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Headteacher - Mr Barry Doherty

Deputy Headteacher – Ms Natalie Hancock

Assistant Headteachers – Mr Daniel Gent and Mr Alan Trainer

15 October 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

One Type of Rehearsals – Wednesday 17th October

Last minute practice is underway to bring you a wonderful showcase of CNS talent on Wednesday night at 7pm. Songs from a range of musicals including *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound of Music*, *Shrek*, *Amelie* and *West Side Story* will echo from the Main Hall with refreshments provided again by our super PTA. We hope to see lots of families there! Please see Mr Brown or Mr Franklin for more information. Unfortunately, I have been told that there isn't enough time for my rendition of *Edelweiss*.



And Another Type of Rehearsals – Week Beginning 5th November

The Year 11 examination rehearsals will begin during the second week back after half-term. It is therefore impossible for our Year 11s to imagine a nine-day break from it all and must instead put into practice a sensible revision programme. Their teachers will have already provided advice on what they need to focus their time on and please do not hesitate to contact your son or daughter's teacher if you have any questions whatsoever. And so the big question is... *how much should they revise?* My answer is always the same and is based on the fact that a basic working week for adults is 37 hours. Given your son or daughter's revision is an investment towards a lifelong goal then I would strongly recommend that at least 4 or 5 hours per day is spent revising, with some days and plenty of time set aside for rest and fun.

The Wrong Trousers & Skirts – Focus Fortnight

Over the past two weeks we have, as staff, emphasised the rules on mobile phones in class and lessons and have been really pleased with the response from students. Either side of half-term our emphasis moves on to ensuring that everyone wears the correct school trousers or skirt. Even after six weeks too many students wear canvas / jeans instead of black trousers, or skin tight / very short skirts. We shall be drawing this to relevant students' and families' attention this week and sincerely hope that parents and carers will use the half term break to remedy all outstanding problems for that first day back on 29th October. Mrs Thomas can arrange confidential support for families in need of financial assistance: gthomas@chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk.



Emerging School Improvement Priorities – Part 4 of 4

The focus of the first three emerging priorities may not appear at first glance to be on the students themselves. Naturally, everything we do must be and will be with the students' futures and needs at its heart. However, our students cannot be passive recipients of things the adults do or say – most of what we seek to achieve will amount to little if our students do not change and improve with us as well.

To me at least, character is what we are like when no one is looking, whereas personality is what we are like when others' eyes and ears are very much upon us. We see great *character* everywhere at CNS and see widespread evidence that our students, your children, are driven by a consideration of others. But we also know that queue jumping, litter dropping, insensitivity, smoking, swearing, teasing or even occasional bullying isn't as rare as it could be, or needs to be, to be a truly amazing school.

Amazing schools cannot count the tiny and seemingly insignificant acts of kindness, helpfulness, altruism and community-mindedness that sees all students driven by what is inherently right and just and not simply what the rules say.

The vast majority of students at CNS are committed to their future and make major personal sacrifices to ensure they reach their academic goals and personal dreams. But we seek more of that outward commitment to others; to less fortunate strangers whose lives our students can transform. By actively fundraising for local, national and international causes, by participation in pressure groups or democratic movements that seek to create a better world, or simply by reminding their friend when they've left their litter behind or tell a classmate that their comments or interruptions are not fair or helpful, we will, as their educators, discover an ever more fertile ground in which to sow those seeds of wisdom and lifelong happiness.



We plan to assign a virtue or value to each of our Houses and then ask students to choose charities to support so that we can find ways to echo President Kennedy's call to ask not what your world can do for you, but what you can do for the world. We shall develop a new way for students to evaluate their own personal development and explore the balance of what they get and give to this world. Meanwhile, we shall revise our behaviour policy so that consistently high expectations are sought every day in every part of the school, but are driven by a renewed focus on how we have fallen short of our ideals, rather than which rule has been broken. With a shared understanding that behaviour is merely the symptom or product of our academic, social or emotional state, we will become ever more centred on removing the causes of poor choices and challenging ourselves, the student, or their family, to make the necessary changes to be the best we can all be.

