



*"Outstanding eagerness to promote good learning"*

# NEWSLETTER



@HexhamMiddle

Edition: Spring 1 2020

ALN - 334 pts

Wansbeck - 300 pts

Coquet - 286 pts

Tweed - 235 pts

## Attendance:

Year 5 - 95.7 %

Year 6 - 96.3 %

Year 7 - 94.9 %

Year 8 - 95.5 %

## Welcome

Welcome to the February edition of the HMS newsletter. We hope 2020 has got off to a good start for you. Life at HMS continues apace with the usual humongous amount of enrichment activity going on. As ever, the message to pupils is: get involved! And the message to parents and carers is: encourage your child to get involved! In this edition, you'll find articles on clubs and societies, educational visits, sporting success and guest speakers. There's an update on the new build and a link to our online safety [newsletter](#) that was sent out recently; please read this if you haven't already as there is important information and guidance provided on how to keep your child safe online.

With all good wishes.

Mr Atkins (Executive Headteacher)

## Ski Trip to Les Menuires.

Twenty-nine pupils and three staff had the pleasure of a week in the fabulous French Alps. The trip was based at the Skilt Hotel, which is situated right on the slopes and is a home from home for Hexham Middle School now. It has been even more homely for our last two visits: as Simone who is a gymnastics coach at the Wentworth LC has been working in the hotel.

A wet day followed by a heavy snow day made for an interesting week of weather. Everyone made great progress over the week overcoming many challenges and pushing themselves on more difficult terrain. It was great to see smiling and proud faces on the awards day. Mr Armstrong would have been pleased with the smattering of French attempted when out and about. I think most people attempted to order a crêpe during our stay.

Mr Gaines would like to thank all staff and pupils for helping him have a relatively straightforward week! It is a demanding week both physically and mentally but always very rewarding.

Mr Gaines

Year 7

Year 8



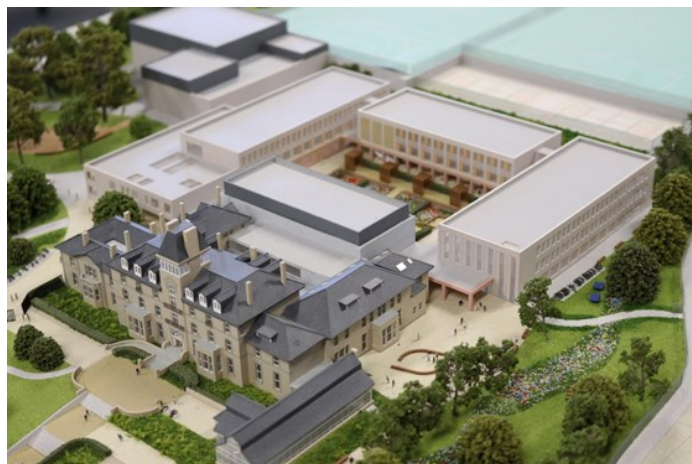
## Update on new buildings for Hexham Middle School

Last month, the County Council's Strategic Planning Committee unanimously granted "minded to approve" status to the application for our new buildings on the high school site, and this was subsequently supported by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. As such, Galliford Try, the construction company delivering the project, are now able to proceed with preparatory works on site.

Activity in the early months will take place to the rear of the Grade II listed Hydro building. Thereafter, more substantial building and refurbishment work gets underway over the course of academic year 2020/21, with a view to the new buildings for Hexham Middle School being ready for September 2021. We will of course keep parents and pupils posted on developments along the way.

### Sustainability in the new design

A 'fabric first' approach has been taken with the new build elements of the scheme, with heating, lighting and hot water systems all targeted to reduce energy requirements. For example, there will be LED lighting throughout, controlled by presence/absence detection.



Northumberland County Council has also committed to investing an additional £400,000 into the scheme. This will be used specifically for providing additional sustainability measures using a combination of technologies, including photovoltaic solar panels and air source heat pumps.

It is estimated that the combination of these measures will result in an Energy Performance Certificate rating of A15. This compares to D78 in the QEHS Lower School building, and E106, E119 and E122 in the HMS Beaumont, Fellside and Orchard buildings respectively. The effect of all this will be a very significant reduction in carbon emissions.

