

# Upper School: Autumn Term 2024



Since returning from the summer break, students and staff in Upper School have settled back well into their routines, they have all got to grips with a new timetable and a totally new cohort of students, that reflects the changing cohort of students that are now transitioning through the different age phases of school despite all of the building work that is happening on site, students and staff have navigated remarkably a new route to Upper School extremely well. Upper school now has a total of 57 students within the area, of which some students have transitioned from Year 11 at the end of their Key Stage 4 education from other schools within Lincolnshire. To support this a robust transition has been led by members of the Upper school team to ensure that for the students it felt seamless. We also have some new members of staff that have joined the area, they have felt very welcome since starting and are really enjoying seeing the students taking part in a different variety of lessons, and also their own timetables change due to the rotation of activities that make up the Upper School timetable. The environment is at capacity, with an even greater variety of students experiencing the 'World of Work' as they best prepare for life beyond St Francis. All the student's lessons on offer, no matter the curriculum pathway they follow are having a huge impact upon students' individual journeys that they are embarking on, especially as they prepare and are fully supported for life after school.

There is a real sense of change within the area and the school that is now happening, particularly with the complexity, in terms of health of students getting older and them still needing a curriculum that best meets their individual needs. Therefore, following the review of the curriculum and the way in which the four different curriculum pathways in Post 16 (Formal, Semi-Formal, Informal and Pre-Formal) have now been structured, it is really starting to come to life, particularly with the dedicated amount of work from Teresa Duncan and her team of staff to develop and implement a curriculum for the newly formed Pre and Informal Curriculum pathway within Upper School, it really is brilliant to see the fantastic offer daily that the students so rightly deserve. Staff and students are really enjoying spending time together in their variety curriculum pathway groups and the different variety of lessons, some fantastic relationships have continued and are starting to develop with new students and staff to the area. Socialising at break and lunchtimes is back to its best, supported by some excellent lunchtime clubs including Karaoke and Drama where students can further display their individual talents, all of this is so lovely to see.

We have received some fantastic results from the NCFE, the awarding body that our students follow for their Functional Skills examinations, for the students who sat and passed their examinations in the summer term. We have students receiving qualifications in both Functional Literacy and Numeracy with results ranging from Entry Level 1 to Level 1. Lisa Penney and Sam McCardell have done a fantastic job in supporting students to receive these excellent results and we will now plan to invite ex-students back to school to celebrate their individual success.

# Subject updates

## Functional Literacy

It is wonderful to start on the positive note of naming students from the Formal group who passed their exams last summer. The following students passed all three elements, Reading, Writing and Speaking, Listening and Communication.

Travis, Alex, and Jodie all passed their NCFE Entry Level 3 Literacy exam. Poppy, Conner, and Jason all passed their NCFE Entry Level 2 Literacy exam. Finally Tally and Lewis passed their NCFE Entry Level 1 Literacy exam. The success of these students was down to their commitment to learning, their continued hard work and enthusiasm. We are so proud of them and look forward to having a Presentation Ceremony to award them with their certificates very soon.

This term Upper Semi-Formal 3 have focussed on the book, 'The day the Screens went Blank,' by Danny Wallace. They had an interesting group discussion on how much they would miss technology if the screens and internet stopped in real life. We also discussed the Pro's and Con's of the apps on their phones and safety issues. It was great to hear how aware the students were of potential scams and they demonstrated a good knowledge of on-line safety.

Finally Upper Semi-Formal 1 have focussed on the theme of 'Autumn'. They enjoyed exploring conkers, cones, and different coloured leaves. The students also enjoyed learning more about hedgehogs and squirrels through listening to story books and using widget symbols to show their understanding of the stories.



Jack enjoyed the hedgehog story and using widget symbols and Arielle enjoyed helping to tell the story with 'Harriet the Hedgehog!'

