initial tests to you early in the New Year.

WIDER SKILLS

This term, we have found pupils making more positive contributions in their classroom and really developing their ability to learn independently. In the vast majority of classes, pupils have been focused and taking pride in their work. Pupils have also been working collaboratively in the classroom and we are keen to develop this area of school life.

The very successful Learning to Learn Project has returned to the classroom. We have found in our monitoring of lessons that pupils have been able to recall lesson objectives and explain in their own words what they were asked to do and what they had to learn and more importantly, why.

WIDER PUPIL INVOLVEMENT IN THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

We have increased the number of Clubs and Societies this year. Details are enclosed. Not only do we have a very popular Chess Club, there are also Clubs for Arabic, Italian and Korean. Pupils are able to suggest new Clubs and one pupil has set up a Club with a focus on Disabilities in Society.

Ms. Williams intends to start the Seed Capital Club next term where pupils are able to bid for money to start new business ventures within the school.

- The Girl Guides, Scouts and St. John's Ambulance Cadets as well as our Army Cadets continue to flourish.
- You will read about the Children's University in this Newsletter. Well done to the Graduates of 2013.
- The Anti-Bullying Champions regularly monitor and log bullying incidents and have started to play a wider role in the Equalities Forum by promoting the understanding of bullying and safeguarding across the school.

- Our Presidents/Vice Presidents, Junior Leaders, Ambassadors and Prefects continue to play a very important role in our school community by taking ownership of their year group meetings, leading assemblies and performing duties on a daily basis.

Thank you once again for your support. I recognise that we cannot win every single parent and I accept that a tiny minority of our parents are anti any form of authority and/or discipline. I am however extremely pleased that we have such a successful partnership with the overwhelming majority of parents, especially during difficult times when the wider social agenda overtakes our day-to-day educational aims.

We have taken the first steps to ensure that pupils make greater learning gains in Years 7, 8 and 9. Our expectations are higher than those set nationally. We always manage to do the difficult things, even when we contravene the so called 'normal' expectations and/or the status quo. We will continue to work carefully and successfully with parent(s)/carer(s) to achieve these goals.

Finally, I wish you a good break. Good wishes to every single parent/carers and indeed to all our wonderful pupils.

I write without hesitation or reservation that God is with us, especially with our wonderful pupils. Always.

Yours sincerely,

J. Tapper (Ms)
Headteacher

Safeguarding at Platanos College

Consulting pupils, parents and carers about Safeguarding A summary

We consulted pupils, parents and carers at the beginning of the term about Safeguarding and Health and Safety at Platanos College. Thank you to those who responded to the survey. There was a high level of feedback and the overall response from parent(s)/carer(s) was very positive.

- 99% agreed that the school is a safe place for their children.
- Over 90% agreed that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.
- Over 85% thought that the school deals with unacceptable behaviour effectively.
- Over 85% thought that the school deals with bullying effectively.
- Over 85% agreed that their child was not bullied at school.

(Respondents were given the option of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'don't know', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree')

We are very pleased with the very positive outcomes. We will continue to prioritise the welfare of our pupils. Also, we will continue to consult and address any concerns raised by pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and indeed staff.

At Platanos College, we are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of our pupils. Our **Designated Senior Person for Child Protection** is **Ms T. Williams**.

There are also pupils in each tutor group who are fully trained as **Anti-Bullying Champions** and they meet regularly to discuss any issues that may arise.

The dedicated anti-bullying email address for both pupils and parents/carers to raise any issues about bullying is abc@platanoscollege.com.

Recent News

Children's University Graduation 2013

We are pleased to announce that 30 pupils graduated from the Children's University on Wednesday 13th November 2013, at the London South Bank University.

The Children's University is a national organisation offering children an exciting and innovative programme of high quality learning opportunities outside of school hours with a focus on rewarding participation and encouraging engagement with learning.

Platanos College pupils were welcomed to the ceremony by Bev Jullen, the Pro Vice Chancellor of London South Bank University, and Angela



Nelson, the Lambeth Children's University Manager.

The Chief Executive of the Children's University delivered an inspiring key note speech encouraging pupils to believe in themselves, before presenting pupils with their graduation certificates.

It was a fantastic evening, which both pupils and parents thoroughly enjoyed.

The Children's University programme encourages children to actively try new subjects and activities outside of normal school. The activities are all voluntary and pupils are free to decide on the subjects they would like to study. Importantly, the learning is linked to a course available at 'grown up' university.