Mr Atkins

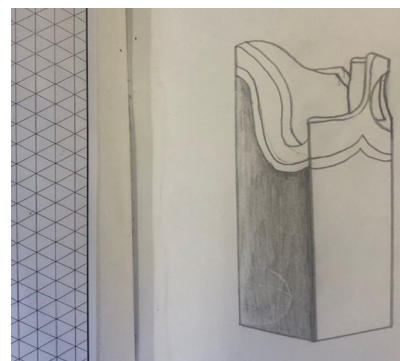
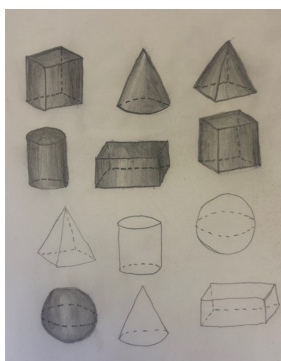
## Bronze Arts Award

Arts Award is going from strength to strength and this half term we saw pupils presenting their Part B 'Review of experience' to the rest of their groups. Pupils have reflected on what they liked about the shows and exhibitions they have seen, what could have been done better regarding lighting, costumes and characters. Pupils are welcome to work on their practical artwork and log books during Monday and Friday lunchtimes.

## Other art news

As the pupils return from their half-term holidays, we will be welcoming a special guest into the Art Department on 24th and 26th of February. Curator Peter Sharpe intends to join us from the Art and Architecture programme at Kielder Forest. The Year 6 pupils will learn all about his program and about how artists work with Peter to develop their ideas for the local environment. Year 6s focus this term is on Ceramics and they have been developing their drawing skills. We are all looking forward to getting messy with our clay pots! Stay tuned for artwork development and lots of making! So far, the children have been learning about the artist Grayson Perry. We will bring our ideas together in our final artwork next half term.

Miss Lawton



## Year 8 Taster Days

Between Monday 10 and Wednesday 12 February all of the year 8 pupils who will be attending Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS) from September got the opportunity to take part in three taster days run by the QEHS staff. Pupils were all able to try lessons such as Spanish, drama and dance as well as sample the school food and get a feeling of their prospective new surroundings.

As always it is a great opportunity for pupils to experience what high school will be like and it helps to alleviate any stress or anxiety about the forthcoming academic year. From this visit all pupils have been given an options sheet where they must decide on which options they would like to pick ahead of next year. Please check the sheet for more details and hand it in to form tutors as soon as possible.

Mr Barry

Year 7

Year 8

Year 8



## Published Work

Miss Lawton has recently been published in a book by Cambridge Scholars called, 'Drawing Conversations II.' In her work, she writes about projects undertaken in dance and performing schools in India and the UK, between 2015 and 2019. The partnerships with Darpana Dance Academy and SUP 'Something Useful Project' UK have been made possible through national and international funding grants and have allowed her to build on the concept of Kinaesthetic Empathy. She believes that by drawing dancers, and those rigorously practicing their art-form, it is possible for learners to develop a stronger sense of empathy towards other people.

Here is a short poem of gathered words from the Dalcroze International Summer School, in 2018. How powerful creativity and the arts can be at connecting young people to themselves and to others! Miss Lawton is looking forward to building links between HMS's Art Department and other schools around the world!

### The life of the note

How did she  
keep the story going?  
Confidence. Security. Bookends  
Repetition. Children need repetition  
to feel secure  
Recognising the teacher and the student

The consequences of the story  
From the technical  
to something you cannot name  
You have to be together,  
when you start something like this  
Something is crystalizing

Changing you as a person  
You can drop out, yes  
But be there, for the last note  
You must be there  
Moments of quiet, stillness. Dynamic range.  
We are together

Keeping children excited and engaged  
Quick reaction  
The musical material  
High pitch, small objects  
In the realm of the child  
You will go from here, a little bit liberated

She took the offer he made  
My musical upbringing. Canada  
Pace of the lesson  
A beautiful, precious bauble to pass around  
Boundaries, contrasts – loud, soft  
Getting children to move.

