



Ramsey Voice

Updates Newsletter

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Notes From the Head

Welcome to the first edition of this year's Ramsey Voice newsletter. We started the term celebrating an excellent set of GCSE results; record breaking for the school!

Congratulations to our former Year 11 students, 59% of whom achieved 5 A*- C including English and Maths, an increase of 11% compared to the previous year. Although this is no longer a key accountability measure it is still an important benchmark ensuring students have the qualifications to progress to the next stage of their career. This figure must also be taken in the context of the ability of the cohort and the progress they have made since joining the school in Year 7. Again the progress figures indicate students made more than expected progress in a wide range of subjects compared to their peer group nationally.

It has been a busy half term: we have welcomed our new Year 7 students, who have quickly settled into the Ramsey routine. It was particularly pleasing to see large numbers help at our Open Evening, meeting their friends from primary school, explaining the exciting activities they are now involved in and reassuring them that the transition

process is not as daunting as they may initially think.

Work on the tower block is nearly complete. The two-year project has involved the replacement of all cladding, frames and windows, replacing the roof and installation of new blinds. The learning environment in the classrooms and science laboratories have been transformed and the exterior view is considerably more appealing.

We are delighted to announce a new partnership with local estate agent, Breadmore & Webb. Owner, Martin Webb has agreed to sponsor the Ramsey Voice and provide additional funds to support a rewards scheme which recognises the achievements and effort of individual students during the year.

Our aim of becoming 'an outstanding school in the heart of the community' could not be achieved without forming a variety of partnerships. As part of our careers programme a number of local businesses have given Year 10 and 11 students the opportunity to apply for 'mock jobs' and attend interviews. Which has provided a valuable opportunity to view life in the real world and learn from the experience. Throughout this edition there are examples of how staff and students have taken various career routes and there will be more stories of former students in the next edition.

Our philosophy is not merely to prepare students for qualifications, but to develop a range of life skills and attitudes including self-confidence; resilience; rising to the challenge; learning from failure and willingness to take the chance when the opportunity presents itself. This approach is summarised in the following quotations by John Dewey, an American philosopher and educational reformer;

'Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself,' and 'Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.'

We hope you enjoy reading the Ramsey Voice, celebrating the success of our students in a wide range of opportunities throughout the coming year. - Mr R James

PIXL Awards

PIXL is an organisation comprising of more than 1500 secondary schools across the country which supports teaching and leadership. They also present achievement awards to students who have performed particularly well in GCSE examinations. This year we nominated 4 students to receive awards based upon the fantastic progress they made.

We were delighted when we received confirmation that Lewis Crow, Lewis Brennan, Jack Preston and Lucy Edwards had been successful. Along with parents we attended a star-studded celebration evening at Central Hall, Westminster where awards were received from Jo Rowsell-Shand, Olympic Gold medalist.

Congratulations to all winners. - Mr C Leys



Gardening Club

The end of the summer term was hectic. All hands were put to weeding and putting on a good display for the 'Anglia In Bloom' judges. They arrived on the last day of term and were impressed with our members' knowledge and enthusiasm. The polytunnel was filled with geraniums and tomato plants, while our allotment showed a variety of produce. I am delighted to say that 'Halstead In Bloom' have once again secured a Gold award and been named 'Best Town in East Anglia'.

The crops in the polytunnel happily survived the summer holiday with a minimum of intervention. Our computerised irrigation system worked excellently, creating an indoor monsoon twice a day.

This term started off with the sorting and washing of seed trays and pots. We will soon begin processing the geraniums for over-wintering and aim to sell off some of them next year.

We are continuing with our annual Halloween fundraising tradition. This year we are manufacturing bats on shields made from scrap wood. The greenhouse has consequently been filled with the sound of banging nails, singing and spilt paint!

Followers of the Gardening Club will recall the RHS Rocket Experiment we took part in earlier in the year. We sent in a photo of our members, dressed up in white lab coats, during the experiment. The Head of RHS School Gardening has requested that, out of all the hundreds of photos sent in, ours is to be used for the front cover of their report. This will be sent out to all schools in the country and will be available online.

