



Headteacher's report to Trustees

Spring 2024

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KEY OF ACRONYMS

DIR	Department Improvement Review
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
FAP	Fair Access Panel
FFT	Fisher Family Trust (Educational analysis tool)
FSM	Free School Meal
IDSR	Inspection Data Summary Report
KS	Key Stage
LAC	Looked After Child
LOtC	Learning Outside the Classroom
PAN	Published Admission Number
PP	Pupil Premium
RSL	Raising Standards Lead
SEN	Special Education Need
SIMS	Schools Information Management System (electronic record keeping system)
SPI	School Performance Indicator
TE	Teacher Estimates
WRAP	Wirral Respite Alternative Provision



BEHAVIOURAL REPORTS

Suspensions

Number of exclusion occasions

	Totals 2018- 2019	Totals 2019- 2020*	Totals 2020 - 2021 ♦	Totals 2021 - 2022	Totals 2022 - 2023	Autumn 2023	Spring 1 2024
Year 7	7	1	20	3	11	0	1
Year 8	3	9	8	28	13	6	3
Year 9	18	11	17	31	64	21	10
Year 10	13	22	27	37	31	20	9
Year 11	19	16	39	7	19	15	5
Year 12	0	0	0	4	1	2	0
Year 13	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Totals	60	59	111	111	140	64	28
Total Number of Days	73	152	206	310.5	243.50	92.5	48
Total Number of students	46	43	66	96	87	36	24

*Includes the period of school closure from March – August 2020

♦ Includes the period of school closure from January – March 2021

Number of Permanent Exclusions

1 permanent exclusion in October 2019
1 permanent exclusion in May 2021
2 permanent exclusions in May 2022
1 permanent exclusion in February 2023
1 permanent exclusion in January 2024

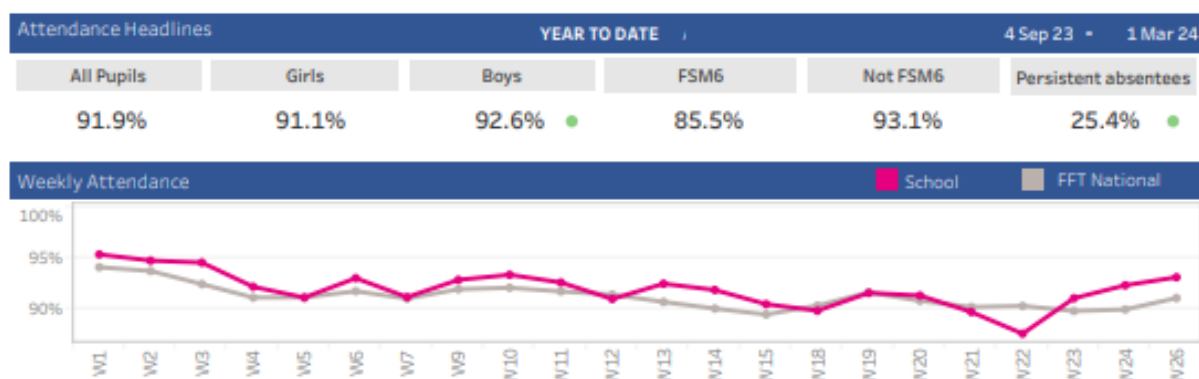
ATTENDANCE

Our year-to-date attendance up to 1 March 2024 stands at 91.9%. As the attached overview document shows, we sit above national averages for the following sub-groups: girls, boys (significantly above), SEND support (very significantly above) and EHCP (significantly above). The attendance of our Pupil Premium students remains a cause for concern, and we are working actively on targeting this cohort as a priority (see below).

In the week commencing 29 January 2024, attendance hit its lowest point compared to national averages since the start of the academic year. Swift action was taken to address this (see below), and an immediate and sustained improvement can be seen on the attached graph in the following three weeks to the point that attendance for the week commencing 4 March 2024 peaked at 93.9%.

