

Issue 26: DECEMBER 2019

# ISCA MATTERS



We wish you a  
Merry Christmas!



A roundup of our busy Autumn Term  
at Isca Academy, including outdoor  
education awards, dance, music,  
drama, poetry, science trips and more!



# A letter from the Headteacher



As ever it is difficult to believe that a term has passed already! This year marked the largest intake in the history of Isca Academy, with a Year 7 cohort 214 strong. And what a fantastic group there are proving to be! I have been impressed by their positivity, keenness to learn and respect for one another. This has gone a long way to making the start of this year a smooth and purposeful one. Having said this, a first year in a new, larger school is bound to present some challenges for any student, now or in coming months, and I want to reassure you that we are here to support your children and want to work with you to make the start of their secondary school journey a successful and enjoyable one.

As part of this, the buddy scheme trialled last year is now in full swing, pairing Year 7 students with older student leaders. The buddy pairs meet once a week during tutor time. This is a forum for younger students to share their hopes, aspirations, worries, questions, and for the older students to develop their mentoring skills. The student leaders are also responsible for looking out for their buddies around the school and helping them find their secondary school feet. Feedback so far has been very positive and we plan for this to become an established part of school life at Isca Academy.

Another important element of settling into secondary education is to embrace all that it has to offer. As a school, we remain committed to providing a full, rounded education and pride ourselves on our rich and diverse extra-curricular offer across sport, outdoor education, science, engineering and the arts. This continues to grow year on year and our renewed focus this year is on making clubs accessible to all students wishing to take part as well as inspiring those yet to get involved. And of course, extra-curricular activities are not limited to after-school clubs. Students have the opportunity to represent their tutor group on our Student Council, to become a member of the Student Leadership Team, to train as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, to join the Climate Champions, to bring their passion to the Debating Team, or to sign up for our new Student Cabinet, where students can experience political life, both within the school and in the wider community, including meeting local MPs and visiting the Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court. We hope that you will join us in encouraging your child to try new things. Who knows? They may discover new interests, new talents, or meet new like-minded people. If your child is interested in a club or initiative but feeling shy about joining, please contact their Head of Year or the club leader for a 'taster session'. Our staff will make sure they feel welcome.

As we look ahead to the Spring Term, helping students to keep balance in all aspects of their life will be particularly important for our Year 11 in the run up to GCSE examinations. For now though, the time has come to rest and enjoy the end of year festivities. The team at Isca Academy joins me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you again in January.

Aimee Mitchell  
Headteacher



# Winter Whirligig



Congratulations to all the sensational performers that took part in this year's Winter Whirligig on December 19th. The sellout audience enjoyed a show of Christmas favourites, an uplifting Johnnie Be Good, hits from the Arctic Monkeys and a fabulous sneak preview of School of Rock. A really wonderful concert to end the term!

Massive thanks to Mrs Vallance, Mr Wilkie, Mr Conibear and Mr Williams for their work with students to put on this great show!



## Coming Next Term:

A poster for 'School of Rock' at ISCA Academy. The poster features a central shield with a crown on top. The shield is divided into four quadrants: top-left has a red lightning bolt, top-right has a white star, bottom-left has a skull and crossbones, and bottom-right has a red lightning bolt. The shield is surrounded by a red border with white stars. The text 'ISCA ACADEMY' is at the top left, 'SCHOOL OF' is on a banner above the shield, and 'ROCK' is on a banner below the shield. At the bottom, it says 'ISCA ACADEMY PRESENTS TWO NIGHTS OF ROCK!' and '12TH &amp; 13TH FEBRUARY 2020' in large white letters on a red background. Below that, it says 'TICKETS AVAILABLE IN JANUARY'.

# The Colours of Black

by Willow, Year 7

The Christmas Eve sun is beginning to drown  
In the dusk behind the clouds  
As the night sky comes I only see  
The colour black, as dark as can be,  
But my friend hiding in the corner  
Sees more than the black border.  
Snow drying down the window  
Foxes padding in the meadow,  
Frost-bitten trees swaying in the breeze  
And out in the distance  
Out of the corner of her eye  
Santa Claus in the sky.  
All these colours in the air  
Yet so blind to those who stare.  
Relax your eyes, let your mind fly  
And yes, you will see  
The colours of black in the sky

# Knowledge Organisers

We are very excited to launch knowledge booklets to every student at Isca Academy in January. This follows a successful pilot this term with years 10 and 11. In summary, a knowledge booklet is made up of a series of knowledge organisers for each subject, linked to the core knowledge per unit of work being taught during the term.