The rest of term and beginning of next year will be focussed on achieving the final RHS Five Star Award. Once we have this the school will be able to display the RHS logo on the school stationery. - Mr S Pittuck



Building Work Update

The second phase of the replacement curtain walling on the tower block has now finished. All scaffolding will be down by the end of the week. It has made a vast improvement to not only the aesthetics of the building, but also to our energy efficiency (carbon footprint or sustainability).

Building work will continue on the ground floor of the tower block during half term in order to minimise disruption to the school. It is hoped that the entire building will be finished towards the end of November.
- Miss K Holroyd.



The role of a Governor - Julie Reid

I became a Governor at The Ramsey Academy about seven years ago, after my daughter had joined from primary and I felt I would like to become a part of the Academy and make a positive contribution.

I have lived in Halstead for over 25 years and during that time have seen many changes to the Academy; even in the years since I have been a part of the Academy there have been significant changes. I feel very fortunate to have been part of the improvements and goals achieved over the last few years. I love the enthusiasm from teachers, students and the governing body and am extremely proud of our involvement in the community.

We have numerous achievement and awards evenings which are a wonderful boost for us as an Academy, sharing in the success of individual students and the Academy as a whole.

In the last year I have become the Safeguarding Governor. Children's safety is paramount to me and I welcomed the challenge of being involved. Safeguarding covers many issues from attendance to bullying, extremist views and internet safety to child protection. All students and staff are aware of the procedures to follow and regular training for all staff ensures any issues are dealt with quickly and procedures followed correctly. My hope is for all of our students to feel safe within their learning environment and I believe we strive to achieve this as our systems and procedures on this are rigorous.

I am extremely proud to be involved with our school. I visit most weeks and love the atmosphere in any part of the school at any time. Students seem happy in their work and are willing to talk about their achievements and concerns. Their enthusiasm is a pleasure to see. - Mrs J Reid



Strasbourg Trip

From 17-21 July, a group of 30 Year 10 students visited Strasbourg, a city on the border of France and Germany. During the 4 days we were there we went to The Mercedes Benz Museum (in Stuttgart); a chocolate factory; the Parliament building; Europa Park and the Strasbourg light show.

Personally I enjoyed the first day the most; looking round the city of Strasbourg was a big eye opener to how other people live. Even down to what they wore, everything was different to back home. The city was old and had many interesting buildings and areas that our tour guide told us about and showed. We had lectures in chocolate making as well that day, and also had a boat ride down the main river with an audio tour explaining all the places we went past.

Whilst we were there we practised our French and German with the locals. We went to historical buildings such as the cathedral on the first day and travelled to many different places in Strasbourg. Everyone on this trip had taken French, German, History or Geography as a GCSE and each person found it beneficial to their chosen subject. This trip was seen as a brilliant opportunity to learn the different options that we have when we leave school. Futures living abroad, travelling around the world, or even working in parliament: it was an experience that none of us will forget.

This is a brilliant experience for any younger students. The trip was well supervised but we also got our own space. This trip gave us time to connect with friends we didn't even know we had, even though we see each other in class. Going there was an opportunity to see things and people from a different perspective. - Jessica Leach (Year 11)



Post 16 Options

Now is an important time for Year 11 students. They will soon be in the process of applying to Colleges and Sixth Forms. As well as the guidance offered through assemblies, visits and teaching, The Ramsey Academy has a Careers Advisor, Laura Eaves, who attends 1 day per week to offer impartial information, advice and guidance to students on the range of options available. Students can drop in at lunch time or request an appointment via their tutor.

Students have the choice between A levels, The International Baccalaureate (IB), Diplomas and Apprenticeships. There are options available for all levels of ability.

