



PLATANOS COLLEGE

An outstanding school for
pupils of all abilities

Key Stage 4 Newsletter

Spring Term – April 2021

Attitude Determines Altitude

Key Dates

Return to school – Summer Term	Monday 19th April 2021 at 8.40am
May Bank Holiday	Monday 3rd May 2021
Half Term	Monday 31st May 2021 to Friday 4th June 2021
End of Summer Term	Thursday 22nd July 2021

Welcome



As another term draws to a close, we would like to thank you, our parents and carers for the continued support

that you have shown us in the Spring Term.

You have been appreciative and positive in supporting your children's learning at home. Collectively we have ensured that pupils have continued to learn and make progress online.

A big congratulations must be offered to our outstanding pupils! To say that we are impressed with how rapidly pupils managed to adapt to their live online lessons would be an understatement. Pupils have shown maturity beyond their years and have

really taken ownership of their own learning.

Our focus is to ensure that pupils drive the momentum of independent learning forward – to constantly and consistently consolidate their learning, to think critically and to have an inquisitive nature when it comes to their learning. Being an independent learner will auger well for pupils for their futures – whether it be in preparing for their GCSE or A Level examinations, university or the working world.

If you needed any evidence of how impressive our pupils have been, we would direct you to our weekly Pupil Celebration Newsletter. We sent over 5,000 certificates to pupils in the Spring Term in recognition of their hard work and progress. Something that was picked up by the South London Press!



We recognise the importance of personal development in education. We have continued to share our weekly reflection in our Assembly Notices sent out by text message and available through our school website. We have wanted pupils to reflect on themes such as consumerism, a safer internet, Holocaust Memorial Day, and conscience. We have also wanted to share weekly notices and updates with pupils and the Assembly Notices will continue to be a useful tool in regularly communicating with our pupils.

Our focus during the Spring Term has been to reinforce our high expectations. This has included teachers continuing to provide high quality lessons, providing pupils with feedback and ensuring high standards. We continued to reach out by telephone to all parents, carers and pupils and provided technological support – all in the spirit that our pupils are our priority – they come first.

Where we are proud of the achievements of the Spring Term, we must now look ahead to the Summer Term. Our focus remains on our pupils making rapid progress academically and personally.

Our high expectations of our pupils remain. We believe that each and every pupil can achieve beyond all expectations. After all - Attitude Determines Altitude.

Pastoral Manager Reflections

I am absolutely delighted to see our Key Stage 4 pupils returning to school. It was fantastic to see them interacting with each other at lunchtime as well as seeing them learning from each other in the classroom environment. Equally, I have relished speaking with pupils whilst on lunch duty and at the front gate.

Over the last few weeks, we have been re-establishing common routines and introducing new essential procedures to ensure that we keep our school community safe and well. I am thrilled (and not at all surprised) to see how wonderfully our pupils have quickly accepted and adapted to these procedures. They have shown consideration to each other and staff and demonstrating their resilience and maturity that I have grown accustomed to.

They were also a credit to the school during the asymptomatic testing week.

The focus for our year 11 pupils is undoubtedly their GCSEs. Our staff have been developing plans to assess our pupils and are providing them with teaching and assessment opportunities to demonstrate what they know and what they can do in support of them achieving their target grades.

Our year 11 pupils have risen to the challenge and we have been, and remain, incredibly proud of their positivity, determination and resilience. We urge them to remain focused, diligent and committed to their studies. We expect all pupils to produce their very best work at all times and to maintain outstanding attendance and punctuality to school.

