



Making the most of opportunities

Last week the governors' Curriculum Committee met and amongst the reports they considered was one on the range of extra opportunities that are currently available to our students. Extra, that is, to 'normal' lessons. Governors commented on the very large range that is now offered to our students and how it is far more than just a few years ago. As well as being grateful to the staff for providing these opportunities it struck me that I should mention them again in the newsletter and remind students that they ought to be taking part in at least one. No sooner had I made a note to do this Mr O'Hara came to see me to say that a large number of students had come along to enrol in the cadets and the numbers could potentially reach 70! That would be amazing and almost one student in ten would then be part of the cadets.

So I do urge students to aim to take part in at least one extra activity on a regular basis, and more if you can manage it.

Sixth Form Expansion

Our Sixth Form does very well in terms of results and is proving very popular now with students from other schools. We had 78 students join at the start of this year but this meant that if a similar number applied for next year we would not have room. We therefore started the process to increase the number we can admit to the Sixth Form. This has now been completed and we can now have up to 150 students in total. As we have so far had 98 applications for next year it looks like we acted just in time.

School Performance Tables

I am sure that the public must find it confusing that the government publishes draft versions of secondary tables in October and then finalised ones in January. Although these were published yesterday the media seem to feel that they have already covered the story and people I speak to feel it is quite late after the summer results. Either way, they were published yesterday and our results remain as good as previously reported. At GCSE, we had the second highest Progress 8 score in the city for the third year running, and at A level our pass rate was 99% and all students went on to a recognised destination – university, work or gap year. Our vocational 'A level' subjects achieved excellent results again but these are reported separately to A levels. Again, our progress score from GCSE was one of the highest in the city and the highest in the diocese.

Sean Hayes

We are going WoW for careers!!

How many times have you thought in lessons "Why am I learning that?!" or "Where would I use that?!" Well, we are starting a new initiative in lessons called WoW (World of Work) where teachers are having those conversations about how the topics that they are teaching will relate to a variety of jobs.



Look out for your WoW moments!

Year 9 Options and Parents Afternoon

This is on Tuesday next week, so please don't forget that school finishes at 2.00pm so this event can take place.

Year 9 Options and Parents Evening

Tuesday 29 January 2019
2.30pm – 6.30pm

Key Stage 4 Options presentations
at
2.10pm
3.45pm
5.30pm

Use the online parents evening booking system to book appointments with teachers around your chosen presentation slot.



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In A World Where...

In last week's newsletter we reported that Year 10 student Austija Klimovaite, Year 10 has had a poem published in a new anthology called *The Poetry Games*. Here is her poem:

In a world where your face is your profile
And where your feelings are a simple smile
And where, once a memory cuts too deep
And leaves you a scar to keep
It's hard.

In a world where you must be perfect
And where you must be quiet to respect
Where equality hasn't found its way
You can't expect me to feel joy, no way!
It's hard.

In a world where my voice must be silent
And where we humans must be violent
Where I must hide my mind with a face
Where you wear an uncomfortable façade
It's hard!

In a world where women are seen as toys
And must grow their own girls and boys
Where women are not safe at night
Come on, this must not be right!
It's so hard!

In a world where abuse is the only way
And innocent lives are just taken away
Where children are starving
And bills are rising sky-high
Oh lord, it's hard!

In a world where animals are not safe
And lucked up just in case
One day, they will go extinct
Humans are horrid, they must all think.
Why can't you see it's hard?

Adventures at New Ark Farm

Our Learning Support department has been taking some students to work at New Ark Farm every Monday afternoon. The year 8 students have had the opportunity to help look after the animals and learn about the work involved in caring for them. The students have also developed their communication and team work skills in school. Next half term even more of our students will be taking part in outdoor learning at New Ark as part of their differentiated curriculum. We are very grateful to the staff at Newark for being so welcoming. One of our students said, "I like going to the farm and being outside. I enjoyed feeding the chickens, although it is difficult to catch them."



'A year of reading ... a lifetime of memories.'

National Citizen Service

In assembly last week the school was presented with its Gold Award from the National Citizen Service. This was awarded to us in recognition of the increasing numbers of students from our school who participate in and graduate from the NCS scheme.

Muhammad and his team launched the project with Year 11s, who are entitled to take part for three weeks this summer. It offers a tremendous opportunity to take part in a residential, gain independence and also give back to the local community through a social action project. The cost is only £25 for students, with those entitled to Free School Meals not required to pay anything at all. Lots of our year 11s returned their sign up form this week. If there are any students who have yet to do so, spare forms are at Student Services and the team will be back next week to collect them



Myriad Project

This week in our Mindfulness lessons students have been 'Playing Attention'. We have been viewing our minds as being like puppies – in need of training. We have discovered that with patience, firmness, kindness and repetition, we can train our minds to focus our attention in a more sustained way. In class we practised scanning our bodies and zooming the spotlight of our attention on different areas. We also did an exercise on aiming and sustaining our attention on our breathing. Home practice supports this with a short exercise on aiming and sustaining attention.

Year 11 Study Room

Room 211 is open for study to Year 11s after school every Wednesday and Thursday. Please encourage your son or daughter to attend if they have no other Period 5 commitments. Staff will be available to support.

Academic Tutoring
Year 9
28 January – 1 February