



Diary

What's coming up...

Summer Term

17th April - 24th May

Half Term: 27th - 31st May

3rd June - 25th July
(with Year 11 leavers
finishing June 30th)



Inset days 2023/24

April 15th & 16th



Message from the Head

Students and staff alike, are looking forward to the coming spring and summer as the new seasons bring with them wider opportunities for learning. Students have studied well this term, some preparing for mocks this winter as well as taken on work experiences and chances for career prep. Many of our young people have braved the elements as they work stoically outside the classroom, in Forest School and a host of other off site activities. For students who are not as motivated by outdoor exploration, the term has presented opportunities where learning has come to life such as; 'Chinese New Year', 'World Book Day', 'Safer Internet Day', participation in a poetry competition, 'Mental Health Day' and even a visit from a South American corn snake!

We have the largest ever cohort of year 11 leavers this year and we are busy with students securing next steps and exploring options for life beyond On Track. Careers South West and ASK have provided the students with comprehensive preparation including work placements ready for their transition.

Our year 11 leavers will move on from On Track on 30th June following their final exam series.



Our whole school attendance has dropped again slightly this term so I would like to ask you, please ensure that you are doing all you can to support your young person to engage. We are at capacity, and consequently need to really build our participation to be able to show that progress and development are in place for all learners. It is parent and carer's responsibility to ensure that a learner attends school.

Next term we will have a range of dynamic experience based learning: enrichment days alongside rewards days, leavers trips, our final interschool football tournament. In addition there are planned gallery visits, and a range of new starters to refresh the school, students and sites. We will have an in-school focus on a 'Growth Mindset' from staff and in our Thrive and mindfulness teaching which runs alongside the curriculum. We are thankful to the parents and carers who were able to attend our drop in session to see and celebrate the work that our young people have produced. We were really pleased with attendance and the interaction by students alongside this.

Thank you for all of your ongoing support, Maria.

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ASCEL library project

Students from Saunders House have been involved in the Barnstaple library ASCEL project; offering ideas for youth engagement.

Barnstaple library is one of just seven libraries to receive funding to put on more youth activities, and our students are taking the lead in supporting this initiative.

"I get to explore new things"

Nicola



"On Track is the longest I've ever been in a school and I didn't think it would last this long."

Corey

Mental Health Day

On the 7th February, during 'Children's mental health week', pupils took part in a whole school themed day. They were offered a range of activities, including reiki sessions, online workshops on resilience, therapeutic art activities, badge and dreamcatcher making, dog walking, and a talk by a mindfulness nurse about managing anxiety and stress. We celebrated together at lunch with a special meal, highlighting the importance of healthy choices: we are working towards the 'Healthy schools award'. A fun day was had by all, it was great to see pupils engaging in activities to promote their mental health and wellbeing, whilst opening up new conversational topics.



Careers

A number of our students have one eye on their next chapter after On Track has come to an end. Staff have supported in creating CVs, application letters and we have also had a careers advisor from ASK visit and offer valuable feedback.

It has been inspiring to see the enthusiasm on display, with a range of college prospectuses being combed through, open days visited, 'Indeed' profiles created and other research taking place.

It has been an eye opener to witness such focus and all of the aspirations and future plans being hatched.

Below is a particularly eloquent enquiry letter from our learner Rhys.

Dear Sir or Madam, my name is Rhys Brock and I am a 15 year old resident of the United Kingdom. I am deeply fascinated by chemistry, physics, telescopes, simulators and all things related to space.

I loved to do research in my own time and learn details about discoveries and endeavours. My interest and passion for this field have been brewing for quite some time now, as I am on the autistic spectrum (Asperger's specifically) and believe that becoming an astronaut would be an incredible opportunity. I understand that this is no small feat, and that it takes a lot of training and preparation to achieve. But, I am willing to put in the work, and I am certain that my passion for the topic will carry me through it. I would greatly appreciate it if you could provide me with some information on how to get started on this journey, and what the requirements for becoming an astronaut are.

I am eager to learn and begin this process. Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely, Rhys



School menu

Below are a few samples from the delicious Spring term's menu.

Chicken or vegetable burger

Chips and salad

Raspberry & white chocolate whip

Juice or smoothie box

Macaroni cheese with garlic bread and carrots

Lemon drizzle cake

Salmon fillet or cod fish fingers

Wedges and peas

Summerfruit sponge

"I didn't know it then but now I understand it" (Maths - lines of symmetry)

Sian



Mock GCSE exams

During assessment week this term all pupils in year 11 and above were given the opportunity to sit mock GCSE exams in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science.

Several sat these under formal exam conditions at our Narita and Castle house sites

Pupils demonstrated a mature and calm approach to their mocks, which will be great preparation for sitting the "real thing" in the summer term.



Poetry competition

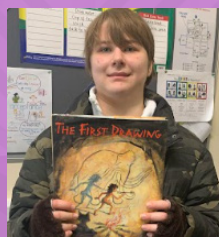
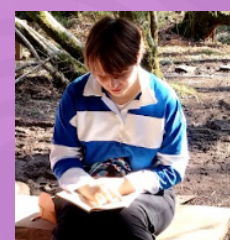
'Through their eyes'

Six learners have submitted entries to a young writers poetry competition. 'Through their eyes' has given students the opportunity to step into somebody else's life and write a poem about what they imagine their thoughts, feelings and experiences are.