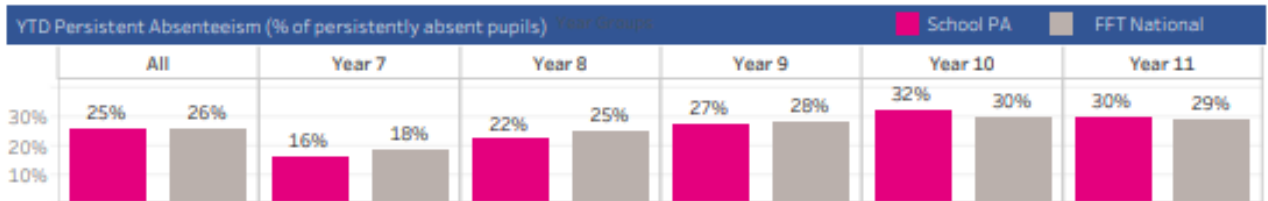
Ongoing actions in place to secure continued improvements in attendance:

- Deputy Headteacher Stuart Nuttall presented to all staff on the central importance of attendance as a whole-staff team priority for action.
- Stuart Nuttall has signed Neston up to be part of a National Attendance Hub - we will be informed of our lead school by the end of April and will be invited to our first Hub meeting, the key aim of which is for schools to share best practice in improving whole-school attendance.
- Four staff have accessed Emotionally-Based School Non-Attendance training led by the Local Authority and have shared the outcomes of this training with the wider pastoral team.
- Year Teams have been tasked with leading their form tutors to ensure that they are making proactive phone calls home to students at risk of becoming persistent absentees to talk to families about the barriers and what can be done to overcome them - particular focus on PP students.
- Assemblies led in every year group on attendance and visuals around school screens have a greater focus on the value of high attendance.
- Attendance reward event led by Stuart Nuttall on 16 February at the halfway point in the year to celebrate those with high attendance and create a culture of aspiration around attendance. Certificates were issued to all those invited, parents informed by letter and raffle prizes awarded to individual winners.
- PLMs have set up a custom group on Arbor of vulnerable students whose attendance is a cause for concern. PLMs are now being asked to make phone calls home to these families on the first day of absence to explore the barriers to attendance. One PLM whose practice is particularly rigorous in this area is presenting to Heads of Year at a meeting on 12 March so that we can establish greater consistency across year groups.



ATTENDANCE

Attendance breakdown			YEAR TO DATE					4 Sep 23 - 1 Mar 24
All Pupils	Pupils		All	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
All Pupils	1,502	School	91.9%	94.8%	92.7%	91.4%	90.2%	90.5%
		FFT National	91.1%	93.6%	91.6%	90.6%	89.9%	89.8%
		Difference	+0.8%	+1.2% ●	+1.1% ●	+0.8%	+0.3%	+0.7%
Gender			All	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Female	685	School	91.1%	95.1%	92.6%	90.2%	88.8%	89.2%
		FFT National	90.8%	93.8%	91.5%	90.1%	89.3%	89.3%
		Difference	+0.3%	+1.3% ●	+1.1% ●	+0.2%	-0.6%	0.0%
Male	817	School	92.6%	94.6%	92.8%	92.3%	91.5%	91.8%
		FFT National	91.4%	93.4%	91.8%	91.0%	90.4%	90.3%
		Difference	+1.2% ●	+1.2% ●	+1.0% ●	+1.3% ●	+1.0% ●	+1.4% ●
FSM6			All	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
FSM6	231	School	85.5%	90.5%	86.8%	86.4%	81.2%	83.6%
		FFT National	85.8%	89.9%	86.7%	84.9%	83.4%	83.0%
		Difference	-0.3%	+0.6%	+0.1%	+1.5% ●	-2.2% ●	+0.6%
Not FSM6	1,271	School	93.1%	95.4%	94.0%	92.5%	92.3%	91.4%
		FFT National	93.1%	95.0%	93.5%	92.6%	92.1%	92.0%
		Difference	+0.1%	+0.4%	+0.5%	-0.2%	+0.2%	-0.6%
SEND			All	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Support	181	School	90.3%	95.5%	90.3%	90.4%	87.8%	88.5%
		FFT National	86.0%	90.5%	86.8%	84.7%	83.5%	83.2%
		Difference	+4.3% ●	+5.0% ●	+3.5% ●	+5.7% ●	+4.3% ●	+5.3% ●
EHCP	48	School	84.6%	94.3%	81.0%	86.3%	91.6%	71.8%
		FFT National	82.5%	87.2%	83.8%	81.5%	80.0%	79.2%
		Difference	+2.1% ●	+7.2% ●	-2.8% ●	+4.9% ●	+11.6% ●	-7.4% ●
Not SEND	1,273	School	92.4%	94.7%	93.5%	91.7%	90.6%	91.5%
		FFT National	92.3%	94.4%	92.8%	91.9%	91.3%	91.2%
		Difference	+0.1%	+0.3%	+0.7%	-0.2%	-0.7%	+0.3%



