



ICENI ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

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Principal's Post

As we arrive at the end of this half term, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on what has been a fantastic start to the academic year here at Iceni Academy.

We were delighted to welcome a team from the Department for Education earlier this term, who recognised the rapid progress the academy has made over the past two years. They praised the significant work undertaken to raise expectations around behaviour and noted the clear improvements in our learning environment. Their feedback highlighted the strides we've taken to develop our pedagogical approach and embed more research-informed practice across the school. Most encouragingly, our students told them that the quality of teaching has improved significantly – a testament to the hard work and commitment of our staff team.

This half term has also seen some wonderful community events. Our Year 7 Settling-In Evening on 2nd October was extremely well attended, with lots of positive feedback from both parents and students. It was a great opportunity to celebrate how well our newest students have begun their secondary journey.

On 9th October, we held our Open Evening for prospective families. It was a privilege to showcase the academy's progress to Year 6 students and their parents. Our current students were fantastic ambassadors – enthusiastic, articulate and proud of their school.

We're thrilled to be ending the half term on such an exciting note with our very first House Competition! The Houses of Cavell, Dyson, Nelson, and Wellington will be going head-to-head in the hall for a "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?"-style quiz. It promises to be a fantastic event full of teamwork, friendly rivalry, and plenty of fun as our students showcase their knowledge and house spirit. What a brilliant way to celebrate all their hard work this half term!

Finally, I would like to take a moment to express our heartfelt thanks to three valued members of staff who are retiring this half term. First, we recognise Mrs Crook, our wonderful Art teacher of 25 years, whose creativity has inspired so many, and whose enthusiasm has enriched school life far beyond the classroom through tireless work on proms, fundraisers, and unforgettable school productions. We also thank we recognise Mrs Sutton who has dedicated an incredible 35 years in our kitchen, ensuring generations of Iceni students have been well fed and cared for with warmth and kindness every single day. Finally, we extend our gratitude to Mrs Snare our ever-reliable minibs driver, who has ensured our students' safe journeys to and from school, and who has also supported the kitchen and other areas over the years with the same dedication and good humour.



Each of these colleagues leaves behind a lasting legacy, and we wish them all the very best for their well-earned retirement.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I hope you and your family enjoy a restful half term break. We look forward to welcoming the students back on Tuesday 4th November.

Mr Rushton

Clubs and Interventions

Lunch		
Monday	Computing Club (R12), School Magazine Club (R6)	Y11 Interventions: Geography, Computer Science
Tuesday	Y7/Y8/Y9 STEM club (Science)	
Wednesday		
Thursday	Board game club (Library)	Y11 Interventions- RS
Friday	Computing Club R12, Board game club (Library)	Y11 Interventions - History

After School		
Monday		Y11 Interventions-Maths 3.15- 4pm
Tuesday	Y7 Technology Club 3.15- 5pm	
Wednesday	Y8 and 9 Technology Club 3.15-5pm	Y11 Interventions - English (3.15pm - 4.00pm), Art (3.15pm- 5pm), 3DD (3.15pm-5pm), French (Wk 2 only)
Thursday	Drama club 3.15-4.15pm	Y11 Interventions- Science & Sports Studies
Friday		



Update from Mr Morris

As we reach the end of what has been a very long but positive half term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support. It has been a strong start to the academic year, and we are proud of how well our students have settled back into school life, showing dedication and commitment across all areas of their learning.

We ended the half term with a really positive Friday, celebrating our first House Competition of the year – a quiz in the style of ‘Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?’ Students worked brilliantly together, competing in their houses to earn valuable points. The winning house, who will enjoy a non-uniform day next half term, will be announced soon.

We greatly appreciate the role that you, as parents and carers, play in supporting your child’s education and in upholding the standards and values of our school community.

As we move into the half term break, I would like to remind everyone of our school uniform expectations, particularly in relation to skirt length. In line with our policy, skirts must be knee length. We ask that you please check your child’s uniform over the break and, if necessary, purchase new skirts that meet this requirement before the start of the next half term.