Colleges/Sixth Form

- Chelmsford College - Tel No: 01245 265611 www.chelmsford-college.ac.uk
- Writtle College - Tel No: 01245 424200 www.writtle.ac.uk
- Colchester Institute - Tel No: 01206 712777 www.colchester.ac.uk
- The College at Braintree Tel: 01376 321711 www.colchester.ac.uk
- Colchester Sixth Form Tel: 01206 500700 www.colchsf.ac.uk
- Braintree Sixth Form Tel: 01376 556353 www.braintreesixthform.com
- Otley College Tel: 01473 785543 www.otleycollege.ac.uk



To find out when the local College Open Events are, please visit the Ramsey website.

It is strongly recommended that students attend open events where possible. It is also important to remember that students can apply to more than one College or Sixth Form to keep their options open and allow for a backup plan. - Ms L Eaves

Stansted Airport Work Experience

In August I completed two shifts at Stansted Airport, working for Titan Airways. Titan Airways is a large company within Stansted that hires out private aircraft for other companies. I chose this as my work experience to see the background work, planning and organisation, and to experience an office environment, as working in the travel industry is something I am interested in.

The first day at Stansted I completed an early shift, starting at 6.00am and finishing at 2.00pm. I completed 8 hours, however the normal shift times would have been 6.00am-6.00pm: a very long day! The office was very friendly and although there was a lot to do it was quite a relaxed environment to be in which made me think differently of office work.

On the first day I helped work out fuel maximums and minimums for each aircraft and log them into the computer. I also learnt about flight plans (routes) and safety precautions that must be taken. I spoke to each department at the office and they showed me what they do and their own personal experience of the job: everyone I spoke to enjoyed their job and being a part of a small team.

One of my favourite parts of the first day was being given a pass which allowed me to go airside. With our passes we were able to go round most of the airport and just see what was going on.

On the second day I started at 11.00am and finished at 6.00pm this allowed me to experience the 'second half of the day'. I started off in the office again, and spoke to some more people about what they do: there was a broken aircraft which caused a problem. While the aircraft was broken I was able to go over to the hanger in a company car and speak to the aircraft engineers. I was also able to get on one of the Titan aircraft and have a tour of the plane!

My work experience was very positive and made me think of other branches of work and opportunities I hadn't previously thought of. - Poppy Yeomans (Year 11)



Open Evening

On Thursday 29 September we opened our doors to Year 6 students and parents in order to display our school and our student's achievements.

The evening was a massive success with approximately 300 visitors experiencing the activities and learning that takes place within all the subjects. Well over 150 students volunteered to help at the evening either as Prefects guiding and talking to parents, or as students in subject areas showing parents what life is like at The Ramsey Academy. The students were a massive credit to the school and a vast amount of the positive feedback we received from parents highlighted how impressed they were with the maturity and attitude of our students.

We would like to thank all those students who supported the evening and we look forward to welcoming large numbers of the Year 6 students who attended the evening back as Year 7s in September. - Mr P Taylor

Apprenticeships

Hey, I'm Tom and I work as an ICT Technician Apprentice at Ramsey. From about four years old I've been using computers. My interest grew from there and after I realised my footballing ability was the same as that of my sausage dog I started thinking about getting a job in IT. I'm quite lucky because I knew from about thirteen years old what I wanted to do and every few years I adapted my plan slightly. The best thing to do is have some sort of plan in place (you don't need to write it down but just think about it) think about the future e.g. after Ramsey where do I see myself? How can I achieve this? What steps do I have to take? If you don't know what to do think about what you enjoy. My brother and I really enjoy football; we are die-hard Southend United fans (feel free to laugh). We didn't try to get into that industry, we weren't really good enough to play, but we could have done plenty of things: sports journalism, analysis, physiotherapy, coaching etc.



Think about what you enjoy and look at the wider picture because if you work hard you can get your dream job. The route to that dream job is an important journey and you decide exactly what you want to do. The best advice I can give you is: have a plan and do what you enjoy. Think of your path as a staircase and plan what you have to do to get to that next step: achieve X,Y and Z grades, do a certain course, work at a certain shop etc. I wanted to get a job in IT because I loved computers so before I started my GCSEs I thought about what I wanted to do when I finished school. College, apprenticeships and work were the main options I thought about.

