
The Elms Academy

NEWSLETTER

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10th January 2025

Message from the Principal



Welcome back, and a very Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you all had a lovely and restful break. We're excited to start the new year here at The Elms Academy, thinking about what our students will go on to achieve this year and beyond.

It's been great visiting lessons this week, seeing teachers and students making every minute count. In my assemblies, I emphasized the importance of being active learners—asking questions, engaging deeply, completing homework, and always striving to do their best. Attendance remains a top priority. Regular attendance is crucial for student success, so we encourage all families to ensure their children are on time and present each day. Striving for excellent attendance this year will make all the difference in terms of the outcomes that are achieved.

This week, we hosted the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge for Year 10, where students created and delivered speeches, boosting their oracy and confidence. It was wonderful to see so many Year 11 parents at Parents' Evening this week, and

to hear so many productive conversations about how we can work together to make the most of the remaining weeks in the lead-up to the GCSE exams.

A reminder to parents of Year 7, 8, 9, and 12 students: exams begin Monday. Please support your child with their revision checklists to help them prepare. These exams give us valuable insight into their understanding, helping us target areas for improvement ahead of their end-of-year assessments.

Lastly, Year 13 parents, please remember their Parents' Evening is next Thursday at 4:30 pm. We look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you for your ongoing support and have a lovely weekend!

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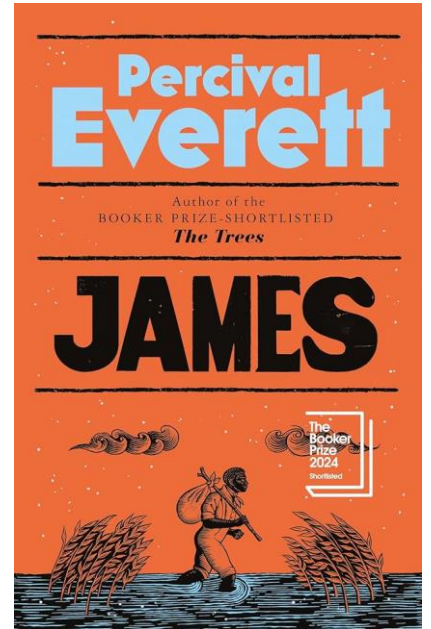
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Booker Prize

This academic year, our Year 12 A-Level English Literature students shadowed the Booker Prize, an annual literary prize awarded to a novel written in English. Previous winners include Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, and Bernardine Evaristo, and this year the real judges chose *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey, a novel set on the International Space Station.

But the judges at the Elms Academy disagreed! Instead, we chose ***James by Percival Everett***, a satirical retelling of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* in which James, a slave owned by Huck's parents, flees slavery with the young Huck to escape to the northern states. Along the way, he meets other runaway slaves, a minstrel group, and becomes a stowaway onboard a Mississippi steamboat. It is sarcastic, adventurous, and exciting, with the students highlighting its humor, warmth, and tension as particular strengths. Their decision was unanimous, and they look forward to reading more from this often-overlooked author.

Thanks to the publishers who generously sent us free copies of the novels for us to read and judge, and to the students for putting in the hard work of reading and thinking about totally new, alienating, and weird novels by authors they had never heard of before — well done to them for jumping in and giving it a go! Our judging panel was Tamsyn, Lois, Ashlyn, Lanaiyah, Lueji, Destiny, Naomi, Eva, and Rylee.



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Jack Petchey's Speak Out Challenge

On Thursday the Year 10 students participated in an all day 'speak out' workshop where they developed their oracy and public speaking skills.

During the workshop, students were given the opportunity to develop their communication skills and build their confidence in delivering a speech in front of an audience. Working together with members of Jack Petchey staff, students learnt how to listen and work together to give constructive feedback to each other. By the end of the day, each student was able to deliver their speech on a topic of interest to them. Well done to everyone who took part.



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Student Success



Congratulations to Brian Janier Chaveco Arcos from Year 12 who was offered the position of a Peer Researcher for the UPRISE Project run by the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) at King's College London.

The *Understanding and Improving Racial Inequalities in Adolescent Mental Health (UPRISE)* project is all about exploring how to support Black young people and what can be done to make support better and more accessible in school and colleges.

Brian will be involved in providing his interpretations of research findings, co-creating a toolkit to be used in schools, creating content for the UPRISE social media and much more. We are proud of Brian's success, and we hope this will be a great opportunity for him to prepare for his future career.

Key Dates for Your Diary

Event	Date	Time
Year 13 Parents Evening	Thursday 16 th January 2025	4.30pm – 7.00pm
INSET Day	Friday 24 th January 2025	All Day
Year 7 Parents Evening	Thursday 13 th February 2025	4.30pm – 7.00pm
Half Term Holiday	Monday 17 th February – Friday 21 st February 2025	All week
Year 12 Parents Evening	Tuesday 25 th February 2025	4.30pm – 7.00pm
Pathways Evening (Year 9)	Thursday 3 rd April 2025	5.00pm – 6.00pm
Easter Holiday	Monday 7 th April 2025 – Monday 21 st April 2025	Two Weeks
INSET Day	Tuesday 22 nd April 2025	All Day