QA Process and findings

- Formal QA process implemented as of September 2023
- The purpose of this process is to empower middle leaders, establish consistency of practices across school and identify areas of best practice, as well as areas of training need.
- QA process takes place through standardised book look and learning walk processes.
- Three formalised, two-week windows identified throughout school year.
- Process formalised with consultation from middle leaders, SIP and union representatives.
- QA windows have allowed for whole school development areas to be identified through Stuart Smith and Kieran Smith acting as whole school gatekeepers.
- All documentation is stored centrally on MS Teams to allow for comparison and sharing of best practice.
- Samples are selected by Curriculum leaders, SLT looking at specific areas of their remit and Stuart Smith as part of the classroom standards lead role.
- Kieran Smith and Fiona Mannix are now working with Curriculum Leaders to identify training needs for staff and implement programme of development opportunities.

Sixth form QA observations

- As part of QA window two a sample of lessons and student work was undertaken by Kieran Smith and Luke Burton.
- Kieran Smith found examples of exemplary practices particularly in relation to assessment feedback which will be shared whole school.
- Kieran Smith and Luke Burton identified areas of strength and areas of development particularly in relation to sixth form which have been shared with Curriculum Leaders at recent meeting.

Curriculum development meetings

- Kieran Smith has met with all Curriculum Leaders to discuss Curriculum developments and mapping of curriculum intent, implementation, and impact. National curriculum compliance has been reviewed with development priorities identified for each curriculum area. Best practice identified and discussed with Curriculum Leaders.

Ofsted research reviews and implementation

- All relevant department areas have been directed to Ofsted research reviews, with view to implementing what has been identified as best practice nationally. Some subjects have now received a phase two report and are working on the implementation of these findings. Kieran continues to meet with Curriculum Leaders to discuss implementation. Best practice of implementation and documentation surrounding this has been identified and shared with Curriculum Leaders.

Website and development

- Kieran Smith met with Kath Harris to discuss Curriculum website sections and ensure compliance with Ofsted regulations. Curriculum plans have been updated by Curriculum areas. He has worked to identify best practice in regard to Curriculum areas of website and has met with Curriculum Leaders to discuss the development of departmental areas. These will then be implemented in Summer 2024.

Middle leader curriculum development programme

- Kieran and Amy Mitchell, English Curriculum Leader have completed course on Curriculum development delivered by Tomsett and Myatt. This is regarded as best practice nationally, with a lot of the recommendations now being highlighted within the before mentioned Ofsted research reviews. This course is now being used to develop an in-house training programme for all middle leaders. Materials will be on demand via MS Teams with tasks designed for completion to check for understanding and implementation. This will help to ensure that all Curriculum Leaders are fully prepared for our next Ofsted cycle.

Middle leader training

- Training has been delivered training to Curriculum Leaders regarding our QA processes and consistency across departmental areas.
- Curriculum Leaders were asked to identify areas of strength, development and next steps following or QA window as well as reflecting upon the levels of consistency observed within departmental teams.
- Kieran Smith discussed preparation for our next Ofsted window and required steps to ensure that all departments are confident and consistent in their preparation for any visit.

DISADVANTAGED

The analysis of progress figures reveals a discernible widening of the gap between non-PP and PP cohorts in the year 2023. At Neston, the Progress 8 gap has notably increased to -0.8. While this development is a cause for concern and necessitates concerted efforts to mitigate, it is noteworthy that this trend aligns with regional and national data. Furthermore, Neston's gap, despite its increase, remains comparatively lower than that observed in the broader Local Authority. Nationally, the gap has reached its peak since the inception of PP funding.

In alignment with government directives, our approach to narrowing this gap is guided by the Education Endowment Foundation's recommended strategies. The primary focus this year encompasses Quality First Teaching. This initiative is anticipated to yield substantial benefits for both disadvantaged students and their non-disadvantaged counterparts. Continuing the SSAT programme into Year 2 enables Teachers to refine formative assessment strategies and identify gaps in student learning. Notably, the current academic term has emphasised comment marking, with an upcoming focus on supporting PP students within the classroom during the summer term.

The literacy intervention programme persists for Year 7 students, strategically targeting those identified as disadvantaged. Concurrently, an overarching commitment to fostering a comprehensive reading culture within the entire school has been championed this academic term. An explicit teaching approach to Tier 3 vocabulary has been adopted across all key stages and curriculum areas.