Private practice. Set-up the action  
Then repeat it  
Feel the movement  
Mirroring and conversation  
It all goes around – sharing  
Scarf sound. Singing through the eyes

If its taught in physical terms  
Then it is learnt  
No words conversation  
You have to make sure everyone's there  
Otherwise they'll end up drowning  
Action into sound: Sound into action

Miss S Lawton

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## SATs preparation

Year 6

Well done to all our year 6 pupils who have recently undertaken a mock SATs week to prepare them for this process later in the academic year. Thank you very much as well to our teaching and support staff who are working hard to support all pupils to make the best progress possible.

Mr Watters and Mrs Roff

## Diana Award

For the second year in a row Hexham Middle School had the opportunity to be a host school for 70 pupils from across Northumberland and Newcastle taking part in the Princess Diana Anti Bullying Ambassador Training Course. The pupils who attended last year have made huge contributions to school life setting up the Be You campaign which runs in Key Stage 2.

As part of the legacy for this 15 year 7 students took part in a day long workshop with Diana Award tutors where they worked with pupils from a range of schools and year groups learning how to be the best ambassadors. Over the course they looked at how to deal with situations which may occur in person and online.

The pupils were highly professional and motivated throughout the day. They have already started thinking of strategies they would like to implement in school over the next 18 months.

We would all like to say a massive thank you to the staff at the Diana Award for yet another brilliant day.

Mr Barry

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## David Burns

Year 6

Year 8

Over the past year we have developed a fantastic working relationship with David Burns from Be Safe. Be Safe is a company that comes to schools to deliver real life stories and advice on topics which are crucial in modern society aimed to keep young people across the North East safe.

David's first session was all about County Lines and was delivered to all of the pupils in year 8. County Lines is a growing issue across the country. David gave the pupils advice on how to stay safe when out with their friends, the signs to watch out for and what to do if you or someone you know is affected by this. The year 8 pupils were incredibly responsive, sensible and mature. The feedback from David was magnificent and we are all very proud of our year 8 pupils for responding in such a professional manner.

David's second session was with year 6 and offered advice on how to stay safe online and in the streets. Growing problems come from online games such as Fortnite and David educated the pupils on how they should behave in these situations and any danger signs to watch out for. David also educated the students on 'Stranger Danger' and what to do if they ever feel uncomfortable when out with their friends. David again gave great feedback about year 6 pupils at HMS who were engaged, happy to take part in role play situations and responsive.

A huge thank you again to David and his team and we are looking forward to his visit in the summer term.

Mr Barry

On Wednesday 29 January, 11 KS3 pupils took part in the Hexham Partnership Spelling Bee here at Hexham Middle School. Pupils competed against Corbridge Middle and St. Joseph's Middle Schools for the coveted title of Spelling Bee champions

Pupils had to learn the French words then spell them out using the French alphabet, whilst being watched by their peers. Although we didn't win, pupils battled hard and represented the school incredibly well – with standout performances from Connie and Martha.

Mr Armstrong

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## Mandarin Club

**Year 7**

Mandarin Club continues to go from strength to strength. In recent weeks pupils have celebrated Chinese New Year by learning the art of traditional Chinese paper cutting as well as making Chinese Dumplings. Some pupils have also supported Mr Armstrong to deliver an informative assembly about China and Chinese New Year. Thank you to Beatrice, Flora, Harriet and Izzy for their help.

Mandarin Club will continue to run until the Easter Holidays.

5 facts about Chinese New Year:

- Happy New Year = Xīn nián kuài lè (新年快乐)
- Chinese New Year celebrations last for 15 days.
- 2020 is the year of the Rat.
- Chinese New Year falls on a different date each year, but it is always somewhere between January 21st and February 20th. This year it took place on Saturday 25th January.
- Children are given little red envelopes called Ang pao or Lai see that contain money.
- In China red symbolises luck.