Many congratulations to our Graduates of 2013:

Year 8

Andy Cassombi
Kelsey Morseco
Victoria Odubote

Elizabeth Wenani
Siham Osman

Hafsa Besong
Kawtar Haouache

Hanna Bagate
Precious Oladipo

Year 9

Alaina Oposa
Faisal Seginda

Edward Adonteng
Rita Krasinqi

Nikita Brown
Ashley Vernon-Staple

Anisa Hersi
Jordan Burton

Sarah Bello
Connor Hopkins

Charley Gazely
Julie Joram

Julie Dao
Daniel Payne

Shirmae Elliot
Ma Meco Tesoro

Year 10

Zara Ahmed
Genielle Dearne

Gisela Fernandes
Ryan Tsolaki

Melissa Rodrigues

Mawa Bagate

Our Year 9 pupil, **Nikita Brown**, said: "It was a wonderful occasion to recognise all the hard work that we have put into our studies and a great way to celebrate with my friends. The graduation was a unique experience for me."



Business and Enterprise workshop at UBS Investment Bank

On Friday 15th November, our Year 9s on the able, gifted and talented register attended a City Careers Workshop at the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS).

The Workshop was designed to raise the aspirations of young people and to increase their awareness of the wide variety of career opportunities based in the City and Finance/Banking sectors. The Programme was delivered by 'The Brokerage Citylink' charity.

Through meeting and working with UBS employees, pupils were encouraged to re-evaluate and explore their preconceptions of the City. They learnt about UBS and their products/services (wealth/asset management etc.) and career opportunities they offer. They also had a tour of the UBS building (including witnessing a trading floor).



The pupils at the end of the workshop further gained an understanding of the employability skills that are vital to succeeding in the City (by designing a poster for recruiting candidates and delivering a pitch to the UBS staff and their peers) and an understanding of the business-like behaviour and expectations in the work environment.



Our pupil, **Anthony Daley**, said: "The workshop was extremely useful. It was first-hand experience which gave us a good insight into the real working world of the City."

Fundraising for the Philippines

Earlier in the term, our senior pupils led a series of assemblies throughout the school to raise awareness of the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

The pupils agreed on a fundraising event to contribute to the relief effort in assisting the many people affected in the Philippines.

A large 'Bake Sale' was organised and over £100 was raised during the event.



Lord Mayor's Show

On Saturday 9th November, a selection of our Army Cadets and St. John Ambulance Cadets participated in the Lord Mayor's Show.

The Lord Mayor's Show is a prestigious annual televised event. More than 6,500 people, 200 horses and 150 floats were on display to welcome the new Lord Mayor and mark the beginning of her year in office. The Show is a visual feast of floats from local and City businesses, ward clubs, livery companies, schools and community groups. There were more than 2,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and cadets and the mounted branch of the City of London Police Force present.

The opportunity for our Army Cadets was presented by the Worshipful Company of Fuellers, who support our uniformed groups.

Our St. John Cadets were part of the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital that works predominantly in Gaza and East Jerusalem.

The pupils showed dedication to the event, staying late after school prior to the event to ensure their uniform was perfect for the occasion. It was a very early Saturday morning start; however, all of the pupils arrived early and were ready and raring to go.



Despite the wet and cold weather the pupils remained enthusiastic throughout and enjoyed the experience immensely. Our pupils were great ambassadors for both the school and their cadet units.

Our pupil **Lauryn** said, "I felt very honoured to be a part of the show. It was an amazing experience and was a great opportunity for us to showcase our skills on the big stage."

Our Army Cadets was successfully established in partnership with St. Dunstan's School earlier this year as part of a combined cadet force (CCF) and train on a weekly basis. The cadet forces give young people the chance to develop a host of skills recognised by employers and participate in community projects.

A very well done to our cadets!

Our St. John Cadets:

Daniel Payne

Shawn Steer

Special-Rose Brisefert

Our Army Cadets:

Edward Adonteng

Olivia Paige Davis

Mohammed Marsou

Lauryn Gayle

Maklit Hannah

Connor Hopkins

Liam Townsend

Ami Wague



Educational trips to enhance learning

Our end-of-term programme of trips to enhance learning for our pupils has once again been successful, with a host of trips to a variety of national museums and galleries including the Science Museum, Natural History Museum and the University of Oxford.

The educational trips allow our pupils to experience learning outside of the classroom, broadening their knowledge and stimulating their interests.

Pupils explored the Launchpad at the Science Museum, where they got to try out a number of experiments. They also participated in an interactive rocket show to learn about gravity and how a space rocket is launched.