In the realm of examination preparation, MADE revision sessions have been systematically delivered to students in Years 10-13, emphasising the cultivation of metacognitive skills. This successful initiative will be for expansion to lower year groups in the coming months. Specialised metacognition and exam preparation sessions have been specifically tailored for Year 11 PP students in anticipation of their impending examinations.

Reinstating the Year 7 summer camp during activities week has been a notable inclusion, featuring offerings from an external provider such as rock climbing, problem-solving, and outdoor cooking. Access to these activities has been targeted at PP students, underlining an intensified push for inclusive extracurricular experiences. Trips across the school now carry a cost for PP students, contingent upon their socioeconomic circumstances. Vigilant tracking and improvement of PP attendance at extracurricular clubs continue to be focal points.

Beyond these initiatives, a comprehensive support system has been implemented for PP students in Years 10-13, involving SLT mentoring sessions post-CAE exams. Additionally, all PP students across the school partake in tutor-led mentoring sessions at two intervals throughout the academic year. The objective is to discern individual student needs and respond effectively, which may include the provision of laptops, revision guides, pencil cases, and tailored adjustments to timetables. To address underperformance, additional parental meetings have been organised for PP students.

Furthermore, each department has designated a PP champion, trained in the utilisation of Go4Schools to identify underperforming PP students. A meticulous data tracking spreadsheet is employed to identify PP students underachieving across multiple areas, paving the way for targeted, student-specific interventions.

The Sixth Form team have been working hard to ensure that progress is being made towards the school development plan targets of 'To improve progress and standards in the Sixth Form'.

Our year 13 cohort are currently working at an Average grade of a C+, male students are currently C+ and female are at a B- based upon current teachers predicted grades. The Sixth Form team have worked hard to try and ensure that students adopt the 'A-Level Mindset'. We have introduced study logs, a silent study room, file and folder checks as well as an improved destinations program. All Sixth Form students follow a pathway that we hope will provide them a suitable destination and inspire them to work towards an aspirational goal. This year we have seen 95 students apply through UCAS, 8 of these applying as early applications to ensure places on courses such as medicine and dentistry. One student has been successful through his application and subsequent interview to gain an offer to study Medicine at Oxford University, a fantastic achievement! In addition to the UCAS process, to ensure we are assisting our students who do not wish to go on to further education, we have recently finished a series of events that we have branded the Employment Readiness Programme which offers students support in finding and preparing for apprenticeships. This programme included Interview preparation, CV writing, attending a mock assessment center and careers fair events. The results of the steps outline above have been a vast improvement in our attitude to learning data.

The team have a focus on students' academic performance and have coordinated a number of activities throughout the year in order to ensure students continue to progress. Students test scores and attitude to learning data is monitored and feeds into regularly data meetings with department leads. Students have attended study skills workshop and bespoke intervention programs to ensure they have the required skill set to be successful at A level. The heads of year have led on parent meetings to ensure all stakeholders are involved in conversations regarding students progress and suitable support is in place at home. Timetables are amended to increase time with teachers when required and all students in year 13 have been assigned and attended two SLT mentoring session to discuss progress and future plans.

The efforts of both Head of Year 12 and Year 13 have led to an improved level of Sixth Form attendance. Regular attendance meetings, letters, phone calls and parent meetings are put in place quickly to ensure students return to their learning after absence. Sixth Form attendance is now at 92.3%, 1.1% above the Arbor national average and marginally higher than lower school. The team are continuing to strive towards our target of 95%.

Recruitment Update

This year we have 180 applicants to join the Sixth Form. 165 of these have indicated we are their first-choice destination, this figure is 17 higher than the previous year. When students are analysed based upon their predicted grades 147 students meet the Sixth Form entry requirements, this figure is 13 higher than the previous year. We have 16 external students who have applied to us from a range of other educational establishments, 5 more than last year. 88% of our most able students have indicated a desire to continue their studies at Neston High School Sixth Form.

Efforts have been made to retain our year 11 students and ensure that Sixth Form remains a viable part of Neston's offer. The Sixth Form open evening has been restructured to increase student focus on the courses on offer during the event. The event has also been moved to a point earlier in the year to fall in line with competition. Following from this our application launch was much earlier this year, allowing us to collect our initial round of data in November rather than Jan/Feb. We are currently mid-way into collecting our options data from students, this will be completed by Friday 15th March and will provide further insight into student

numbers for the new academic year. Our curriculum offer has again been compared with local competition and we have taken the decision to add an A level in Law. This decision has been popular with the student body, with 48 indicating in November that they would be interested in taking this course, so far 21 students have opted for Law as an option with more data still to come in. The current offer includes 30 subjects across the curriculum areas. This round of recruitment will see the addition of student interviews and taster sessions which will be running later in the year.