Mr Armstrong

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## Maths Challenge

**Year 5****Year 6****Year 7****Year 8**

Newcastle University are running a mathematics challenge for pupils in year 8 and under. This is an opportunity for pupils to stretch themselves and be the best they can be. Pupils will earn themselves certificates and prizes accredited by Newcastle University.

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/maths-physics/outreach/teachers/challenge/>

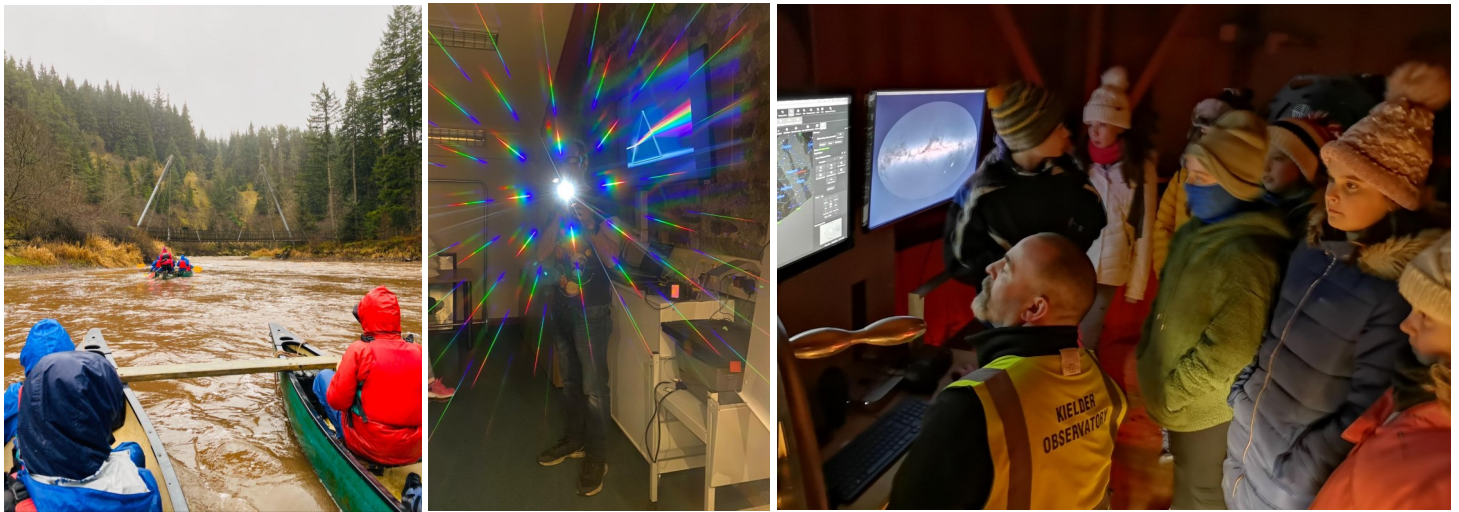
Challenges can be downloaded at this link, or picked up from Mr Forster. This is an excellent opportunity for pupils to apply their knowledge and solve real world problems, as well as considering a future career in mathematics. Entries need to be completed by Friday 29 February which gives pupils the half term holiday and a further week afterwards to complete them. I would really like to discuss the entry and provide tips to any interested pupils.

Hexham Middle School has some amazing mathematicians; they deserve to be recognised by the university.

Mr Forster

The eagerly awaited trip to Kielder was a great success, despite a thorough soaking!

We arrived at the Calvert Trust residential centre after a busy school day; some of us remained on the coach and others headed straight up to the Kielder Observatory for their Dark Sky session. The pupils learned about the aims of the observatory, looked at some of the spectacular images taken from their telescopes and even managed to stand on Mars! Unfortunately due to cloud cover, for both groups, we were unable to look through the telescopes into the night sky. The group back at the centre had an evening of playing games, with some awesome contests in giant Jenga and giant Connect 4! Many chose to have a swim in the pool, with a mix of "silly salmons" and relaxation in the sensory pool. A perfect end to a school day!



