

14<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Dear Parents

It seems to have done nothing but rain this week – something which always seems to make school life more difficult, particularly in the summer when we hope that pupils can make the most of our wonderful grounds. In Senior School Reading this week Mr Pepper and the Sixth Form introduced a new society – the Polam Heritage Society. The Sixth Form showed us some amazing old photographs of our school grounds and revealed that the intention of the new society is to try to restore some of the features which we could see in the photographs. The group are going to begin with the path and planting on Lavender Walk, and were asking for volunteers to help. Miss Patience told me today that 25 students have come forward to help, which is wonderful news. I will keep you updated with their progress and hopefully we will be able to invite parents to come and see their handiwork at some stage.

Green fingers have been quite a theme of the week. Mrs Jones is continuing work in the polytunnel. Form reps met today during CC time to clear out the poly tunnel and make space for more fruit and vegetables that students would like to plant. Some really tough physical work was involved but the students threw themselves into the task and the poly tunnel now has a new lease of life ready for more plants. Students also planted some 'bee bombs' in the green planters outside the poly tunnel, which include 18 native varieties of wildflowers. Students are doing their bit to replace bee and butterfly habitat as 97% of it has been lost in the UK since World War Two. Keep up the great work!



Year 4 have also been green fingered this week on their school trip, which was based on their study of Rainforests. Despite wet conditions, the children had a very successful trip to the Botanic Gardens in Durham on Thursday. The children experienced The Tropical House which represents the warm, humid environment of a rainforest, complete with (at the press of a button) real rain! They saw banana plants, sugarcane, coffee and giant bamboo, to name but a few. In addition to this they spent time with the Head Gardener exploring the 10 hectare botanic gardens. Mrs Hood and Mr Davies inform me that the Head Gardener has e-mailed to commend the children on their positive attitude to learning and to the rain!



We are hoping for a change in the weather as next Friday is Senior School Sports Day. The PE staff have been out training with pupils every lunchtime for both our own in house event and also the Darlington Track and Field Championships which is held the week after. I don't have any school sports news to share this week, but I do have some from Ciaran Dixon in Year 10 who played for Darlington FC youth team in Holland over the weekend. Darlington came first out of twenty teams in the competition, which included teams from Holland, Germany and Denmark. Darlington won all of their games and only conceded two goals. Ciaran tells me that the last English team to win the tournament was Wolves Academy in 2005 – so a real triumph for us! Ciaran himself scored 5 goals over the weekend – well done!



Whilst I am discussing school events, Mr Buchanan has asked me to invite you all to the annual Art exhibition, which will take place on Wednesday 26th June from 4-6pm. This event is a wonderful opportunity to support and celebrate the creativity and hard work of our GCSE and A level students over the last two years and we hope that many parents will be able to attend. There is a flyer attached with the newsletter which has the details of the evening.

We are almost at the end of the examination period and, although there are still exams taking place, many Year 11 and Year 13 students are finishing and coming to say goodbye. I am aware that for the parents of these year groups there are not many newsletters left and so I do want to take this opportunity to say how well the students have conducted themselves throughout this period, despite all of the stresses and strains of examinations. We are very proud of them all and sad to say goodbye – though we do still have Prom and the Leavers' Ball to look forward to.

I hope that the rain stops this weekend! Keep your fingers crossed for better weather next week!

Best wishes

Kate Reid