Update of the Year so far-

- Enrolment day for new year 12 students
- Year 12 Parents information evening
- Huddersfield University outreach and admission tutor- personal statement checking day x2
- Year 13 SLT mentoring day- round 1
- Year 13 Progress Event
- Social Mobility Foundation Applications
- Bursary applications
- Year 13 Parents meeting day-MRO
- Apprenticeship- Parents Information Evening
- Year 12 Made Training-stepping Up
- Year 12 In class assessment week
- Year 13 CAE week
- Employment Readiness Program in school PHSE sessions
- UCAS Early Application Deadline 8x students (medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, Oxford or Cambridge)
- EPQ day
- Sixth Form Showcase
- Sixth Form Open Evening
- Year 11 Application Process launch
- Year 12 Work Experience Launch
- Elevate Training for year 13 session 1
- Departmental Data meetings
- Students Interview prep 1-1s
- Past year 13 certificate collection morning
- RSL Target setting
- RSL Parent Meetings
- Cheshire west and Chester careers fair- Advertise Neston Sixth Form
- UCAS deadline 95x total sent applications
- Year 12 Progress Event
- Apprenticeship and Jobs Fair trip
- Mock Assessment Centre Trip
- Sixth Form Social Events
- Year 12 SLT Mentoring Event- round 2

Planning of-

- Year group trip- Edge Hill University
- Year group trip- UCAS conference
- Liverpool University assembly series

SIXTH FORM UPDATE

- Student finance talks
- Teaching and Learning week
- Prom

ASSESSMENT / EXAM UPDATE

- January External Exam Series ran smoothly (involving students from Years 11, 12 & 13). JCQ arrived for an unannounced inspection in which we were successful in passing.
- JCQ updates shared with all students and staff (AI) and website up to date with 2024 JCQ docs.
- Year 12 and 13 Centre Assessed Exam Series successfully completed. Results have been analysed, data review meetings are taking place with all curriculum areas and action plans created for each department.
- Year 11 Centre Assessed Exams Cycle two is underway. Year 11 have been thoroughly prepared for these exams with extra revision classes, revision guides, information assemblies and clear communication with parents. Results will be analysed, final interventions will be put in place and results reported home to parents.

Year 10 examination updates

- Year 10 first term data catch analysed and review meetings have taken place with all subject areas. Action plans created leading into the Centre Assessed Exams after Easter.
- Year 10 Parents 'How to help your child revise' evening has taken place in preparation for their Year 10 Centre Assessed Exams directly after Easter. 90 families in attendance.
- Exams Webinar online (run by Elevate) attended by 204 families ranging from years 10-13.
- Year 10 – All students have had MADE Rapid Revision training. This is strategically placed to start their vision schedules before their CAEs after Easter.
- Year 10 – Targeted students (underachieving / disadvantaged) have been targeted for Elevate sessions. These are taking place before the CAE exams to help support students.

Year 11 examination update

- Key Stage 3 assessment plans have been updated in Go4schools in all subject areas. Trends and underachievement sent to Curriculum leaders at the end of Autumn term. New tracking and intervention report underway and trialled with English.
- Face-to-face Parent Progress Evenings - Teachers and parents reporting how personal and enjoyable the evenings have been. Years 7, 9, 11, 12 & 13 have taken place. Year 10 & 8 will be the final year groups before Easter. Our student leaders have served staff tea and coffee during the evenings and made a positive impact on the front of house.
- External revision company 'Elevate' have worked with Year 11 & Year 13 targeted students identified off our Horsforth data analysis and have run the 'Ace Your Exams' programme and 'Finish Line'.
- All Year 11 Higher prior attainers have undergone a bespoke intervention programme focused on attaining Grades 7-9. Maths/English/Science targeted 7-9 top tips.
- Year 11 Disadvantaged students have followed a bespoke intervention programme. Resources provided, organisational support and motivation for exams and outcomes.
- Year 11 PGL Residential revision trips taking place for 100 girls and 100 boys. Maths / English / Science sessions taking place along with zipwire, archery, fencing and abseiling.
- Year 11 Lesson 6 programme has been exceptionally well attended across all subjects. Walking Talking Mocks taking place after school in Bushell hall has attracted over 100 students each evening.

- Year 11 Tutor time intervention for Maths / English and Science has been successful in targeted groups. Use of 1-1 Maths and Science intervention for disadvantaged and underachieving students.

