

# Celebrating a year of being 'GOOD'. Special Edition Newsletter

Montsaye  
ACADEMY

*"An inspiring environment, where everyone aspires to exceed their potential."*

It seems like a few weeks ago, not a year, when we celebrated getting our 'Good' Ofsted judgement. If you didn't know, Montsaye Academy is and continues to be a 'Good' school!

What an exceptional year it has been and this special edition newsletter celebrates some of our fantastic achievements. What an amazing school I work in! It is absolutely my pleasure to be working with and for this community. I sincerely believe that I have the best job in the world, making a difference to our young people is a wonderful privilege. One of the proudest achievements to date is how our values of Excellence, Resilience and Aspiration have been embedded across the whole of the school. ERA days remain a strength and every year group has had an opportunity to partake in activities that bring these values to life. All pupils have had visiting speakers, worked together in groups and with their tutors. Our ERA curriculum is unique to Montsaye Academy and our context, and we are extremely pleased of our achievements in this area. It's one of the things that makes us stand out.

So much has happened in the last year as you will read here, not least an increase in the number of trips and opportunities for your child. We have recently achieved Steinberg accreditation which means that in the field of arts (music) we are now able to provide educational training courses in Steinberg software and hardware - award-winning, technologically advanced music and media production products for musicians and producers of music, video and film.

In terms of teaching and learning we have remained focussed on providing quality teaching to ensure that our pupils are learning and that this remains our number one priority. There has been a sustained focus on outcomes and progress to ensure that we are all continuing to move in the right direction. Staff have been working together across departments and developing curriculum plans right the way from Year 7 to Year 13. Our curriculum is broad, balanced and built around our learners. We stand by our decision for pupils to have access to a range of subjects including: music, dance, drama, design technology and French. We look forward to the first musical in three years 'School of Rock' on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

We have currently undertaken partnership working with three local secondary schools and are all working together to ensure that our provision and opportunity for our children is of the highest standard. This forward thinking approach will help us to keep improving.

We have big plans for the future and want to strive to be an even better school, one thing that we have not seen this year is any complacency and we are definitely not standing still. We have been inventive with our approaches and continue to maintain high standards that have become the norm. I look forward to continuing to lead a school that is innovative, forward thinking and puts its children first. I want to thank everyone who has been and is on this amazing journey with us and we all look forward with great anticipation to the next stage.

**Meena Gabbi - Principal**



## Teaching and Learning



Montsaye students working with chefs from the Tollemache Arms

At Montsaye, we've worked hard over the past twelve months to ensure that our students continue to get an excellent quality of teaching in the classroom.

Since getting our GOOD status, we have been reviewing our curriculum across the academy to ensure that we are providing students with the very best 'diet' for learning. Some subjects have changed the topics that they offer, others have restructured the order of topics so that progress is maximised, and still others have looked at developing more high quality resources from which our students can learn.

We are very excited to be working to continually review and develop all that our rich curriculum offers.

A second clear focus has been on the quality of feedback that our students get. We know the impact that good quality, timely feedback can have on student progress, and as such, we have developed a new approach to feedback and assessment. All students are assessed once per half term, but our emphasis on feedback runs much deeper than the grades that students receive back after these assessments. We believe that feedback is a continuous process. As such, we've moved away from just relying on more traditional 'book marking' to engage with what the students are doing in more progressive ways. Whole class feedback is now a regular feature across the academy – teachers are spending time reading and engaging with the work the students are doing and planning their next lessons to reflect what they have read. Examples of excellent work are used to model what this looks like for the rest of the class, students are shown what good aspects of work look like, and where their misconceptions might lie, and they are given the opportunity to put those green pens to use in improving their work! We're also working on the development of student resilience with self and peer assessment opportunities and through teaching our students to effectively reflect on their learning in order to move forward.

