

July 2023

Dear Parents and carers,

It is hard to believe that another academic year has come and gone so fast. Years 11 and 13 students have responded amazingly to the pressures of their final exams, whilst Years 10 and 12 have completed work experience and have started their preparation for September when they will be in their final years. Year 9 are also now well embedded into their life at LeAF.

We have decided that as so much of our specialism news is shared daily through our social media posts, the termly newsletter is now going to focus on other, wider aspects of school life. If you do not follow us on social media and wish to keep up to date, you can access all the latest information through our website, which can be found at www.leafstudio.co.uk.

Staff changes

Congratulations to the following staff who have recently been appointed into extended leadership:

- Mr Lawrence is now Curriculum Area Leader for Science.
- Mr Jones is now Curriculum Area Leader for Personal Development and Careers.

Every academic year there are changes in staffing for a variety of reasons. This year we have staff leaving who have been part of the LeAF journey for the majority of my time as Principal, and we will be sad to see them go:

- Mr Olson – Mr Olson joined LeAF in 2016 as our Humanities teacher, later focusing exclusively on Geography. Mr Olson has been a big part of the LeAF community, leading on careers and supporting performing arts in all their summer shows. Mr Olson has taken a job very close to home in Weymouth.
- Mrs Wain – Mrs Wain was so committed to LeAF; she was interviewed on her wedding day after turning up with her wedding hair done and heels on!! Mrs Wain has been central to the daily running of the school as our receptionist and attendance officer and has been a fount of all knowledge. Mrs Wain started at LeAF in 2016 and is leaving to be Natural Therapist (including a mixture of reiki healing, homeopathy and aromatherapy), with her new business being based from her home.
- Mrs Jennings – Mrs Jennings joined originally as Head of English in 2019 and became SENDCo in 2021. Mrs Jennings is leaving LeAF to move abroad and start a new life with her family in Madrid.
- Mrs Taylor – Mrs Taylor joined LeAF in 2019 to be Lead Teacher of History as well as leading on Personal Development. Mrs Taylor is leaving teaching to focus on her dream job working for British Airways as an Air Hostess.
- Miss Small – Miss Small joined LeAF in 2021 as an Early Careers Teacher (ECT). She has had a significant impact on the PE department with her dual career as a FIFA referee as well as supporting our girls' football team as they reached the National Final in July. Miss Small leaves us to enable her dual career to develop alongside a part-time teaching role closer to home.

LeAF Studio

Sian Thomas, BEd (Hons), CEO - AAT

Jon Webb, BA (Hons), Director of Secondary Education

Nadine Lapskas, BSc, Principal

Geoff Lake, CertEd, Head of Sixth Form

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Part of Ambitions Academies Trust

Joining LeAF Studio either during T6 or in September are:

- Mrs Burton – Mrs Burton is a very experienced History teacher who joined us on the 1st July, having taught most recently in a school in Southampton.
- Mr Welch – Mr Welch is joining us from the 1st September as our SENDCo and Science teacher. Mr Welch comes with vast experience having been deputy SENDCo at a very large school in Hampshire.
- Miss Hann – Miss Hann is joining LeAF as an Early Careers Teacher (ECT) officially in September within the PE department, however, we have been lucky enough to have Miss Hann support our specialism week during T6, so many pupils have already met her. Miss Hann's favourite sport is netball.

Sadly, we have not yet been able to replace Mr Olson in Geography. I have therefore taken the decision not to commence a Geography option in Year 9 in September. The senior leadership team are ensuring all plans are in place to allow Years 10 & 11 to continue with their programme.

Quality of Education

As usual the year has flown by especially for Year 11 and 13 students who quickly found themselves sitting their live exams and leaving school. Mrs Percival would personally like to thank those parents and teachers who supported our students right up to the end to ensure they performed to their potential. It was difficult at times, but most students realised the importance of getting good grades in order to move on to their next stage in their learning journey.

We haven't stopped there! Year 10 completed their end of year exams and soon found out that lack of revision is not an option at LeAF Studio, with many having to re-sit their papers – well done to those who made substantial improvements! Subject teachers will be setting additional home learning over the summer in order for students to continue with their revision and retain vital knowledge because they will soon find themselves sitting their mocks and live exams before they know it. Compulsory interventions have already started in order to bridge any gaps students might have in their knowledge and skills - these groups will change termly throughout the year.

Year 9 are also working extremely hard and sitting their end of year exams. They have shown a mature attitude and I hope that their results reflect how hard this year group have worked and what a delight they are to have at LeAF.