We wish Alexis, Charlie R, Lex, Rhys, Zak and Charlie C the best of luck.

World book day

In March the annual celebrations took place across all school sites for World book day. Many of our staff dressed as their favourite characters, and there was a wide range of fun activities, making it a roaring success.



Eco school

The eco team have been busy this term preparing the gardens and planting vegetables. This is to help towards achieving another eco school status and teaches students how to care for the environment and grow their own organic crops.



Art Gallery visit



Some of the On Track Art students met Emma Haines, a local artist, in her 'Doodles Gallery' in Ilfracombe. She was able to offer insights about starting out as an artist, as well as technical advice around technique, materials and starting commission work.

" I love forest school, because it pushes me to do activities and enjoy myself, i wouldn't usually do."

Zak

Thrive at On Track

We are proud to welcome two new qualified Thrive practitioners.

Mark and Leeanne commented: We are thrilled to become Thrive practitioners which has given us the tools to understand ways to best support our students emotionally.

The training included learning about the adolescent brain, how it develops, and what happens when we have strong emotions. They have learned techniques to best help our students to feel calm, regulated and nurtured, which can help to restore and enrich any gaps in a young person's emotional development.



This term the focus has been developing independence skills.

Students have been learning to use the washing machine, make hot drinks for others and create new recipes; also making their own choices.

Students have explored new experiences including meeting pets and enjoying playing games to build relationships with peers and staff.

Each of our students has a Thrive book, which documents the social and emotional learning that your child experiences with us. One parent recently commented how surprised they were to see the social and emotional aspects their child had given such emphasis to during their school time and were delighted to see the progress made.

Thank you for attending the parent and carer drop in session, it was wonderful to see so many of you.

Family Thrive work

Last but not least, we are delighted that a group of parents have joined our family thrive lead Clare, for her first set of sessions. The 6 week course supports parents and carers to understand the thrive approach and its everyday application to family life. This includes learning about the importance of play and exploring the concept that behaviour is a form of communication. Clare also covers the way in which adolescent brains and nervous systems develop. Groups are small and provide a safe space for parents and carers to talk and share ideas.

If you think you might be interested in joining an upcoming group, please don't hesitate to contact clangmead@ontrackeducation.com

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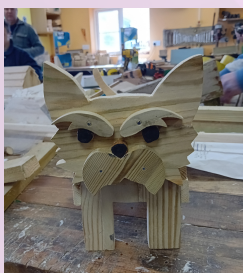


Theatre Royal

Three learners made the journey to The Theatre Royal, Plymouth, to see Disney's spectacular Broadway and West End musical Aladdin.

"The music and singing was really good!" - Alexis

"I enjoyed watching it! Their singing was really impressive!" - Zak



Callum made this amazing dog shaped planter out of wood at his session at Made-Well farm. He worked really hard on it and as you can see its finished to a really professional standard.



Staff will risk assess and bring their pets into school, with great therapeutic benefit. Here is a picture of Tommy holding our assistant head James' corn snake. The school was a buzz as many of our young people also had this opportunity.

Cooking - BTEC & WJEC work

Students have been showing dedication and talent in their culinary skills. Over 50 AQA unit awards have been successfully achieved this term, with an additional 30 awards recently submitted.

Ten students are actively engaged in working towards the WJEC entry pathway in preparing, cooking and serving qualification. Five students are striving towards their Level 1 BTEC in home cooking skills with their practical assessment fast approaching.

The department recently celebrated Chinese New Year at Narita house where Sian took the lead in planning and preparing traditional dishes to share with staff and students. The event showcased not only the students culinary skills but also their cultural awareness.

Over 40 entries have been made for the WJEC Entry Pathways this term. These entries have been made through forest school, cooking, fitness and animal care. Students are working hard on their portfolios of evidence which will be submitted after Easter.



Forest School

Presented with consistently inclement weather this term, the students have been resilient, determined and receptive to change.

Following the theme of 'shelter', the students have trudged through the mud continuing to improve the drainage and re-landscape the camp. They have tested their strength and technique to chop wood for the store, practised tying knots and wheelbarrowed stone for the drains. Meanwhile, a pheasant was plucked and cooked, and the bones of a deer discovered on an explorative walk!

Embracing new experiences, the students have been on a number of "field trips" away from the forest camp this term. They have visited the Motte and Bailey castle site at Eggesford forest and searched for the giant Douglas fir tree. The students have explored Branton burrows and stood on the concrete replica landing craft used in the approach to the D-day landings in WWII. A snow day just added to the excitement.

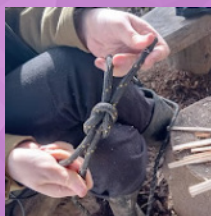


Photo Drop



Our usual selection of pics to show some of the term's highlights!

Please check out our website for contact information and any help or support you may need: ontrackeducation.com/barnstaple

Keep up to date by following us on Instagram

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