At the Natural History Museum, pupils became investigators and had to work out what various artefacts were and where they may come from. They used a variety of research methods and tools, including microscopes, reference books and digital databases.



Of course, a trip to the National History Museum would not be complete without a trip to the dinosaur zone, which the pupils thoroughly enjoyed.



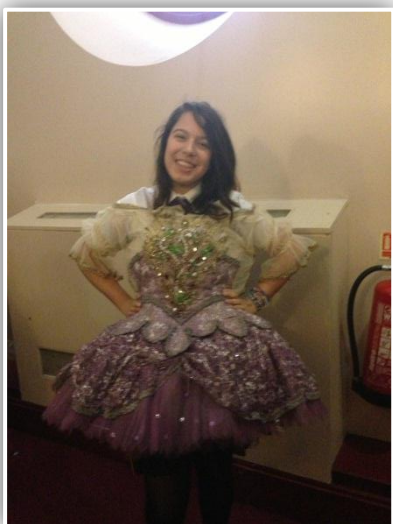
The visit to the University of Oxford proved to be a big inspiration for our pupils once again. Pupils were able to appreciate the rich history behind the university and visited a variety of historical buildings. They also had the opportunity to meet a group of Oxford undergraduates and academics in an extended workshop and learn about life as a university student.



Through a partnership with the Royal Opera House, some of our pupils also had the opportunity to tour the Royal Opera House and see a production of Romeo and Juliet. The trip involved a question and answer session with professional ballerinas, watching rehearsals and the costume preparation backstage and understanding the management of such a large production.



Some pupils even had the chance to put on the costumes at the Royal Opera House!



St. John Ambulance 'Save A Life' Campaign

Earlier in the term, our St. John Cadets were out on duty teaching members of the general public basic lifesaving first aid as part of the St. John Ambulance 'Save A Life' Campaign in September.

Shoppers at Tesco, Kennington, and the N1 Centre, Islington, were extremely impressed with the cadets' first aid knowledge and demonstrations.

The cadets also did an outstanding job of raising £415.80 for the organisation which will go towards further training and resources!



Our Cadets take part in a wide variety of activities and courses throughout the year including national tours and competitions and have made a great start on their Grand Prior's Award Scheme.

Success for Platanos College Basketball

During the first half of the term, our Under-16 Girls Basketball team has been competing in the Lambeth League as part of the London Youth Games and National Schools Competition.

Earlier in the term, the team faced Dunraven School in the final and came out triumphant with a 15-10 score line. This is the first time in the school's history that the U16s team have won this league. The team now progresses to the next stages of the London Youth Games.

Many congratulations to our very talented team!

U-16 team members:

Eunika Edwards

Mawa Bagate

Patrea Powell-Farquharson

Bryony Bromfield

Melissa Rodrigues

Special-Rose Brisefort

Su Allen

Marta Mateus

Ademola Agunnowo

Bryony said: "We are so happy!

The many training sessions together have paid off and it was a great team effort.

Everyone played their part."



In addition, two of our pupils, **Sarah Bello** and **RJ Eytile-Rock**, have been selected for the England Development Squad. Sarah has been selected for the U15s and RJ for the U16s.

The focus of the National Development Programme is to introduce England's best 14 and 15 year olds to international team basketball. The programme develops the players' application (training habits), attitude and understanding and builds on and extends the individual skills learned at regional and club level.

Sarah said: "I am absolutely delighted to have been chosen for the programme. This opens up a lot of opportunities and I can't wait to get started!"

Sarah and RJ have worked very hard to get to this stage and we wish them the very best of luck in their next stages of their basketball development.



Extracurricular Clubs and Societies

Debating Society	Chess Club/Centre of Excellence for Maths
Cookery Club	Centre of Excellence for Science
Textiles Club	Technology Club
Photography Club	Art Club
Animation Club	Computer Club
French Club	Italian Club
Arabic Club	Korean Club
Reading Club	Centre of Excellence for Modern Languages
Disabilities in Society	Centre of Excellence for Sports
Health and Well-being	Choir
Army Cadets	Girl Guides
Scouts	St. John Ambulance Cadets
First Aid Club	Drama Club
Peer Study Groups	

(Further information can be found on our website at www.platanoscollege.com)

Key Dates

Monday 16th December 2013	Grammar School Pathway tests - English
Tuesday 17th December 2013	Grammar School Pathway tests - Mathematics
Wednesday 18th December 2013	Grammar School Pathway tests - Science
Thursday 19th December 2013	Achievement Assemblies (Key Stage 3) School ends at 2.30pm
Friday 20th December 2013	CHABOP Day LAST DAY OF TERM – School ends at 12.40pm
Monday 6th January 2014	FIRST DAY OF NEW TERM FOR ALL PUPILS Please ensure that your child arrives on time at 8.40am in full school uniform and ready to learn

The Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)

Platanos College retains the prestigious Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)

This award recognises the school's strength in working in partnership with parents and carers to enhance children's life chances.