Please note that on return, any student whose skirt does not meet the required length will be offered trousers (if available) or will be placed in isolation until the issue is corrected. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring all students return to school in full, correct uniform, ready for learning.

Pastoral Structure:

As a school, it is important that we continually reflect on our practices and ask ourselves, “Is this what’s best for our students?” When doing so, we consider a range of factors, including student outcomes, behaviour, and current research. Our goal is always to ensure that everything we do supports our students to achieve their very best.

Following this reflective process, we have decided to make some changes to our pastoral team to further strengthen the support we provide. The updated structure is outlined overleaf:



Years 7, 8, and 9: No changes

Year 10: Acting HOY Mr. Morris, supported by Ms. Valentyna and Mr. Spurgeon

Year 11: Progress Team

SLT: Miss Staniforth

Head of Year (HOY): Ms. Agoudjil

Student Support Officers (SSOs): Mrs Connor (Mon–Wed) and Mrs Thomas (Thur–Fri)

With this in mind, if you have any queries, please direct them to the relevant year team or your child's tutor. This will help ensure a timely response by directing your query to the most appropriate person.

Thank you once again for your support throughout this half term. I wish you and your families a restful and enjoyable break, and we look forward to welcoming students back refreshed and ready for another successful half term ahead.

Update from Miss Staniforth

At the end of a long half term, it's important that we reflect on all the fantastic work our teachers and students have completed. Year 7 have settled in fantastically, and it has been a genuine joy to see them participate so enthusiastically in their lessons. Year 8 have built on their strong start from last year, and it's been great to hear Year 9 already talking about their GCSE options: something we will be sharing lots more about just after Christmas. Year 10 have made a strong start to their GCSEs, with a renewed sense of focus and hard work. Year 11 have made a flying start to Year 11, and we know that with their 'aim high, work hard, be kind' attitudes they are destined for amazing things.

Our pedagogical principles (the teaching techniques we use which are rooted in research as to how students best learn), common across all lessons in the academy, have been fantastic to see from our teaching team and we can't wait to develop these more through our training and inquiry-based practice next term.

Students have made an incredible start to Seneca this year, too, where we have found ourselves top of the Trust leaderboard on numerous occasions, and even on the podium more than once in the whole of Norfolk! Students have completed a whopping 1408 hours of study this term between them. As I write this on the last day of term, we are top in both league tables – and given our size relative to these other schools, I feel immensely proud of our students. Well done, Team Iceni!

I wish all our students a happy and relaxed half term, and we're already looking forward to seeing them back in the academy on Tuesday 4th November.



Chair of Governors Post

As the nights draw in even more, the end of the first half term is upon us, and as ever, I am not sure where almost eight weeks has gone.

The new school year started with Iceni seeing a much-improved set of GCSE results from the summer exams. This was a just reward for all those students who worked hard, and, for the staff at the school, it is recognition that things are moving in the right direction. Yes, there remains work to be done, but with a solid foundation to now build upon, everyone in the school has high hopes that the current Year 11 students will continue the upward track in outcomes.

The new Year 7s have settled in well, and the first Year 7 evening was very well supported by parents. As the first year group to wear the new uniform, I have to say they all look very smart, and as the school environment changes more towards the new colours, I hope they will soon start to be joined by other students around the school wearing the new uniform.

For the current Year 11s their choices after exams are approaching at pace, and I know a letter has come home recently giving the dates for upcoming open evenings, as well as Work Experience opportunities. The school is doing a lot of work to support them all with their next big moves.

As a Governing Body we are always looking for parent feedback on any issue in school, so please feel free to drop me an e-mail directly, or via school and the governance team. All of the relevant e-mail details are on the school website.

I hope you all have a nice half term break: before we know it Christmas will be here!

Simon Conner



Year Team Updates

Year 7

A Fantastic Start for Our Year 7 Community

We are delighted to share what a brilliant start our Year 7 students have made to their high school journey this term. From their very first day they have shown enthusiasm, kindness, and a real commitment to becoming part of our school community.

