

## Aston Academy

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**Principal:** James Graham BSc (Hons), PGCE

**CEO:** Rebecca Scutt BSc (Hons), PGCE

21 November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Another Friday arrives and ends what has been a very cold but productive week for our students and staff. I promised last week that I would hopefully be in the position to share some exciting news. I am delighted that this week we have had it confirmed that the academy has been awarded a Gold Accreditation for the Pupil Resilience Award. This award recognises how our school actively promotes resilience across the curriculum and in every aspect of daily school life. Through thoughtfully designed lessons, teachers encourage students to embrace challenges, learn from mistakes, and persist through difficult tasks. Collaborative projects and problem-solving activities help students build confidence and adaptability, while pastoral support and wellbeing programs ensure they feel safe and supported as they thrive. Across subjects, we teach strategies for managing setbacks, reflecting on progress, and celebrating personal improvement. Outside the classroom, enrichment opportunities, leadership roles, and extra-curricular activities further strengthen students' ability to cope with change, overcome obstacles, and develop a positive, resilient mindset that will serve them throughout their lives.

The gold award encompasses 12 months of work, and I am both delighted and extremely proud that our staff, students and school has been recognised for the work we do, not only promoting the importance of resilience, but teaching it. This has been a journey which has highlighted how building resilience in all aspects of academy life can help with overcoming obstacles and ensure students have the skills to cope with life in modern Britain. A special thank you to Mrs Adams and Mrs Rhodes who secured the top award, I must also thank Mrs Booker who began the journey in 2024.

It is another reason to be proud, and I hope it continues to reassure you that at this academy we want to give our students every opportunity to be ready for the next stages of their education, have the tools to thrive and ultimately make a positive contribution to society.

I must also thank you, our parents/carers (and probably your friends and extended families!). You will remember we started an easyfundraising page, with my commitment that every single penny will go towards rewarding our students. I am delighted that so far we have raised £539, thank you. If you are not already signed up, please do so. Join easyfundraising for free, and every time you shop online with your favourite retailers, they'll donate to our school and won't cost you any extra. This is a great time to join as easyfundraising are adding an additional £2 donation for everyone that joins via the app. The link is [here](#) - please give it a go.

A huge well done and congratulations to our very own Chair of Governors, Mr Dave Lennox. The Mayor of Rotherham, Councillor Rukhsana Ismail and Councillor Victoria Cusworth, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, have invited Dave to Rotherham Town Hall on Tuesday 25 November 2025. Dave has been invited as he is to be recognised for his outstanding voluntary work over recent years, and the continued commitment that Dave gives as Chair of Governors at Aston Academy. Effective Governance plays such a huge role in our school improvement. Dave both supports and challenges, me and school leaders. He leads a team of ten Governors at the academy who ensure our academy decisions and actions all contribute to making a positive impact on our provision for students and staff. Congratulations Dave, it is great that Aston Academy is being represented at this event.

It is not yet December, but we are already thinking about our Christmas celebrations and activities for our students. Our Christmas lunch menu has been finalised and sent out, and year teams are thinking about Christmas rewards and treats. This is a good time to highlight a wonderful Christmas tradition we have at Aston Academy; our annual Christmas Snowflake fayre and extra treats on Friday 12 December.

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The academy raise money for Sheffield Children's hospital through a variety of Snowflake activities. So far, the academy has raised £35,527.29 since 2017 - an absolutely amazing effort! More details will follow closer to the time but below is some early information re 12 December and Snowflake.

- Snowflake Fayre - students can bring a little money into school and will have the opportunity to visit the fayre during the day. There will be a tuck shop, various stalls selling Christmas treats, crafts (great for presents!) and games to get involved in.
- Christmas Jumper Day - will be live on gateway for parents to make a £1 contribution. Students to wear the jumper instead of a blazer but over their normal school uniform (shirt/tie etc). It will be live on gateway from 5 December - 12 December.

Academy staff will also be attending the Snowflake lights switch on event at the Children's Hospital on 1 December and taking six of our lovely Y13 HSC students. I'm sure I will be able to share some pictures of this in a later letter.

As I mentioned last week, we very much appreciate your patience as we work to resolve the issues that have hampered the use of our cashless payments and lunch money systems. You will have received an update yesterday and we are very hopeful that this essential work will resolve many of our issues. The update yesterday explained that we are undertaking urgent technical work required to resolve the ongoing issues with our online cashless payment systems. This work could cause the unavailability of cashless payments while the changes are carried out. The necessary integration of SchoolComms with our new Management Information System (MIS) is scheduled for Monday 24 November meaning that SchoolComms would be unavailable from midnight Thursday 20 November.

While we anticipate the work will be completed quickly, potentially with SchoolComms being back up and working on Tuesday 25 November. However, we must prepare for potential outages. We appreciate your patience as we complete this critical step to finally resolve the payment issues. During this work please be reassured all children will still be able to access lunches on this day. We will update again on Monday with the progress the team has made.

On a personal note, I am looking forward to meeting and working with the Waverley Councillors who have kindly invited me to their council meeting on Tuesday 3 December. Our local MP, Jake Richards, met with myself and leaders last week to update on our academy plans and provisions. It is great to work closely with Government and community leaders. Their willingness to work with local schools can only be positive for our students and I will continue to reach out and seek support for provision. I will be sure to update you on our conversations in a future Friday letter.

On Monday we are very much looking forward to welcoming our parents/carers of our Y7 cohort. We have been absolutely delighted by the start to Aston Academy life this cohort has made. Monday will provide parents/carers with an update on the provision we are providing for the students as well as an opportunity for them to meet their child's group tutor and learn about what we do during our tutor period each day. Thank you to the Y7 team and Y7 group tutors who have been preparing these resources ready for the event. The role of the tutor is extremely important - they are the adult that will see your child at least once every day. That daily check in, positive words and delivery of our PSHE curriculum is something that adds to every child's sense of belonging at the academy. If your child is not in Y7 but you are interested in learning more about our tutor time and PSHE curriculum, please view [this link](#).

Have a wonderful weekend, when it arrives. The combination of home, school and student will make a difference.

Best regards,



**Mr J Graham**  
Principal

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