A knowledge organiser is a set of key facts or information that pupils need to know and be able to recall in order to master a unit or topic. Facts can be chunked into different sections (for example 'key vocabulary, 'important people' or a 'timeline'). Students will be trained how to use these effectively over a 5 week period starting in January. All resources will be placed on our website, to enable students, parents and carers to align themselves with this new approach.

More detailed information can be found on our website, and we will be offering drop in sessions on parents evenings to further explain how they can be used. Please don't hesitate to get in touch for further information.

Gary King - Deputy Headteacher



*All Year 7 students received the gift of a book earlier this term.*

## Isca Academy is a Reading School

Accelerated Reader has allowed the English Teachers to engage in robust and constructive conversations with our Year 7 and Year 8 students about their reading habits and the individual progress they need to make. The software provides comprehensive information about each individual student in our class showing the areas they need to develop, together with clear targets for them to achieve. Each student completes a Reading Test and then is provided with a Book Level range for them to choose texts from that offer the appropriate level of challenge, whilst also remaining accessible. Students are asked to complete a quiz on each book which contributes to them achieving their Points Target. In due course we will establish a league of classes across both Year 7 and Year 8 to raise awareness of Isca Academy as a Reading School and of the success of our students in achieving this. We will also be congratulating individual students for their reading progress by celebrating awards such as most quizzes successfully completed in a timescale and the most words read, amongst other awards.

We already have our first Millionaire Word Reader which is an incredible achievement. Huge congratulations are due to Maja in Year 8. Several students have already met their target points and are striving towards reaching their third target now.

We would ask parents and carers to support your child's learning at home by discussing their book choices with them. Reading with them or listening to them read can be a really lovely use of time with your child. Encouraging your child to read every night so that they can complete quizzes and receive certificates can add to the competitive element of this scheme whilst ensuring your child is making great progress with their reading.

Overall it has been a purposeful and useful addition to the reading community at Isca Academy and one we will build and develop as we become more familiar with the system.

# Bude 2019

Our largest intake ever meant that the largest group of Isca students in our history went on a residential trip to Bude in October. Over 140 new Year 7 students joined our trip to Bude this year for a week packed with activity starting with early morning dips in the sea, runs on the beach and an enormous breakfast to fuel the activity in the day. Activities include surfing, body boarding, kayaking, cycling, caving, climbing, abseiling, or climbing up the high wires.

The amazing team of staff at Adventure International also organised activities every evening with games, movies, discos and theme nights so every moment was busy! It's a wonder that anyone has the energy to get up and do it all again the next day.

A huge thank you to all the staff that volunteer to go and support the students on this week, it's certainly worth it, as they develop strong friendships at the start of their Isca Academy journey and create great memories too!



# France 2019

In September year 8 spent a week in France. After a long, but unavoidable, day of travelling on the Monday, we spent our first full day completing a town trail in Brie. The clues were all in French but nobody got too lost. We used our French to buy all sorts of food - from baguettes to sweets and presents for family and friends. We also had a swim in the pool at the Château. The weather was not great but nobody cared.

On Wednesday we went to Disney and walked miles going from ride to ride. We returned to a dinner that included snails for those brave enough to try them.

On Thursday morning one of our coaches broke down but luckily it did not delay our departure for Paris by too much. If anything we missed the rush hour traffic. We walked up to the second floor of the Eiffel Tower - yes, walked! Why take a lift when you can use the stairs? We followed this with a leisurely boat cruise along the Seine. It was sad to see the aftermath of the fire at Notre Dame but heartening to see the repairs are well underway to bring it back to its former glory.

On Friday we stopped at Vimy Ridge - site of a World War One battle. We walked through the trenches in the footsteps of soldiers from both sides and listened to stories of those who lost their lives, but also the survivors of the Great War. It was a solemn visit but an important one.

It was an exhausting but fun week and the students were exemplary ambassadors for the school as always.



# Devon Climate Forum



On November 29th five of our key stage 3 students represented Isca at the Devon Climate Forum hosted by the UK Youth Parliament. The day offered the opportunity for our budding environmentalists to develop their knowledge of the climate emergency through a range of inspiring talks from members of the Friday's for Future campaign and Dr. Ben King, a United Nations Climate Change Teacher. Creative workshops were also offered from: Growing Devon Schools, The Devon Wildlife Trust, City Science and Plastic Free Schools who discussed issues ranging from food security, and production, the vulnerability of our ecosystems, to innovative scientific solutions to our carbon hungry lifestyles.

Most importantly, Isca students were given the opportunity to contribute their ideas to the Devon Carbon Plan; a net zero task-force made up of environmental experts, emergency services and local businesses. Some excellent initiatives were proposed by our passionate students who raised issues concerning the need for affordable public transport in order to reduce congestion and its associated pollution, and essentially, the need to redevelop the curriculum so that our environment is central to all we teach and learn. These students were a credit to their school community – well done to all!