In other aspects of teaching and learning, our focus on teacher development, especially in the early stages of their career, has been paramount this year. We have now forged strong links with the University of Leicester, and we have already hosted six PGCE students this year, with more to join us in the coming weeks, alongside students who are training to teach on our brand new apprenticeship programme. Ms Bunker has been amazing as our Initial teacher training coordinator, and our induction and development programme offers our staff an excellent introduction to the profession, and to team Montsaye.

For the staff as a whole, we have begun to use IRIS as a part of our continuous professional development. This equipment allows teachers to record lessons and store them on a secure platform, where they can watch back, reflect on lesson events from a different point of view and see how effective their planning and assessment has been. It's an excellent tool that is proven to ensure teachers keep on working to become masters of their craft.

The team we are building at Montsaye is phenomenal, and the future is looking not just GOOD, but fantastic.

**Gopal Baria - Senior Vice Principal and Kirsty Berry - Assistant Vice Principal**





## From the Chief Executive...

It seems hard to believe that it was this time last year that OFSTED visited Montsaye Academy and judged the school to be a 'Good' school.

As stated at the time, this was a dramatic turn-around from special measures in barely more than two years, due to the unwavering vision and leadership of Mrs Gabbi and dedicated team of staff. This determination has continued during the last year and the school continues to go from strength to strength keeping the pupils at the heart of all that is done.

This newsletter highlights some of the great changes that have been taking place ensuring that your children are given the very best opportunities as they progress through their education at Pathfinder Schools, working collaboratively to bring out the greatness in all our pupils.

**Ann Davey - Chief Executive Officer, Pathfinder Schools**

*I am happy to be part of a really strong pastoral team, providing a level of support to our students that surpasses anything I have seen offered in the other schools in which I have worked. Attendance, behaviour and progress are all carefully monitored and the team work together with the special needs coordinator, outside agencies and parents to provide appropriate challenge and support.*

*The ERA Days have provided an amazing opportunity to develop our students' thinking and self-awareness. They are provided with the knowledge and strategies needed to grow a positive mind-set, learning resilience as well as being encouraged to have high aspirations. The ERA values are deeply embedded in Montsaye's culture and are an invaluable part of what we do.*

*Montsaye is an incredibly supportive environment in which to work and study and the future looks very bright indeed.*

**Jane Cooper - Year 8 Progress Leader and Teacher of English**



## Montsaye Academy Sixth Form is GOOD

In April 2019, Year 13 student, Joe was celebrating after receiving five offers to study Physics at the following Russell Group universities; Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and York. The Russell Group is an association of the twenty-four best research universities in the UK, and places at these universities are much sought after.

Joe said *"Physics, like all of the sciences, is driven by research. By going to a Russell Group university, I will be taught by active researchers who have a great understanding of their field. I will also benefit from the reputation that these universities have when searching for a job after graduating. I decided to apply for physics as it is a discipline used to explain everything around us and how things interact through equations and laws. Physics research is important for our future and responsible for many things that we enjoy today. A-level physics covers a very broad range of topics and is therefore limited in depth. Studying physics at university will help me to better understand these topics but also provide me with a useful set of skills different from those gained from other degrees - hence why around a third of graduates enter work that does not involve physics."*

In order to be offered his places, Joe had to face an interview at three of the five universities he applied to. Joe told us that *"They were all a half an hour conversation with a member of the academic staff, mainly concerning my reasoning for applying to the course and university, as well as my intentions afterwards. I was asked a question on something that we had covered in either maths or physics lessons and the interviewer wanted to see how I would work through it. The interview was surprisingly relaxed, and it was alright if I didn't quite know how to solve the problem. Overall, the interviews are nothing to worry about."*

So what was next for Joe? First needed to make a decision about which two university offers he would



accept, and which three to reject! Joe said *"I have narrowed my options down to two universities, but I am struggling to make the final decision about which to put as my firm choice"*. Next, Joe needed to achieve the best possible grades he could, in order to get his place. At the very least, he needed to achieve ABB in his A-levels, with his highest rated university requiring him to achieve A\*A\*A.