Intervention / Progress

- Year 11 and Year 13 SLT mentoring programme: all students have had personal meeting to review outcomes and set personal targets for improvement. This is the second meeting this year for each individual student.
- Key Stage 4 and 5 data analysis, tracking and intervention has taken place, with intervention being targeted for identified students both in subject areas and across the year groups. Horsforth data also produced to place a particular focus on underachievers, Disadvantaged, SEND and our Higher Prior attainment students.
- Our 'More Able' Development plan has been launched for Years 7-13. Identified students are accessing enrichment and further opportunities to challenge and inspire ambition. Whole staff training has taken place on our More Able programme. Year 7 have recently had a STEM visit to Eureka Science museum. Year 8 have taken part in a literacy masterclass. Years 10-12 went to West Kirby Grammar School for an Oxbridge evening. Next steps will be working closely with departments to identify specific talented students to provide bespoke subject opportunities.

Next Steps:

- Continuation of data analysis and intervention programme, focused particularly on Year 11 & 13 leading into the summer exam series. Support package for vulnerable students through exam series.
- Preparation for Summer 2024 Exam series. Creation of exam calendar and revision sessions before each exam. Parents Exam Information Evening Wednesday 24th April.
- After Year 10 CAE Exams data review meetings will take place, reports will go home and Year 10 parents will attend the transition into Year 11 parent meeting. Year 10 summer intervention programme to be created and targeted off Horsforth data.
- Follow up Quality Assurance meetings for all Curriculum Leaders to review progress on KS3 Assessment and Tracking system to take place with HWA/JVO/KCU.
- Curriculum leader training phase two to take place on Key Stage 3 tracking and use of Go4Schools for data analysis and intervention. New analysis sheet to be rolled out across all departments.
- Preparation for Summer term summative assessments for Years 7, 8 & 9. Including a preparation revision programme.

Premises and Estates update

- Car Parks – there have been a small number of complaints from parents whose children need to access the blue badge spaces at the front of school due to general parent traffic using this car park. Parking permit initiative introduced to support this.
- 3G pitch Changing rooms with small classrooms spaces – meeting held with Nomads, Football Foundation and Integral. Revised costs have been received, no further funds available from Football Foundation. Integral are obtaining alternative quotes.

Health & Safety update

- Next CWAC H&S Review 18/4/2024
- CWAC Hygiene Audit – January 2024
- Fire Drill - was undertaken 14th October 2023 and was extensively reviewed, recommendations are to be shared with all staff at an appropriate future point before the next drill. Fire Drills are carried out termly.
- Danny Crawford attended a CWAC led Managing Critical Incidents training session. Next steps – group review of current procedure including dummy run.

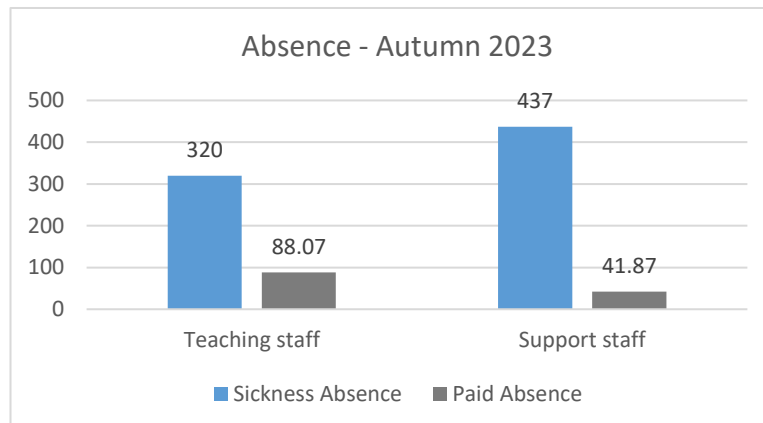
IT Update

- We have successfully implemented mandatory online cyber training mandated by the DfE. Recognising the evolving nature of cyber threats, we are now proactively planning additional 'bite-size' modular training sessions throughout the year. This approach ensures that our staff receive the latest, up-to-date cyber training tailored to the dynamic threat landscape, in addition to the traditional 'once a year' twilight/cpd session mandated by the DfE. We have already launched the portal ready for this next step in our cybersecurity response (it was used for the mandatory DfE training) we are just awaiting confirmation of allocated CPD time to facilitate the distribution of this supplementary training.
- In the previous term, our launch of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) significantly bolstered IT security- staff must now use a registered smartphone or access tokens for remote access to school Email/File systems. Furthermore, this term, we seamlessly integrated our Arbor system with the Microsoft Authentication suite, mandating MFA for remote access or non-networked device usage, further strengthening our overall cybersecurity response.
- IT Acceptable Use & Cyber Security policy is in review.
- To enhance our internet connectivity resilience, a secondary fail-over internet line has now been installed. This strategic addition mitigates service issues on the primary line, addressing concerns outlined in our risk register (reliance on cloud based or internet connected systems).
- New IT equipment has been installed in one of our IT suites to keep our IT suites up to date with the ever-changing technology. Plans are underway to upgrade another IT suite over the summer terms, should budgets allow.
- No cyber incidents to report.