After researching all my options I decided I wanted to get an apprenticeship after I did my A-Levels at Colchester Sixth Form. During my GCSEs I got my head down and revised, got the grades I wanted then enjoyed an awesome summer chilling out with my mates before most of us started college. I wanted to get an apprenticeship after I finished college because it meant that I could get decent grades and then start my career path. I finished my time at the College after achieving okay grades, however, the apprenticeship didn't quite fall into place straight away. I couldn't find an apprenticeship during the summer so instead I did the next best thing and worked in Currys selling computers which helped give me job experience and some computer knowledge.

After about 3 months I started looking again and after I sold a laptop to Mr James, he told me that Ramsey was looking for an IT Technician apprentice so I applied. I prepared for the interview, turned up and got the job. Six months down the line and I'm at the school doing what I love.

Apprenticeships are a great way to get into your desired career path and it gets your foot in the door. Not only do you develop contacts and work in your desired field but you also build up the knowledge that you need to be successful within that career. I'm doing a job I like and getting paid for it. There's always an opportunity cost that you have to bear in mind when thinking about these steps - I knew I didn't want to go to University because it wasn't for me (there are many benefits like the social life, degree, job experience within a sandwich year - where you work for a year in some courses) however I weighed up the pros and cons and decided I wanted an apprenticeship. If you do the research you will have a better idea of what to do and how to get there. If you don't know where to look ask Careers or look on websites such as <https://www.getingofar.gov.uk/>.

Good luck. - Tom Jarman



Transition from trainee to teacher

'Become a teacher' they said. 'It'll be rewarding and challenging' they said. They were right. Training to become a teacher is by far the best decision I've made. I don't feel like I'm 'working' as I enjoy my job so much. I love working with young people, I love the new challenges each day brings and I love the fact I get to spend all day doing my favourite subject!

I can say this now that I am an NQT but the training process was by no means an easy feat. My training year was tough, gruelling and a steep learning curve, but it has really prepared me for the challenges to be faced in my NQT year.

Although there are some challenges I was not expecting; like the wider professional responsibilities I would have to undertake and understanding data and target setting, I am fortunate enough to work in a school with really supportive and helpful staff, meaning that the transition from trainee to NQT was as smooth as possible.

Juggling marking, planning and wider professional responsibilities as a Form Tutor have been challenging but I have found routines and using my time effectively has helped me to keep up with the demands of teacher life. Becoming a teacher has kept me on my toes (and kept me awake late some nights!) but this encourages me to keep learning, keep developing my practice and to try new things. - Miss H Siseman

Insect Trees

In the last two days of school, Year 8 got to choose which subject they would like to do for activities week. They were allowed to choose any subject within the Art and Technology Faculty; I chose Catering with Mrs Bushell and Mrs Smith.

As it was a House Competition, we had to work in our houses (I was in Endeavour). A lot of the competition was about how well we could work as a team. Our themes were insects and trees; each house was given an insect to base their designs on: Dragonflies for Endeavour, Ladybirds for Diversity, Grasshoppers for Aspiration

We were set the following recipes as our tasks: a tree loaf, including at least one insect as decoration, a garlic bread tree, a Nutella tree.

My favourite was definitely the Nutella tree, like most people, because it included Nutella and tasted the best! At the end of the second day we all presented our breads and then we voted for our favourites and the best team. It was a really fun 2 days which I would love to do again. - Molly Gerrard (Year 9)



Art

The Ramsey Art and Technology Departments ran activities for Year 8 students to choose from over 2 days in the last week of term. We could choose our subject, I chose Textiles and Art. We worked in House teams to make a felt toy, a house tree, a recycled junk framed display and a mixed materials insect.

We were taught lots of different things including how to use the sewing machines. My group (Diversity) had some amazing finished designs. - Mason Brady (Year 9)

Science

The resilience of the pupils in making the robots especially, was really impressive. Not only were they expected to make the robot individually, most had no experience in this kind of process and some of the wiring was pretty fiddly too. Despite this I believe there was a 100% success rate and the robots were trundling around the science block like Chihuahuas on leads or being used to play football. Some were even converted into sumo robots and used to battle each other.

