

10th January 2020

Dear Parents

Welcome to the first Polam newsletter of 2020! It has been wonderful to welcome pupils back into school this week and to hear about their Christmas break! Junior School pupils have told me all about their presents – Year 11 have been recounting their preparations for their Mock Oral examinations, which began this week!

Even in this first week back Mrs Jones took some of our Science students to Sheffield: On Wednesday *Amelia Martin and Jamie Crook along with Ezra and Sophie from Trinity Catholic College, represented Teesside at the North Science and Technology Challenge Final at Sheffield University, after winning the regional heat last May. The day involved a project using a Lego Mindstorm Robot and Java, to programme the robot to weave it's way through a maze avoiding crashing and sensing different coloured spots. At lunchtime the team were deflated after the robot had 'died' and had to restart it and their spirits were definitely flagging. The team then rallied, had a programming breakthrough and in 15 minutes had turned it all around. They were the only team to successfully negotiate the maze with top marks to much relief of the students and Mrs Jones! It was very tense but the students did it and I was so proud. They achieved 3rd place overall but in my eyes were the true winners, showing real resilience and the true meaning of team work in the face of adversity. Well done everyone!*



Miss Rachel has also had plenty to celebrate this week and has asked me to add the following to the newsletter:

Dance News

Congratulations to all the Polam Hall Dancers who have been successful in their Royal Academy of Dance Ballet Examinations that they took in November. The results arrived this week and I was very pleased with everyone's achievements.

Year 1 all were successful in Pre- Primary

Year 3 all received lovely results for Primary

Year 6 all received lovely results for Grade Two

Year 11 & 13 received well deserved Merits for Grade SEVEN!!!!!!

Well done everyone ,I am very proud of you all

The first Activities sessions of the term took place on Wednesday in Senior School and this afternoon in Juniors. It has been great to see Senior pupils trying different options – often on the recommendation of their friends and peers. As ever the sports options were very busy – as were the Year 9 bakers who made fantastic biscuits. As Junior School parents will know there has been a change to Activities so that KS1 and KS2 pupils now have Activities on alternate weeks. Our thanks for your support with this and with sending pupils in PE kit today.

The Polam Scholars were set their first task over the Christmas holidays. This was to read a piece of non fiction literature and to write a book review on it. A selection of these book reviews have been placed on the school website and can be found at

<https://www.phs.woodard.co.uk/1207/scholars>.

Mr Galley has asked me to also remind all students and parents that the list of scholars will be added to each year so students are currently working hard to earn a place on the programme for next year. Keep up the good work!

I try to walk round both Juniors and Seniors each day and this week on one of my walks I encountered Miss Barrass teaching poetry to 4DH, who were writing their own poems. She has emailed me today to ask me to include a well done to them as they all tried really hard and came up with some amazing poems by working well together as a team. As it is the start of term, Junior School classes have also been beginning new Convince Me..? topics and new Power of Reading books. This has meant that I have met Year 1 in their pyjamas as they began to answer the question of whether we need light to survive on Earth and Year 2 guessing what animal was in the box as an introduction to their reading of 'Olga da Polga' by Michael Bond. There has certainly been lots of curiosity in our learning this week!

Year 9, on the other hand, have begun the week with exams. We have put these in the calendar at this time of year to aid students with their GCSE options choices which they will be making in the next month. Mr Rees will be introducing the process to all Year 9 students in Reading on Monday.

The PHPA have asked me to add into the newsletter a request for unwanted Christmas presents.

Have you received any gifts for Christmas that you do not require that the PHPA could use for future events for raffle prizes or a tombola stalls. We will happily accept any new, unused, unopened gifts such as toys, books, toiletries sets, gift sets etc. If you have any of the above and would be kind enough to donate them please drop them off at the senior school office where they will pass them on to the PHPA this can be done during w/c Monday 13th January.

We thank you for any donations and your ongoing support.

Another thank you comes from Miss Lawton and Mrs Jennings who have been in touch with me to ask me to pass on their thanks for all of the lovely cards, presents and best wishes which they received at the end of last term. We look forward to a full week next week – have a relaxing weekend.

Best wishes

Kate Reid