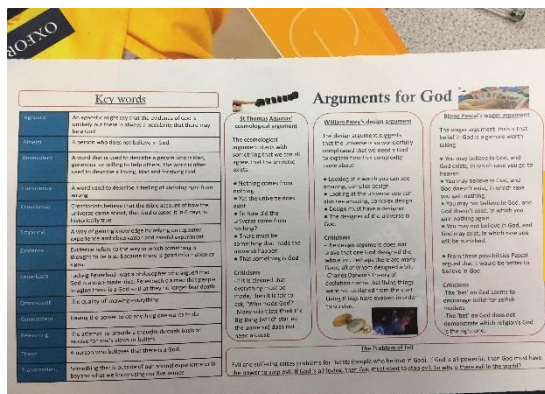
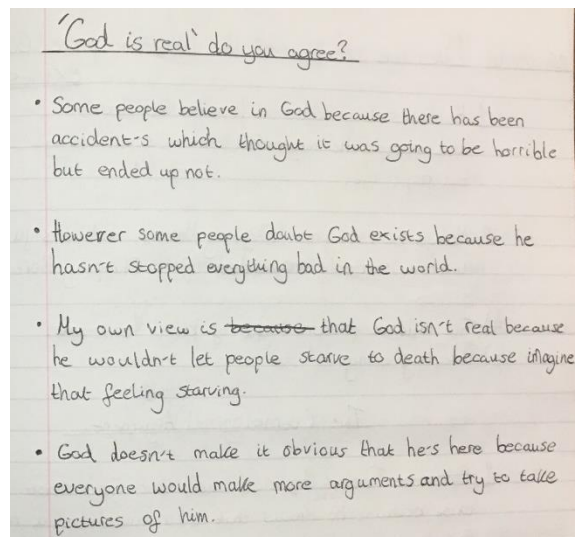
Great leadership of others surely begins with great leadership of ourselves. This starts with our students taking extraordinary care of their own health, wellbeing and education, and encouraging them to be a true asset within their family and amongst their friends. We seek them to be active and admired members of their local community and behave with certainty that we must not be a product of the world, but it become a product of us.



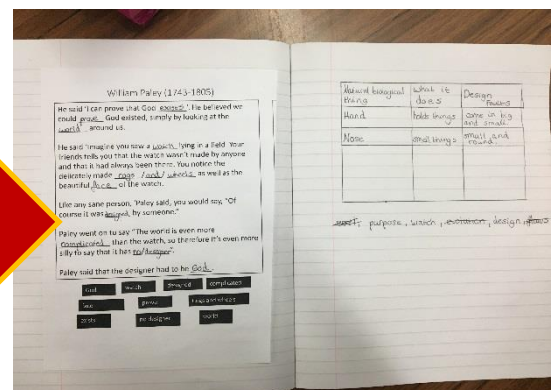
“God is real.” Do you agree? - Out and About in Lessons – Year 7 RE

Those less familiar with education are sometimes unclear how RE lessons are used in non-denominational schools, or indeed across a more secular and culturally diverse society. A visit to Mrs Jackson and Mr Ward’s RE lessons last week perfectly illustrated the manner in which RE is used to develop higher-level critical thinking skills, whilst deepening their knowledge of how a range of faiths and traditions seek to understand life’s fundamental questions.

Last week, our Year 7s explored William Paley’s theory that the complexity that exists within nature ‘proves’ the existence of an intelligent designer or ‘god’. The teaching was not designed to steer students’ minds in one direction or another, but to nurture their critical thinking skills so that they may arrive at a personal response based on reason and argument. As one student said to me, “On one hand if you look at the complexity of the rainforests, you can understand why there might be a god behind it all. But then when you think of tsunamis and hurricanes it makes you doubt she or he exists.”



From Knowledge
Organiser to
lesson activity.



As with all great teaching, the teacher is gradually building up the students’ knowledge whilst adding greater complexity to their thinking. Note the writing of one student in those four bullet points. The next logical step in her thinking and learning will be to explore whether the existence of a god and evil or suffering in the world are compatible. This will then move on to the meaning and importance of free will – and therefore what does it mean to be a human being.

Half-Term: Monday 22 to Friday 26 October

It is very, very difficult to believe that seven weeks has already passed this year. I feel sure that everyone is looking forward to some additional time with their family and friends after a busy start to the year. Please have a great short break and we look forward to the start of the new term at the normal time for all students on Monday 29 October.

Yours sincerely

Barry Doherty
Headteacher

Tickets for Joseph on sale now.

Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Tickets: £7 and £5 concessions.