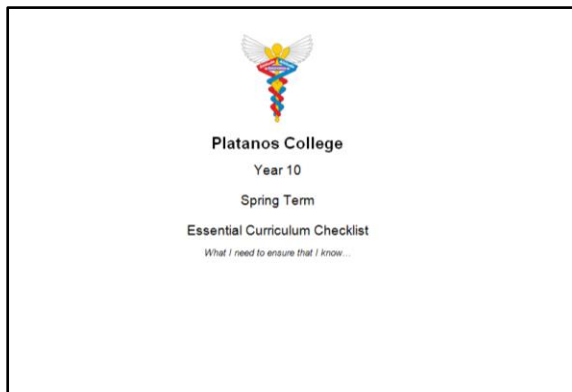


As for our year 10 pupils, the focus must be to take ownership of their learning and develop their independence and resilience. This year has seen unprecedented disruption to our lives – and to the way pupils access their learning. Despite the disruption, we still expect our year 10 pupils to accrue excellent GCSE results in 2022. Working hard right from the outset and demonstrating outstanding behaviour for learning is key to GCSE success.

As the term draws to a close, a big well done to all pupils in Key Stage 4 for the way they have settled back into face to face teaching and for their hard work and focus. I would also like to thank you for all of your ongoing support. We are hugely appreciative of the role which you have played in supporting our pupils in their remote learning at home and we wish you and your families a safe, happy and peaceful Easter break.

Mr Edwards

Essential Curriculum



Many parents/ carers will have read much in the news about pupil 'catch up'.

At Platanos College we have started our preparations for helping pupils fill in the gaps of any missed learning during the enforced school closure.

We have decided to compile a list of key learning topics for the Spring Term (January to April) for each subject.

This is intended to:

- Assist pupils who have missed lessons so that they can 'catch-up'
- Allow pupils to revise topics at home, using interactive learning resources.

These curriculum guides will be sent alongside this newsletter and will be made available through the school's website.

These 'Essential Curriculum' guides will help parents/ carers to support their children's learning at home. This can be done by:

- Agreeing two topics for one subject that pupils can study at home (approximately 1 hour)
- Agreeing two topics for one subject each weekend day

- Agreeing three topics for one subject per weekday in the holiday time.

Some pupils may find it useful to create a timetable to assist with their planning for studying these topics. A blank timetable is available at the end of each guide.

We hope that you will find the Essential Curriculum Guides a useful resource to support your child in achieving their target grade this academic year.

Teachers' reflections on online learning

It has been important for all teachers to connect with our pupils during the most recent lockdown. I found that through the use of Google Classroom I was able to have meaningful conversations around work and progress.

I was so impressed and pleasantly surprised at how quickly pupils adapted to their online live lessons. Pupils were able to maintain and replicate our high expectations in school online. They were able to show the passion for their learning, which I was worried might be missing whilst attending a lesson in front of a computer screen. It was a pleasure to witness humour and experience the personalities of pupils, which was missed massively in the previous school closure. A lesson that I taught on the crime of witchcraft in the Early Modern time period to year 10 pupils

comes to mind. I remember two pupils trying their hardest to convince me that witchcraft was real and that I should be careful!

I also respect the resilience of my pupils who consistently attended the lessons and provided me with high standards and quality of work

I feel so proud of our pupils and how they have learned in the Spring Term. Really well done to all of you.

Mr Garry

The COVID-19 outbreak has thrown up many challenges for schools and teaching staff. During the most recent lockdown, the teachers at Platanos college have risen to the challenge with creativity, compassion and care.

I was positively surprised by the ability and organisational skills of some of our pupils to cope with working independently. I also noticed that pupils who were often quiet in classrooms, were more confident in answering questions and expressing opinions online. In general, I have been positively impressed by the resilience of both staff and our pupils in response to the way that we work.

Ms Ahn: "One of the positive experiences of teaching during lockdown was to see how our pupils continued to show positive attitude towards their learning. I was really impressed by those who were engaged even during live lessons and always put a great amount of effort into their work."

Ms Bahia: "I was really impressed with our pupils' ability to use new online applications to support their progress. Some of the pupils even gave me tips

on things such as tools on the geometry software!"

Mr Daba: "At the beginning, it was challenging to engage with as many pupils as I wanted. After building a good routine with learners online, more pupils felt confident to actively engage in lessons. Using new tools, such as additional cameras and different screens meant that the delivery of lessons became more creative. It became a good experience and productive for our pupils."