In the afternoon students created rockets that were fired across the school field using foot pumps to provide the pressure. Some of the designs were pretty impressive, as well as the distances achieved. The Year 9 pupils were excellent during the day and approached the tasks with a great attitude making the day enjoyable, hopefully, for them, but also the staff. The only casualties of the day were the foot pumps, they just couldn't cope with the pressure...

- Mr S Hendry



Span the Gap

Everyone loves playing with K'Nex, not least the Mathematics Faculty and so it seems do Year 9.

During Activities Week teams of students were challenged to use large kits of K'Nex to build a bridge to span up to two metres and to carry as heavy a load as possible. The twist was that they could only support the bridge by touching the ground at each end.

Students in the team had to decide on who would take on the roles of Team Leader, Construction Leader and Finance Director. They were given a budget within which they had to operate and each part of K'Nex they needed had to be purchased.

Marks were given for staying within budget, the span of the bridge, the mass it could support and the quality of leadership and teamwork. No-one quite managed the two metres, but several could support over 4kg.

Judging by the excellent outcomes, Ramsey should be producing a large number of engineers, entrepreneurs and financial stars in the future. - Mr M Everett



Balsa Wood Airplanes

The Balsa wood planes are made of different sized sheets of this lightweight and delicate material called Balsa wood. There were many different parts which we manufactured in our groups of 5 to 6. We used wood drying glue which is stronger than just normal PVA glue. To cut the Balsa wood we used a fret saw which was easier, quicker and more accurate.

To hold the plane parts together to dry we used coloured wood dowels which corresponded to our houses colours and elastic bands. The motor was powered by 2 lithium Iron batteries in a plastic case which we soldered together and then soldered both of the battery packs to a propeller which was placed on the front or on both wings. We based our planes on a prototype made by Mr Sadigh which had had many prototypes before that.

The flight for Aspiration was very successful as they took the lead in points for collaboration, teamwork, design and distance flown. The prototype set the benchmark distance, followed by Endeavour then Diversity and finally Aspiration. But after a battering for all of the planes it was a successful 2 days for all of the houses and was a fun experience for everyone.
- Nat Taylor (Year 9)

ICT

Year 8 students created an animated short film for their respective houses. The theme was nature and students were encouraged to tell a story related to their house name; Diversity, Aspiration and Endeavour. Characters were formed from modelling clay and backdrops were selected using locations around the school. Each film was initially storyboarded, students were given roles within teams, e.g. camera operator, director, animator etc. By making small movements to the characters the students realised the end result would be more fluent. It turned out that a day and a half of shooting footage with GoPro cameras and tripods produced less than a minute of actual video. Sound tracks and titles were added in the final edit before being presented to the rest of the Year 8 students. - Mr M Sharp



Globe Trip

On Wednesday 20 July, we went to the Globe Theatre in London. There were 105 students on 2 coaches which had 50 or so people on. All of us were divided into 4 groups with two teachers leading each group. First we went into the theatre and had a tour of it. As we sat in the stands, we could see all the actors for 'A Midsummer's Night's Dream' preparing the props for the performance later. Before we left actors from each group took part in a workshop with The Globe.

The day after, 21 September, we did some activities involving court dancing from the medieval times and song writing where we picked a song and replaced the words with shakespearean words. A man taught us how to fence, he was a 4 time Olympic winner in fencing. During the afternoon there was a mass masked ball as well as a fencing demonstration and song performances.
- Santini Rumble (Year 8)

Tony Lee Author Visit

On 20 September Year 8 had a visit from Tony Lee a graphic novelist. When I sat down ready for assembly, I thought it wasn't going to be fun, but then he started to talk about 'Change the Channel' it was quite interesting the way he hated reading, but when he found comics and graphic novels he soon loved to read. Afterwards he got a few students up on stage and we did our own version of Robin Hood, which was very funny.

