

Acceptance – Kindness – Responsibility – Perseverance - Aspiration



IMPORTANT Term Dates

March 29

British summertime begins!

April 5

Easter Day

April 23

GCSE public exams begin

May 4

May Bank Holiday

May 18

Walk to School week



Message from Jacquie



Welcome to the spring edition of iTimes.

We have been publishing our newsletter since December 2020 – nearly 6 years ago! When I look back at all the copies, I am very proud of the variety of academic and enrichment activities that iCollege offers learners and what a fulfilling and stimulating environment we provide.

We have recently carried out some surveys to find out what you think, and here are some of the great things that learners have said:

- “They make sure I go to lessons.”
- “They cater for your needs.”
- “They look after you.”

And parents and carers said,

- “They make sure that children are listened to.”
- “They offer great opportunities.”
- “They go above and beyond.”

So I am pleased we are all on the ‘same page’; iCollege is a place to learn and thrive!

Our Easter holiday starts on Monday 30th March and we return to school on Monday 13th April. Have a lovely break and enjoy some quality time with family and friends.

Jacquie Davies, Headteacher

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN STATEMENT

- The iCollege and its Management Committee take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in their care; this includes providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have best outcomes.
- The iCollege and its Management Committee ‘ensure that staff have the skill, means and training necessary to ensure children and young people are protected from harm’.
- The iCollege and its Management Committee endeavour to ensure that we work together with all agencies, services and other provision regarding the safeguarding and wellbeing of children in our care. **Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.**

Children’s Act 1989
 Section 175 of Education Act 2002
 Safeguarding Children 2014
 Working together to safeguard children 2025
 iCollege Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy September 2025
 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2025

Support for keeping children safe online

Online safety advice for parents – click on the link to discover how to talk to your children about AI, and online safety.



<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>



Tellmi is an app the NHS deems safe for children as young as 11. It’s a safe, anonymous space where you can talk about anything. From anxiety to divorce you can get support for your worries. All posts are checked by trained moderators who can signpost support. Click on the logo for more information.



Inspiration

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This year's topic was 'What's your curiosity?' We had fun designing and making rafts that float.

We also carried out some curious experiments. For example: 'Does toast always land butter-side down?' This activity was designed to get us thinking about probability. Murphy's Law says falling toast always lands butter-side down, but is this true? We flipped toast and kept a record of how it landed. It turns out toast does not always fall butter side down!



Inspiration learners watched a video clip to learn how showing empathy with kindness can make a huge difference to someone. We decided to pick from a selection of iCollege learners that we do not know and send them a helpful and kind message. We are looking forward to hearing how their messages were received!

Mosque Visit by Oscar (Inspiration learner)

On Friday 27th February, iCollege Inspiration went on a school trip to a mosque!



Starting off by taking off our shoes at the front door, we met our Imam who gave us a tour and the facts about religion and the building. We began asking questions on the ground floor, where we had an introduction about the difference between Christianity and Islam. We then headed downstairs to the basement which was very different to where we started off from. Used as an overflow praying area, football pitch and dinner / breakfast hall, we got told about what times of day Muslims pray and where they pray towards. They pray 5 times a day towards Makkah, Saudi Arabia. During Ramadan (2026 Ramadan was from 18th February to 21st March, however this will be 10 days earlier every year). Muslims observe a fast between sunrise and sunset to think about the poorer people who don't get a choice to eat or not.

Whilst we were downstairs, we were taken to a different room where we were shown a room for washing. We learnt that before prayers, an important part of the Muslim faith is to wash your hands, face, head and feet.

Visiting the mosque was a unique experience and very worthwhile. It was really interesting learning about the Muslim faith directly from an Imam. What was also good was that we were given a 'goodie bag' to take away!



Floating and Flying at Forest School

We talked about how we think things float or sink and even discussed how insects can stand on water.



Then we made boats out of paper, tin foil, sticks and tape. We added rocks slowly to see if they could keep floating!



We also looked at the best design to make a paper plane fly.

We built a platform out of logs and rope to launch our paper planes from.

