

11th June 2021

Dear Parents

Today was the last day for our Year 11 students, which we marked with the traditional Leavers' Reading. Having completed all their assessments just before half term, the students have had a week of Activities – with some NTI sessions (ably led by Mr Pepper) to cover the statutory PSHE topics that had been impacted by the disruption this year. It has been a real pleasure to see Year 11 enjoying the week – we hope that we have also filled some of the gaps in fun that were caused by Covid and the changes to GCSE! As well as staff v students rounders earlier in the week and an enormous scavenger hunt yesterday afternoon, they have taken on Mastermind this morning where Ellie Ferguson was the Year 11 winner (specialist subject: the Twilight films) but Mr Robson was the overall winner, answering on Fawlty Towers! 11P were the winners of the Year 11 uniform competition and were treated to a pizza picnic on Thursday lunchtime.



After the obligatory shirt signing, our Leavers' Reading was an emotional affair – we will miss this cohort of young people hugely as they have contributed so much to Polam. For the first time since early 2020 we were able to invite parents into school – carefully following government guidance and ensuring all details were collected for Track and Trace! It was lovely to have parents back in the theatre, and very much worth jumping through all the hoops for such an important occasion. It isn't quite goodbye – we have Prom next week to look forward to but, as I said to them today, they are a group of inspirational young people and we will miss them very much.



In other news, Junior School children have had a wonderful experience this week, courtesy of the Circus! We have Miss Blair to thank for organising this – here is her report:

This week, Junior School have had the opportunity to take part in some circus skills workshops, focusing on balance, coordination and movement. They have been a roaring success with both children and staff. Some children in Year 2 told me that it was the best lesson ever! Many children said that their favourite part was juggling because they could not do it before the coach, Ross, showed them. I think, we now have enough talented children for our own circus!



There has also been plenty of learning of a more traditional nature going on in school this week! Miss Patience has been developing the literacy skills of her Year 7 Geographers – sending me this report after we had talked about it earlier in the week:

Year 7 were quite excited to read an article from the National Geographic magazine in an effort to improve literacy. They found some very interesting articles and once they had read them shared them with the class. This sparked their curiosity and introduced them to more complex geographical language.

Miss Blair's Year 5 class have also been learning: *In Computing, 5B have been looking at how flip books are created and how to make an effective animation. We spent some time researching what makes a good animation, discussing ideas and planning them out. The children created some fabulous animations thoroughly and enjoyed sharing them with each other.*

Mrs Dixon tells me that Wraparound in Grange House is such fun that they are having difficulty keeping visitors out – specifically Eric the cat! She sent me a report about Holiday Club, which ran throughout the Half Term week and will, of course, also be running in the Summer Holiday – and couldn't resist sending some pictures of Eric as well as the children enjoying themselves!



Eric decided to join us last night, I think he was looking for the tuna sandwiches. He then decided nonchalantly chill on our doorstep.

Last week's Holiday Club was very exciting. As you can see, the slip and slide went down a treat. I really hope the weather is in our favour again for the upcoming summer Holiday Club. Places are filling quickly so please ensure any bookings are made by Friday 25th June. Please email dixon.s@pfs.woodard.co.uk for any enquiries or bookings.



In sporting news, Mr Wilkinson has taken a number of students to Kings Priory School today for a tennis fixture. You may know that KPS is one of the other Woodard Academies Trust schools – we have formed close relationships with them in terms of curriculum and education, but this is the first sporting fixture that the schools have had. Having read Mr Wilkinson's report of the day, I imagine there will be plenty more!

Today the tennis team travelled north to Kings Priory School for our first Woodard Trust competition. A range of players from Year 6 – Year 10 took part and should be proud of their performances against some excellent opposition.

Highlights in this friendly included:-

Year 10 Alfie & Jack losing narrowly in a very close game 6-4.

Year 6 & Year 7 - Briony & Dash won their first match 6-3 playing some super tennis and winning a range of points including some great volleys.

Mr Wilkinson even got a game but was beaten alongside Mr Snow (KPS) by some Team Northumbria players. After the tennis we had time for a quick ice cream/chips and a mess around on the beach in front of the Priory. What a lovely end to a fantastic day of sport.

Let's look forward to more competition against Kings Priory in the near future when they will likely travel to Polam for a return fixture in rugby, football and netball.

Mr Wilkinson



Mrs Bury has also sent me some sports news (not usually something that I have from Mrs Bury!). Miles in her class has been chosen to play for the Under 9s squad at Middlesbrough

Football Academy, which is a fantastic achievement! Miles is pictured below with Phil Mason from the club, signing the contract.



And so the final half term of the school year has begun with a bang! I'm sure the next four weeks will be just as busy. Next week we have Year 10 exams, Year 11 Prom, Senior Sports Day on Wednesday, enhanced transition sessions for Year 6 and some of our new Reception pupils coming for Stay and Play...

As I said to them as they left tonight (Friday being one of my Gate Duty days), I hope that Year 10 pupils will use this weekend to revise. They have exams for the next two weeks and an opportunity to really show us what they can do. Some effort and commitment to revising now will pay real dividends in the future, helping them to retain knowledge for Year 11 and to form the good habits of independent study that will be needed next year. With a bit of luck they should be able to revise in the sunshine for the next couple of days at least!

I hope all our Polam families have a lovely weekend

Best wishes



Kate Reid