Our second day was dominated by...RAIN! As well as some fantastic outdoor adventure activities, including archery, Leap of Faith/All Aboard, canoeing on the reservoir and King Swing. Pupils were well wrapped up to brave the elements and really put their best effort in despite the miserable weather. It was fantastic to see some of the pupils facing their fears and even better to observe the camaraderie between pupils when encouraging others to get involved in the activities. That evening, the other group went up to the observatory and again didn't get a chance to look out of the telescopes because of the weather. This however did not deter our pupils from learning more about the power and capacity of the telescope.

Once back at the Calvert Trust on the Saturday evening, the observatory ran sessions inside the inflatable planetarium. Pupils learned about the positioning of the stars and constellations, with a little history of star gazing. The other session involved investigating how light travels in the universe. The observatory staff were highly impressed with the level of questioning from the pupils; some even commented these were at A level standard.

The Sunday was a much brighter day; the canoeing group experienced the idyllic setting of Kielder reservoir, while the other groups enjoyed the activities back at the centre.

Overall, a fantastic trip had by all! The pupils were a delight, the facility perfectly fitted our needs and the food was great. The observatory visit was out of this world and the activities topped off a wonderful weekend.

Mrs Stewart



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 goals defined by the United Nations to tackle the world's biggest problems by 2030. More than 40 per cent of the global population are between the ages of ten and twenty four – the largest youth population ever. To solve the world's problems, our pupils need to know what these problems are and how to contribute to their solutions. Year 8 pupils have been busy working on two STEM projects, alongside our partner schools in Ethiopia, through the Connecting Classrooms project.

As part of their science topic on energy, our pupils looked at goal 7: affordable and clean energy. They researched different types of renewable energy and then were challenged to design and build a simple wind turbine that could lift a cup off the floor.

Goal 6 is about clean water and sanitation. Pupils investigated ways of making dirty water cleaner through sieving and filtering, techniques developed in their science topic on separating techniques.

Pupils in both countries have enjoyed sharing photos of each other's work and we look forward to sharing more work and ideas in due course.

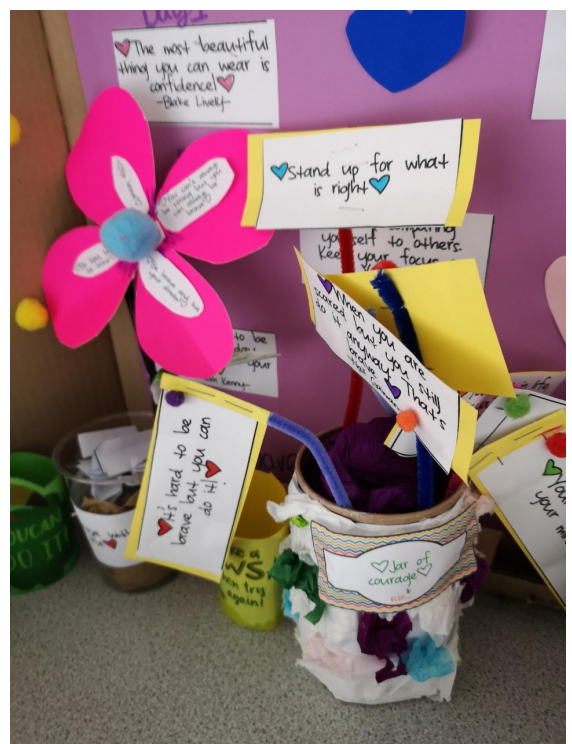


## Mental Health Awareness - Courage Project

Last week it was Mental Health Awareness Week. At Hexham Middle School some of our pupils have been learning about how to be brave at times, share worries and ask for help. They have created 'Courage' booklets and bookmarks, distributing these around school for other pupils who may benefit from them. On the bookmarks, the recipients will find supportive quotes for each day of the week.

In Beaumont building, immediately outside The Base, a display has been created showcasing some of these creations. A huge thank you and well done to everyone who has contributed to this project so far.

The Base Team





## Reading well for our health and wellbeing

Please find below an extract from The Reading Agency website relating to a Reading Well for Children booklist, aimed at supporting children's mental health and wellbeing.