Mr Persaud: "It was very pleasing for me to see nearly all of the pupils attending their lessons online on a regular basis. They were keen to learn and were engaged during the lessons. Their attitude was outstanding. I felt as though they were there with me in the classroom. Pupils wanted to improve their learning and were always interested in their progress and attainment."

Mr Sintayehu: "It was great to see so many pupils embracing the challenges of online learning, pupils were inquisitive and quickly adapted to editing the work set online."

Mr Tromba: "I have seen determination in some pupils to regularly join live online lessons and submit their work despite the challenges they were facing, such as technical difficulties or family circumstances."

In conversations with colleagues across the school, we have all been thoroughly impressed with the resilience, talent and determination of our incredible pupils. It has meant so much to us see our pupils engaging with remote learning. We are proud of how our pupils approached the 'new normal' with positivity and an open mind, which has enabled them to not

just adapt and survive but adapt and thrive.

Ms Bajaj

Pupil Anthology

Last year, our pupils across Key Stages 3 and 4 demonstrated their outstanding creative writing skills through a number of publications.

Who could forget the truly heart-warming, honest accounts of life during Coronavirus in last year's Life in Lockdown anthology? We were all amazed at the phenomenal range of creative writing pieces, depicting our pupils' thoughts, feelings and hopes during the challenges of 2020.

This year, our pupils are being given a number of opportunities to write for yet another school anthology, this time to be published at the end of the academic year.

So far, pupils across Years 7 to 11 have submitted interesting and thought-provoking pieces on the theme of Dreams and Nightmares. KS3 pupils took part in a lesson based on the theme of Dreams and Nightmares, studying 2 poems and art works before being challenged to create their own original pieces; some chose to write a short story, whilst others created their own poems.

Many pupils challenged themselves to complete the deceptively tricky task of summarising their thoughts into a 6 word story.

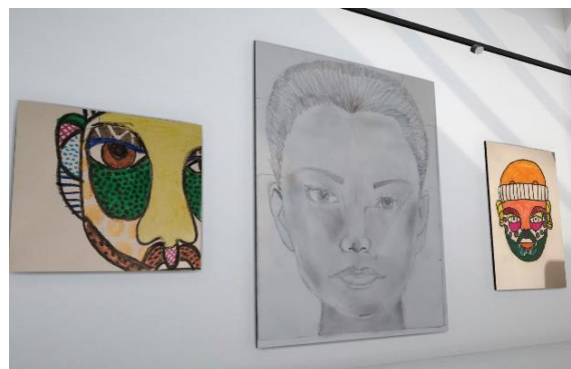
Over the Easter holidays, our pupils across all year groups are being given yet another opportunity to have their work published - this time, the

challenge is to write a creative piece on 1 of 3 opening lines or an image.

All pupils should see the guidelines on Show My Homework for the full details of what they need to do. We want all Platanos College pupils to have the chance to have at least one piece of work published at the end of the year; we can't wait to read more of their exciting, thought-provoking and insightful writing!

Ms Thompson

Virtual Art Gallery



The Art department are proud to present the wonderful artwork created during lockdown. Lockdown has been a challenging time for all of us, but through it all, pupils have been hard at work creating amazing art pieces.

To celebrate the achievements of our art students this term, we have curated an interactive virtual exhibition of their work.

The artwork ranges from reflection photography, portraits, mixed media collages, paintings and digital drawings.



Years 10 and 11 pupils have followed schemes of work that focused on their chosen discipline, to build skills and independence for coursework. Whilst pupils in Key Stage 3 continued with their themes of Portraits and Plastic Ocean.

We hope that all pupils are as proud of their work as we are, their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

To all our pupils, well done!

Ms Fletcher Thomas

The Creative Insider



Over the past twelve months, the *Creative Insider* has been helping our pupils stay focused and inspired. From laying down the gauntlet in providing practical art challenges to highlighting opportunities for the free streaming of plays, musicals, operas

and ballets, the magazine has provided alternative resources to replace those we would usually have access to outside of lockdown.