Integration

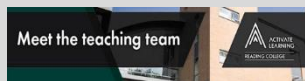
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With the arrival of some half-decent weather, learners have been tasked to create a fence along the outer carpark. They have used some leftover concrete blocks, branches and sticks to build a structure. The aim is for nature to take over and make it sturdy enough to stop the football rolling into the stream below!



Year 11s take note for your post 16 options!

Most Year 11 learners have completed their college applications. Please check college emails regularly—if a college receives no response after two emails, they may call and then withdraw the application. Popular courses fill up quickly, so missing communication could mean reapplying and losing a first-choice course.



Meet the teacher sessions are a compulsory part of Reading College's enrollment. Please click <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/meet-the-teaching-team-reading-2964179> to find a date and time that suits you.

Sparsholt College Open Evening is on Wednesday 29 April 2026, from 5:00–7:30 pm. Book your place online. <https://www.sparsholt.ac.uk/opendays/> Choose subject tours (each lasts about 1 hour—avoid booking overlapping times). You'll explore the campus, tour facilities with lecturers, and speak to staff. Only one ticket is needed per learner; additional guests can attend without booking.

Newbury College learner interviews are ongoing. If your young person hasn't been invited, check emails and contact the college or Ali Haynes (Careers Leader) 07464895993 or ahaynes@icollege.org.uk. Watch for emails about transition sessions—accepting these is important to secure enrolment in August.

West Berkshire Training Consortium (WBTC) are based in Newbury (near the train station) They are a great alternative to college. [Click here for more!](#) If you're interested in an **apprenticeship**, [click here](#).

Please speak with Ali if you have questions about any of these options.

Bespoke learners have been sitting their Functional Skills maths exams and are in the process of sitting their Functional Skills English, too. We are delighted to share that many have achieved positive results, reflecting the hard work, resilience and commitment they have shown throughout their studies.

Preparing for these studies is no small task. Learners have been developing their reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills and it has been fantastic to see their dedication pay off. Passing Functional skills is an important milestone that helps learners build confidence and equips them with essential skills for further education, training and employment.

Congratulations to everyone who took part – your achievements are something to be very proud of!

Attendance

Inspiration	99%
Integration	90%
Intervention	88%
Independence	93%
Pod	99%
Pod+	99%
Whole School	94%

*Figures include authorized absences

[Why is attendance important?](#)

Independence

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Learners at Independence are gearing up for their GCSEs with a set of practice exams. This is a great opportunity for them to see what it will be like when the 'real things' begin next half term. It's also a chance for us to work out how best to support with access arrangements, organisation rooms and allocation of readers and scribes. Good luck year 11!

TIPS FOR COPING WITH EXAM STRESS

1. Stay positive and try your best
2. Stop and breathe
3. Exercise and eat healthily
4. Get plenty of sleep
5. Drink water regularly to stay hydrated
6. Seek support if you are struggling



Pod+

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We have had a great term leading up to the Easter break with lot of detailed drawing, oil pastels and clay work linked to dragon eyes. The learners have been able to show their creative side and the standard of work has been exceptional.

In maths, we have been working on long division, fractions and angles. We have completed some really complicated calculations and can explain the process in detail, showcasing our increasing knowledge and understanding.

We have also been getting ready for the first planting season, and with lots of weeds in the beds, we have been busy digging the ground preparing it to start.





Work Experience Focus

Here's Y11 Ollie on 25th February, finishing his work experience with Rebound and holding his feedback form. Congratulations Ollie—you achieved 'Very Good' or 'Excellent' in every category, including attendance, engagement, attitude, following instructions, and behaviour. You've also created valuable portfolio evidence for your future Digital Skills course at Newbury College.



Well done as well to Y11 learners Daniel, Jack, Bobbie and Charlie who completed work experience this term. You've gained insight into careers, developed key workplace skills, and gathered useful experience for CVs, interviews, and references to support your next steps.



National Work Experience Update!

