

SEN Department Newsletter

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3

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Summer Is Coming...



After a short Lent Term, the first half of the Summer Term has raced by in record time. With study leave and exams already taking place, the Summer Term presents a new set of challenges for us all.

Despite its brevity, there is much to report on the last term's activity in Student Support, and this issue particularly highlights the fine contribution our students make to the department.

New Programmes for L5

To add to the support offered to all our students, Mrs Gwyther launched two new groups last term. The KS3 Resilience Group was formed to look at developing skills that help in dealing with the challenges and difficulties we all face in our daily lives. A group of students also met for



four workshops on handling negative emotions, a programme that will run again later this year.

Mr Roe also ran a new group meeting on Thursdays in L5 this term, to help Year 10 and 11 boys to prepare for exams, and to share advice on revision and study skills.

Overcoming Anxiety

The end of last term saw an insightful talk from the school's educational psychologist, Deborah Sander, on the symptoms of anxiety disorders, the conditions behind them, and the support available in school and externally to help pupils manage these issues. The talk was open to all staff members and Deborah spoke to a full house in the LRC.

The topics included:

- Phobias
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Social anxiety disorders.

Through the session Deborah's shared her experience of helping those who suffer with anxiety and emphasised that these responses are based on healthy instincts: we all rely

on adrenaline for our safety and well-being, but if they operate disproportionately they can be distressing and highly impairing.

This event tied in closely with a focus on mental health awareness in school throughout the year, and is followed by similar events this term, including the emotional health awareness sessions delivered to boys in KS3 and KS4 by Satveer Nijjar.

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2

An L5 favourite is the annual film and food trip, which this year saw students and staff returning to catch up on the final part of the Hunger Games saga. This event is always lots of fun and this year was no exception. A film critic from Year 9 reviewed the film...

Usually, the books are better than the film. But not for any of the Hunger Games series. No offence to Suzanne Collins but the Hunger Games films were so much better than the books. The film had many loud scenes in it which would make anyone jump and some

scenes when even the most avid film viewer might have no idea what is going on.

But the movie's graphics and plot were excellent, and for those who haven't read the books and had blissful ignorance of what was going

to happen, I'm sure they were shocked. However, what was even more shocking was that certain teachers laughed at the height of the violence, and I was appalled at such shocking behaviour!

Overall the film was very good, made you jump at certain scenes and actually had a plot which made sense and wasn't plagiarised from a film earlier in the series—I'm talking to YOU Star Wars Episode VII!. One thing though, has anyone realised that only two films from the four actually have a Hunger Games tournament in them?



Film rating: 5 stars

Matthew, Year 9

New Games Arise—and are Reviewed

Last term saw the addition of three new card games to L5 for the break and lunchtime groups. Bohnanza has emerged as the new favourite and some of the boys took their time to share what they think of each of the games. Come along and join us if you would like to try them for yourself!

FLUXX

The premise of this card game is deceptively simple: shuffle a couple of packs of Fluxx cards together, deal 3 cards to

new and the interactions of the different rules (and players) with one another can produce hilarious situations.

I've not given it full marks is that not everyone enjoys it and it can be a confusing game to play at first. But I think it's well worth playing and you'll pick it up and be having fun in no time!

Year 13 student

out of cards and that person wins.

This is a good game for family and friends. Rating—7/10

Kirill Alekseev, Year 8



each player and then follow the rules on the cards on the table. The trouble is that the cards you choose to play have instructions on them too, which change the rules of the game whilst you play it.

How do you win? Simply match the cards in front of you to the goal card in the centre of the table... But even that can change! The game is in a constant state of flux and you've got to keep your wits about you to beat it.

In terms of a score, I'd give it an 8 out of 10, since it's an interesting and fun game to play; each game is something

DOBBLE

Dobble is a card game in which the aim is to get rid of all your cards. The game is similar to Snap but the cards have numerous pictures on them.

When the first card is turned over, players seek to find a match as fast as they can and shouts out the name of the picture they matched. This continues until a player runs

BOHNANZA



Bohnanza is a trading game where you play as a bean farmer. You draw some bean cards and you can plant one type each in a limited number of bean fields. You then trade cards to maximise your crops, which you sell to make coins. The winner is the player who has the most coins at the end of the game.

Games last around 45 mins and 2 to 7 people can play.

Really entertaining — 8 / 10

Year 9 student



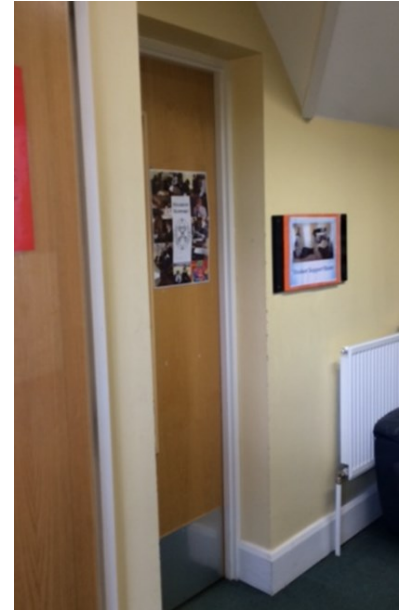
Student Support

As ever, we continue to offer:

Sensory Circuits – every Tuesday morning from 8.15 am in the gym – a good place to learn new skills and make friends!

Great for:

- Improving motor skills
- Practicing working as part of team
- Making friends and having fun



Breakfast Club (KS3) every Friday morning from 8.20 am in L5 – come and join for fun and games ranging from the Uno to Penguin Pile-Up!

- Relaxed environment
- Fun games to play
- Inclusive atmosphere

L5, in the coach house, is available at break and lunch times—if you're at a loose end during lunch and break times, come to L5 and enjoy the friendly atmosphere. You can try your skills at chess, Uno, board games, or just read or do homework and have a bite to eat.

Meet Steve...

Some of you may know Steve the school counsellor who has been coming to Reading for the past few years. He offers confidential advice on a wide variety of topics and many of our students have benefitted from his help. If you're having a difficult time and would like someone to talk to your form tutor, Mr Roe, Mrs Gwyther and Miss Rogers can make an appointment with Steve. You don't even need to tell us why you'd like to see him.



Web Focus — Puberty:

<http://www.pamf.org/teen/health/puberty/>

[http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/information for boys about puberty](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/information_for_boys_about_puberty)

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/therapists-spill-how-i-manage-murky-moods/>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/teenboys/Pages/Teenboyshome.aspx>