

iCollege



Message from Jacque

Since our return to school following the Christmas break, we have had 12-15 staff absent every day, but with the support of the amazing iCollege team, we have managed to stay open and deliver a package of education to all our learners.



I would like to thank our learners and their families / carers for being flexible during this very challenging time, and responding positively to quick timetable changes. It has been much appreciated.

Spring is just around the corner; the trees are already in bud, daffodils are just waiting for a bit of sunshine and birds are looking for mates. Spring also means the start of the final few months of statutory education for those in year 11 and the count-down to secondary transition for our year 6 learners.

It's a time of new beginnings and fresh starts, so it seems a good time for each of you to focus on your studies and to recognise your self-worth. 'Liking yourself' is very important in reaching your potential!

We return after the ½ term break on Monday, 28th February and I look forward to seeing you then.

Jacque

IMPORTANT Term Dates

March 1

Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day)

March 2

Functional Skills English exam

March 3

World Book Day

March 6

GCSE Practice Exams

March 18

Red Nose Day

Important Covid information – testing and reporting

We are aware that changes in regulations are imminent. However, currently, our guidelines remain the same:

- If you are in Y7 and up, you should be testing with LFTs twice-weekly.
- All positive tests should be reported to your Lead Teacher.
- A positive test requires 10 days of isolation. You can be released early provided you have tested negative on an LFT on days 5 and 6 (tests need to be taken 24 hours apart.).



Support

- **In an emergency, call 999**
- For urgent, medical advice, call 111
- **Samaritans: 116123**
- Childline: 0800 1111
- **Cruse bereavement care (West Berks branch): 01635 523 573** www.crusewestberks.org
- West Berkshire Foodbank: <https://westberks.foodbank.org.uk/> or call 01635 760560,

Unit News

Independence

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At Independence, the young people have been learning how to save a life with Allison from the University of Reading's Health Reach Team. They learnt how to assess an unconscious patient, put them into the recovery position, perform CPR and use an AED (Automatic, External Defibrillator).

We have also been making good use of our lovely garden (see the picture top right) and playing football at lunch time!



Pod

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Here at the POD we have all enjoyed our Art topic this half term of Fruit and Vegetables. We have learnt to shade and draw using charcoal, and drew peppers.

We then made our peppers out of clay, using a variety of different sculpting tools to make different textures.



We enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year. We created tiger prints and researched interesting facts about tigers.

Pod+

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At Pod+, young people have been exploring their own creative ideas and in Art have been focusing on line and tone.



Intervention

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This term at Intervention, we are fortunate enough to have the talented Kryz from Berkshire Maestros coming in to deliver a series of sessions aimed at inspiring us through music. We have already had Alfie learning to play the keyboard parts in the Spiderman theme tune and Dylan laying down some drum beats to various rap songs.



It has been terrific to see the enthusiasm and willingness of the young people to get involved in the sessions and we are looking forward to seeing what they produce next

Inspiration

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This term at Inspiration's Forest School, we have been thinking about what it must have been like to have been a child during World War II; having to move away from home and not having new things to play with.



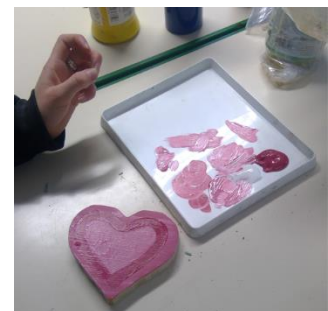
We have been inventing and making new games from recycled items and have been mending things around our camp site instead of buying new.



Integration

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This term at Integration we have been getting crafty and creative! One project we have been working on is decorated wooden hearts, made by our young people and our resident DIY master, Simon. After cutting out the hearts using woodwork tools in our workshop, young people have spent the last week or two perfecting their individual designs with the aim of varnishing them before half term.



Alongside the wooden hearts, the young people have also worked together to create some mobile wooden flower boxes for our garden area so that our lovely garden can come with us when we move out of the unit temporarily in the next month or two, ready for our brand new building.

Who knows what they will create next!

Careers news

Celebrating Apprenticeship Week, 7th – 11th February!

