

5th April 2019

Dear Parents

The final week of term is always busy and this has been no exception. For Year 10 this has been work experience week and we have welcomed them back into school this morning to evaluate the week. It has been an absolute joy to hear the reports from employers about our students, who have been exemplary representatives for Polam. Mrs Robinson and Mr Robson have written me the following report:

This week Year 10 have been out of school on their work experience placements. There have been many and varied ranging from primary schools to cafeterias and restaurants through to architects and medical centres. Some slightly more unique placements included engineering and telecommunications companies, child and adult care, outdoor dry stone walling and working at a steam railway museum.

All reports from employers have been extremely positive with some students being offered holiday or Saturday jobs as a result of their commitment to their placements.

Students have developed valuable interpersonal skills during their placements, such as confidence, cooperation, creativity, communication skills, customer service skills and an insight into their chosen career paths.

Polam Hall School is very grateful to all employers for taking the time to offer our students placements.

Mrs Robinson and Mr Robson have also gathered some quotes from students about their experiences:

"I think school life is easy compared to working. I was very tired." BEN POGUE (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

"I really enjoyed working practically and hands on as opposed to being at a desk all day." CALLUM BOOCOCK (ON-SITE MAINTENANCE AT POLAM HALL)

"I really enjoyed Stanhope Park Vets because it gave me a great insight into my career path and allowed me to gain knowledge I wouldn't have got in the classroom." AMY SCARFE (VET PRACTICE)

"I loved reading to the children of all ages. By Thursday young children were bringing me books to read. A young child almost fell asleep on my knee when I was reading to him." MADDISON RAW (PRIMARY SCHOOL)

Mrs. Bailly, Head of Key Stage 4 said that "This has been the most successful work experience placement we have ever undertaken, with many students appreciating the opportunity to take a week out of school and think about their future career." And Mrs. Robinson, our Careers Leader: "I feel it was very successful because the students took ownership of finding their own placements, took responsibility for organising and preparing themselves for an experience they had chosen; this has demonstrated great independence and initiative in the students, something they will need in the world of work."

Today the students have returned to school and worked on their evaluations. Next they are looking forward to developing their employability skills, finding out about labour market information, researching how to get into their chosen field and preparing a CV.

In Reception we have had news of a different kind, as Mrs Crosby explains: *Children in Reception have had an exciting few weeks since we found mysterious giant footprints in our classroom and a note from The Giant asking for our help to buy new shoes. The children measured things against the footprints and sent The Giant letters to help him decide what kind of shoes he would like. We went to the office in school to get our letters franked and posted. This week the children were beyond excited when Mrs. Walker from the office brought us down a giant letter. The Giant thanked the children for all their help and told them about his lovely new shoes.*



Joshua Mitchell and some of his Year 11 peers have also been helping others – this time by supporting St Mary’s foodbank through Interact. Josh has written the following report:

I want to start by extending a massive thank you to everyone who helped out with the food bank donation scheme! It’s been absolutely amazing watching the food stockpiles in school stack up in preparation for delivering them on Thursday lunchtime.

I however want to take the time to explain why I chose St Mary’s Food Bank to be at the centre of Polam Hall termly food bank collection scheme by Interact. The main source of support for people living in the Cockerton area who can not afford food is centred around St Mary’s community centre. It provides critical support to some of the most vulnerable people in our local community and our school community has already made a great stride towards a system of committed support towards this necessary community resource.



Again, I am very grateful towards everyone who has helped out in any way. I hope to engage more people in the process by making it a more accessible donation scheme to our community members.

Joshua Mitchell Year 11

Interact have made a great impact with the charitable work that they have done this year – well done to Josh and all the members of Interact.

Junior School were welcomed on Monday by a rather unexpected visitor! Sitting on top of the roof was an interesting and unusual robot. This special visitor became the focus of the children's writing across Junior School as they let their imagination run wild about where he had been and what he was doing at our School. Listening to the children discuss the robot and the excitement that he generated was wonderful. The robot is part of our strategy for improving children's writing, which is, in part, about giving them exciting inspiration for their writing.



Miss Saunders has also sent me some information about the work that Year 3 have been doing this term: *This term Year 3 have studied the rainforest and as part of our showcase activities we made a rainforest model that shows the different layers and explains what animals live there.*



Mrs Barker has written for me about the A Level Drama examination, which took place on Wednesday. I was lucky enough to be in the audience and can testify to the quality of the performances.

