



SUMMER 2014

# SALVE!

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE ISLAND FREE SCHOOL

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## Our terrific transition days

*Before our doors officially opened, students were given a sneak preview of life at The Island Free School over two 'terrific' Transition Days.*

Every July, Transition Days are held across the Island to give Year 6 students a taster of their new secondary schools – and the feedback we had was 'bring on September!' 125 pupils from 28 different primary schools were welcomed by Headmaster Mr Boyd, who hosted a special assembly, introducing the children to his 'challenge chest'. Pupils were asked to solve a series of clues so that they could crack the code to open the chest and win an iPod (well done Georgial!).

- Pupils were given sample lessons and activities included:
- Finding their own superpowers in Drama
  - Kitchen chemistry in Science
  - An historical costume challenge in History
  - Making photographs with sun paper in Art
  - Writing a postcard in Latin.



Parents had the opportunity to look around the school and meet their child's mentor. All pupils selected a musical instrument to learn over the next year, and chose activities for the enrichment hour that will take place at the end of every school day.

On the second day, the pupils were treated to a workshop with the super-cool choir, Sense of Sound. This started with an African call and response song, and culminated in a wonderful 'sing-off' before the pupils were dismissed until September.

"It was wonderful to get together as a school for the very first time", says Headmaster Mr Boyd. "The students were exceptionally well behaved, and so smart and creative. The teachers were very impressed and are now busy planning lots of activities for our first term and beyond. This is such an exciting time for us all."



When students do well, we send 'Good news' certificates home to parents/carers and suggest that a little reward might be in order...

# WELCOME

**Welcome to the first issue of Salve!**, which means 'greetings' or 'hello' in Latin. This is an historic time for the school, which opens in September 2014, after years of planning. We hope you'll share in our excitement, as we move forward as a high-achieving secondary school for the Isle of Wight. This newsletter will give you a snapshot of life at the school – any time you would like an update, please visit our website, drop us an email or give us a call. We would love to hear from you.



Mr Boyd,  
Headmaster



## Get involved!

Here are five ways to support The Island Free School...

1. Become a parent governor.
2. Run an extra-curricular activity.
3. Volunteer (ideally on a regular basis).
4. Join our parent teacher organisation.
5. Attend school fairs and other events.

Thank you for your support!

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## When the students met **STOMP**

**I**t's not every day that you get to meet the stars – and be treated like a VIP – but the music scholars from The Island Free School didn't skip a beat. In the summer, they were taken by staff on a special visit to see STOMP's hit West End show. The flamboyant percussionist troupe use everything from brooms to basketballs to make music, and play to packed houses all over the world. Afterwards, the ten children met the performers and asked questions. To add to the excitement of the day, the students were filmed by a TV crew, who are making a documentary about The Island Free School, which will be aired later this year.

"It was such a wonderful day", says Mr Peace, the school's Head of Year 7. "The children were thrilled to meet the cast and get the star treatment from the film crew – and who knows, one day, it could be them up there on stage, performing to a full house. These particular students were selected for their musical aptitude, and will receive free musical tuition throughout their time at the school. They have such talent and potential, it's a real possibility that they will be the stars of the future."

After the show, the children had a meal in an Italian restaurant and a stroll along the Thames – before it was time to return to the Island.

Says Mr Peace: "We hope this trip will inspire them to achieve great things and it's the first of many activities that will be educational, motivational, and a whole lot of fun. All the pupils at our new school will benefit from a range of musical experiences, as we're a music specialist school – and by music, we mean pop, jazz, classical, funk, latin, hip-hop, you name it. They will be able to play a wide range of instruments, including drums, saxophones and electric guitars. We might even teach them how to play the bin lids, like STOMP!"



Thumbs up: the music scholars and Mr Peace, the Head of Year 7, give their verdict on the outing.

**"These children could be the stars of the future."**

**Mr Peace, Head of Year 7**



# OUR NEW STARTER HOME



INDOOR SPORTS



PLAYING FIELDS



NEW SCHOOL SITE

*We're looking forward to working closely with local businesses and residents, as the exciting plans for our brand new school in Upper Ventnor begin to take shape.*

The Island Free School opens in September 2014 to the first intake of Year 7 students. We will start off in our beautiful temporary home, in Leeson Road in Lower Ventnor (where St Francis Catholic and Church of England Primary School used to be based).

Meanwhile, a smart new school will be constructed for us in Upper Ventnor. The Governors and Headmaster have been in touch with the ten building contractors on an approved list supplied by the Department for Education and Secretary of State.

Over the next few months, the senior team will be interviewing the contractors and choosing an appropriate design for the building, which will be no higher than two storeys, to fit in with the local landscape.

Says Headmaster Mr Boyd: "Almost opposite the new site, on Newport Road in Upper Ventnor, is the new St Francis School – this is a striking and well designed building, that we greatly admire. We will ensure that the design we choose is complementary to theirs, using similar materials, such as cedar cladding and white rendering."

"Our contractor will use the same modern pre-fabricated technology, that's quick to put up, high quality, and cost-effective. The grounds will be enhanced by interesting planting and a grassy nature area. As soon as we have gone through the process of selecting a contractor, then we will share our ideas and welcome comments."

"This school will have outstanding facilities, including £1m of ICT equipment, because our students deserve the very best."



**SEPTEMBER 2014:**

The school will open to our first Year 7 intake at our beautiful temporary site in Leeson Road, Lower Ventnor.

**DECEMBER 2014:**

Work will start on the new building. Our chosen contractors will follow guidance set out in the Considerate Constructors' Scheme so that residents experience minimal disruption.

**AUGUST 2015:**

Phase 1 of the building will be completed in Upper Ventnor.

**SEPTEMBER 2015:**

We will move into our new site on Newport Road. Meanwhile, work will continue on Phase 2 (that will not interrupt the running of the school).

**DECEMBER 2015:**

Phase 2 will finish and the new school will be fully completed.



# NUNTIUS

## THE NEWS ROUND-UP



### IT'S OFFICIAL

Mr Boyd was invited to a very special reception at the **House of Lords** on Wednesday 9 July. The event was to mark the official launch of a number of Free Schools – including our school. All the Free Schools opening this year, known as ‘the class of 2014’, went through a rigorous selection procedure before funding was approved. From 400 initial applications, 245 made the shortlist, and 103 have now reached the pre-opening phase. 80 of these schools – including The Island Free School – open in September 2014.

### REMEMBER

Our school is proud to support The **Royal British Legion** with the poppy appeal and Remembrance Day commemorations.



### OUR HERITAGE

We will be working with the **Ventnor and Undercliff Heritage Partnership** to create trails around town – our historic starter home, built in 1905, is likely to feature on the routes!

### GOOD SPORT

We have taken over **Rew Valley Sports Centre** – an outstanding sports facility in Upper Ventnor, which was earmarked by the Council for closure. The school will now run this centre, giving access to St Francis Primary School and local community groups. This is one of the few spaces in the Island suitable for indoor cricket. It also comes with an astroturf pitch and large section of the playing field that can accommodate a running track, football pitches, a rugby or hockey pitch, and a cricket pitch with small pavilion.



### GREEN LIGHT

Earlier this summer, we had a **pre-opening Ofsted inspection**, which we passed – with no reservations – giving us the final green light. Says Mr Boyd: “The Inspector had a 42 page checklist – and we were ahead of where we should be on every single measure!”

### TAKE NOTE!

**Do you have any unloved musical instruments gathering dust in the loft?**

If so, please donate them to the school – they will be put to good use! We’re a music specialist school and all our students will learn an instrument during their time with us.

Thank you!

Mrs Riches, Head of Music Specialism