## Functional Numeracy

In Functional Numeracy our formal students have been best preparing techniques and strategies towards examinations, we have been focusing on student's ability to collect, present and analyse data. We have begun the term by using real life scenarios to present data. We have 4 students from this group sitting examinations in December and I have high hopes of the students who will sit these examinations. Our semi-formal learners across the different pathways have been looking at basic numerical functions of addition and subtraction to best support them at looking at future projects throughout the year.

We have had a particular focus on creating totals using multiples of £1, 50p and 10p. To put this into a life-based scenario we took the students to shop where they bought an item of their choice and where necessary support was given to help them when paying for an item. Further learning has focused on days, weeks, and months. With the aim of getting a greater understanding of what events occur during the year, different seasons and what to expect in those seasons. As the festive season comes, we will be looking at creating a calendar for the students to take home to their families and create a Christmas enterprise project, where we will be creating a small Christmas Fayre, we will have collected some market research on what the students would like to have at this event. Students will now collect the relevant information on what they need to order to make this happen.



## Pre/Informal Curriculum pathway class

Everyone is settling into new surroundings and new timetable. Excited class staff led by Teresa and supported by Sally came in early every day of the first week back and decorated, designed, and set up a lovely, engaging learning environment. We wanted the room to be a sensory area with lots of interaction spaces and a calm corner with equipment so students could be out of their class and wheelchairs. We wanted to create a grown-up space and have a theme of greenery and woodland.

Some successes so far have been our Floor focus lessons, internal support from Vicky gave us some brilliant training and we have implemented this into the timetable, the students are so engaged with it. Staff are very enthusiastic and keen to lead the session too and this has been a fantastic addition to the students offer. Communication- we have a communication station and are adding to the number of symbols around. One real success is the My Body sessions which include physio programmes along with body awareness and exercise. Having access to the Quad area is a major help for student's walkers and basketball stretches.





## Art

We began the term getting to know the new students by creating individual jigsaw pieces about themselves. Currently Semi Formal 1&2 are focusing on the environment. They have been exploring the outdoors to experience the autumn colours for inspiration on creating their seasonal trees looking at the colour of leaves & texture of bark.

To honour the veterans on Remembrance Day the students created pictures using charcoal & paint then displayed in the temporary reception area. Preformal/Informal are creating a sensory box about a hedgehog from the book 'Ouch' using varied materials, textures & colours.



## Learning Outside the Classroom/ Independent Living

Last term my LOC and independent living group semi formal 2 have been going to Mint Lane café as part of the 'Happy Cooking' scheme where they learn to cook cheap healthy meals. As part of the travelling to and from Mint Lane café the students have been learning about bus timetables, how to conduct themselves when traveling on public transport, and how to stay safe in town. The group have also all applied for free bus passes to make this journey, which they will then be able to use in their free time with their families. We are currently in the process of preparing for our bake sale on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November. Students have baked scones and cookies for the event and have also designed their own posters to put up around school to advertise the bake sale. Students will be taking money on the day and all proceeds will go to 'candlelighters' charity.



This next term with semi formal 2 we are going to look at road safety, navigation, making basic meals, hot drinks, and personal hygiene.

Last term my semi formal 1 LOC group have been looking at the different seasons and appropriate clothing to wear within them, we have also explored how the different seasons display themselves in nature. They have been doing colour and shape matching using leaves. For Halloween they made witches broom sticks and wands, they also made a caldron which the students then filled with child friendly bath goo, they then selected different bugs to place in the goo. We then used caldron goo as a sensory experience to further enhance, using feel the texture, smell and some students with delight took great joy in throwing the goo at all the staff! This term we will be looking at Christmas themes and making Christmas trees and decorations for them to take home as gifts for their families.

### Cooking

The students have enjoyed the first half term of cooking lessons, they have adjusted well to the new groups and the new students to Upper School have settled well. The students have been identifying weighing, measuring equipment, and using the relevant pieces of equipment to complete recipes with increasing degrees of accuracy. In cooking this term, we have been working on various recipes that have included.

- Basic Cupcake
- Lemon Thumbprint Cookies
- Sausage Rolls
- Chocolate Chip Cookies

Some of the Semi-formal students are working on identifying ingredients needed for each recipe using Widget symbols, and they continue to access a wide range of small electrical appliances using switches.





