

20th November 2020

Dear Parents

I have to say that this week has truly flown by! It began with Year 10 Parents Evening on Monday evening – so lovely to get to see many parents on the video link and to have the opportunity to talk ‘face to face’. Whilst the technology may not always run smoothly, it has made it possible for us to do so many things that we could not have imagined doing. Year 8 have been taught via Teams all week – so my daily walks of the school have this week included hovering behind computers while teachers are on the web cam, talking or sharing documents with their classes. I have made the odd cameo appearance in a lesson or two! Next week Year 11 will also be taught using Teams, whilst Reception will have their input on Zoom, with links sent out via Marvellous Me.

On Tuesday we all wore odd socks to raise awareness of Anti-Bullying Week and the fact that we are all unique and difference should be celebrated. Mrs Brown sent me some pictures of her children, whilst I took pictures of Year 6 lined up to hand wash – and couldn’t resist taking one of Miss Blundy as well!



Wednesday is CCF parade night – I very much enjoy watching them from my office window. Mrs Roberts has sent me lots of pictures this week of what her cadets have been up to, which are below. After Christmas Year 8 pupils will have the opportunity to join CCF – I would urge as many as possible to do so as it does offer such fantastic experiences and the chance to develop leadership skills. Here is a fantastic shot which Mrs Roberts has sent me of Blue Section under the cargo net:



Mrs Roberts has also sent me the names of some of her vocabulary stars – the following have done *brilliantly*:

Year 7 Top 3: Karys, Leah and Jayden

Year 8 Top 3: Courtney, Kai, and Alex

Year 9 Top 3: Annabelle, BLACKPINK-IN-UR-AREA and midnight12 (Mrs Roberts says that she hasn't yet found out who the last two are, but they are in Set 1!)

Year 10 German Top 3: Seth, Jessica, and Jack

Y11 German Top 3: Ellie, Beth, and Amelia

Mrs Goodwin tells me that the Year 5 classes have been learning about Alexander the Great and after a game of Alexander Bingo, they were able to use the facts that they had learnt to make chalk fact files about him on the playground. She says that sadly, she and Miss Blair don't have any pictures to share with us as the rain quickly washed them away!

On Wednesday during Activities I was grilled by the journalistic team of The Polam Press – one of the activities that we have running this year. The team are creating a newspaper which will be published – they have had training from Peter Barron, the ex-editor of The Northern Echo and are now putting this into practice led by Mrs Squires. Ollie Morgans and Edward Watson had requested an interview with me and so I fielded their very thoughtful and perceptive questions on everything from uniform and the heritage of the school to school improvement. I am very much looking forward to reading the finished article when the paper is published.

You may recall that last week was House Week and so I have some results which were did not make it into last week's newsletter. Here is Mrs Ryan's Year 10 House Netball report:

Friday saw Year 10 girls play their annual House Netball competition. Despite missing some crucial players, all the girls that came down were involved, either playing, umpiring, or keeping score. Well done to all.

Games were closely fought, with the first game seeing a 1-1 draw between Swale and Skerne, with Kent beating Tees 1-0. By game two it was obvious that the girls were warming up more as Kent beat Skerne 4 - 1 whilst Swale beat Tees 5-0. This left the results to the final game where Skerne took on Tees and Kent took on Swale. Skerne beat Tees 4-1 and Swale beat Kent 2-1. This meant that Swale were victorious with 13pts to Kent who were second with 11 points. Skerne were 3rd with 8 pts and Tees with 0 pts.

A big shout out to Georgia H and Saffron H for umpiring and Chelsea W and Emily G for score keeping.



This morning I had the pleasure of attending Mrs Squire's Reading for Year 11, in which she talked to the students about the resilience that they will need this year and how to build that through taking care of themselves – physically and emotionally – and taking care of each other. If ever an assembly was prescient, this one certainly was. This academic year is throwing up challenges for us all – pupils, parents and staff. Thank you for your support and for the many positive emails and comments that we have received. I would like to assure you all that in school we are as careful as ever about hygiene routines, cleaning and the other health and safety protocols that we have put in place.

There will be a letter for Year 11 parents and pupils on Monday with information about a revised Mock Examination timetable and arrangements for careers interviews – we are just checking the details before we send everything to you.

A reminder for Year 2 parents that the KS1 Tests Parent Information Event will take place via Zoom on Thursday night next week at 5.30pm – I hope that as many Year 2 parents as possible can attend. The Zoom link is in the email that you have been sent today.

I hope that you all have a pleasant weekend – and that next week goes at a slightly slower pace!

Best wishes

Kate Reid