# Youth Cultural Champions

This term we held our first Youth Cultural Champions event. This was run in the library during break and lunch time. We had Christmas music, treasure hunts, origami and competitions. The theme was where our Christmas traditions come from and how Christmas is celebrated around the globe. Our team worked very hard on the organisation of this, a huge well done to Bonnie, Josh, Macey, Andrew, Bella, Cody, Augustas and Aisha.

The atmosphere was buzzing and it was lovely to see our YCCS beaming with pride at the success. Our YCCs will be judging the competition entries and delivering the prizes before the end of term.



# Studio71

This term has seen the launch of our new art based wellbeing programme '**Studio71**' run by our Art and Textiles teacher, Amber Hughes. Studio71 is a calm and safe environment focused on improving student mental health and wellbeing through the use of art processes and activities. Each half term a new group of students are invited to take part following referral. This half term the focus has been on helping to improve levels of anxiety. Students who have taken part have said "*It has made me feel less pressure at school*" and "*It helped me stop worrying and took my mind off what was worrying me.*" If you feel Studio71 would be something that your child could benefit from, please contact our Inclusion team or your child's Head of Year so that they can be put on our referral list. The remaining focus areas are Low Self-Esteem, Social and Emotional, Exam Stress Year 11 only), 'Head space'

# Physics Challenge Accepted

Eight brilliant physicists from Y10 and Y11 (Joel, Sara, Joe, Hannah, Erica, Cosmo, Mya and Emily) took part in Exeter Maths School's Physics Challenge, competing with 15 other teams from schools as far away as Bournemouth.

The competition has three rounds, with exceptionally difficult problems.

The Estimation Round expects students to use their physics knowledge and any reasonable numbers they can come up with to answer questions like "What is the momentum of Asia due to plate tectonics?"

The Practical Round gave credit for creative ways of using limited equipment (a metre rule, spring, 100g mass, straws, string) to measure things like the mass of an AAA battery.

The VERY Hard Question round demanded a great deal of hard thinking, linking physics ideas together. "Can you tell how high the toy rocket will climb if all you're told is how much it compresses a spring?"

All eight acquitted themselves very well over the four hours of competition. They found it extremely challenging but really enjoyed the team atmosphere and the chance to really push themselves. We'll be back again next year to challenge for the top rankings!



# Catering students cooking up a feast

Congratulations to year 11 Catering students on completing their practical exam. Outstanding preparation, cooking and presentation skills, well done!



# Anti-Bullying Ambassador Training



Nine Year 8 students recently attended the Diana Award Anti-bullying ambassador training at Exeter School. The students represented Isca Academy brilliantly and networked with other passionate young people to exchange ideas and good practice regarding promoting an anti-bullying culture. Students left the day feeling inspired and full of ideas to take back to Isca Academy.

Students were challenged to develop an action plan and timeline for their ideas, they are now keen to share these with senior leaders at Isca. It is hoped that this will be rolled out to all years from the 2020-21 academic year.

Our new Isca Anti-bullying ambassadors are: Eliza, Ellie, Chloe, Alfie, Cody, Ruby, Codie, Stephanie and Nikol.

# Music and Performance at Isca Academy

## School of Rock

The annual Performing Arts trip to London took us to see School of Rock this year on the 14<sup>th</sup> November. Students got the chance to work with professional actors, singers, and dancers inside Pineapple studios before getting to watch the real thing in the Gillian Lynn theatre. Many of the students are also in the school production so hopefully took some inspiration from the West End show. An inspiring and exciting day!



## Mobile Phone Show

Mr Carter's Year 11 class performed the 'Mobile Phone Show' on the 4<sup>th</sup> December to an audience of friends and parents. This was for their component 2 coursework. It was a fantastic performance and the group should be really proud of themselves.

## Powderham Workshop

Members of the Isca Voices choir were given the opportunity to attend a workshop inside Powderham Castle with vocal group Apollo 5 on the 8<sup>th</sup> November. The group performed an acapella repertoire before teaching the 150 children present some of their songs. It was wonderful to sing with so many people and to learn from the group.

## Powderham Live

Two of our Music students secured spots at this year's Powderham Live event. Max and Mya represented us phenomenally and blew audiences away with their stunning performances. Both students performances can be found on the Powderham Live social media pages and on Vimeo.



