

iCollege



Message from Jacquie



As you know, as soon as we returned from the Easter holiday, we received 'the call' from OFSTED advising us that our school inspection would take place on 26th and 27th April. I was hoping to be able to talk about the inspection and grading in this newsletter, but I haven't received the final report as yet, and so the outcome needs to remain confidential. However, I would like to thank all those families that responded to the parent questionnaire on 'ParentView' and to all our learners who engaged with the three inspectors during their visit. It was a very positive experience for us all and I look forward to sharing the report with you all as soon as it is released.

Somehow, the academic year has flown by once again and we are back in the exams / SATs cycle for our Year 11, Post 16 and Year 6 learners. We are also starting to firm up transitions to secondary schools for our primary learners and for our older learners, college, apprenticeships and jobs. 'Moving on' is an exciting time, and iCollege will be making sure that we offer all the necessary support to each and every learner to ensure that this is a successful and positive journey for them.

Royal Visit!



On Wednesday 25th May, Pod + got a huge surprise: Princess Anne landed in the field behind Moorside Community Centre!

We found out she was visiting Xtra limited, the worldwide leader in the design and manufacture of transmission, which is used by the world's top motor sport teams. We saw her walking out to her car and we were allowed to then watch the helicopter take off which was quite noisy but very impressive.

Upcoming Dates

June 2

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

June 13

Y10 Assessment Week

June 24

Last day for Y11 and 16+

June 27

Work Experience Week

July 21

Break up for the summer!

Helpful links and organisations to remember for Pride Month:

Support U (LGBTQ+ youth group):

www.supportu.org.uk

Autistic Pride Reading:

autisticpridereading.co.uk

BeYOU (Berkshire LGBTQ+ coffee social) Facebook group

AVEN (online support for people exploring asexuality):

www.asexuality.org

Mermaids (support for young people and their families when exploring identity):

mermaidsuk.org.uk

Unit News

Integration

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This term at Integration, we are due to go on a visit to Rushall Farm to experience a day in the life on the farm. We will be taking part in a variety of activities involving both the crops and animals available, giving us a really good idea of everything that goes into running a farm and creating produce.

We can't wait to get involved and get our wellies on!

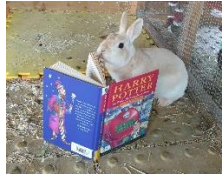


Inspiration

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During our OFSTED week, a learner chose to read Harry Potter to Fruity, the rabbit. She is hooked!

At Forest School this term we have been using exciting tools to build things around camp. We have used a rubber mallet to make a natural noughts and crosses board and we have been measuring logs to be cut down using a Bow Saw to replace damaged logs our log bridge, where we have been practicing our knot skills.



Intervention

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Learners from Intervention attempted the £5 shopping challenge. The challenges were:

- Feed a family of 4 breakfast and lunch from Tesco's.
- Buy cleaning products for a young mum and baby from Pound Stretcher.
- Do a basic first shop for a homeless person moving into a bedsit.

Summer, Kian, Cody and Dylan were brilliant with the challenge but they were also surprised at how carefully you have to shop, thinking about what you buy and where you go. All the food has been donated to the Food Bank who were very grateful.



The Pod

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It's been a really busy and quick half term at The Pod! We have been learning about transport and are looking forward to lots of outings next half term. We would like to share our favourite parts of this half term.

Joe: "My favourite part of the term was building friendships and having more of a social life."

Leo: "I've really enjoyed my sessions at Reading Football Club."

Jack: "I enjoyed writing a recount about my trip to Anfield Stadium in the Easter holiday."

Alfie: "I've liked researching trains and creating a fact file on them."

William: "I have enjoyed baking flapjacks. They tasted good."

Jack: "I like our gardening lessons."



Independence

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At Independence, the focus has been on revising for GCSEs.

These are now in full swing and the young people are working hard to get the best grades they can. Between sessions, we have been enjoying the garden which now boasts these lovely, new pots.



We are looking forward to celebrating the end of exams and to welcoming Y10 learners next term.

Pod +

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Learners at Pod+ have been reading Shakespeare this half term. On Tuesday, 17th May, we visited the Watermill Theatre and took part in a workshop run by Joe, a West End actor. We enjoyed taking part, reading, playing games and doing some drama.

The learners did iCollege proud!

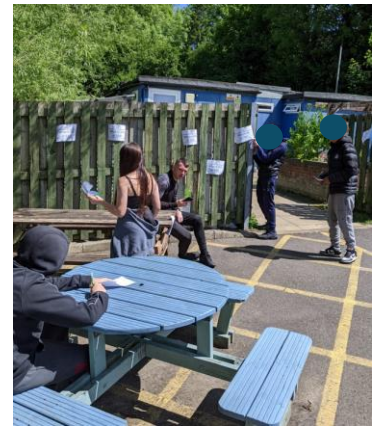


Election Fever in PSHCE!