We have now re-launched the Staff Well-Being Group. This will be led by Deputy Headteacher Stuart Nuttall and the first meeting of the newly-formed group will take place in the week commencing Monday 25 March. Fourteen staff have expressed an interest in joining this forum, and all of the following teams are represented within the group: Teaching Staff, Curriculum Leaders, Site Team, Admin Team, Pastoral Learning Mentors, Heads of Year and Senior Leadership.

In order to ensure staff voice was formally represented in planning the key agenda items for the Staff Well-Being Group, Stuart Nuttall led a CPD session in which he asked all members of staff to work in groups to feed back what measures they felt would have the greatest impact on improving staff well-being. We received a great many responses, of which the following list is just a snapshot. These will form our starting point for discussion in our first meeting at the end of March:

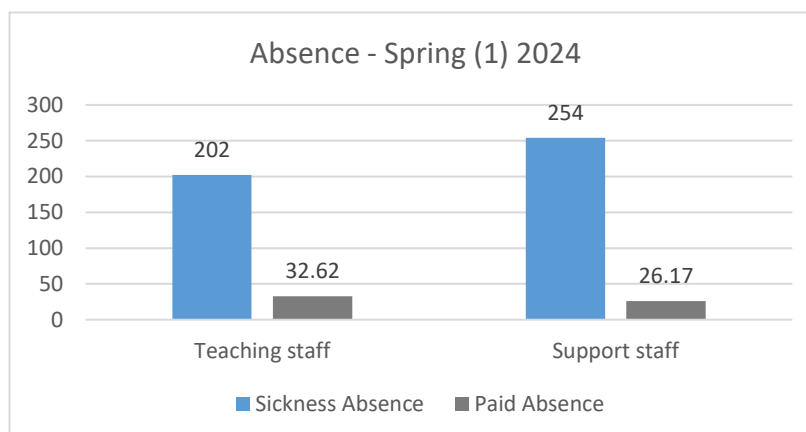
- protocols to be established for the use of staff work rooms to ensure staff can be productive in these areas
- a wider use of regular staff recognition systems to celebrate staff achievement and contributions to the school community (e.g. extra-curricular, trips)
- clear communication to parents regarding email response times
- greater accessibility of phones for staff to make potentially sensitive calls home to families
- more whole-staff well-being events where we can bring together staff from different teams e.g. summer BBQ

Autumn Term 2023

The above graph shows the total number of days of absence of staff from September – December 2023 exclusively.

Sickness absence includes long term absence for four teaching staff and three support staff. Three of which have returned to work and one member of staff has since left Neston High School. This can be reflected in the comparison to the same period the previous year when there was a combined total (teaching and support staff) of 390 sickness absence days which included only one long term absence in comparison to seven.

Paid absence is for authorised time off for non-sickness absence, such as medical appointments, caring for unwell dependants, attending children's events and compassionate leave. Also included in paid leave is jury service for two members of staff. Authorised paid leave includes part day absence.

Spring Term (1) 2024

The total number of absence days January – February half term is shown above.

Sickness absence includes long term absence for two teaching staff and four support staff. One of which have returned to work. Total sickness absence for the same period the year before was 139 days when again there was no long term absence.

Paid absence includes one member of staff on jury service.

In February 2024, following guidance from Hill Dickinson, Solicitors and presentations to staff, a new Absence Reporting process was introduced. The impact of this is currently being monitored.

STEM

STEM at Neston is STEAM as we included the Arts, and this combination gives our students more benefits.

STEM aims to equip learners with “future-ready” and practical skills by focusing on teaching science, technology, engineering, and math. STEAM can also equip learners with these skills but additionally fosters a love of creativity and imagination by bringing the arts into the equation.

Since the start of September, we have been awarded the Gold STEM Club award for Makerspace, had Y7 students speak at the first Cheshire schools Sustainability conference, and won the Educate Outstanding Commitment to STEM award.