Then after the assembly two at a time forms went out to the English area to do Tony Lee's Workshop. We had an hour to listen to a story about a lady and her puzzle which we heard the first part of in assembly. He told us the second chapter. We had to make up the third chapter in groups and then tell our group's story. All of Year 8 had a great time with Tony Lee and I hope he comes back again. - Abigail Brooker (Year 8)



Awards Evening

On Wednesday 21 September we gathered in the Hall to celebrate the achievements of our students during the last academic year. Subject certificates were awarded for achievement and progress to more than 120 students. Awards were presented by Mr James and Mrs Ward (Chair of Governors). It was a fantastic evening with the support of more than 200 parents ensuring the hall was packed and the applause was loud. - Mr C Leys



Primary Tea

On Monday 3 October, our Year 7 students enjoyed afternoon tea with staff from their primary schools. Richard de Clare, St Andrews, Holy Trinity, Earls Colne and Colne Engaine primary schools were all represented at the informal event in the school library. Year 7 students were able to chat with their primary teachers and show them all the work they have done so far in their exercise books and folders (primary school staff commented on the positive attitudes of students and the quality of the work they had completed whilst enjoying tea, sandwiches and cake, some of which were baked by Year 7 students). Thanks go to Mr O'Gorman and Mrs Tyler for their organisation of the event.

Kayleigh Benson (7E2), a Richard de Clare student commented: 'My teachers thought that my work had really improved and it was nice to see them.'

Jasmin Holdaway (7E2) a Colne Engaine student said: 'My old school teachers were impressed by my books and I enjoyed meeting them again and telling them what I have been doing at Ramsey.' - Mrs M Gibbs

Orienteering Update

On Saturday the 8 October the orienteering team ventured, to Leicestershire in order to compete in the British Schools Score Championship.

The students put in some good performances and the girl's team which included Beth Lucas, Amy Skeet and Isabel Peters came 8th overall in the country in the Lower Secondary School Girls' category and the boy's team of Thomas Lock and Thomas Leader came in 11th place in the Lower Secondary School Boys' category. This was a great performance for both teams as it was their first national competition this year.

It was great to be back out competing in the British Schools' event but we also missed the previous Year 11's who had competed in the events since Year 7.

We are now getting ready for the British Schools' main event in the West Midlands which takes place in November. Any students who are keen to get involved in the sport and get into the team for the next competition please see Mr Taylor. The club runs on a Monday evening after school: all standards and age groups are welcome. - Mr P Taylor



Netball Fixtures

On Wednesday 28 September the Under 14 netball team played in a County Tournament at Felsted School. The team played against Felsted School, Tabor and Notley High School. Congratulations to Molly Gerrard, Amy Tyler, Jessica Livings, Ellie Hood, Becky Howard, Lily McKean, Rosie Shackell and Nicole Clouting who were selected to represent the school.

On Wednesday 5 October the Year 11 netball team competed in the District Netball Tournament at Helena Romanes School. The team played matches against Saffron Walden County High School, Helena Romanes and Hedingham School. Well done to: Poppy Yeomans, Jodie Tyler, Holly Taylor, Emma Lowe, Matilda Daniels, Jessica Leach and Jasmine May who were selected to represent the school.

Unfortunately, we did not make it through to the finals but the girls played excellently and were a credit to the Academy.

Netball club takes place on Wednesday after school for all year groups. The Academy will continue to attend weekly netball tournaments against local schools in all age groups. - Mrs S Patching

Dates For your Diary...

2 November - Careers Fair
3 November - Berlin Trip
7 November - Road Safety Play
9 November - Catering Trip
16 November - Jack Petchey Speak Out
24 November - KS4 Awards Evening



Year 10/11 District Rugby Tournament

Thanks to all schools for the biggest attendance we have ever achieved for Rugby. 9 schools attended: Alec Hunter; Hedingham; Helena Romanes; Honywood; Joyce Frankland; Maltings; Notley; Ramsey and Tabor.

The effort from all of the boys was great to see, as was the sportsmanship before, during and after the games. After some great Rugby the group games were finished and the top three went through by right with the best runner up. A good quality final finished with Joyce Frankland as champions. - Mrs S Patching