*'The Reading Well for children booklist contains 33 books covering topics which may be relevant to children, including grief, anxiety, bullying and staying safe online. In recognition of the potential impact of living with diagnosed conditions and physical disabilities, the booklist explores living well with conditions including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), dyslexia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and physical disabilities. The booklist is targeted at children in Key Stage 2 and includes titles suitable for a wide range of reading levels to support less confident readers, and to encourage children to read together with their siblings and carers.'*

*The 33 books on the list, by authors including Michael Rosen, Tom Percival, Zanib Mian and Joseph Coelho, have been selected to help Key Stage 2 children (aged 7-11) understand and talk about their mental health and wellbeing. The books have been selected to encourage conversation about feelings between children and their parents or carers and to offer support outside of a clinical setting or whilst waiting for treatment.*

*Reading Well booklists have been created to add value to health services, and to support early intervention and prevention.'*

Please use this [link](#) to access the reading book list.



As a school we believe we have created an ethos and environment where children feel supported and feel that there is someone they can talk to. However, we recognise that growing up is not easy and children may need extra help at different stages. Problems that seem minor to us as adults can seem like the end of the world to a child. If you feel that your child would benefit from additional support from school or other agencies, please do contact us. We will always do everything we can to help.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy break.

Mrs Frankish

## Bikeability

Year 5

Year 6

Building on the success of L2 Bikeability at Hexham Middle School, Mr Gaines has organised for the next stage L3 Bikeability to take place in March. L3 is a two hour course designed to provide training for cyclists to use more complex road situations like roundabouts, main roads etc. This is ideal training for any pupils who may have a paper round, want to ride in One Life triathlon group road riding coaching, for pupils planning to ride to school and keen families who ride together on the roads in and around Hexham.

Letters are about to go out for L3 after half term. We have 24 places which are available for anyone who has completed the L2 course to apply for. The course is run with an instructor-to-pupils ratio of 1:3. So pupils are well supported.

## Cross Country Success

Year 7

The Northumberland School County XC championships took place on Jan 21 at Temple Park in South Shields. We had 15 pupils who had been selected to participate at this event and represent Tynedale. Our Y7 girls were the most successful with Maria Gaines coming 3rd and Ania Stobbart 9th. Maria and Ania will both have the opportunity to go on and compete for Northumberland at county and national competitions. Poppy Watson was first home for Y8 girls from HMS in 34th, Zak Maurice was the first HMS Y8 boy in 26th. Charlie Jackson was first home for the Y7 boys in 27th.



From the County XC Championships Ania Stobbart was selected to represent Northumberland at the Northern Inter County Schools race which was held at Lowther Castle, Cumbria. At the time of writing the results have not been published. However, Mr Gaines has seen a video online where Ania was the third counter for the Northumberland team and was just outside of the top ten placings. Well done Ania - an excellent performance.

Mr Gaines

## Boys' Rugby League

Year 7

Rugby League is a sport which has been growing at Hexham Middle School thanks to the commitment shown by the pupils over the past year. Due to the current year 8's success last year we have been able to enter teams into the Champions Schools tournament this year. The tournament saw the year 8 boys team narrowly miss out on a place in the grand final after an incredible run of games.

The year 7 boys team however went on a 15 match winning run to reach the North East Final against Egglecliffe where a Will Hunter Ainsley try and Jack Weatherley conversion set up a grandstand finish. Incredible defensive efforts by man of the match Daniel Twizzell and the rest of the team saw HMS crowned North East Champions and saw them take a place in the last 16 of the National Champions School Cup.

Hull based school Parkside awaited in the round of 16. In an end to end and thrilling encounter HMS came agonisingly close to reaching the quarter finals however ended up falling just short by the smallest of margins in a phenomenal game of rugby league. Every single player who has taken part on this journey has done so in a professional manner and has been a credit to themselves and the school. We would like to say a huge thank you to every player, parent and carer who was a part of the journey.

Both the year 8 boys and year 7 boys are currently ranked at the top of the Sky Try championship ratings and if current form continues another set of national finals may be just around the corner.

