

Dear Parents,

Follow us on Twitter: @SPFSchools

With university offers rolling in and interviews beckoning for many, it might be easy to assume that a 6th form education is solely about achieving that coveted place. However, the purpose of education must be far more than achieving that single goal. Preparation of a flexible, thoughtful mind seems to be one of the most important goals we seek to fulfil. How often is it that we are reminded that students, perhaps increasingly, seek the 'right answer' as they pass through our education system of examinations? There may be some such answers, but the world will demand a very different approach as they move towards employment. With this in mind, it has been exciting to see so many students demonstrate this flexibility of thinking. This week we celebrated the success of our students in the Bebras Computational Challenge, which involved applying a set of problem-solving skills and techniques that software engineers use to write programs and apps. Examples of these techniques would include the ability to break down complex tasks into simpler components, algorithm design, pattern recognition, pattern generalisation and abstraction. What has been a particular pleasure is seeing the enjoyment students have gained from this challenge and that reflects a mindset which will serve them well.

As always when university offers start to increase, we have been monitoring trends in university entrance closely. We are reassured by the number of students who already have offers, in some cases generous ones from top universities. Some courses will make early offers but some students, most notably the medics and dentists, will have to bide their time and hold their nerve. Particular congratulations are due to some fortunate and talented students who have secured unconditional offers. Clearly this reflects a desire by many universities to secure excellent students early in the process. Whilst our students want the strongest courses, it's important to note that they are wanted too. Many students will be awaiting interviews over the fortnight ahead. They all carry our very best wishes. Not all can secure offers and for some this will be the first reverse they have suffered in their academic lives. I'm particularly conscious that this is a stressful time for parents too.

In the final newsletter this term, I am particularly keen to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of the performers in Jim Cartwright's "Road". To run a production in a professional manner and to reach such high quality is a testimony to a vibrant student life in the 6th form as well as to the exceptional support offered by colleagues, notably Ms Barrell and Miss Wood. We commend the outstanding talents of our students both on the stage and, very importantly, behind the scenes too.

Whilst the holidays provide a welcome break, the books, be they electronic or hard copy, should not be entirely set aside. Lower 6th A level students would do well to reflect on the fact that they are 25% of the way through their courses and will have significant subject tests in January. The Upper 6th IB students look ahead to their mocks immediately after the holiday, whilst their A level peers will have a series of significant subject tests later in the term. In short, the business-end of our work continues. Hard work now will pay enormous dividends for the rest of the year.

May I take this opportunity to wish all students and their families, in addition to the academic labours outlined above, a period of rest and relaxation with those dearest to them.

With best wishes,
Stuart Jack
Head of 6th Form

Talks at the College this week

Dark Energy and the Ever Expanding Universe

Dr Carolin Crawford from the Institute of Astronomy and Emmanuel College came to talk to the SPSFC Science Society on Wednesday. Students were challenged to get their minds round a lot of Physics as well as some philosophical ideas and a historical overview of developments in this field.



What is it really like to be a junior doctor?

Year 11 students joined potential medics in the 6th Form to hear about life as a junior doctor from Dr Francesca Crawley. Dr Crawley is responsible for Foundation doctors at West Suffolk Hospital and gave an insight into the realities of the transition from being a medical student to being a very newly-qualified doctor.



Juvenes Translatores 2015



Several 6th formers took part in the EU translation competition yesterday. They worked against the clock to translate texts from French, German and Spanish into English at the same time as many schools in every EU country. This was an excellent opportunity to experience the challenges of translating the untranslatable and achieving a balance between fluency and creativity alongside being true to the original. Students were only allowed paper dictionaries and needed to think how best to convey the meaning, confirming that Google Translate can't pick up on every nuance and translators as well as language teachers are still very much needed. The students were given special multi-lingual T-shirts for their efforts. Congratulations to all involved!



Alumni eNewsletter

If you are a parent who is an alumna of the school, you might be interested to see our latest alumni [eNewsletter](#), full of links to our alumni section of the website, and updates to a network reaching 2,500 alumni and former staff.

Please get in touch if you aren't on our mailing list already. You can join or update your details if you are alumni using [this form](#).

