

13th September 2019

Dear Parents

This has been the first full week of school and the sun has continued to shine on us. It has been a busy week, with new pupils getting used to routines. Reception joined Junior School assembly in the theatre this afternoon and I have spent much of my week directing Year 7 pupils to their classrooms!

The new Activities Programmes are underway in both Junior and Senior Schools. Junior School actually began theirs last Friday, when I managed to visit almost every activity – from Yoga and Reading Café to Boxercise and Board Games. It was an absolute delight to see how much the children were enjoying themselves. On Wednesday afternoon Senior students got their turn, opting for a range of activities from Dance Fitness to Gardening Club. The most popular option was Mrs Babington's Forbidden Baker – in which pupils get the chance to cook the sweet treats that are not allowed on the National Curriculum! Activities have been introduced across the school as part of our Concordia Crescimus Curriculum, intended to develop character. We believe that the opportunity to develop talents beyond the classroom is important enough to timetable as part of the school day. It certainly looked like pupils agree with us – and the feedback from all those I spoke to in both Juniors and Seniors was unanimously positive.



The Junior School had another enrichment experience on Tuesday when they were all able to watch a production of The Railway Children in the Liddiard Theatre. The PHPA kindly paid for us to be able to offer this to all our Junior School children, so very many thanks to them and to all those who have contributed to their fundraising. The play will also be inspiration for the children's writing in class:



In sports news, this week saw two of the school's football teams get their seasons off to a good start. On Tuesday the Under 13s played their first league at home to Longfield. Although they lost the game 3-1 there were lots of positives - especially the performances of the Year 7 players who played up a year. Answorth Adu got the goal for the team and played extremely well.

On Thursday the Under 12s played in a friendly against Hurworth. The team were missing a few players so didn't manage to be victorious. That said, there were some excellent individual performances, especially from man of the match Alex Wilkins and the goalscorer Brandon Boyle-Blair. There will be plenty more action to look forward to in the next few weeks so all players must make sure they attend training sessions to gain a spot in the team.

In Senior School the Polam Hall Heritage Society got work underway on the restoration of Lavender Walk at lunchtime on Wednesday and Thursday. There were 32 volunteers who turned out to help rake, prune, weed and plant seeds – a sterling effort from all concerned and great to see pupils from Year 7 to Year 13 involved. Mr Pepper tells me that there is still some work to do, but a great start has been made and that he for one was touched by the amount of pupils and the enthusiasm shown.



There are some events which I would like to publicise. On Saturday 12th October Vocal Ensemble will be taking part in a special performance – Mr Robson has written this report for me:

Polam Hall Vocal Ensemble has been delighted to receive an invitation from Backworth Male Voice Choir to support the choir in a concert in North Shields on Saturday 12 October 2019

The choir is a well established north-east choir who have performed in Belgium, Germany and France and have regular concerts across the North-East of England. Mr. Robson is a Baritone in this choir.

It would be great to see as many staff, parents and friends of Polam supporting the Vocal Ensemble on 12th. Alex Peart in Year 11 will be performing a solo song as well as singing with the Choir in one of their numbers as a solo performer. Some former students who were members of the Ensemble are also going to try to return to Polam for the concert.

If you are interested in attending the concert, tickets, priced at £6 and including refreshments, are available from Ms. Holmes or Mr. Robson at Polam.

Miss Lawton has decided to take on the challenge of the London Marathon this year – she has asked me to include the following in the newsletter this week:

I'm running for ActionAid – they work across parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America supporting sustainable projects with women and girls to ensure they have access to education; help them know how to keep themselves safe from violence and train them to be leaders within their communities running cooperative projects such as seed banks to have long term impact.

I have sponsored a child in The Gambia through ActionAid for the past 8 years and, having also been to work with schools there on 5 occasions, know from first-hand experience how valuable the support for community groups particularly in rural areas is for helping girls and young women build a future for themselves.

The link is: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/catherine-lawton1>

Finally, we have made some changes to the way we reward pupils this year. Juniors will have 4C Heroes in Friday assemblies and Seniors will reward Top Five Housepoint Winners each fortnight in Reading. I will include the names of these pupils in my newsletter.

I hope you have a lovely weekend – hopefully the sun will continue to shine.

Best wishes

Kate Reid

Junior School 4C Heroes:

1B Evie-Mae Wood – Confidence – for going above and beyond with her rainbow challenges

1M – Mia Connolly – Community

2E – William Lawson – Community

2M – Charlotte Armstrong

3J – Charlie Goodwin – Community

3S – Gracie Thurston – Community

4DH – Matthew Buckingham – Confidence

4T – Spencer Jones and Oscar Earl – Community

5B – Max Stenton – Confidence

5H – Ellie-Mae Wynn-Jones, Thomas Etherington, Darcey Wheelhouse – Confidence

6B – Devan Maloney – Community

6G – Amelie-Rose Lumley – Community

Senior School Top Five Housepoints

Jamie Ashley

Finn Gornall

Maddison Raw

Daniel Jackson- Fairhurst

Jack Gilroy