Although there were no elections in West Berkshire on 5th May this year, learners at Intervention and Integration still completed their annual mock election lesson this half term using the Election Toolkit from Parliament. This year we learned about voting in local elections and focused particularly on Reading Borough Council. Learners looked at the candidates for the Tilehurst Ward and chose three based on their photo, background, political party and policies. They learned how to register to vote, received a poll card and then filled in a ballot paper which they posted in the ballot box. Once the votes were counted, we compared our results with the real outcome. We got the first-place candidate, Meri O'Connell, correct!



The art department is currently at its busiest: Year 10 learners are completing their projects before moving to Independence, and Year 11 learners are finalising their portfolios before they are given a final mark. Art teachers have been concentrating on final assessments and wish Year 11s the best of luck for a job well done. The work produced this year has been beautiful and is clearly evidenced in the two gorgeous ceramic masks pictured here for you all to appreciate.



A maths treasure hunt at Integration this half term!



A new display board: 'Conversations in literature' at Independence!



Practical Skills at Intervention!



We are delighted to be forging stronger links to Westcoast, who have recently been appointed as Enterprise Advisers to the iCollege careers team.

Operations Director, Andy Newbury, is helping to support learners with their post 16 transitions. We are confident that this collaboration will significantly improve our offer. *Andy is pictured below.*



- A group of Y11s are looking forward to visiting Westcoast Theale to meet with maintenance, sales, legal and IT departments.
- Y10s will be visiting Westcoast during work experience week to learn more about employment roles, typical daily tasks and the requirements of the IT distribution industry.
- Teachers have been invited to Westcoast to discuss ways to link curriculum topics to working life to help learners make connections between the world of work and their learning.

Did you know that there is a large range of pre-16 courses available?

Newbury College:	Plumbing, Carpentry, Mechanics, Hair, Beauty	
Reading College:	Beauty, Health & Social Care, Carpentry, Catering, Motor Vehicle, Sport	
Sparsholt:	Animal Management, Equine Studies, Environment and Countryside Skills, Motor Vehicle	

Please speak to Ali, our Careers Leader, Sarah Maggs from Adviza or your Lead Teacher to express your interest in a Pre-16 Course.

Ali is available on 07464895993 or ahaynes@icollege.org.uk

Please note, all courses are yet to be confirmed.

Anyone wanting a 1:1 session with Sarah to help with applications can also contact Ali.



On 11th May five Y11 learners attended mock interviews at Sovereign's new Greenham Park offices.



Mamadou, Gabriel, Jess, Georgie and Conner were interviewed for the position of Carpenter or Administrator by two members of the Sovereign HR Team. A big thank you to Steph Ackerman who organised the day for us and to interviewers, Jen and Carol, who provided all learners with valuable feedback to take with them to their next interview experience. Well done Year 11s: you volunteered to be part of the interviews and in doing so you have demonstrated a positive, flexible attitude and the resilience to manage in challenging situations.



Congratulations to Georgie (Y11) on securing her work experience placement and 'Thank you' to Waitrose, Newbury.



Georgie identified an area of interest, waited for a placement and blitzed the interview! She has been offered an extended work experience placement.

Health and well-being

Every year we all accompany young people as they adopt various strategies to help them contend with the blunt realities confronting them in the form of exams. Every year I hear things like: 'I'm not ready yet!'; 'I should be panicking more, shouldn't I?'; 'It doesn't feel real that they're starting now!'; 'I'm not bothered'; 'I reckon exams are all about the government trying to control us'; 'I'll just get on with it, what's the big deal?'

These statements are imbued with feelings we all recognise and have felt at some point. How to respond to the challenges life throws at us. Jump in and have a go? Give up? Wobble and hope to be rescued? Scornfully defy? Be sanguine and adapt? And how we respond is informed by what we feel is expected of us by our families, friends, teachers, and ourselves. None of this is simple.

And every year, no matter the outcome, these realities are opportunities for young people to learn about themselves and how the world works. They might learn about actions having consequences (put in the work and you're more likely to do well, but it's not guaranteed), or that when it comes down to it no one can do it for you, or that as personal as it might feel, life moves on for all of us. Supporting them by drawing on our own experiences, recognising that the future can be scary, we can remind them that what they're feeling makes absolute sense, stand with them as they take a deep breath, and encourage them to have a go *iCollege Counsellor*



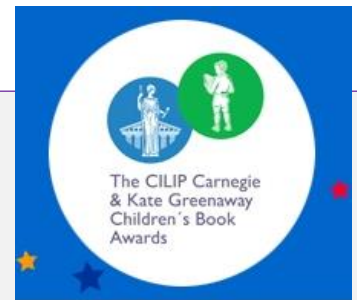
iCollege Pride Month Celebrations

The month of June is when we all celebrate Pride and everything to do with the LGBTQ+ community, and you will be glad to hear that there will be activities and celebrations throughout iCollege!