Theatres may still be closed but the network of creative communities across London and beyond continue to produce art for our enjoyment and therapy. Few can remember a time when imagination and ingenuity have been more vital in improving our mental health, so each edition has sought to promote mindfulness and healing through creative means.

Platforms such as *The Social Distancing Festival* provide powerful artistic responses to the difficulties of lockdown and the pandemic, which our pupils can view and process before sharing their own creative reactions.

With its finger on the pulse, the *Creative Insider* has continued to draw pupils' attention to the many opportunities our young people are afforded by living so close to the epicentre of many of our creative industries, with radio plays produced by our local theatres, public art installations and Southbank photography exhibitions being easily within walking distance to add some much-needed colour to our daily exercise.

Finally, spring has arrived and with it a renewed sense of hope for the eventual reopening of live theatres. This is longed for by so many, but with the timeline for the roadmap being impossible to guarantee, if delays continue, the *Creative Insider* will

continue as an outlet that will be able to offer some of the passion and joy longed for from live performance experiences.

Ms Valmarana

Virtual Parent Workshops

At Platanos College, we recognise that working in partnership with our parents/carers is vital in supporting the educational and social development of all of our pupils.

Since December 2020, the school's Educational Psychologist and two Assistant Psychologists have been running fortnightly parental workshops.

We recognise that the national lockdowns have been difficult for all in our school community and as a result, the workshops have focused on topics that support pupils' well-being and home learning. during this difficult time.

The topics covered in the workshops has been determined by parent voice and we have covered the following topics to date:

- How to develop your child's study skills
- How to manage behaviour as a parent
- How to support your child with home learning
- 8 ways to motivate your child

- How to support your child's wellbeing at home.

The workshops have had some excellent feedback. The highlights of the workshops have been:

- *Interaction with other parents*
- *The variety of topics covered*
- *The information around teen brain development*
- *Picking up techniques from other parents in the breakout rooms*
- *Everyone sharing their opinions, and I got good suggestions.*

The workshops will continue throughout the summer term and will continue to offer parents/carers strategies on areas that have been identified as topics of interest to parents/carers. Future topics include:

- Supporting your child with future planning
- Supporting your child to develop their reading comprehension skills
- Supporting your child to develop their numeracy skills
- The power of using growth mindset at home to support your child's learning
- How to build your child's self-esteem and resilience
- Top tips to prevent and manage your child's anxiety

If you are interested in attending a parental workshop or have any questions, please send an e-mail to info@platanoscollege.com.

Ms Henry

Head Boy, Head Girl and Prefect Team



Head Boy
Mohamed Khiar

Head Girl
Sumayah Abdulrahim

Mohamed and Sumayah are assisted by Deputy Head Boys Tassnim Abdessalem and Haysam Osman and Deputy Head Girls Rebecca Obadina and Laura Dogbey.



Deputy Head Girl
Rebecca Obadina

Deputy Head Girl
Laura Dogbey



Deputy Head Boy
Tassnim Abdessalem

Deputy Head Boy
Haysam Osman

Uniform

Please ensure that your child has the correct uniform for their return to school. **This includes hair cuts which should be of a straight forward style – natural colour without lines or patterns. Lines cut into eyebrows are not allowed.**

- Boys are not permitted to wear earrings. Girls are permitted to wear a small stud in the lobe of each ear. **No other piercings are permitted.**
- Uniform includes: school blazer, school tie in house colours, formal white collar shirt, grey or black trousers (not denim), black or grey skirt for girls, black or grey socks, school shoes (not boots/ canvas shoes/ trainer style shoes).
- Hair colour must be natural
- For girls who wear a hijab this must be only plain dark blue, plain black, plain white or plain grey.

Pupils who return to school in April with breaches of school uniform will be sent home until this is corrected.

Update to Contact Details

Please ensure the school office has all your current contact details, especially your current mobile phone number and email address and advise us immediately if any of these change.

If there are any changes, please let us know by informing the main office as soon as possible or email info@platanoscollege.com

Twitter

We are on Twitter! If you want to see our latest successes as they happen follow us @platanoscollege.

#attitudedeterminesaltitude