Amazing Apprenticeships

A big thank you to Britney from Adviza who visited Intervention and Independence to present information to Y10 and 11 learners about apprenticeships. For some this was an introduction, whilst for others it was a reminder of the key information. Learners researched opportunities in our local area and Y11s created accounts and registered alerts for their areas of interest. Next half term, iCollege alumni will be visiting to explain the challenges of balancing working and studying. Ask Apprenticeships will also be coming to Independence to run an application workshop.

Thank you to Basingstoke College of Technology..



There was a warm reception for Independence learners from Helen Key (Transition Manager). On January 24th, she met with several groups to discuss the kinds of experiences they could expect as a student at BCOT.

Adviza offerings across iCollege!



iCollege is extremely fortunate to have Sarah Maggs from Adviza (Careers Advice and Guidance) as a weekly visitor to Independence. Sarah joins in with Careers lessons and also offers 1:1 sessions with learners, working with them to create bespoke action plans to support their next steps after iCollege.

Sarah also met with year 7 and 8 learners at Pod + where they discussed future job aspirations and skills and qualifications needed for them to realise their ambitions. Similar discussions were the topic of conversation during Sarah's visit to Pod on 20th January. With many of the learners having ambitions of being youtubers, it was important for them to look at alternative options, in the Berkshire area and beyond, and to break down skills required for roles. All sessions were well received by learners and staff and Sarah will be meeting students at Integration and Inspiration next term.

Any learner (and their parents/carers) can arrange a 1:1 session with Sarah on a Wednesday afternoon. Please contact Ali: ahaynes@icollge.org.uk

Look out for National Citizenship Service Challenge Team joining Independence on February 17th.



NCS provides an interactive and memorable learning experience to develop new skills and confidence.

Coming up next term... Visit to Sparsholt College (near Winchester): 30th March, 2pm



Sparsholt offers the following subjects:

Agriculture, Animal and Zoo Management, Forestry and Woodland Management, Butchery, Conservation, Countryside and the Environment, Equine studies, Fishery studies and Aquatics, Game and Wildlife Management, Horticulture, Motor Vehicle, Outdoor Adventure and Uniformed Protective Services, Sport

We will be taking a small group of young people for this visit.

Please book your place early to avoid disappointment as numbers will be limited.

Our iCollege Community

A Note from Governors

Governors are very impressed by all the efforts that staff and learners are doing to ensure that the work of iCollege continues, despite sustained challenges from Covid infections and subsequent absences and isolations. Again huge thanks from all governors for everything that is being done both within and beyond the classroom to maintain iCollege's high standards. Public exams look set to go ahead this summer after recent announcements. These are still very testing times and staff and learners will continue to wrestle with covid and its impact.

We are especially pleased at this time to share news of new governors joining us. We welcome them warmly to iCollege's Management Committee. We're really hoping that they will soon be able to visit the different units to meet staff and learners in each of these and familiarise themselves more fully with how they operate.

Rebekah Dee is an experienced English teacher and Head of Year in a local comprehensive school. She has joined the governing body as she is keen to learn more about alternative provision and the opportunities it provides to meet the academic and well-being needs of learners. Her experience in the classroom and beyond it will all be useful in her role as an iCollege governor.

Joseph Clarke has been working in local government for several years and has worked as a volunteer with a number of charities. His involvement in all of these and his interest and commitment to the local community will be invaluable as an iCollege governor. Interestingly, Joseph was home educated through his secondary school years; this gives him a strong interest and motivation in joining iCollege's governing body.

Annette Priestley set up her own public relations company thirty years ago. Recently she has been working with young people who have found education more challenging; she has also helped to set up three learning centres in different places around the UK. Her experience in business and her work with young people are an excellent combination as Annette joins iCollege's governors.

This is a great time to be welcoming new governors as iCollege moves forward and as spring is evident in lighter and longer days!



iCollege are committed to achieving the Rainbow Flag Award, a national quality assurance framework for schools and colleges focusing on positive LGBTQ+ inclusion and visibility.

The Rainbow Flag encourages a whole organisation approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion as well as developing strategies to effectively combat LGBTQ+ phobic bullying. We are committed to improving the lives of all the young people in our care.