Earlier this year Platanos College was again visited by an LPPA assessor as part of the award scheme. To continue to be recognised by the LPPA the school has to satisfy stringent objectives.

- It demonstrated a continued commitment by making and implementing effective plans to achieve and maintain the award.
- The school must be a welcoming and friendly place for parents/carers.
- Promotes an awareness of, and participation in, lifelong learning opportunities available both in school and the community.
- Holds and actively promote enrichment opportunities for joint parent/child participation.
- Provides good induction for all new parents/carers.
- Provides parents/carers with relevant and user-friendly guidance and information to help them support their children's learning.
- Produces and implements parent/carer friendly policies to establish effective home-school links and improve pupil attendance, punctuality, behaviour and progress and their positive participation in school.
- Provides good support for transition for parents/carers when their children leave the school.

The LPPA assessor was very impressed with the work and the future plans for the school. She spoke with some of our Presidents and Vice Presidents, governors, as well as parents/carers and recognised that the school met all the objectives of the LPPA.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and SAM Learning

So you want to make sure your child succeeds? Here are two ways.

Firstly, use our VLE: Virtual Learning Environment.

What is the VLE?

Platanos College's VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) is the College's on-line learning space. Unlike a normal web site it is a direct link between teachers and pupils, where such things like homework can be posted. There is both a pupil portal and a parent portal. As a parent you will be able to view such things as attendance, timetable and homework.

Accessing our VLE for Parents:

1. Go to <https://www.klp.rm.com>.
2. Enter your username and password (both supplied by Platanos College).
3. The first time you log on you will be asked to accept the terms and conditions. Click **"Yes"** and it will take you to the parents' aspect of the Platanos College Homework page. Click on

the name of the subject teacher of your child. This will open and show five (5) folders. Click on the year group your child is in and the latest homework will be the file at the top of the list. (Homework is located in the “Shared Space” tab.)

4. If you click on “Home” in the left hand column of the page it will take you to the information on your child. *(You will only be able to see information about your own child, you cannot access other pupil’s information and they cannot see anything about yours.)*

Another way is to use SAM Learning.

What is SAM Learning Go?

It is an online educational service, providing year-round learning.

It has been independently proven to raise attainment. Its simple approach focuses on interactive revision and “test question” practice to consolidate learning and increase confidence.

It helps raise achievement by providing high value services that enables your child to take more individual responsibility and improve their results.

SAM Learning can be accessed from any computer connected to the internet.

Accessing SAM Learning:

(Please note it is the pupil whose log in account that it used)

- Go to www.samlearning.com
- You will need to enter the Centre ID, User ID and Password
- The Centre ID is **SW9OSP** (O as in the letter **not** the number)
- The user ID is the pupil’s date of birth followed by their initials. For example if John Doe was born 01/05/2001, the **User ID will be 010501JD**

The **password** is initially the **same** as **the User** ID. For example **User** ID 010501JD would be **password** 010501JD. Once the pupil logs on they can change their password.

Your son or daughter can now work, with you, through “online” tasks, specifically targeted at their level. You can monitor and check your child’s progress, diagnose where they need extra help and work with them to achieve the highest grades of which they are capable.

You can now make a difference. Help your child to success. Log on and give it a try.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr N. James (Assistant Headteacher).

Severe Weather Conditions

The weather is likely to deteriorate in the coming weeks. This is a reminder that, in severe weather conditions, we will close the school as a (very) last resort if pupils and staff face a significant risk of injury or non-attendance.

If the school is to be closed, we will post a notice on the school website (www.platanoscollege.com) and send a standard text message to all parent(s)/carer(s) before pupils arrive at the start of the school day.

If the weather conditions deteriorate during the school day, we will inform all parent(s)/carer(s) of the situation by text message and via our website.

Uniform Shop Opening Times

Term time opening hours

Mondays: 9am - 12pm

Wednesdays: 3pm - 5pm

E-Newsletter

If you would like to receive our regular E-Newsletter via email, please provide us with your email address by contacting us on 020 7733 6156 or emailing us at newsletter@platanoscollege.com.

The latest news and previous issues of our newsletters can be found on our website at www.platanoscollege.com.