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## Running Club

Year 5

Year 6

Year 7

Year 8

Running club is open to all pupils in both KS2 and KS3. We try to have a fun edge to the activities that we do and promote both the competitive element and the social element that running with others brings. At present we have a small committed collection of runners that regularly attend on a Friday dinner time. Mr Barry has told me they even turned up while I was in France this last week and organised themselves with an activity.

It would be great to have many more pupils looking to attend and enjoy being active. Hopefully the weather will be improving and the spring sunshine may encourage some new runners to attend. Bring a friend, bring a smile and give it a try! See you after half term.

Mr Gaines

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## Pastoral Leadership Team Column

A huge thank you for all the hard work and determination this half term by our pupils must be shared. It is amazing how quickly time has flown by since we got back after the Christmas holidays. Over the Spring half-term holidays, can we ask that all pupils ensure any uniform and equipment issues are resolved. We place a great deal of emphasis on pupils taking pride in their appearance and being ready to learn. In particular, Key Stage 3 pupils need a scientific calculator. Congratulations must go to 6IBO with the best overall attendance this academic year of 97.3%.

Mrs Frankish, Mr Barry and Mrs Cave



This half term, many pupils have enjoyed attending forest school, both during the day and as part of the after-school club. The pupils have learned about Chinese New Year and Burns Night. They have spent time outside in our forest school area making crafts such as whittled wands, kites and have enjoyed weaving. The children would say a highlight of forest school has been the fire and being able to cook and eat a range of foods including eggy bread and smores. This week the pupils were set a challenge. They needed to work as a team to collect all of their own sticks and to start a fire using cotton wool and fire flints. All the pupils worked fantastically well as a team to get their fire going and toasted marshmallows – which definitely taste better when you have made and lit the fire yourself!



Miss Kingett

### Assembly Themes for Half Term 4

#### **Week 1: Week commencing - Monday 24 February**

Cultural Capital - "The world is your oyster!" - led by Mr Barry

#### **Week 2: Week commencing - Monday 2 March**

International Women's Day - led by Miss Ferraro

#### **Week 3: Week commencing - Monday 9 March**

British Science Week: "What has science done for the world?" - led by Miss Kingett

#### **Week 4: Week commencing - Monday 16 March**

Happiness - International Day led by Mrs Frankish

#### **Week 5: Week commencing - Monday 23 March**

Money Matters - "Money makes the world go round!" - led by Mrs Bond

#### **Week 6: Week commencing - Monday 30 March**

"All jokes aside" - A history of April Fools' Day - When is a joke not a joke? –  
Led by Mr Holdsworth

Many thanks must go to our staff and visiting speakers who help support the assembly programme that we offer to our pupils.

## Careers Programme Update

Half term 3 has been very busy. Work is progressing with a range of projects as part of our involvement in the Wave 2 Careers Hub. Working closely with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) we have identified three case study projects: personal careers guidance, apprenticeships and business networking.

In the final week of this half term, we welcomed Tamara Hastie (our Enterprise Advisor) along with Karina and Trinity (two apprentices) and Steven (Apprentice Mentor) as part of a workshop aimed at demystifying apprenticeships.

Next half term, we will be hosting a Business Breakfast (12 March ). Invitations have been sent to local and regional employers to attend a morning of networking. If you think your own organisation or employer may be interested in getting involved with the school careers programme, please contact us.

Mr Freeman-Myers



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## Looking ahead:

24 February 2020 - School re-opens

25 February 2020 - PSHE Operation Encompass

28 February 2020 - Year 5 Theatre Trip

5 March 2020 - Energy Quest: Year 7 Engineering workshops

5 March 2020 - World Book Day

9 - 13 March 2020 - Travelling Book Fair

12 March 2020 - Business Breakfast— 'Realising Destinations'

11 and 13 March - Texan students at HMS (Religious Studies workshop)

16 - 20 March - Key Stage 3 Assessments in mathematics, English and science.

16-17 March - Year 5 Trip to York

19-20 March - Level 3 Bikeability

26 March 2020 - French Trip Parents' Information Evening

27 March 2020 - Year 7 University workshops

30 March - 2 April 2020 - Mock SATs week

3 April 2020 - School Closed for Easter holidays.