All staff have completed the relevant training and signed a pledge to support the initiative. Champions have been appointed in each unit and wear a rainbow lanyard to identify themselves as someone who can be approached for support for anyone with any problems or questions LGBTQ+-related. Displays have been created in all the units.



'So you talk about dreams in counselling, don't you? Are you gonna ask me about my dreams then?'

Yes, dreams are important, but perhaps not in the way people sometimes imagine them to be, with the analyst silently listening, stroking his beard, and then offering up a clever interpretation. In dreams we re-present to ourselves key existential messages in a specific language of visual, and sometimes auditory, imagery. We do not *have* dreams, rather we *are* our dreaming state. It is the dreamer who assigns meaning to the dream, given that she or he created it; dreams are full of potential in terms of what they communicate about what the dreamer is open or closed to, whether the dreamer is active or passive, and what they might be aiming for. I find it helpful to consider every element of the dream to represent an aspect of the dreamer; as Carl Jung held: 'The dream is the theatre where the dreamer is at once scene, actor, prompter, stage manager, author, audience, and critic.' And I wonder with the dreamer why *this* particular dream at *this* particular time, and what might the dream say about the dreamer's approach to living?

In no way do I ever try to impose insights upon the dreamer; whilst some people may be able to reject interpretations, others, especially young people, may comply and take on ideas that they haven't really experienced for themselves. 'It's your dream not mine', I remind people. 'How about we explore it together to see what comes up for you?'

iCollege Counsellor

In Conversation with Cheyanne

I'm Cheyanne and I'm a year 10 learner at Intervention. In this edition of the newsletter, I am interviewing Jacquie Davies, our Headteacher.

What does your job involve?

Being a Headteacher is a position of trust within the community. The job involves setting standards and expectations in behaviour and teaching; ensuring a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum for all learners and managing our wonderful staff.

Why do you work with iCollege students?

iCollege learners are the best! Every learner is a perfect individual who needs to be guided to achieve social, emotional, physical and academic success. Just like Edgar the Excitable Dragon - when he was helped by Ava to focus his fiery breath, he reached his potential and 'self-actualised'.

What are your future plans for iCollege?

To always provide the best outcomes for all learners and offer excellent opportunities for them. We want to promote equity and champion diversity...and we have the small matter of building new premises for Integration of course!

What was your journey to being Headteacher for iCollege?

My first teaching job was in London, then after 1 year, I moved to Slough where I did a training course called 'All Behaviour Has a Purpose'. I found this course really interesting, and knew from then on that I would not stay as a teacher in a mainstream school. I was a Head of Year in a West Berkshire school for 5 years, then I left mainstream to do my MA degree and work with vulnerable adults attending 'life-long learning' at a college in Reading. I became a Headteacher in 2005.

What do you like most about iCollege?

Seeing the learners thrive, mature and leave as successful, happy young people ready to start the next stage of their lives and seeing my staff develop new skills and purposeful, professional relationships with learners and each other. It is particularly pleasing when our learners complete their SATS and sit their GCSEs. This makes me feel really, really good as I know that all learners in these age groups are doing the same tests on the same days and under the same exam conditions – it doesn't matter if they attend alternative provision like iCollege, or mainstream, or private school or Eton College; every learner is equal.

What will you do after iCollege?

Hmmm – good question! I might train to be an OFSTED Inspector or perhaps take a bit more time for myself...certainly lots of dog walking!

Who chose the name for the service?

The iCollege name was chosen by the Senior Leadership Team in 2017. Do you think we should think about returning to the original names for each unit: The Oaks, Bridgeway, Badgers Hill and The Porch? Do you know why the units had those names? There's a challenge for you! I'll answer in your next interview with me for the next newsletter.

Meet Fat Man!

At Integration, we have a resident celebrity squirrel who has been fondly named "Fat Man". Fat Man visits every day to hide the food he's nabbed from the local area in our flower beds – he has previously been seen trying to bury a whole sweet potato that he proceeded to then eat over several days!

Fat Man enjoys leisurely activities such as stealing food, fence post parkour, and sitting outside the office window and wailing at the top of his voice to the passing squirrels. Next time you visit the unit, keep an eye out for our furry friend and make sure to hide any food you bring with you before he sniffs it out!



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.

For general enquiries, contact:

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