One of the most impressive aspects of this start has been their excellent attendance, currently standing at 96.3%. 7NR and CJ currently tying on 98%! Year 7 has set the bar high, arriving at school ready to learn and making the most of every opportunity. This positive attitude is already laying strong foundations for the years ahead.

We are also incredibly proud of the number of Year 7 students who volunteered (over 49%) at our recent Open Evening. They welcomed families, guided visitors around the school, and showcased what makes our school such a special place. Their confidence, maturity, and pride in their school shone through, leaving a lasting impression on everyone who attended.

In the Maths block, our Year 7 community has flourished. Working closely together in this area has helped them build strong friendships and a real sense of belonging. It's been wonderful to see how this close-knit unit supports one another, both in and out of lessons.

As their confidence grows, more and more students are venturing onto the field and playground at break and lunch times. Yet, the Year 7 Quad remains a vibrant hub at community time, filled with energy, laughter, and a strong sense of togetherness.

This term also saw the return of our annual Year 7 Pumpkin Carving Competition, a fantastic event that will no doubt bring plenty of creativity (and a few spooky surprises!). Every tutor group has a team ready to compete for the winning scary face, results to follow in the next newsletter! We couldn't be prouder of how Year 7 embraced high school life. Their enthusiasm and spirit are already making a positive impact on our whole school community, and we can't wait to see what they achieve next.

Mrs Thompson



Year 8

It has been a ridiculously long, and challenging half-term - but it has also been a genuinely rewarding one! At points, it feels something close to eleven weeks since we all started back, and I am just about ready for a lie down! However, no matter how challenging I have found these past (only eight!?) weeks, I know that our new Year 8 students have risen to the challenge with style!

WAY BACK in September, I made a point of not looking into what Year 7 had been like for anyone – both Mr Spurgeon and I wanted this to feel like a truly fresh start for everyone in every way. It has been fantastic to see so many students continue to either raise the bar or work tremendously hard to make last lasting positive changes.

The new Year 8 students have needed to adjust very quickly to the concept that they are no longer the youngest or newest in the school, and have slid into the dangerous territory of now also being seasoned role models for the new Year 7 pupils, forged in the fires of Mount Iceni, and with the weathered wisdom of one who has lived and breathed the expectations of both classroom and corridor...

...and they've pretty much smashed it this half-term!

At the time of writing, Year 8 have the second highest number of reward points in the school, regularly topping the weekly totals against the other year groups.

Additionally, we are proud to share that three of our Year 8 students applied and were all accepted as members of the Student Leadership that was launched in September to represent and work for the student body to improve the quality of the school community and act as a voice for all.

I would also like to say a HUGE thank you to all the Year 8 students who volunteered to give up their own time to support and represent the school during the Open Evening event which took place on Thursday 9th October. It is these moments which highlight who truly make this school something special as those volunteers did more to illustrate how wonderful the school is to the highest number of visitors I understand the school has welcomed in several years.

Overall, whilst I creakingly look for a comfy chair to rest in this half-term holiday to recover from the hectic pace of the past eight weeks, I am already eagerly anticipating starting the next half-term which leads up to Christmas, and the fantastic opportunities it will bring for your son or daughter to be the very best person they can be.

I would like to wish everyone a wonderful break!

Mr McAllister



Year 10

I am really pleased to see how well the Year 10 students have settled into their GCSE journey. Writing these newsletters always gives me an opportunity to pause and reflect on the half term so far. When visiting classes, it has been a pleasure to see the hard work and engagement that pupils are showing in their studies.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all the parents who have supported the school with the school uniform and the school behaviour policy.

Year 10 have made an impressive start to the year having collectively received 5127 positive events. Our current top 10 students who have received the highest number of positives points are: Thomas B., Alfie P., Lottie D., Charu C., Kiyah D., Phoebe S., China L., Kiri T., Erin C., Seb B. Congratulations to all of these students and to everyone in the year group as all of them have contributed to our collective number of positive points! They also have completed some great work. I very much look forward to seeing how the Year 10 students will be getting on this year. Thank you as ever to our parents and carers for their continued support.