Mrs Percival would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that as a school we not only value but expect academic success alongside our students' specialism training. Therefore, if students do not meet their expected targets, technical training and professional leave will be stopped until there is improvement. It is important that everyone understands that this does not just mean high grades. All students have a target grade generated by their Key Stage 2 SATs, and we use this to measure how well a student is performing according to their individual target grade - some are working below, at or above this. Our aim is for all students to be at least working at their target grade in order for them to have as many options open to them as possible when they leave education. Again, thank you for your continued support with this.

Sixth Form

It's been an incredible year for LeAF Studio Sixth Form! Our Year 13 students have secured outstanding Post 18 destinations as they embark on their steps following their time at LS6. Students next steps are taking them both nationally and internationally and as far afield as Australia!

Mr Lake has completed his first whole academic year as Head of Sixth Form and is so proud of the journey the Sixth Form provision at LeAF has undertaken. The professional conduct of our students is further improving as we prepare them for the world of work and adult life. As we move into the next academic year, further change and improvement comes as our sixth form continues to grow from strength to strength. Our ambitious provision allows for our students to truly 'Perform to their Potential' and we continue to strive towards outstanding.

Attendance and punctuality by some of our Sixth Form does require improvement and we hope to see this improve upon our return in September. We will be following up immediately with any student who is not meeting these expectations.

Our Sixth Form team wish our departing Year 13s the very best of luck as they depart and begin their new chapters, but we are also excited to welcome our new cohort in September!

We are delighted as a Sixth Form to be hugely popular now, this year with over 150 applications! If you know a student who LS6 could be perfect for, please share our website with them.

Inclusion

Attendance continues to remain a key focus for us here at LeAF Studio. All the evidence and research indicate that students with lower attendance achieve lower grades as a result and this in turn will then impact on their life chances. Whilst attendance here at LeAF is generally above national average, there are still too many students missing large periods of time from school, and this is impacting on their progress in both their academics and their specialisms. Even missing one day a fortnight means that your child's attendance is at 90% which then reduces their chances of achieving 5 good GCSEs by over 10%, from 84% down to 73%, which is a significant impact on their chances of success.

In order to improve attendance, we have recently written to all parents about the new APB review process which will begin in September. We will be checking Attendance (alongside Progress and Behaviour) at the end of every half term to decide which students have earned the right to access all of our training, fixtures, rehearsals and shows for the following half term. Thank you to those parents who have voiced their support of this initiative, it is great to see so many parents buying in to the ethos and culture of high expectations that we are trying to create for all of our students.

Finally, we are delighted to report that from September we will be adding a school well-being dog to the staff here at LeAF. Many schools within our Trust have already got school dogs in place and they have had an overwhelmingly positive impact within their settings, so we are pleased to be able to trial something similar. We do have a number of new Year 9 students joining us who are well used to working with school dogs, so this was a good opportunity for us to see if it will work at LeAF Studio.

Our school dog, Buffy, is a 6-year-old Labrador who will be receiving specific training to work as a well-being dog within a school setting. She is owned by Mr Clark and was bred by Mrs Lapskas, so she is already well known to many staff and students at school and is used to being around children all the time. She will be in school on a part-time trial basis from September and will be based within the Pastoral office for most of her time in school. There is a Trust policy in place for dogs in schools, but if your child is allergic to dogs or afraid of them then please let us know by emailing tim.clark@leafstudio.co.uk so that we can factor this in to our plans. The trial will run for the first half term in September, and if successful will be made permanent at October half term.

Important Dates:

- Friday 1st September
 - INSET day, school closed to pupils.
- Monday 4th September
 - INSET day, school closed to pupils.
- Tuesday 5th September
 - School opens again for all year groups, 8:35am
- Thursday 14th September
 - Yr11 & 13 Raising Attainment Evening 7pm
- Thursday 21st September
 - KS4 Open Evening
- Friday 22nd September
 - PA trip to Ailey 2 @ The Mayflower 7pm
- Wednesday 27th September
 - School photo day
- Thursday 28th September
 - Yr10 & 12 Raising Attainment Evening 7pm
- Monday 30th October
 - INSET day, school closed to pupils.
- Thursday 2nd November
 - Yr11 Parent Evening
- Monday 13th November to Thursday 30th November inclusive
 - Yr11 and Yr13 PPE 1 exams
- Thursday 23rd November
 - KS5 Open Evening
 - PA trip to Poole Lighthouse 7:45pm
- Friday 1st December
 - INSET day, school closed to pupils.

We would like to wish everyone a safe and happy summer and look forward to seeing the pupils on their return in September.

Kind regards,



Nadine Lapskas

Principal