

Aston Academy

Aughton Road, Swallownest

Sheffield S26 4SF

t: 0114 287 2171

e: info@astonacademy.org

w: astonacademy.org



Striving for **Excellence**
Empowering Achievement
Shaping **Learning**

Principal: James Graham BSc (Hons), PGCE

CEO: Rebecca Scutt BSc (Hons), PGCE

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Dear parent/carer,

First week of a new half term, it has been lovely to have slightly brighter mornings and little warmer weather. It means that our students can get back outside at their break and lunchtimes, more students on our playgrounds, getting exercise and fresh air. It also means more of our competitive sports fixtures start up again, especially for our netball and football teams.

I love that our teams can regularly compete against Rotherham schools and it makes me very proud that we not only compete but are very successful. The students representing our community and being proud to play for the school and each other is very important in promoting the feelings of pride, belonging and team. I must also thank our amazing PE staff that give up so much time each evening to ensure these fixtures and opportunities run.

Our netball and football teams are playing fixtures in order to qualify for the finals of the Rotherham school's tournament that will be held on Saturday 21st March. So far, our Y8 netball girls have made it to the finals, qualifying on Wednesday undefeated, beating a very strong Wickersley team along the way. Our Y7 team play their qualifying tournament on 11th March. We wish them luck and hope to see them represented in the finals.

Not to be outdone by the Netball teams, our boy's football have been working through the qualifying rounds as they seek to qualify for the Rotherham football finals. So far, our Y8 team is through to the semi-finals after a 5-2 win in the quarter final. Our Y10 team have reached a quarter final after a great 8-1 victory in the round before. We also look forward to our Y9 teams' appearance in the semi-final of the Rotherham plate competition later in March.

I must not forget the amazing work our dancers are putting in as they prepare for the Showcase. This week they have been testing out the costumes and putting finishing touches to their routines. Our Showcase will run over two evenings on Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th of March. Keep an eye out for social media posts and ticket information.

Keeping to the sporting theme a huge congratulations to brothers Vinnie Johnson (Y13) and Seb Johnson (Y11) who represented Aston Academy and Rotherham in the South Yorkshire Cross Country Finals. As a result of their performance, they managed to finish inside the top 8 and secure a spot at the English Schools Championship in March. An amazing achievement for our school and the Johnson family. Congratulations.

I can't recommend enough the benefits of joining a club - this might be for competition or simple recreation; we have lots to choose from. Well, done to students and staff involved. It is important to me that our students are proud of their school and community, that they know that our sports teams and students can compete and win against anyone in Rotherham, Yorkshire or beyond. I have reported many times that the opportunities Aston Academy provides within and outside the classroom allow all our students to achieve, belong and thrive.

Below is a link to the clubs from our school website.

[Extra Curricular Clubs](#)

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My proud principal moment this week must go to our amazing Y11 cohort, who have finished their trial exams this week. Resilience, determination and a great deal of work on show throughout the exam series. Our Y11 staff are working to ensure that all curriculum areas are covered, exam techniques are well rehearsed, and students feel fully ready to take on the summer exam season with confidence. We are certainly very confident in the student's ability. We are putting details together for our Easter revision sessions and will share these once finalised by the Y11 team.

Next week the Y9 students will be completing SSA's (Standardised Summative Assessments). These are 50-minute assessments that are completed under exam conditions with external invigilators and 'GCSE' style rules and regulations. SSA's are unseen assessments that test learning over time. Ultimately all students will sit external GCSE exams at the end of their Y11, so we believe it's very important that students have an opportunity to experience a 'slimmed down' version of these. This allows students to understand the routines, become familiar with exam rooms and invigilator staff, while building the resilience and confidence needed to perform under exam conditions.

All our students have an opportunity to experience this during the academic year. We ensure all students are prepared and supported through this. We know that some students will need additional support to ensure they can access and achieve success and we will ensure that this is in place. The exam content is the same as what they would do if completing the tests in the classroom, the only difference next week will be the location. I know they will work hard, try their best and enjoy that feeling of achievement once finished. Good luck Y9!

I have mentioned a few times before in my Friday updates, but I just wanted to thank our parent/carers who have already signed up to our easyfundraising page. Together, through this cause we have raised £772, all of which goes straight into our students rewards and praise activities. Last month we were in the top 10% nationally for donations - an amazing effort by everyone who has signed up.

If you have not signed up, please follow the link and get started. Your support would be greatly appreciated. Please share with family and friends, it is easy to use and means we can afford more rewards, more often for more students! The link is below.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/aston-academy>

Next week I will hopefully bring you updates on our reading week, national careers week activities and share some experiences from our Disney trip. So why not finish with some good advice from famous Disney quotes to help all of us make next week a success.

- To our Y11 students and parent/carers racing towards summer exams - "Just keep swimming." – Dory, *Finding Nemo*
To our Y9 students preparing for SSA assessments next week - "You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." – Winnie the Pooh
- To our sport and performance teams preparing for their next challenge - "Venture outside your comfort zone. The rewards are worth it." – Rapunzel, *Tangled*
- and...For our Aston Academy community - "Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten." – Stitch, *Lilo & Stitch*

Have a wonderful weekend.

The combination of home, school and student will make a difference.

Best regards,



Mr J Graham
Principal

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