Have a restful and enjoyable half term break.

Miss F. Agoudjil

Year 11

I can hardly believe that our Year 11 students are already in their final year at Iceni Academy. I am incredibly proud of the positive way they have settled in and how they are approaching this important stage. This is an important time as they focus on their studies to prepare for their GCSE exams and begin planning for the next stage of their education. Over the past few weeks, we've welcomed several college representatives who have shared valuable information about post-16 options. I encourage all students to explore the courses available and begin the enrolment process early to ensure they secure the right pathway for their future.

I would also like to take the opportunity to remind the parents that the Year 11 Parents' Evening is the first week back on Thursday 6th November and I hope to see a lot of you as it is always a pleasure to catch up with you.

Year 11 have made an impressive start to the year having collectively received 4552 positive events. Our current top 11 students who have received the highest number of positives points are: Angel F., Jack A., Dylan W., Tyler R., Scarlett P., Chloe P., Dayton G., Henry P., Max K., Freddy H. Congratulations to all of these students and to everyone in the year group as all of them have contributed to our collective number of positive points! They also have completed some great work. Thank you as ever to our parents and carers for their continued support. Have a restful and enjoyable half term break.

Miss F. Agoudjil



Department Updates

PE

Another busy half term in PE!

We have enjoyed seeing pupils progress across a wide variety of activities in lessons, including netball, handball, football, rugby, dodgeball, basketball, table tennis and step aerobics.

The Year 7s have proven themselves to be a very hard working, polite and competent group of children and we are delighted with how they have managed to settle into our routines in PE. We look forward to working with them as they continue to impress across a number of activities, well done!

Year 8 and 9 continue to work hard in their PE lessons. They have also settled well into their new classes and have already impressed with their attitude and effort in lessons.

Our new Cambridge Nationals Sports Studies pupils have made an excellent start to their course, having been assessed in both practical and theoretical elements so far. Our non-examined Year 10s continue to work well in their core lessons, ensuring they benefit from physical activity as they start their GCSEs away from the department.

Year 11 have been excellent on their chosen pathway in lessons. It is always lovely to see Year 11 making their own choices in PE activities and then working hard to get the most out of these lessons across their final terms with us. We will shortly be entering a period of winter choices with pupils, in support of their physical and mental wellbeing during mock exams. Our Cambridge National pupils have made a great start to their Sport and the Media unit and their exam unit, ensuring they prepare in the best way for the final push towards the summer, which will be here before we know it!

Fixtures have been a plenty this half term! Pupils have enjoyed fixtures in girls' and boys' football, with the last few to be squeezed in before we completely lose the light! The netball squads have played some of their fixtures, with more to play after half term. Club number have been relatively low this half term, compared to years gone by. All clubs are free and do not require pupils to sign up, they simply need to meet in the changing rooms ready for their chosen session. PE clubs to be offered after half term can be seen overleaf. We hope to see more pupils there in November and December.

Lunchtime clubs run from 1.40pm - 2.05pm, and after school clubs from 3.30pm - 4.30pm.



	Lunch Time	After School
Monday		Netball Fitness Suite
Tuesday		
Wednesday		Fitness Suite
Thursday		Sports Studies (Years 10 and 11)
Friday	Basketball	Fitness Suite

Our affiliation with fellow ATT academy, The Nicholas Hamond Academy (TNHA) in Swaffham, continues to provide an excellent opportunity for our pupils to be involved in extra-curricular sport. This half term, saw pupils from TNHA come to us for fixtures in netball and football. Some excellent games were played, and we look forward to visiting TNHA after half term for dodgeball fixtures in Years 7, 8 and 9.

As we head into the colder months, please ensure pupils are equipped for outdoor lessons. Some activities are suitable to go ahead this time of year. Others will be paused for a lesson during inclement weather and an alternative activity will be undertaken. Iceni branded PE items or a non-branded plain navy alternative are appropriate for lessons. Socks should be Iceni PE socks or white sports socks (although I wouldn't recommend white at this time of year!) It is also a good idea for pupils to bring in a plastic carrier bag to place wet/muddy trainers/boots in after their lessons.

