



## Head's Half Termly Update

Autumn Term 1 - November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

### Platinum Artsmark Status

I am extremely pleased to announce the school's recent accreditation status from the Artsmark Council which we have to apply for every two years. We have been Gold for the last four years but have now been awarded the Platinum badge which shows progression and a significant achievement for the community. This is measured through noting that out of the 38 secondary schools that are Platinum London wide, we are the only secondary school in Islington to achieve this status. This has recognised the work that we do to support creativity both in and out of school, especially through our outward facing projects in the community.



**Artsmark  
Platinum Award**  
Awarded by Arts  
Council England

### Literacy Success!

Last year Year 9 students participated in a Literacy Trust project that involved watching a performance of Agatha's Christie's "The Mousetrap" and completing a workshop with a published author. They each then wrote the opening to their own mystery story which has now been published in a book. I praised them for their success at the start of this term in one of our favourite spaces in the school, namely the Library.



## **Attendance and Punctuality**

We might remind you of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality to school. This is the time of year where young people (and adults!) get sniffles and coughs, but we would like our young people to show resilience and come into school! Likewise, punctuality is an important skill to gain. Parents and guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually, and we would ask that you ensure that this happens!

## **Teaching & Learning**

We are pleased to report increased attendance to Homework Club which is in the library every day from 3 - 4 pm as well as from 8 - 8.40 am Tuesday to Friday. 96% of our students complete their homework on time and as parents you have played a significant role in making that happen, so thank you. We have been particularly impressed with the increased voluntary attendance of Year 11 to Homework Club demonstrating a positive attitude to learning and preparation for their forthcoming mock examinations. Year 7 have made a great start with their attendance to Homework Club which will instil some valuable study habits and build their confidence in class.

At the end of September, we hosted our second ever AMSI Lit Fest: a week-long celebration of poetry, prose and storytelling. With 4 jam-packed days and 15 workshops, students were delighted to welcome Raymond Antrabus, Zohra Nabi, Arji Manuelpillai and Michael Mann. It was a fantastic experience for our students to meet four diverse published authors, and learn about their process and journeys to success.

We were given the opportunity to take 10 of our year 10s for a 'Maths Art meet' trip to Guildhall Museum in Moorgate. Students were given a tour on pieces of art that have a high level of Maths content. They were then given a workshop where the students created a piece of art using techniques that they were taught in geometry. They produced some great work and the trip was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

## **Careers and Unifrog**

Unifrog serves as a comprehensive platform supporting students through every stage of their career progression journey. From initial exploration of interests to documenting achievements, discovering education and training opportunities, and even writing applications, Unifrog offers a holistic approach to career development. Not only does it benefit students, but it also supports teachers in managing the entire process.

To ensure students make the most of Unifrog, we've conducted introductory sessions during assemblies. Personality and Interests Quizzes have been shared with students, helping them in making informed decisions about their potential subject choices and career paths.

Moving forward, staff will integrate Unifrog into tutor time and lessons, using its features to deliver engaging lessons through the teaching resources provided. The platform enables the tracking of career interactions, simplifies the drafting of references, and streamlines the application submission process.

For these sessions to be effective, it is crucial that students bring their Chromebooks to school. This will enable seamless participation in lessons and ensure they can fully access the resources provided by Unifrog in their career exploration and planning.

### **Behaviour and Attitudes**

In September we launched our new behaviour systems, with 2 days of training in the AMSI Way. We are pleased to say that this has had an excellent impact - the school is a very calm place, which allows for good quality teaching and learning. We have done a lot of work with the students about regulating their emotions to ensure they are able to keep focus on their learning. Early indication shows that this has worked - we have seen a 35% drop in sanctions. Congratulations to the young people on picking up the new standard so quickly.

### **Personal Development**

We have launched the new School Council for the academic year 2023/24; our students have been very involved in representing the school during open mornings. Many of our prospective parents were complimentary about these students and their experiences as they toured the school. The Crisis Clothing Donations is underway and continues to be our charity focus for a second year running.



The school has been celebrating Black History Month. The focus this year was on the important role women play and we must highlight our themed assemblies that took place in October to share this. There was a school trip for over 50 of our students to hear the writer Jeffrey Boakye discuss his new book, 'Musical World.' and the poet Anthony Anaxagorou in situ. A visiting expert on the origins of the Kente cloth organised by the Head of Geography and an unannounced visit from ex students who are now members of the group NSG. They inspired our male students on the Becoming A Man (BAM) programme and Key Stage 4 Music students on how to

pursue a career based on your passion and aiming for success.

### **AMSI Talent**

We are all extremely excited about the upcoming **'Musician of the Week LIVE'** event on Thursday 14th December 2023 and, as always, look forward to welcoming lots of you to join us in celebrating the confidence and musical talent of our students. Previous performances can be listened to here <https://www.artsandmedia.islington.sch.uk/category/latest-events/music/>

The newer but equally impressive **'Composer of the Month'** feature is already providing students with a platform for sharing their creativity and compositional skill. On Thursday 30th November we will be welcoming 'Quartet Concrete' from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama to perform, amongst other things, a piece written by one of our current Year 11 musicians. Emily is currently

studying GCSE music and is, as well as being a fantastic drummer, a keen and prolific composer who is extremely comfortable writing in a number of styles. Emily has produced an exceptional piece of work that stylistically, has clearly been influenced by her listening to, and interest in, the quartets of Dmitri Shostakovich. In addition to Emily's composition the performance will also include Benjamin Britten's String Quartet No.1 Op.25, mvts 1 & 2.

#### Reminders:

- Clothing donations for the charity Crisis
- Students are required to bring their chromebooks fully charged to school every day
- The school door opens at 8.30am every morning - breakfast club available from 8am
- The AMSI way includes perfect uniform at all times and following our big ten rules
- Medical on Call - we introduced a system of medical on call in September. If students need medical assistance, trained staff will go to the students' lesson to give them medical support. Students should not present themselves to reception, as there will not be trained staff available to support them. Please reiterate this with your child.

#### Key Dates:

<b>20th November</b>	Year 11 Mock exams begin
<b>23rd November</b>	SEND Parent Coffee Morning - 09.15am - 10.30am
<b>30th November</b>	String Quartet performance showcasing Composer of the Month
<b>8th December</b>	Christmas Jumper Day
<b>11th December</b>	Year 7 Parents Evening 04.00pm - 06.30pm
<b>12-13th December</b>	Spanish students visiting AMSI
<b>14th December</b>	Musician of the Week Live Event - 06.00pm
<b>21st December</b>	End of Autumn term (Half day finish for all students)

Kind regards

**Susan Service**  
Head teacher