Last week the students made Spooky Halloween Pizzas, Sophie showing some prime examples below.



Leading up to Christmas the students are starting to prepare tasty treats that are going to be frozen then sent home at the end of term in a small Christmas Hamper this will include:

- Decorated Gingerbread Biscuits
- Cheese Straws
- Mince Pies
- Sausage & Cranberry Plait
- Christmas Pudding Rocky Road.

### **Saints and Dinners café**

Saint's & Dinner's continues to go from strength to strength and is hugely popular with staff members every Thursday. This year we have a group of seven students, including a student that attends from St Christopher's School each week who help to run the café.

School staff love the variety of dishes on the menu each week we have a steady number of orders each week that is keeping us busy, fifty last week alone! A student has been assisting me with the shopping for Saint's & Dinner's each Wednesday as part of his work experience, which is also going well, and he is developing crucial life skills such as budgeting and time management whilst out with me doing this.

We now have a Coffee Machine installed and me, and 2 students have attended a Basic Barista Course at Stokes Coffee House, and we are hopefully getting this up and running in the New Year where we will be in a position to serve freshly ground coffee to add another arm to the café provision.

### **ICT**

ICT lessons for formal learners have focused on staying safe online, using a variety of activities, we have explored different outcomes to the same situation by which choice we make and the reasons for our choice. We are now moving on to working with Publisher this term, learning about the different software they can use to create amazing content. For our Semi-Formal students where appropriate we have been using I.T to support within our numeracy lessons, with a particular focus on accessing local shops websites. We have been having discussions around IT platforms that they access such as YouTube and Spotify. We have been able to use these discussions as an opportunity to discuss the positive and negatives of these apps that now play a huge part in everyday life.

## Health, Wellbeing and Beauty

Each week this term we have looked closely at a topic, based around our general wellbeing and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. These topics have included, the importance of a good night's sleep, healthy balanced diets, and hidden sugars in our food, how exercise helps both our body and mind, the importance of brushing our teeth. Students have also taken part in treatments to support their wellbeing, we have concentrated on foot care, manicures, and hand massages.



## PSHE/Careers and Work Experience

It has been an exciting time for Careers and PSHE this term. Our semi-formal one and two groups have been learning about friendship, as well as starting the 'MyHappyMinds' lessons – learning all about why they feel they way they do, and how to control those feelings as best as possible. We will continue to investigate relationships going forward, exploring appropriateness in these and how we avoid and overcome difficult situations that we may find ourselves in.

Semi-formal three have also looked at relationships, as well as looking at jobs that they might be interested in going forward. They will spend some time looking at their vocational profiles, as well as moving on to work on The Rez comic series, which is related to friendship. Additionally, they have been exploring 'MyHappyMinds' lessons.

Our formal learners have been flying with their work experience placements, with all students now embarking on internal and external work throughout the week. The start of the year has also brought a number of engagements with industry. Students visited Curry's repair warehouse in Newark, the completed BGU accommodation next door – which they had visited through the building phase – and opened a new Starbucks!



## Sport

We have been making the most of not being able to access a fit for purpose area for the students to be active due to the building work. In good weather conditions we have been accessing the local park where we have promoted independence and physical activity using the cycle tracks. We have been fortunate to gain access to the drama studio, where we have been taking part in Boccia, New Age Curling and in recent weeks, focusing on movement/dance.





Finally, five students from across school are taking part in a Social Enterprise activity, initiated by Lincoln City Football club, asking for our input as to how they can make a 'Matchday' experience even better for a young person with a neurodiversity or disability. This will involve the students giving up their own time on Saturdays, coming together in school time to collaborate with mentors from SSPP to be able to create presentation in preparation to present to the CEO, Liam Scully at Lincoln City about their findings. This is an exciting project that could have a lasting impact upon the football club and better enhance the matchday experience for students at St Francis school.



Nick Wray and Post 16 staff