In May 2025, the government introduced new guidance to give learners earlier, more hands-on experiences of the workplace. Years 7–9 will take part in a week of employer-led activities across the year, while Years 10–11 will focus on meaningful work placements.

At iCollege, we already offer strong placements and are now expanding opportunities for younger learners, with plans for visits and placements for Years 9 and 10.

If you can offer a visit or placement, we'd love to hear from you—thank you for supporting our learners' future pathways.

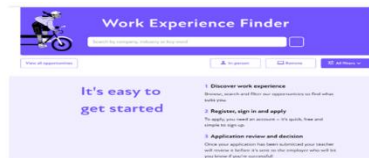
Online work experience opportunities

Check out on-demand opportunities with **Springpod** (click on the image):



- For young people aged 13/14 +
- Range of employers.
- Create a log in and get started
- Watch a minute video
- Work through the modules
- Gain a certificate of completion

Or explore the range on offer with **Futures for All** (click on the image)



Pod

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In Pod we have been looking at Edible Gardens. We examined and sketched familiar herbs and looked at delicious strawberries. We have linked this to our WW2 topic when people were encouraged to grow their own food, something we are planning on doing in the summer term.



We have also been focusing on our core value of **kindness** by learning to play collaboratively, share resources, help one another and use kind words.

Intervention

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In science at Intervention, learners are focusing on the effects of diet, exercise, alcohol and smoking.

In the garage, the Honda adventure bike has been diagnosed with a faulty fuel tap. A new one has been ordered and is awaiting fitting.

And science week has seen a collaboration between maths and science to answer the question, "Are all humans square?"

A 'square' human is one whose height is the same as their arm span.

Everyone was measured and results are being examined. Can you predict how many learners and staff at Intervention are 'square'?



On March 12th, learners took part in a thought-provoking workshop delivered by the charity, '**Stand up to Violence (SAV)**'. Learners heard about the dangers of county line involvement and how this exploits young people as well as the serious risks involved and the consequences can have. Learners responded thoughtfully to the discussions and challenges posed. We are very grateful for Stand up to Violence for delivering such an informative session.

Everyone at Intervention wishes you a Happy Easter!



Our iCollege Community

Given the nature of my work, I'm often approached by parents and colleagues with questions about their own children or those of a relative. Such questions always come from a position of love and concern, and they are often peppered with ideas on what makes for being a 'good' parent, ideas gleaned from books, popular culture, and alloparents. Whilst I'm not proposing to present the definitive stance on this issue, one way of consolidating the decades of research on child and adolescent development is a theory of parenting styles developed by Diana Baumrind in the 1960s. Imagine an xy graph, with responsiveness as the x axis, and demandingness as the y. Responsiveness refers to parents' sensitivity towards the child's needs, whilst demandingness refers to the expectations parents place on behaviour. Essentially, warmth and structure. In this model the ideal is to be authoritative: displaying high degrees of warmth and structure. As parents and school staff, we all know that children aren't small adults. What they need from us is not always what they immediately want. And if they are raised in an environment of warmth and structure, they are far more likely to grow up to become independent, responsible, confident, and aspirational.

iCollege counsellor

A Note from the Governors

As we reach the end of term, the governors would like to say a big thank you to all learners, staff and families for the hard work, perseverance and support shown across the iCollege community this term.

Before we close for Easter, however, we feel obliged to report on something slightly unusual. There have been unconfirmed sightings of a rabbit being spotted outside Inspiration. Witnesses describe a fluffy individual hopping purposefully around the playground area, carefully inspecting the grass borders with what can only be described as *professional interest*. Shortly afterwards, several rainbow-coloured carrots were discovered nearby. After some entirely serious governor research (definitely not snack-related), it has been discovered that each colour carrot has its own healthy superpower:

Orange carrots – help keep our eyes strong so we can see clearly.

Purple carrots – help protect our bodies and keep us healthy.

Yellow carrots – help keep our brains working well.

Red carrots – help keep our hearts strong.

White carrots – help our bones grow strong.

