

26th April 2019

Dear Parents

I hope that you all had a restful Easter holiday. It has been lovely to return to school in the sunshine this week and feel that the Summer Term is really here.

On Tuesday we had staff training in a range of areas. Primary staff were trained in Minimus – the Primary Latin course. We have been focusing on how best to develop foreign language teaching and the wider vocabulary of our pupils this year. This is leading to some changes in the languages we teach across the school in order to give pupils better foundations for the study of English as well as MFL. Latin will widen our Primary pupils' knowledge of our own language and its etymology as well as giving an excellent grounding for Modern Foreign Language teaching when pupils move to Senior School. In fact Mrs Roberts and Mrs Joyce, who teach French and German in our secondary phase, attended the training on Tuesday. If you would like to find out more about Minimus please follow this link: <http://www.minimus-etc.co.uk/> - or attend our next Parent Information Evening on 15th May when we will be discussing this and some of the other school developments for 2019/20.

We are also focusing on how our curriculum develops pupils' knowledge across the phases as well and part of Tuesday was devoted to work on the curriculum and progression. Subject leads from Junior School are working with subject teachers in Senior School to develop the threads of curriculum and make the most of our all-through status for our pupils. We also held our inaugural Edubook club on Tuesday – back in February all teachers opted for an educational book to read and this week groups met to discuss the books that they had read and how they might use the ideas and research in their own teaching. There were eight books on the list, ranging from Adam Bushnell's *Modelling Exciting Writing* to Paul Dix's *When the Adults Change everything Changes*. Staff were keen to incorporate ideas from the books into their classroom practice.

On Wednesday the school returned to normal as our pupils returned. The new term means new topics for many classes – Miss Miller and Miss Spence have sent me this report on their work with Year 1 this week:

Year 1 came into school yesterday to find that their modern day classroom had turned into a Victorian classroom. Their tables had been separated into rows of two- with boys and girls separated, paper and pencils had been replaced with black chalk boards (black paper) and chalk! In the corner was a small wooden stool and dunce hat. The children spent the morning living life as Victorian pupils. We wrote the alphabet on the chalk boards and went outside to do some PE drills. The children really enjoyed this as the launch to our Convince Me... question "Would you prefer to live in the past or the present?"



Reception's new topic includes the exploration of Space! Miss Lawton has sent me these pictures of Reception children cooking stars (not to be eaten raw apparently) and moon cheese as part of their astronaut training. (also known as marshmallows on a fire!). The children themselves had suggested that you would eat stars and moon cheese on a space trip...



As part of the Junior Education programme organised by Durham Constabulary, Year Five had the first of their visitors, Andy and Tom from the RNLI. The children learnt about water safety and how to stay safe at the seaside. They also enjoyed trying on the safety equipment and learning first hand about rescues.



The new term has meant new beginnings in Senior School too. The new Head Boy and Girl took their place at the front of Reading on Thursday. Ben's 'All Stand' was authoritative and Lucy read the notices ably. There may have been some initial nerves, but they will no doubt prove to be a real asset to the leadership of the school. Mrs Barker is also beginning the rehearsals for the School Show. She has asked me to put the following notice into the newsletter so that you can encourage your children to participate – in whatever capacity! Technicians are just as welcome as performers!

Students in Years 7-10 who registered their interest in the school show, (and those who would also like to be involved but didn't register their interest!), should all come to a meeting at 1 30pm in the theatre on Monday 29th April to discuss the show- this is for actors and technical crew. Auditions will then be held on Tuesday and Wednesday- more details will be given in the meeting about what this entails.

We have welcomed a team from *Poverty Proofing the School Day* into school this week. They have been working in Junior School this week and move to Senior School next week.

They have been talking to pupils and staff – hopefully many of you have completed the survey which you were sent which enables us to add parent voice to the project. At the end of the audit they will create an action plan for us which we can then take forward to address any of the issues which they identify. If you would like to find out more about this work then you can do so at: <http://www.povertyproofing.co.uk/>

This half term will also see the start of external examinations and assessments. The French and German oral exams take place next week – I wish all of Year 11 and Year 13 the best of luck. I imagine some thorough revision will take place this weekend! We have Year 9 Parents Evening on Monday after school, which will take place in the Mounsey building. I hope to see many of you there.

Best wishes

Kate Reid