# Dance Show

The annual Isca Academy dance show took place on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, with over 40 pupils involved in the evening. It was a chance for the pupils to showcase all that they have been working so hard on this term. Preparations for the show started in September, with most of the pupils giving up their own time to choreograph their work. It was great to see them full of excitement, and quietly proud of what they had achieved.

A big thank you to all that came to support the pupils, it was great to see you all there.



# Theatre Visits this term

Students have been able to attend several theatre visits this term both locally and in London. Here are some of their reviews:

## Humbug!

This production was, to put it simply, extraordinary. The atmosphere was perfectly haunting, the puppetry was eerily lifelike, the characters were convincing and had depth. I really liked the promenade aspect of the show and also the audience interaction; it made it feel all the more lifelike and immersive. The setting, too, built up the story beautifully – St Nicholas Priory was the perfect venue, adding all the right elements of mystery and intrigue. I think that my two favourite parts of the whole show was the puppet of Marley's ghost and the ghost of Christmas past's mind reading trick – I just can't understand how it is done! Overall, it was an unforgettable performance, and one which I would love to watch again.

Tallulah, Year 10



## An Inspector Calls

On Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 we set off from Isca Academy on a coach at 7:45am to visit London to see An Inspector Calls in the New Wimbledon Theatre. The coach journey was 4 hours long. At the beginning of the journey to London I felt joyous because I was on the way to watch An Inspector Calls as a performance. On the way up to An Inspector Calls we saw Stonehenge: it is 5,018 years old.

After arriving at Wimbledon we went to the nearest park for 30 minutes, the park was well looked after and peaceful. On the way we passed houses that have a price value of £1+ million with traditional Victorian features. The rain and coldness forced us into the nearest shopping centre. As we walked into the shopping centre we were greeted by the Christmas spirit that surrounded us. The shopping centre was quiet, calm yet full of Christmas decorations. While walking through the extravagant shopping centre we separated into our groups to explore the shops. There was a range of shops that everyone could enjoy and look in.

Then we all gathered back together and set off to New Wimbledon Theatre. The Theatre is 109 years old with stunning architecture. Walking into the Theatre we were greeted by thousands of students from other schools. Inside there were aspects of gold and scarlet red everywhere which caught our eyes. We then continued to our seats. Arriving at our seats, we waited patiently for the other schools to arrive for the play to begin. A few minutes went by and everyone started to have that feeling of excitement as the velvet red curtains began to open then the play started. At the start of the play we saw two boys, a girl and a higher classed house with the Birling family inside, smoke appeared out of nowhere and blanketed the theatre. We started to hear the family congratulate Sheila and Gerald on their engagement. We were enthralled in the show.

The staging was stunning: fireworks, smoke and moving buildings shocked us at one point. In a good way of course! The tension between the characters was electric and kept us on the edge of our seats. It was just wonderful to see a play we had studied in class brought to life on the stage in front of our eyes. It has really helped to make sense of the characters and the message of responsibility which Priestley was so concerned with.

We got home after 9pm after a long but hugely exciting day. It was a great experience and has made many of us want to go to see more plays at the theatre in the future.

Tegan and Casey, Year 11

# Outdoor Education - Autumn Term

## Ten Tors Day Walks

The training season started with two day walks on Dartmoor in November. New students to Ten Tors embraced the early start - 0530 hrs at Isca - with plenty of enthusiasm and enjoyed their misty days walk on the moors. Training returns in January 2020 with their first overnight camp on the first weekend back followed by a wild camp 2 weeks later.

## D of E Silver Award

In September and October 16 Year 11 students completed their practice and qualifying expedition walks for their Silver award. For both walks the 3 groups had to be self-sufficient for 3 days, camping 2 nights and walking between 30 to 37 miles in total with rucksacks carrying all their food, water, camping kit and spare clothes.

The initial walk took place in East Devon and the qualifier occurred in the Quantock Hill area of Somerset. Navigation skills were tested on the qualifying walk especially on the first night when one group had a spooky encounter in the woods and the students had to endure unkind rainy weather the following two days. All the students successfully completed the expedition section of the award and should be congratulated for their endeavours.

## Combined Cadet Force

This term has been busy with about 20 new Year 9 cadets joining the detachment and learning the basic military skills – drill, weapons handling and camp craft. Year 10's and 11's have demonstrated some great leadership skills by supporting and encouraging these new cadets.

In October nine cadets from Years 10 and 11 attended the Royal Marine CCF Pringle Challenge Trophy. Over the course of the weekend the students competed against 15 other CCF RM teams from all over the UK in 12 challenging events held at both Lympstone Barracks and Woodbury Common training area – these included Drill, Map Reading, First Aid, Stretcher Race, Assault Course, Indoor Rifle Shooting and the Endurance Course including the infamous water tunnels and Sheep Dip.

