



# Richard Challoner School

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2020/21

## Xavier Centre Annual Report

This last year has been another unusual one, with lockdowns and restrictions, but we still have plenty of news. The numbers in the department continued to grow, and we welcomed six new students into Y12 to join the seven remaining ones in Y13/14.

Mrs Martin began the year leading the department, but at Easter, decided to step back down into an LSA role and tutor role, and Ms Dainton took over the coordination of the Xavier Centre.

We welcomed part time LSAs Mrs Dovey and Ms Schmidt to the department to replace Miss Harvey who has started university.

This last year we also got to know some mainstream teachers new to the department, including Miss Taylor (Maths), Mr Gregory (ICT) and Mr Jerwood (PE). We were also lucky enough to be joined by some of the main school LSAs to support in a variety of subjects. A number of other staff in the school worked with the students to offer a range of subjects in the curriculum to meet students' cognitive, physical, social and emotional needs.

The vision we have here is to provide a stepping-stone from school to beyond, whether that is a mainstream or specialist college environment, or a supported work placement. The program is designed over a two-year period; however, some students choose to stay for a third year. We had three Y14 students this year. In the first and second year, students will generally be based at the centre full time. If they choose to stay for a third year, they are encouraged to spend some time offsite doing a work placement. Unfortunately, due to restrictions, we were not able to facilitate work experience this year, but are planning an enhanced program in the following year for students remaining in the school.

We consider ourselves very lucky to have been able to continue face to face teaching while most of the school, and country, was on lockdown this year. We split the group in two to be able to ensure a measure of social distancing and each group was in for either mornings or afternoons. Two students were isolating until they had their vaccinations, but they were able to join us on Zoom for at least one session each day. Students, parents and staff were all pleased with this arrangement as it balanced the needs of the students with safety measures to keep everyone as safe and happy as possible. During this time, we were joined by Miss Blasiak from Learning Support who proved to be a great asset to the team and will be joining Xavier full time from September.

The curriculum has continued to evolve over the five years. As well as providing academic opportunities, at the Xavier Centre, we ensure that students are given the chance to develop their

social, emotional, creative, life and work skills. These range from weekly timetabled Art, Cooking, Life Skills and Science lessons to regular trips and visits. A new program, Arts Award, was introduced this year and all students passed the Explore (Entry Level 3) qualification. It was a wonderfully diverse program, covering drama, dance, craft, photography, artist research and a trip to the Tate Modern amongst many other things. The students enjoyed it immensely.

Students usually benefit from a wide range of trips and visits. Unfortunately, these were somewhat curtailed this year due to the ongoing pandemic, but we still managed to get out and provide some out-of-the-classroom learning. We went on walks to Bushy Park, Richmond Park and The Narnia Trail in Banstead Woods. Students had two visits to Wisley Gardens, taking part in a morning workshop in their newly renovated education centre, and then exploring the gardens in the afternoon. We visited cafes in parks and outside locations so that students could practice their ordering skills, using money and enjoy a drink with their peers. At the end of term, we managed to squeeze in a trip to the recently re-opened Tate Modern to support our Arts Award qualification.

We were not able to do our annual Christmas visit to Toby Carvery, but wanted to ensure the students had a Christmas celebration, so we had a party in school with dinner from the fish & chip shop and a Secret Santa present exchange. The evening ended with a slice of cake and dancing to our favourite Christmas songs. It was a great success!

We were hopeful that our residential to Blackland Farm would be able to go ahead, but as restrictions shifted it became clear that it was not going to happen. Rather than give up on the idea of an overnight visit, staff thought outside the box! We were able to book a day visit to Blackland Farm, where we took part in low ropes, zip wire and archery. We then headed back to school for a pizza, film and sleepover in the school hall. All students took part in the day visit and 12 out of 13 stayed overnight. The following day, those with enough energy walked up to Tolworth Bowl and took part in a game of bowling, before heading home for a well-deserved rest. We were really pleased to be able to offer this experience to the students during complicated circumstances.

Our third out-of-hours event was the summer BBQ. This was in the last week of term and a lovely way to end our year. We had the opportunity to award certificates to all students celebrating their achievements of the year, and to crown Student of the Year to the person who gained the most good comments. We actually had to do gold, silver and bronze awards as it was so tightly fought a contest! This was a lovely event, not least because it was the first time we met some of the parents in real life rather than through a computer screen.

## **Current Organisation**

### **Timetable and Curriculum**

Students in the centre have continued to enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum that is physically, socially and cognitively challenging according to their abilities. The entry criteria for each student is that they are in possession of an EHCP and are working between Entry Level 1 and Level 1 in Maths and English. For some, developing their independence in other key areas such as life skills

and more vocational subject areas is a more appropriate focus than their academic skills. Additional time in exams is granted to students when necessary and all benefit from the small class sizes and high staff/student ratio support. Being in a mainstream environment, students enjoy the opportunity to help them adapt to a busier environment in preparation for a college setting.

Miss Taylor, Mr Mundy and Ms Dainton deliver the core subjects of Maths and English and Mr Gregory delivers ICT. One student joined a mainstream Y11 maths class and achieved a grade 4 at GCSE. We were very proud of the independence he showed in joining this class, and the hard work he put in to get the grade. All students also take a course in BTEC Workskills. All leavers gained enough credits to get a qualification in this subject. Students take part in a weekly cooking session. The plan was to accredit this through Jamie's Home Cooking Skills program. Unfortunately, this was not completed and we will be trialing a new program next year. Arts Award, on the other hand, was a great success, with all students achieving a qualification. We will continue to deliver this program and will look into whether the higher level (Bronze, Level 1) will be appropriate for our learners. All other subjects offer a holistic and practical approach to encourage students' self-confidence, independence as well as inspiring them for areas to pursue in the future. Miss Blasiak has been leading on our garden project with students and has revitalised the garden. We have individual raised beds to grow fruit, flowers and vegetables.

### **Interventions**

Students have a group Occupational Therapy session every week to work on skills that will benefit them in their other lessons. We have a Speech and Language Therapist in for one morning a week, carrying out observations, 1:1 and small group interventions and writing reports. Since lockdown, one member of staff has been working as a SaLT assistant during some of these sessions and this is something we hope to be able to continue into next year as it has been invaluable in terms of carrying the work through to the rest of the week.

### **Precision Teaching**

We began a Precision Teaching intervention this year with two students, one to work on reading skills and the other for times tables. These have both been successful with one student now being able to read the first 400 key words fluently and confidently. This involved learning around 100 words. The other student is now confident on his 2x tables and is working on the 5x. We will continue this next year, hopefully adding more students.

### **Online Safety**

One student showed herself to be extremely vulnerable around the area of online safety and even though it is covered during other lessons, needed a more intensive intervention. She received a block of 1:1 sessions with an LSA to look into this, which will continue into the new academic year.

