

6th November 2020

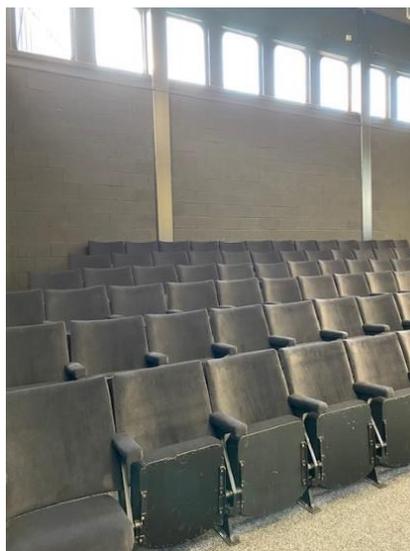
Dear Parents

We have had a very crisp and autumnal week in school as everyone has returned from the half term holiday. It has been great to see pupils out making the most of the grounds in the sunshine. You may have seen the article in the Northern Echo about the Junior pupils' crocus planting project which Mrs Hood has organised as part of the Rotary Club's Purple4Polio initiative. Year 4 pupils planted their bulbs outside Abbeyfield Retirement Home, but all the other Junior School classes have also planted bulbs on the school grounds so they have been very busy this week! In total we have planted 4000 bulbs – enough to exhaust even Mrs Hood, who has boundless energy!

Mrs Hood has sent me this message today: *Following Y4's planting in October, the Manager of Sir Charles Starmer has been in contact to say, "The children were a delight and so enthusiastic, even in the rain! The residents loved seeing them in the garden. On behalf of everyone here at Abbeyfield please pass on our thanks to all the children who took part."*

If you haven't read the article in the Northern Echo then you can access it via the following link: <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/todayupnorth/18852043.pupils-efforts-raise-awareness-polio-blooming-brilliant/>

The other project which has been blossoming this week has been in the Liddiard Theatre. You will no doubt recall me writing about the re-roofing which we were able to complete over the summer so that the space is now watertight – something which has certainly been put to the test in recent weeks! Now we are well underway with the internal refurbishment. The walls have been painted, all of the seats re-upholstered, new carpet has been laid and this week the blinds have gone it. Our site team are re-painting the floor and we hope to be able to use it again in a week or so. It does look amazing and I can't wait to be able to welcome parents to it for a performance – when we are finally allowed to hold such events again.



In school, pupils are working hard and I have seen lots of purposeful learning as I walk around the school and pop into classrooms. Miss Patience sent me a short report about the work of her Year 7 Geographers:

Year 7 have been learning about height on maps and how to read contour lines. Jack Neill-Webb won a prize for not only completing the task in good time but producing his own independent work to a good standard.



Mrs Brown would like to say a big well done to all the Junior School pupils who completed their sponsored read over the half term and thank you all for the many pictures of pupils reading in interesting and unusual places! She would also like to remind any parents who have not yet put their sponsorship money onto ParentPay to do so please...

On the subject of books, Mrs Squires has been putting her mind to how to keep our KS3 pupils reading – without a library! The Senior School library has been re-purposed as a Year 11 classroom and is part of the Year 11 bubble – so the Year 7, 8 and 9 English Reading lessons which are usually timetabled into the space are instead in classrooms. Not one to let anything get in the way of reading, Mrs Squires has solved the problem over half term. If the pupils can't go to the library then the library will go to the pupils... She has created a 'pop up' library in one of the Mounsey classrooms which can be used by both Year 7 and Year 8 students and brought a real range of reading material over from the main library. Pupils were using it this week and really getting underway with their Accelerated Reader lessons.

Mrs Squires has also asked me to remind all students and parents that there must be lots of Polam Hall library books lurking at home, which pupils took away at the start of lockdown in March. We really can't afford to lose them all and so would be very grateful if you could have a special search for them this weekend so that we can re-fill the shelves of our new KS3 library next week. Thank you!

Next week is House Week across the school, with a number of competitions that will be taking place. We will have a House Art competition, the details of which will be released by Mr Buchanan next week. There are also House Sports for all Senior year groups which I know will be hotly contested. Next Friday, partly in recognition of how hard they have worked over the last few months, Year 11 will be swapping their normal Science Catch Up lesson for either Dodgeball or University Challenge... I'm not sure which will be more exciting and am going to have to try and get to both!

I also have the pleasure of interviewing the prospective Year 11 candidates for House Captain roles next week and then announcing the successful candidates at the end of the week. I have a bulging folder of applications to read over the weekend!

On Tuesday next week we have open events for Reception entry in September 2021 which will be held via Zoom at 2pm and 6pm. I hope those of you with younger children who are due

to start school next year will be able to attend one of the events – and please do pass the details onto friends or relatives. We also have a video all about Junior School, to give prospective parents a better idea of what Polam has to offer. Both the Zoom links for the open events and the Junior School video can be viewed via the school website: <https://www.phs.woodard.co.uk/1312/reception-open-event-2020>

I wish you all a pleasant weekend and hope that the dry weather holds for us all.

Best wishes

Kate Reid