A gentle reminder that all jewellery, including retainers, must be removed for lessons: this includes new piercings. We cannot allow piercings to be taped up in lessons under AfPE guidelines and therefore pupils will be expected to remove them. Please encourage pupils to wait until July 2026 for new piercings. Thank you for your support with this.

I wish you all a restful half term.

See you in November.

Rebecca Bradley, Specialist Leader of PE



Technology

At Icenii Secondary Academy we run three Technology Clubs after school from 3.15pm to 5.00pm for our Years 7, 8, and 9 students, with the aim to inspire and teach them a wide range of practical skills not possible through the normal curriculum. Our Year 9s are now working on a soap box project with the aim of entering the Hunstanton Soapbox Run 2026. Projects over the first two years of the club have ranged from carpentry and cabinet making, metal work, bricklaying, to fitting and constructing machines and electronics, with students taking home chairs, tables, metal work tools and working machines made to college standards.

By the time they end Y8 they will be able to work independently, and this year's Year 8 club were asked for ideas for a final project for the summer half term. By consensus they suggested doing something for the community and formed three groups to produce a garden bench for three different local organisations; Blue Bell Community Pub in Stoke Ferry, Duchy of Lancaster School in Methwold and Cupola Farm and glamping site.

Our students designed each bench for their specific chosen charity and are very proud of benches they have made. We are looking forward to presenting these to their choice organisations shortly at a private ceremony.



PSHE

As part of our ongoing commitment to Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, our Year 7 and Year 8 students recently took part in a powerful alcohol awareness session delivered by the Smashed Project – a national programme designed to educate young people about the dangers of underage drinking through live performance and interactive discussion.

The Smashed Project takes a unique approach to alcohol education. Rather than using scare tactics or lectures, the programme uses live drama and open conversation to spark honest thinking about the realities and consequences of underage drinking. The project is delivered in partnership with schools across the UK and globally, and is supported by educators and safeguarding experts.

During the session, students watched a live, professionally acted performance that followed a group of teenagers navigating peer pressure, alcohol use, and the consequences of risky choices. The story was intentionally realistic and relatable, helping students connect emotionally to the characters and scenarios.

Throughout the performance, students were encouraged to reflect, ask questions, and engage in meaningful discussions led by the actors. This format helped them explore issues such as:

- The short- and long-term risks of underage drinking
- The impact of peer pressure and how to handle it
- How choices made under the influence can affect health, safety, relationships, and the future

This session is part of a wider PSHE programme at school that supports students in making informed, confident choices about their health and well-being. In the coming weeks, we will be following up in class discussions, helping to reinforce key learning points.

I want to take a moment to recognise just how proud we were of our students throughout the session. They showed real maturity, listened respectfully, asked thoughtful questions, and contributed sensitively to the discussions. Their behaviour and engagement were outstanding, and they truly embodied our core school values:

☀️ Aim High – by showing curiosity and a willingness to learn about important real-life issues

💪 Work Hard – by staying focused and engaged throughout the session

❤️ Be Kind – by supporting one another and showing empathy during challenging conversations

It's moments like these that remind us what a fantastic community of learners we have!





Humanities

It's been a successful start of the year for the humanities department with students engaging well across the board. The new Year 7 intake have made a brilliant start in history, learning about how Britain changed from the Iron Age up to the Norman Conquest. In geography, Year 8 have made excellent progress in understanding the process of globalization. Building on the theme of developing an understanding of the global community, in RS Year 9 have been broadening their understanding of World religion, focusing on the teachings of Buddhism. In an exciting development, we have secured a place in the Ethics Cup and are building a team to compete at the annual event.



Science

The Science Stem club is now up and running on Tuesday lunchtimes for years 7, 8 and 9.

Kate Williams - Director of Science



aim **HIGH** work **HARD** be **KIND**

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