A Level Drama and Theatre Studies students took the Liddiard Theatre by storm on Wednesday evening, wowing the audience with their Component 2 performances. All five students performed monologues; the quality of which would rival a professionally trained actor, before coming together to perform Act 2 of Mike Leigh's 'Abigail's Party' which had the audience in stitches! Alex Dugdale, KC Freeley, Tyler Hagger, Emily Farley-Smith and Erin Partridge performed roles which showed off their versatility and ability as performers. They have all encompassed what it means to be a Polam Learner: confidence, community, creativity and curiosity. All five students have worked tirelessly on these performances since January pushing through barriers and overcoming challenges. I am extremely proud of them! Well played Y13!



In last week's newsletter I wrote about Hustings and the election of our Head Boy and Girl. This week, our candidates underwent an interview process with myself and Mr Buchanan. All the candidates performed extremely well, with well-planned and insightful suggestions for how they would like to see the school develop. Taking in to account all aspects of the application process; the letter of application, interview and voting we are extremely pleased to announce that our Head Students for the academic year 2019/20 are:

Head Boy – Ben Swindale

Head Girl – Lucy Hart

Taking into account the fantastic performance of all other candidates however, we felt it just to create positions for all with an aim of creating a dynamic and proactive Student Leadership Team. Therefore Abbigail Craggs, Jasmine Dahesh- Moghadam and Jack Gilroy will take the position of Deputy Head Students.

Mr Buchanan and I would like to thank all candidates and those who took part in the election process and wish them all the best of luck in their new roles for the year ahead. I would also like to take the opportunity to publically thank KC and Hannah who have led the school so ably for the last twelve months.

Also this week, six of our Year 13 students completed the final stages of their Extended Project Qualification. Mr Buchanan, Mrs Robinson, Mrs Squires and myself were fortunate enough to witness some extremely professional presentations from all who participated. The projects presented covered topics as diverse as *Concussion in Sport* through to *How Brexit will impact the NHS*. All participants have put in a lot of hard work into their projects, which are a Level 3 qualification equivalent to A Level and we wish them the best of luck come A level Results day when they will receive the fruits of their labour. The students presenting this week were: Will Shields-Porterfield, Jamie Glasper, Matthew Cheung, Erin Partridge, Duncan Wehrhahn and Fane Richardson.

And finally...we had a great sporting event this week. No – not House Sports (the results of which will be in the first newsletter back after the Easter break), but instead a showdown between Mr Robson and Thomas Jewkes... Mr Robson's report below:

For ages now Thomas Jewkes has spoken about wanting to challenge Mr. Robson at badminton, and for ages Mr. Robson has been considering this. The match took place yesterday. Thomas won 21-4. James Pickford and Gurjot Singh Kahlon also won their

matches, but Mr. Robson managed to beat Ben Pogue. Not bad for a 40 year age difference. Revenge will happen.

I must finish with some thanks. Mr Hannan, who joined us as Interim Vice Principal in September, leaves us today as Mr Craig Rees will be taking up the permanent position after Easter. Mr Hannan has brought much to school in the short time he has been with us – not least a calm and determined presence in his battles with Arbor and reports!

On that note, we have today published reports for all Junior School pupils and grade cards for Years 7 and 8. Grade cards for Years 10 and Year 12 and written reports for Years 11 and Year 13 will be published on Arbor during the holiday. An email will alert you when they are published.

I must also inform you that Miss Richardson is to leave us at the end of the first week back after Easter for pastures new. She has been an integral part of Junior School since the day she began work here and will be very much missed by us all – especially the children. However, she is going onto great things and new challenges and we wish her all the very best as she takes up her new post.

There are a number of revision sessions planned for Year 11 and Year 13 students over the Easter holidays. Year 11 students have had a formal schedule, while Year 13 sessions have been organised with subject staff. When we return we will have just three weeks before the real exam season is upon us, so I hope that GCSE and A Level students use the holiday wisely and plan revision carefully – whilst also ensuring that they take breaks and keep physically active.

Students return to school on Wednesday 24th April. The school office, should you need to be in contact, will be open 10am to 2pm during the holiday period, with the exception of bank Holidays.

I wish you all a relaxing holiday – and hope Year 11 and Year 13 have a productive one.

Best wishes

Kate Reid