

29th November 2019

Dear Parents

Tonight is Charter Night – our annual dinner which celebrates the appointment of a new president of our Interact club. Interact is the youth arm of Rotary International, which has had a long association with our school. The library is being transformed into a banquet hall as I speak and we are all very much looking forward to the evening.

It has been a busy week across the school. Juniors has seemed quiet since Wednesday when Year 6 made their annual pilgrimage to East Barnby to get wet and wild! They have returned to school this afternoon – Miss Lawton has promised photos for next week's newsletter...

In Senior School we began the week with the Great German Bake Off – Mrs Roberts' way of celebrating the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. I had the wonderful job of judging, along with Mrs Babington, and so got to eat a lot of cake! The winners were as follows:

- 1st place - Freddy Main with a delicious apple cake
- 2nd place - Megan Greenwood with her Schwarzwaldler Kirschtorte
- 3rd place - Jonny Moffat, also with a Schwarzwaldler Kirschtorte

The staff prize was won by Mrs Ryan with her German apple cake. The following photos show just a few of the entries:



Also on Monday the School Council (both Seniors and Juniors) attended an appointment with the Mayor and Mayoress of Darlington to learn more about local government and the work of the council. They were received in the Mayors' Parlour and visited the council chamber, asking well thought out questions and coming away with plenty to think about.



On Tuesday Year 9 went on the History trip to the Royal Armouries in Leeds to support their learning about The First World War. They were treated to displays of gunfire and hand to hand combat as well as getting the chance to meet and talk to some of the living historians and having a good opportunity to take in the museum as a whole.

We have also had some CCF trips this week. Year 10 and 11 Cadets attended a weapons handling day on Monday, while Year 9 Cadets and some Year 11 NCOs attended the biannual inspection at Barnard Castle School on Wednesday. This is the first time we have joined Barnard Castle for inspection and our cadets did us proud!

Tuesday also saw the launch of the Polam Scholars. Led by Mr Galley, this is an extra-curricular programme for our Most Able students. It was a pleasure to give them their first challenges. There will be opportunities for other students to join this group for particular events and workshops – Mr Galley is creating an exciting programme!

On Tuesday Mrs Teasdale and the Year 10 LGBTQ+ support group attended a conference at the Xcel Center. Mrs Teasdale has sent me the following report: *The students, who are part of the Darlington SMILE Group, presented to the attendees at the 3rd PSHE Conference for Darlington to discuss their rationale behind the group as well as their aims and vision going forward.*

SMILE is a project for young people in Darlington who are LGBT+ and their friends, supported by Darlington Borough Council, Youth Focus North East and some secondary schools locally. Over the last 6 months, students have worked together to create this project with the aim of promoting tolerance, challenging and reducing discrimination, raising awareness, creating a sense of belonging, creating a network of support and understanding that they can be proud of who they are. After their presentation, students then went on to attend a variety of workshops on topics such as:

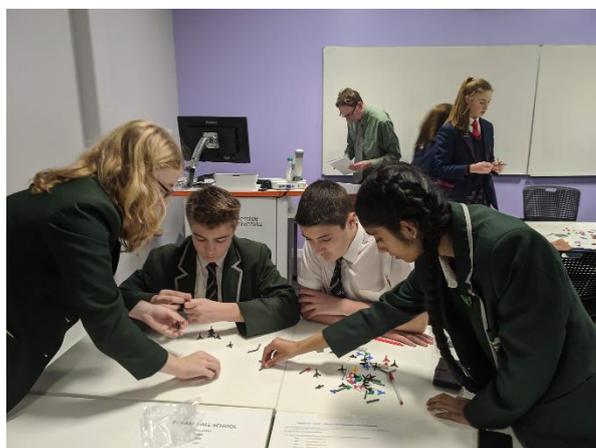
- *Preparing for Statutory RSE and Health Education*
- *Emotional Health and Wellbeing – an introduction to ELSA*
- *RSE in Primary Schools*
- *Preventing offending through intervention – dealing with peer pressure, perceptions and relationships*

When speaking with the SMILE group afterwards, they said that they found the day very informative and educational and that it was also nice to be talked to like an adult and as equals to the others attending. The students also felt that the attendees of the conference benefited from their presentation and Q & A session and that their message of equality, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, was put across well. The group presented with confidence and handled the questions that arose with dignity and gave very eloquent responses. The students who attended were:

*Elizabeth Gilligan
 Theodora Latousaki
 Alfreda Batty
 Jess Nunn
 Alena Close
 Rosie McElvanny
 Maya Watson
 Amelia Martin*



On Wednesday 4 students from Year 9-11 represented Polam at the annual North East Royal Society of Chemistry's Top of the Bench Competition at Teesside University. We competed against 8 other teams from North East schools and the students had three rounds to put their Chemistry knowledge to the test. This included a Kahoot general knowledge GCSE Chemistry quiz, Cluedo guess the element round as well as a memory challenge building an unfamiliar molecular model. The team worked fantastically well together and showcased some great Chemistry knowledge. Well done team Polam!



On Thursday Polam Hall School held its first hustings put on by the Humanities Faculty in support of and to help students understanding of the upcoming General Election. We were lucky enough to have the candidates standing to be MP for Darlington, Jenny Chapman (Labour), Matthew Snedker (Green Party) , Anne-Marie Curry (Liberal Democrat) and due to a last minute change of personnel Catherine Hart standing in for Peter Gibson (Conservative). The event was a huge success with the pupils submitting over one hundred and sixty questions to be put to the hopeful MP's, with Caitlin Minns causing some rather awkward moments for the candidates! Moving forward from here the pupils will be taking part in a mock

election with students standing for Labour, Green, Conservative, Brexit and Liberal Democrat parties to be held on the 12th of December.

The Under-13 netball team put in an excellent performance to beat St. Aidan's Academy 28-0 on Thursday evening! Here is Mr Galley's report: *Every member of the squad performed to an extremely high standard and all the girls should be very proud of themselves. The team surely will prove to be a match for any team at this level. A special mention goes to Caitlin Minns in Year 11 who helped umpire the game. The squad included; Paula M, Grace H, Olivia D, Paula O, Annabelle W, Abbie M (c), Iniya R, McKayla B, Poopy W, Ruby A, Charlotte N, Skye M, and Eva C. Distinctions all round and bring on the next game!*



Last week I promised to come back to the winners of the Maths Week competitions. I have the following report from Mrs Jones:

Maths Week England 2019 was celebrated in style at Polam with Seniors and Juniors getting behind the first ever national event. Students in Years 7-9 were entered into a tournament on Times Table Rockstars and Year 10-11 tutors had a Maths quiz to complete. There was great tension across the week as form group 7A were ahead early on with 8C and 8B closely behind. The tables turned on the Thursday as it became a head to head between 8B and 8C and the winner being decided on the Saturday of the tournament. 8B were crowned the champions with a class average of 2,635 correct answers. They are the winners of their very own form pizza party along with 10B from Key stage 4. It was fantastic to see such enthusiasm, passion and dedication especially surrounding the TT Rockstars tournament. Special mention to Izzie Crook, Sophie Maltby and William Conway who all received individual trophy's and certificates for being the 1st, 2nd and 3rd highest scoring students respectively.

As Christmas approaches, there are lots of exciting events on the horizon. Vocal Ensemble and Junior Choir have been working hard in rehearsals for their forthcoming performance with Hurworth Community Band. This takes place in the Liddiard Theatre on Saturday 7th of December at 7pm. Tickets are available at the school office: £5 adults, £2 children and concessions. The annual advent service is at St Peter's Church in Croft on Sunday at 6pm if you would like to join us there.

The PHPA are bravely running Christmas Discos for our Junior children and have asked me to pass on the following information!

Following on from the fantastic and very well attended Halloween disco the PHPA would like to remind parents that tickets for the Christmas disco can now be purchased on parent pay at £2.00/ticket

*Monday December 16th
Infants 4.30-5.45
Juniors 6.00-7.15*

Please don't forget to purchase your tickets via parent pay. We are all really looking forward to this event. Please remember all children must be attended by a grown up at all times.

We hope to see you all there.

Regards

The PHPA

Miss Rachel tells me that many of her Junior School dancers are auditioning on Sunday at the Hippodrome for the English Youth Ballet production of Cinderella in Hollywood. Good Luck to them all!

Finally Mrs Bury, who leads on PSHE across the school has asked me to publicise this following website, which is about online safety and has a section for parents:
www.darlington.gov.uk/disp

Best wishes

Kate Reid