During the investigation, a handwritten note was also discovered which read: 'Eat your carrots. They help you see the chocolate eggs coming.' Wise advice indeed – *it seems our Easter bunny likes chocolate too.*

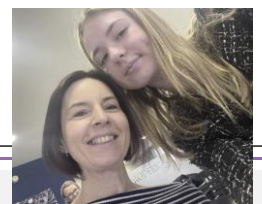
On behalf of the governors, we wish everyone a restful and happy Easter break and look forward to welcoming everyone back next term.



At a loss in the holidays?

Alumna making headway!

Summah left iCollege last year and has taken up an apprenticeship with Roderick Anthony hairdressers in town. She is working very hard and doing brilliantly. In fact, I went for an appointment with Summah where she expertly coloured my hair. I would highly recommend her!



I'm really pleased to announce that we raised £1500 from the Tesco Blue Tokens.

This money will go towards school trips equipment.



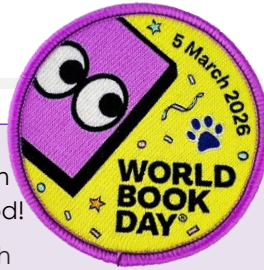
Support Revolution

Huge thank you to Support

Revolution for donating computer monitors and other office equipment (and to Rachel for organising it)!



And Finally...



World Book day was celebrated across the service with learners reading different texts with connections to food!

World Book Day at **Integration** was brought to life through a creative exploration of the iconic Bruce Bogtrotter scene from *Matilda*. Learners immersed themselves in the dramatic events, using the scene as the foundation for writing their own newspaper articles, reporting on the cruel and unjust punishments of Miss Trunchbull. To make the experience even more memorable, learners also had the chance to sample their own *Matilda*-inspired chocolate cake during the lessons!

At **Inspiration**, a Tiger came to Tea! We dressed up and had lots of fun decorating our faces.



As part of our World Book Day celebrations, **Intervention** spent time exploring what makes an effective ghost story, using *The Woman in Black*. We read short extracts and examined how the setting created suspense. Learners took part in activities and watched film clips to bring the story to life. To finish, we gathered for refreshments in true, Edwardian spirit complete with proper teapots, sandwiches and amazing cakes!



Pod had a great time on World Book Day, reading *The Giant Jam Sandwich*, a story about a village that tries to get rid of 4,000 wasps by creating a giant jam sandwich. Inspired by this, we made our own jam sandwiches and created ideas to get rid of the wasps. Ideas included: a giant bug spray (Darcy), giant jam toast (Evie), a giant jar of honey (Louie), a giant cake (Ciara), and a giant fizzy drink (Rachel). Everyone had lots of fun—especially enjoying their jam sandwiches, wasp-free!



For World Book Day, Year 11 at **Independence** enjoyed a day inspired by *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, with staff dressed up as beloved characters to set the scene. We explored an extract from the novel, comparing Roald Dahl's vivid storytelling with its film adaptations, and tackled GCSE-style questions to sharpen our analytical skills. Learners also created delicious cake pops in their food lessons, and we finished by enjoying Willy Wonka chocolate bars and other treats—adding a sweet touch of imagination to the day.

Our World Book Day celebrations at **Pod+** consisted of work around the theme of food from well-known books. We decided on the Mad Hatter's tea party. Learners enjoyed fancy cakes and sandwiches and making placement cards.



Exam dates, May 2025

April 23rd - 30th GCSE Art
May 11th (am) GCSE Business 1
May 12th (am) GCSE Biology 1
May 14th (am) GCSE Maths 1
May 21st (am) GCSE English 1
(pm) GCSE Business 1

Use these links to help with English, maths, business and science revision:

<https://linktr.ee/iCollegeBiology>

<https://linktr.ee/iCollegeBusiness>

<https://linktr.ee/icollegeenglishlanguage>

<https://linktr.ee/icollegemaths>



Year 10s

We will be holding an open day for transitioning Y10 learners and their parents / carers at Independence to find out about key dates and important information.

If you would like to contribute to the next iTimes, please email:

sgiaever@icollege.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who sent items for this edition.

For general enquiries, contact:

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