This event was a steep learning curve for all those involved however the students demonstrated a real determination to do their best against experienced opposition and exemplified the meaning of team spirit.



# Outdoor Education Presentation Evening

On Tuesday 19th November we held our Annual Presentation Evening for all the Outdoor Education events that take place at Isca Academy throughout the year.

We were very grateful for the attendance of The Deputy Lord Mayor of Exeter, Mrs Yolanda Hensen who presented the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver awards to over 90 students. She was joined by representatives from the Rotary Club of Exmoor and the Children's Hospice South West, to help present awards.

Awards were also presented to the Ten Tors teams, Exmoor Challenge winners, Exe Valley Challenge and Exe Valley Extreme winners.



# Isca Academy Sports News

It has been a huge term for Isca's sports teams with over 40 fixtures already this first term. Boys and girls, across years 7 to 11, have competed in football, rugby, netball, badminton, x-country, volleyball, futsal and indoor cricket with some amazing results!

Over 60 Isca students competed in the Exeter & Area X-Country championships earlier in the year against schools from across the county. All students represented us brilliantly with 12 progressing through to the next round, the Devon Championships. This event brought together the top athletes from across the area to compete for a spot in the Devon team, 3 Isca students have made it through and will compete in January at Stover School.

Netball has been booming this year at both club and competitive level. Some of our year groups have represented A, B and C teams which is amazing. Well done to all involved, plenty more to come.

Our Football teams have been very busy with boys playing at A and B team level across all age groups and our girls teams also doing fantastically well, particularly in years 7, 8 and 9. Year 9 deserve a special mention for making it through to the last 72 teams in the country in this years National Schools Cup.

Rugby continues to grow at Isca with teams represented at Year 7, 8 and 9. All year groups have improved so much over the year and had some fantastic results, winning against the other TWMAT schools. More fixtures to follow in January.

Badminton teams also competed, at the central venue league, earlier in the month with our Year 10 boys finishing 2nd overall.

Volleyball has been a new extra curricular club for us this year, linking with Exeter Storm Volleyball Club. This club is open to all years, boys and girls and all ability levels. The club has been led by Peryanaden Coolen (an ex national league volleyball player) who has coached and developed students skills this term including the serve, dig and set/volley techniques. Well done to all those students who have participated in this new club. Over 30 girls attend each week and we are currently seeking our first volleyball fixture for the new year.

On top of all of the above fixtures, and many others, we have had two lots of Isca Inter-house Sport competitions. The first term saw Apollo scrape a narrow early win with the whole school competing across tag rugby, netball and basketball. This term students have competed in football, endball, handball and fitness challenges.

Overall, it has been one of our busiest terms ever with many more students participating in extra curricular opportunities than ever.

Happy Christmas and New Year from all of the PE team and we can't wait to see you back in January for even more.



*New Volleyball Club in training*



*Year 7 Rugby Team*

# Spring Term Calendar

**1st half of term**

**Half term holiday**

**2nd half of term**

**Monday 6th January 2020**

**Monday 17 - Friday 21 February**

**Monday 24 February - Friday 27 March**

January 7th

January 11th - 12th

January 14th

January 15th

January 15th, 16th, 17th

January 23rd

January 25th - 26th

Year 11 Photos

Ten Tors Weekend Camp

Year 7 Parents Evening

Year 11 - Exeter College Open Evening

Year 7 Geography Field work (3 groups)

Academic Awards Evening

Ten Tors Weekend Camp

February 4th

February 8th - 9th

week of February 10th

February 12th & 13th

February 14th

February 25th

February 28th

Year 11 Parents Evening

Ten Tors Weekend Camp

Interhouse Sports: Dodgeball, Handball, Fitness

School of Rock: Musical Production

Exmoor Challenge Training

Year 8 Geography Fieldwork, Group 1

Year 8 Geography Fieldwork, Group 2

March 4th

March 7th - 8th

March 8th

March 10th/11th

March 19th

March 21st - 22nd

March 22nd

week of 23rd March

March 27th

Year 9 Parents Evening

Ten Tors Weekend Camp

Exmoor Challenge Training

Year 10 Geography Fieldwork

Year 8 Options Information Evening

Ten Tors Weekend Camp

Exmoor Challenge Training

Interhouse Sports: Tennis, Badminton & Table Tennis

Exe Valley Challenge Training Walk

Polite request to parents collecting students - please don't leave engines idling while you wait. We are working with students to reduce carbon emissions and it has been pointed out that this should be a factor to be addressed.

## Contact Us

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Isca Academy

Keep up to date with the latest news and information

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