When asked what advice Joe would give to other students applying to Russell Group universities, he said *"You have five choices and the majority of people I know (including myself) apply for at least one university that they definitely didn't want to go to and likely would have chosen clearing over. Be realistic with your choices...but if you have one choice spare, there is no reason not to apply to a Russell Group university. If you get an offer, you should use the firm and insurance choices to your advantage, even if the university has higher grades than you are predicted, it is worth trying if that is where you would prefer to spend three years."*

We are pleased to report that following the summer 2019 exams, Joe achieved AAAB and is following his dream of studying physics at the University of Leeds. We wish him the best of luck in his future studies.

Laura McNish - Sixth Form Centre Manager

*I have worked at Montsaye for around seven years. Montsaye has a certain charm. The students are warm and caring and eager to learn. It's not every place of work you can see the fruits of your labours but here at Montsaye, the focus and effort over the last few years has resulted in something I can be very proud of. I know my efforts are appreciated by leadership and students alike. I'm looking forward to many more years here.*

Stephen Chandler - Teacher of Science





## School of Rock is coming to Montsaye...

We are very excited that planning and rehearsals of our musical, School of Rock are very nearly complete and that the performance will take place on 26th, 27th and 28th February.

Tickets will be available very soon; priced at £6.00 for adults and £4.00 for children.



**Tim Shea - Head of Drama**

## Education Support at Montsaye

Wow, what a great start we had to last year. It was a pleasure and a privilege to work with your children again: supporting their needs, encouraging them to challenge themselves and to see their development and successes. We were lucky enough to have the Therapy Dog, Izzie, visiting us again. The students love seeing Izzie and she loves seeing them.



## Could you be a CCF instructor?



## Combined Cadet Force

The combined cadet force (CCF) unit was formed at Montsaye Academy on 4th September 2015.

Many of our cadets have been promoted and are now non-commissioned officers. Cadets benefit from experience of training in fieldcraft, navigation, drill and turnout, first aid, weapon handling and shooting, as well as expeditions and community activities. To deliver the full basic syllabus, we include several weekends away, either on ranges putting into practice shooting skills, or living in the field.

At Montsaye, we recognise the value of the personal skills that this training brings, including leadership, teamwork, self-reliance, self-discipline, resourcefulness and personal pride and ambition.

We are looking for volunteers to help us to run the unit. If you would like to get involved, please contact me: [mchattaway@montsaye.northants.sch.uk](mailto:mchattaway@montsaye.northants.sch.uk)

**Mark Chattaway - School Staff Instructor**

The well-being room was in constant use – there were meditation sessions, pastoral sessions and we use the room for quiet time for students who need a little bit of time to reflect.

We introduced a new course in Year 10, Foundation Learning, completing units from the AQA Unit Award Scheme. This is providing an opportunity for a small group of our students to partake in some more vocational based learning. We are immensely proud of our students. We know that those of them who require additional support, will rise to any challenges they face and do their best.

**Becky Gatiss - SENCo**

*I feel so very privileged to work at Montsaye Academy, surrounded every day with brilliant students and staff who live and breathe our Montsaye values of Excellence, Resilience and Aspiration. One year on since we were recognised as being good, I still feel proud of the journey the school went on; it really was the start of a new ERA for our school and community.*

**Jon Berridge - Assistant Vice-Principal**



## Year 8 explored France...

**O**ur much anticipated annual residential trip to Chateau du Broutel in France, took place at the end of October. Eight members of staff accompanied our Year 8 students to the beautiful 18th century chateau, which is set in stunning grounds in the town of Rue.



We were able to take part in water-based activities on the lake, including the ever-popular raft-building and kayaking, as well as sessions based on the land such as climbing and archery.

The highlight of the trip this year was a day out in the battlefields of the Somme. We visited the town of Albert which was the main town behind the lines for the allies on the 1916 Somme battlefields. We went to the Somme 1916 Museum, down into a tunnel which took us 10 meters below ground, where we learned about the lives of the soldiers in the trenches.

