



# The Cooper School, Bicester

Where 'Learning Matters'



Science

Issue No. 12

September 2009

## FROM THE HEADTEACHER



I would like to begin this first newsletter of the new academic year by welcoming all of The Cooper School students back after the summer break, particularly our new intake of 214 Year 7 students.

Although August was not the best of month weather wise, I hope everyone, students and their families, had an enjoyable and refreshing break.

September starts with a number of new initiatives and changes. Our Year 10 students are embarking on their new Key Stage 4 courses including an increased range of the new Diploma and BTEC qualifications and we are offering courses at other schools around North Oxfordshire including Bicester Community College, Gosford Hill, Warriner (Banbury), Wheatley Park & Lord Williams (Thame) as well as Oxford and Cherwell Valley College (OCVC).

Additionally students from these neighbouring schools are attending Level 2 Diploma Engineering courses in our Engineering workshops.

You already know that The Cooper School has been granted post-16 status and secured the necessary capital funding of £4m from Oxfordshire Country Council. Planning is underway for the building of a new block of classrooms to help resource this. It is envisaged that this will be in the form of a two-storey block with dedicated classroom spaces, ICT suite, common room, dining areas, offices, toilets etc. Two additional specialist Science Laboratories will also be built adjoining our current laboratories. Building work is scheduled to start towards the end of this academic year with a completion date of July 2011.

In August we saw the end of an anxious wait for our Year 11 (and a number of early entry Year 10) students as the GCSE results finally arrived. I am absolutely delighted, as are all staff at the school, at the high level of results attained. 64% of our students are leaving school with at least 5 GCSEs at A\* to C standard which is the highest level ever achieved at The Cooper School and is now the fourth consecutive year of increased performance in the key measures. This is a firm foundation for them to take forward into the next stage of their lives be it further education or into the working community and all of them carry our very best wishes with them.

Over the summer holiday the Facilities team have been hard at work further improving our school site. We have undertaken various major renovations around the school including fully refurbishing the Lower School Toilet Block. In addition we have provided the Humanities area with a major refit, refurbished the Gym Changing Rooms, replaced worn out paving with tarmac and refitted the Staff toilet block. We have updated our wireless system throughout the school and further updated one of our dedicated ICT suites. The Astro-Turf pitch has also been relaid over the summer with a new generation synthetic surface.

I am also delighted that our sports field site is having secure 1.8 metre high fencing erected around it. This will make it not only a more protected space but will eradicate the ongoing issues that we have had with dog fouling, litter etc. which has limited the effectiveness of what is a potentially fantastic sporting space.

A number of new members of staff have joined the school from September. I would like to welcome Rebecca Humphris (English), Lorna Box (Maths), Daniel Kirby (Maths), Andy Brown (Head of PE), Melanie Hirst (Learning Support), Peter Hogan (Cover Supervisor), Eleanor Desmond (Cover Supervisor) and Lorraine Luckhurst (School Counsellor).

We have noticed during the first few days of term that the flow of traffic into and out of the site is causing congestion before and after school. One of the initiatives in our travel plan is to encourage car sharing wherever possible. If you know of any opportunities to share your journey with a friend or neighbour please consider doing so; not only will this ease congestion and help the environment, it will also reduce your motoring costs and additionally help the school with its Eco Status Bid. Please take utmost care when bringing your vehicle onto the site, observing crossings and paying consideration to others.

There are some key dates in the first term listed at the end of this Newsletter.

In keeping with the Eco School initiative this will be the last hard copy newsletter published as a matter of course and sent home with the students. In order to reduce our carbon footprint and save paper the newsletter will in future be put on the school website and students will be advised accordingly. There will be a limited number of paper copies available for anyone without access to the world wide web. Please contact Reception if you would like a copy.

**B Baxter**



Parent Voice is NOT a PTA or Fundraising committee.

Just an informal discussion of projects and ways to improve school life.

Current discussions relate to the NEW sixth form, safety regarding internet access, and many others.

**NO COMMITMENT TO ATTEND ALL MEETINGS**

Next gathering is Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at 7pm

**COOPER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY  
PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE**

**PARENTS**

**If Your Child Has To Miss School**

- Contact the school by telephone, fax or Email if possible on the first morning of the absence, so we are aware of the problem.
- If your child is ill, it is helpful if you can give us some idea of how long the absence might last.

**When a Student Returns to School**

- On the first day back they should have a signed and dated note of explanation for their absence (use their Planner for this).

**Prolonged Absence**

- If you know your child will be absent from school for a prolonged period let us know as soon as possible.
- If the absence can be supported by a medical certificate the school may be able to arrange some home tuition. Currently Oxfordshire will provide home tuition after the first month of medically certificated absence.
- Parents may be asked to provide a medical note to explain prolonged or spasmodic absence.

**STUDENTS**

**When You Return to School After An Absence**

- Remember to show the absence note in your Planner to your Form Teacher on the first day back.
- Ask your subject teachers about the work you have missed and make arrangements to catch up.

**HOLIDAYS IN SCHOOL TIME**

Parents are reminded that it is never advisable to take holidays in school time. In particular parents need to be aware that many examination courses are of a modular format so external examinations now take place throughout the school year. Students from Year 8 onwards are entered for national external examinations which run to a fixed timetable and for which there are no resits. It is therefore vitally important that parents do not endanger the prospects of their children attaining valuable qualifications by booking holidays in term time.

**BICESTER SCHOOLS  
JOINT CAREERS CONVENTION**

**Thursday 14 January 2010  
The Cooper School Sports Hall  
6.30—8.30pm**

**YEAR 10: WORK EXPERIENCE  
Monday 12 July — Thursday 22 July 2010**

More information will follow, but if any student has already been offered a placement, please give details (name, address and contact telephone number) to Mrs Denial in Reception.

**DIARY DATES**

**2009/2010 DATES**

**TERM 1**

Tuesday, 1 Sept	INSET DAY
Wednesday, 2 Sept	INSET DAY
Thursday, 3 Sept	Yr 7 & 10 students only return to school
Friday, 4 Sept	Rest of students return to school
Friday, 2 October	INSET DAY
Thursday, 22 October	End of Term 1

**HALF TERM HOLIDAY:**

**Friday 23 October 2009 – Friday 30 October 2009**

**TERM 2**

Monday 2 November	Students return to school
Friday 18 December	End of Term 2

**CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS:**

**Monday 21 December 2009 — Friday 1 January 2010**

**TERM 3**

Monday 4 January	INSET DAY
Tuesday 5 January	Students return to school
Friday 12 February	End of Term 3

**HALF TERM HOLIDAY:**

**Monday 15 February 2010 — Friday 19 February 2010**

**TERM 4**

Monday 22 February	Students return to school
Wednesday 31 March	End of Term 4
Thursday 1 April	INSET DAY

**EASTER HOLIDAYS:**

**Friday 2 April 2010 — Friday 16 April 2010**

**TERM 5**

Monday 19 April	Students return to school
Monday 3 May	BANK HOLIDAY
Friday 28 May	End of Term 5

**HALF TERM HOLIDAY:**

**Monday 31 May 2010 — Friday 4 June 2010**

**TERM 6**

Monday 7 June	Students return to school
Thursday 22 July	End of Term 6

**SCHOOL COUNSELLOR**

If you have any worries or concerns, our School Counsellor is happy to discuss them with you in private. A form is available from Reception if you would like to book an appointment.

**PHOTOGRAPHS POLICY**

The School has been very active on publicity recently and have published several photographs of students in the press. If you do not wish your child to appear in any press releases please inform the School in writing.