

8th November 2019

Dear Parents

It has been a real pleasure to welcome pupils back to school this week. It has certainly felt more like autumn! This is always a busy half term as we run up to Christmas – this week we have ordered Christmas Trees and been planning the Christmas events. The PHPA have asked me to include the following from them, about the Christmas Fair, which takes place next Saturday:

Christmas Fair News Saturday November 16th

We are all very excited about our school fair next Saturday November 16th but for it to run smoothly we will need some help..... would any of you lovely kind people be able to offer any time either before to help set up during or after to help tidy away all help will be gratefully received. If you are able to help please email to phpa@phs.woodard.co.uk

We are also looking for donations for the fair of good quality clean toys and books to be sold on a seconds stall, any clean no longer required uniform for our thrift stall and any unwanted items that you have for our tombolla stall eg new toiletries sets chocolates other gift sets. All of these items can be dropped off at the main reception from Monday 11th November.

We also need donations of cakes, scones etc. to sell on the day. These donations can be dropped off again at the main office the day before. Please remember that the school operates a NO NUT POLICY.

Thank you in advance for your support we are all looking forward to this event and hope to see you all there. Remember there will also be a visitor in a red suit!!!

All of the children this week will be bringing home raffle tickets to sell to raise money for the school PHPA. The draw will take place at the Christmas fair on Saturday November 16th. We would be extremely grateful for your support and help children to sell their tickets to friends and relatives too. Please could all ticket stubs (not forgetting to complete all slips so we know who to pass the prize onto if you win!!) and money be returned to school no later than Wednesday November 14th. Please hand these to your child's form tutor. Could any unsold tickets also be returned as we also sell the tickets on the day.

There will be lots of fantastic prizes to win.... vouchers, gift sets, chocolate, alcohol and many many more.

We wish you all the best of luck in the raffle and hope you can also come along to support the Christmas fair.

Regards

PHPA

As usual this time of year sees the publication of the Department for Education's school performance tables. I have written about these each year in the newsletter and feel that I should do so again. Those of you who have spoken with me about this will know that I am no fan of pitting schools against each other – I very much believe that schools should work together for the good of all of the children that we serve. It is also true that our data still does not show the true picture of our school, as only 29 of the 51 pupils in last year's Year 11 cohort count in the DfE's statistics. Nevertheless this year we have a much more positive position in those tables and it is thanks to the hard work of my staff and of our students that this is the case. What is most important to me is that we are helping each and every one of our students to achieve and to make good progress, enabling them to move onto their next steps with confidence. For those who would like to explore this further, the following link will take you to the Department for Education site: <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/compare-schools?for=secondary>

On Tuesday Year 5 visited Jarrow Hall and experienced life in an Anglo-Saxon Farm and Village. This fantastic opportunity meant that the pupils experienced first hand the animals they kept, the food they ate and how they punished wrongdoers in the community. To find out about the punishment system, the children read scenarios and decided who was innocent and what punishment was correct. The children said that their favourite part of the day was sitting within the Thirlings Hall and listening to the story of Beowulf by a roaring fire, (accompanied by traditional Anglo-Saxon flat cakes!). Mrs Bury commented that the children excelled themselves in both curiosity and inquisitiveness and were a credit to the school.



A super badminton fixture with Hummersknott was played this week. Mr Wilkinson has sent me these photos from the night. Well played to everyone involved.



The whole of Year 8 spent two hours in Darlington College on Monday of the week before half term as part of their careers programme, for an initial experience of what is involved in further education in the local area.

The visit involved the year group splitting into small groups and being given a tour of the College by staff, culminating in a quiz to check learning and perceptions at the end of the tour. Staff at Darlington College praised the curiosity of our students and commented on their polite and respectful attitude.

Some quotes from students from their post-visit evaluations:

"I gained experience of what it was like to be in a College" – JAY DUTTON

"I enjoyed seeing the facilities like the engineering area and the library" – OLIVIA DENT

"It was extremely helpful as I now think I may want to go there after Polam" – AMBER PARKER

This is one of several new careers developments, which are being developed for all year groups over the course of this academic year to strengthen the careers experience at Polam and provide all students with the opportunities to visit other places of learning and training and experience the wider worlds of work. My thanks to Mr Robson, our Careers Leader, for the work that he is putting into developing a really innovative and comprehensive careers programme for our students.

Mrs Goodwin has asked me to let you know that 4T have won the inter-class reading competition for Autumn 1 and have received magnetic bookmarks, a class set of books (13 Story Treehouse) and some stickers for their classroom reading area. I was lucky enough to be in Junior Assembly this afternoon and to award the prizes to them!

We would also like to say a huge thank you for all of the support from parents, family and friends who have helped us to be able to raise over £1,400 in our sponsored read. This amazing amount of money along with the support of our Usborne organiser, will mean that we will be able to receive over £2,200 worth of books for Junior School. We are exceedingly grateful for all of the kind support that we have received and we cannot wait to have some fantastic new books in our classrooms for all of our children to enjoy.

On Wednesday, Miss Blair took a group of children to Wyvern to compete in their first indoor athletics event. The children thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon, participating in new events and learning new skills.



Tonight I have attended our Combined Cadet Force Act of Remembrance. My thanks to James Goldberg for returning to play the Last Post for us. It is always a poignant moment and our cadets were a credit to themselves and the school.



On the theme of Remembrance, the Mayor will be in school on Monday to deliver a Remembrance assembly to Junior School and to give poppies to the children. If possible please could the children bring a small donation with them?

Next week is the week of House Plays – always a wonderful time in the Senior School calendar. As usual we have a number of very stressed House Captains and Vice Captains who are trying to pull their shows together! For the first time, however, there are Year 11 students as well as Sixth Formers running the performances and it has been lovely to have new voices leading the event. I am very much looking forward to Tuesday afternoon when we will get to see the results of their hard work!

We have Year 10 Parents Evening on Monday. As Mr Rees has informed you, appointments can be booked on Arbor. This is a change in our systems and is in direct response to parent feedback, which requested an electronic booking system rather than asking pupils to make appointments. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Best wishes

Kate Reid

Junior School 4 C Heroes

RC	Lucy Walker Wall
RS	Elysia Denham
1M	Amelia Voss
1B	Dolly Fenwick
2M	Charles Thomas
2E	Oliver Mawson
3J	Sophie O'Connor
3S	Jamie Blewitt
4DH	Freddie Coulthard

4T	Zara Martin
5B	Isabella Hewison-Stokell
5H	Caitlin Moffatt
6G	Nieve Hicks
6B	Jemima Haymer

Senior School Top 5 Housepoint Winners

William Hart

Genevieve Ferrari

Henry King

Joseph Taylor

Edward Watson