Our next stop was at the Lochnagar Crater. This was created by a large mine placed beneath the German front lines on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. We then went to the Thiepval Memorial (the memorial to the missing of the Somme). The memorial has the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the UK and South African who died in the Somme before 20th March 1918 and have no known grave. Our final visit of the day was to the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial.



The memorial site covers 30 hectares and was named after the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, which provided 800 men to serve with the British and Commonwealth armies. The park preserves the memory of the men who fought and died on this part of the Somme battleground from September 1914 into 1918.

On the last day of our week in France, we were given a guided walk into the local town of Rue. Students were able to experience life in a French café (some of them even managed to speak to the café owner in French). Erin wrote about her experience of the trip:

*"On the French trip, I really enjoyed doing all of the activities with people I wouldn't normally be with. The water activities were one of my favourites because even though it was cold, it was really exciting and fun. I also liked going on the day out to the Somme battlefields. The evenings were really good, one night we had a campfire and another night we went into the forest on a tracking activity. I think a lot of people got closer when we were on the trip. Going into the town and to the shops was really interesting because they looked similar to ours but were still really different. I think that the French trip is something which will stick with us forever."*

The trip was a fantastic opportunity for the students to work together in teams. For many of them, it was their first time away from home, giving them a taste of independence.

**Claire Petchey - Trip Leader and  
Year 7 Progress Leader**

*I am immensely proud of this 'Good' school and all it has gone through. It is a warm, welcoming and supportive environment to work in. Staff care about each other and always want the students to be the best that they can be.*

**Kerrie Jones - Head of Sixth Form and Teacher of English**





### Montsaye students had a lot of talent...

Parents, friends and staff joined together to watch performances from our talented students for a spectacular 'Montsaye's Got Talent' end of year show.

What a wonderful way to end a fantastic year of **#Excellence**, **#Resilience** and **#Aspiration**.



**Fran Malins** Teacher of Dance



### CCF held their annual parade

One of the most prestigious events in the CCF calendar is the annual parade, at which the Year 9 cadets are presented with their formal berets to acknowledge their qualification from basic training.

Formed up on parade inside the gym, due to inclement weather, the cadets proudly presented themselves for inspection by HM Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire and other visiting military dignitaries, with

parents eagerly spectating from the seating area. As well as the presentations to the junior cadets, promotions were given out to some seniors, creating new Lance Corporals Moon and Keller, Corporals Conybeare and Duffy, Sergeants Jackson and Wiley and Staff Sergeant Hollis. Following the parade, the cadets exhibited their excellent teamwork skills in some demonstration command tasks involving obstacles and timed challenges. The Lord Lieutenant passed on his thanks and congratulations to the cadets, leaving them prepared and excited for their forthcoming annual training camp in Penally, Pembrokeshire.

**Sergeant Instructor Giles Urwin** - Teacher of Maths



### We had our first millionaire readers...

We congratulated Year 7 students, Poppy and Matthew who were our first Accelerated Reader Millionaires. Accelerated Reader is a computer-based programme that Montsaye Academy uses to monitor reading practice and progress. The programme helps us to guide students to books that are on their individual reading level; the student then takes a short quiz after reading each book to check if they have understood it. Both students were awarded certificates and gold reader stars in their year assembly and are well on their way to another million words, closely followed by more students who are also nearing the one million mark.

**Mandy Lantz** - Librarian

*Montsaye Academy is a bright and vibrant school, full of energy and ideas. Students have a keen thirst for knowledge, with plenty of opportunities to expand their horizons whilst with us.*

**Tom Curtis** - Teacher of Geography



## Year 9 looked at careers...



**O**n Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February, our Year 9 students spent two hours with a group local employers from a wide range of industries. The aim of the morning was to raise the students' aspirations and broaden their horizons, whilst helping them to make links between the subjects they will choose to study at GCSE and their futures.