For example at Integration we will be having regular Citizenship lessons, exploring a variety of topics around the LGBTQ+ history, progress, and support available. We are also bringing back our rainbow butterfly display at the entrance to our building to celebrate Pride month, but to also support The Butterfly Project – an initiative created to help support individuals who struggle with self-harm. Keep an eye out when you next visit!

Do you have any ideas of projects or activities you would like to do as part of Pride Month? Make sure to share them with your PSHCE teacher!

We are also proud to announce that we have met the criteria and achieved the 'Skilled Teacher' module within the Rainbow Flag Award!



The clip Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals are the UK's oldest and best-loved children's book awards, recognizing outstanding reading experiences created through writing and illustration in books for children and young people.

These are this year's shortlisted Carnegie books:



...and Kate Greenaway books:



I would like to invite **YOU** to try one of these books. The first 25 people to claim their book will receive it in the post!

Go to:

<https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/> to see your choices in more detail.

Choose the Greenaway tab if you are KS1 or 2 or the Carnegie tab if you are KS3, 4 or 5.

Then, email Jo:

office.intervention@icollge.org.uk with your name, your choice of book and your unit name and the book will wing its way to you in the post! Please put CARNEGIE OFFER as your subject.

If you want help choosing, or need any further details, please email: sjaiever@icollge.org.uk

And finally...

In conversation with Cheyanne

I'm a year 10 learner at Intervention, and I spoke with our school caretaker Barry to try and understand more about his role and what he does to help our school run smoothly. Barry has been here for 4 and a half years. He explained that he has been here "since it changed over from Reintegration to iCollege". Most people who are 72 would be retired but Barry loves his job and says that he doesn't "do it for the money, he does it for the gratitude that he receives from staff and learners."



Barry told me that as part of his job he has to fix windows, complete plumbing repairs, replace fixtures and fittings and redecorate the classrooms in the holidays. It sounds like an exciting job and it obviously suits Barry's personality as he describes how he loves "working with his hands." He told me that he spent many years working in Health and Safety where he had to use his brain but he always preferred the building trade. The reason he loves working at iCollege is because he gets to use all of his experience across different jobs.

Working across all 5 iCollege sites can involve Barry travelling around 40-50 miles each day. He joked that the hardest part of his job is getting up in the morning!

Barry told me that he is an old rock n roller with his favourite band being ELO – Electric Light Orchestra. He used to love dancing to Northern Soul at the old air force base at Greenham. I really enjoyed talking with Barry as he was so friendly and funny; he is a truly caring caretaker.

A Note from Governors

Now it's suddenly summer! Or so it would seem... For the most part, issues with Covid seem to be moving away but it would be wrong to be overly complacent. That said, hopefully, this will create more opportunities for governors to be involved in face to face meetings at iCollege and to make visits to the different units in person. Zoom has worked very effectively over a sustained period of time, in a way that would have been difficult to imagine before March 2020. It will, however, be really good to meet up again! Of course the work at iCollege has continued on regardless and governors would again like to thank all staff and learners for their commitment and resourcefulness over this extended period of time.

Most recently OFSTED visited iCollege. With hardly any notice of their arrival, this can be a demanding and stressful experience for everyone, made even more so after all the difficulties that Covid has imposed. While the report has not been released as yet, it seems that the inspection went well; staff and learners had many opportunities to show some of their excellent work and practices. Many thanks to all staff and learners for their hard work in the lead up to these two days and for showing themselves to best effect on those days. Governors had the opportunity, on one of the two days, to meet up with the Lead Inspector to answer some of their questions and to present our thoughts on iCollege.

Another busy term before a short break at the end of this month. The exam season is already starting and all the complexities of the arrangements for these are being put in place. We wish the very best to all learners involved in exams and assessments in 2022.



June sees the culmination of this year's work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Awards with a number of Independence learners undertaking both the Bronze and Silver expeditions with Outdoor Academy.

They will first have to complete their practice expedition on the 16/17th and then the actual expeditions will take place on the 21-22nd June for bronze, and 21 – 23rd June for silver. Participants will be working in teams in open canoes to complete a route in 2-3 days, and taking part in a cook-out amongst other challenges.



We wish them the best of luck with their expeditions!

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

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Thank you to everyone who sent items for this edition.

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