Y9 Students attended STEM workshops at Liverpool University, and Y8 & Y9 students took part in the Unilever Bright Future event with the final this Thursday.



Last week, we held our planned open event for Makerspace, inviting students, their families, and the wider community to try our Makerspace; this event was very well received with a great turnout, and we made some excellent future connections for the school.

Last week, we are held STEAM workshops for primary school visits Monday - Wednesday and Thursday at Unilever and hosted the Rotary Engineering tournament at Neston on Friday.



Our Literacy Coordinator (Stuart Smith) continues to promote a reading culture across the school and develop literacy in line with whole school priorities. Literacy remains at the forefront of our daily business.

Literacy & CPD

Stuart has delivered further CPD to all staff focusing on literacy standards and the teaching of vocabulary across the curriculum. Literacy based CPD often includes the opportunities for other staff to share examples from their own subject area and it has been promising to see how staff are embedding literacy opportunities in all subjects. The Quality Assurance processes (Window 1 and 2) have both highlighted how departments have placed a significant focus on explicitly teaching vocabulary and literacy-rich opportunities are now being included in schemes of learning (this includes wider reading and extended writing opportunities). The QA process has also demonstrated the successful implementation of consistent literacy marking across subjects.

6th Form Reading Buddies

Thirty of our year 7 students with the lowest literacy levels have been receiving 1:1 reading support with 6th form students since October. This intervention has been designed to build literacy and reading confidence. This is a fantastic project which sees our year 7s working closely with older students to boost literacy abilities whilst building positive relationships between our students. Year 7 students completed a baseline assessment when they began this intervention, they will be tested before May half term to measure the impact. However, the feedback from student voice has been overwhelmingly positive:

- 'It's fun - a good way to start the morning.' Y13
- 'It gives me something else to think about and takes my mind of things.' Y13
- 'It's helped me be enthusiastic with my reading.' Y7
- 'I am happy with my reading and reader buddy. I think it's great'. Y7
- 'I hated reading. I couldn't do it. Now I find it a lot easier.' Y7
- 'It has made me more confident with reading out loud in front of new people.' Y7

Reading initiatives

To further promote and develop a reading culture at Neston High School, staff, students, and visitors are now able to see our 'Currently Reading Posters' displayed by each staff member. Students and staff are engaging in 'book talk' daily whilst the posters encourage and motivate students to view reading positively. Staff understand the integral part that reading plays in the success and future of all students. This initiative was implemented by Stuart in January, and it has been excellent to see staff becoming positive ambassadors of reading within our school community.

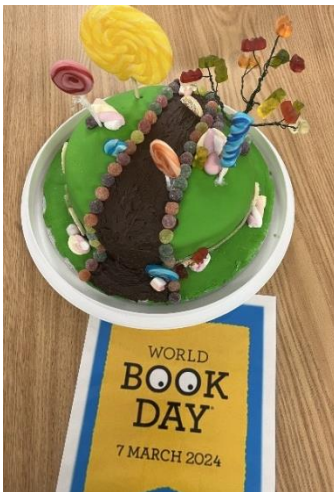
We now have two community volunteers who are now coming into school to support students with their literacy. The students involved in this 1:1 intervention continue to benefit from this personalised support.



World Book Day

On the 7th March, staff and students took part in a range of exciting activities to celebrate World Book Day and the importance of reading. Staff and students were invited to enter book related bakes and cakes for our very own 'Neston Book Bake-Off'. This was a brilliant event. The masterpieces included: Bruce Bogtrotter's chocolate cake, Harry Potter book cakes, Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory and many more. Entries were judged by Chef Shaun, Miss Thomas (Head of Art & Design), Miss Tyson (Art Technician), Mrs Roberts (Librarian) and Alice (our Year 10 student judge). The winning entries received book vouchers to enjoy spending at Lingham's Bookshop in Heswall. The cakes were sold to students at lunchtime raising funds for the library. Across the school, students took part in a 'Big Library Quiz' to test their literary knowledge in their tutor groups. We were delighted to be able to provide all 300 of our year 7 students with a free World Book Day book and the £1 book tokens.

During breaktime, staff and trustees were invited to the library for a 'Brew, Biscuit & Books' – lots of staff enjoyed the opportunity to visit the library and talk to our student librarians. This event supported the well-being of staff providing them with an opportunity to socialise with colleagues from across the school whilst celebrating the school library and the considerable role it plays in our school community.



Kirsty Cunningham
March 2024