Guests included the RAF, Northamptonshire Police, Northlands Vets, NHS - Nursing, Nationwide Building Society, Balfour Beatty (Construction) and the University of Northampton. After a brief introduction to each industry, students had the opportunity to ask questions about the career, what was required to get there and any other questions about the world of work. Students spent 15 minutes with each employer, allowing them to access information from a range of careers. Feedback following the event was overwhelmingly positive, with students commenting that "lots of jobs can give you experiences of a lifetime", "your GCSEs have a big impact on your future jobs" and "to start revising and be the best I can be at a younger age".



This time of year is a pivotal time for students in Year 9, who are in the process of choosing their GCSE Options ready for Year 10 and Year 11.

These sort of events provide the students with the opportunity to consider their post-16 choices in relation to their GCSE options.

We look forward to working with local employers for future events.

**Hannah Pickering - Year 9 Progress Leader**

*It has been wonderful to be the part of the journey to good. As an ex-Montsaye student, I have found being a part of a school that cares for its community extremely important. To see the growth of students and working with staff that are caring, innovative and placing the needs of the students at its heart is something I value. I feel that Montsaye has become a school that has embraced change, certainly to take us into a new ERA that we can all be proud of.*

**Lilith Bateman - Teacher of English**





### Montsaye CCF planted trees in the community...

On the 28th November, Montsaye Academy Combined Cadet Force, teaming up with Kettering Borough Council, deployed to Columbus Crescent in Rothwell to support the environment and the local community. We planted 50 trees as part of our focus on tackling climate change.

This was the first in a new tradition where our existing cadets and the new recruits support local charities and the community. Despite the bad weather, the cadets showed great pride and enthusiasm and really enjoyed the afternoon. Not only was the tree planting a great team-building exercise, it also gave the cadets an



enormous sense of achievement and pride in their community. All of the cadets showed true spirit and maturity in what they do, making everybody here at Montsaye very proud.

**Mark Chattaway - CCF School Staff Instructor**

### Year 12 student had a taste of life at the University of Oxford

We were delighted for Year 12 student Ellie, when she was offered a place on the highly competitive University of Oxford Target Schools Shadowing Day. I took a few moments with Ellie after the event to find out all about it...

#### ***What made you decide to apply for the Day?***

I have been debating for a while now about applying to the University of Oxford, and my biggest worry was about whether or not I would have a chance of being accepted. I thought that by applying to go on the shadowing day, any ideas or preconceptions that I had about Oxford, would be debunked or confirmed.

#### ***What happened on the day?***

The day started at Brasenose College, where we had to register. I then shadowed a current student for two hours, and attended an ecology tutorial with her and another student, both of whom are students at Jesus College. We had a look around both Jesus College and Christ Church College. Next, I shadowed a student called Sophia and visited Keble College; we had a good discussion about being a state school student applying to Oxford. Lunch was at New College, after which we went next door to Hertford College, where we discussed the misconceptions about Oxford, and the application process, with current Oxford students and other students who were also considering applying.

#### ***What did you enjoy most about the day?***

I enjoyed looking at the different colleges the most, as it gave me an idea as to what life at Oxford would be like and whether it would be suitable for me.

#### ***What are your plans going forward?***

The shadowing day has made me decide to apply to Oxford next year. It has made me less worried about applying, as it removed all of the misconceptions I had about any disadvantages I may face. It made me realise that you don't have to come from a private school to go to Oxford, as I met lots of people there who were from state schools. It has also solidified my plan to study biology, rather than to specialise.

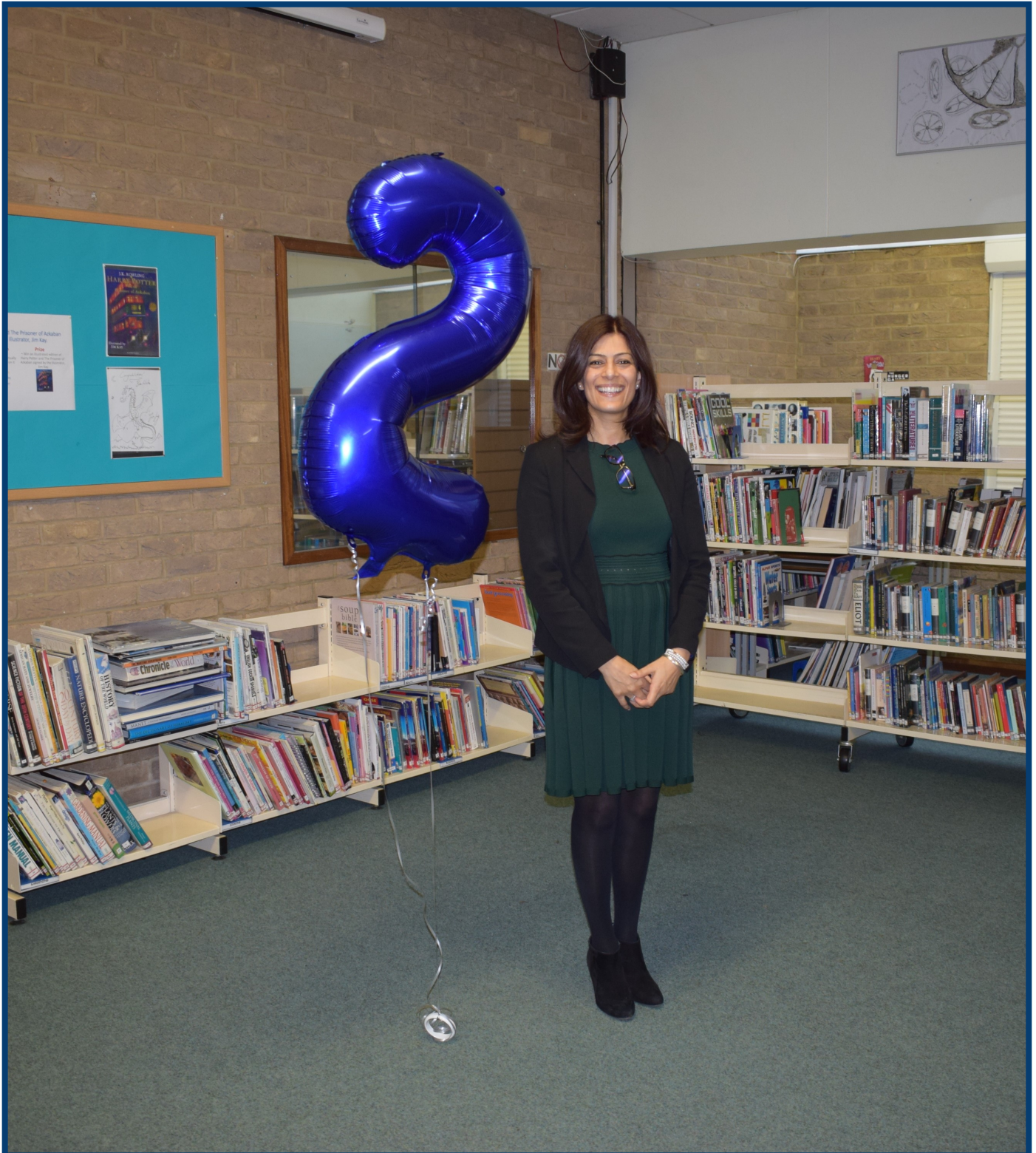


**Laura McNish - Sixth Form Centre Manager**

*I have seen a shift in expectations, engagement and enjoyment of staff and students about being at Montsaye, wanting to do their best. There has been a real desire by the students to embrace being an ERA learner to help themselves become successful in everything they do.*

**Marc Jordan - Assistant Vice Principal**





*I love teaching at Montsaye. Every day is different. Our learners are inquisitive and friendly individuals who make each lesson fun and interesting. Each lesson they challenge my thinking and understanding with their ideas and questions. All of the staff are amazingly supportive and all give 110% each day.*

**Stephen Lea - Head of Computer Science and Business Studies**