

15 February 2011

Dear Parent/Carer

REVIEW DAY

The continuing rise in standards and achievement for the young people in our school is not something that happens on its own; it is being achieved in partnership with home. We were delighted then to welcome so many families to our recent Review Day. I hope you all found the opportunity valuable as we did. I know that the colleague you met with will be glad to maintain a dialogue with you looking forward, so please do not hesitate to get in touch.

TEN YEARS OF SPORTS COLLEGE

In January we were pleased to celebrate our first decade as a Sports College. We were able to welcome many distinguished guests to celebrate with us, including Baroness Campbell, Craig Heap from the GB Olympic Team, Eddie Gray from Leeds United and Alec Shelbrook MP.

Baroness Campbell spoke of the success of Sports Colleges in raising standards of achievement across the nation, and had particular praise for all we are achieving at Boston Spa School. She also spoke of the crucial role that School Sports Partnerships, such as that led from our school, have had in creating opportunity for young people.

Eddie Gray spoke of the vision and leadership of the three people that had inspired him, Don Revie, Billy Bremner and Bobby Collins, and commended the leadership underpinning our school's successful partnership with Leeds United. He marked the occasion with the presentation of a special Leeds United shirt to be displayed in our Reception area.

Craig Heap described his journey from school to the Olympic finals identifying many lessons for our young people. Most significantly he encouraged all of them to receive as much coaching, mentoring and support as they could, but never to accept the negativity of others. Craig is a particularly inspirational man, and we will create further opportunities for him to work with our young people.

Baroness Campbell and Craig Heap unveiled our bronze statue to mark the event. It is the work of Jenny Barber, an ex-student, who wanted to design a piece that described achievement, success, momentum and celebration. It is a brilliant sculpture serving as a great celebration for our school community and an inspiration for young people.

SIXTH FORM

The half term started in excellent fashion with our annual Sixth Form Celebration Evening at the Royal Armouries. It was a joy to see so many of our young people back from their first terms at University, and to welcome our guest of honour, Alan McMenemy. Alan is an extreme athlete who is about to undertake a challenge of 66 marathons in 66 days. He was a brilliant speaker who spoke about the importance of goal setting in achieving new ambitions. The whole event was a fitting way to honour the achievements of our young people, and it is important that we recognise the work of Mrs Ayton in making it all happen so successfully.

The evening saw the first presentation of the annual Liz Bucktrout Award, in memory of our friend and colleague who died last summer. It was given to Erin Urquhart to recognise her exceptional progress. We are also very proud to have a beautiful seat at the front of school, presented to us by the Bucktrout family in celebration and fond memories of all that Liz brought to our school.

I know that many in Year 11 will have taken the opportunity on Review Day to talk to our Sixth Form about their choices for next year. We are pleased that both the nationally recognised measures of Sixth Form value added, ALPS and CVA indicate significantly high levels of achievement above and beyond the expectation for our young people. If you want further advice about securing a place in our Sixth Form please contact Mr. Rumsey on 01937 846612.

YEAR 8 RESIDENTIAL

I am really pleased to hear the universally positive feedback about our Year 8 Residential at Bewerley Park. Mrs Blackley did a fantastic job leading the event, and was well supported by a huge number of our staff, and I congratulate all our young people on their excellent attitude and work throughout.

UNIFORM

Our current uniform has been in place for some years now, and it is time to consider whether it is still the best way to present our school. This will start with 'Student Voice' initiating a cross school consultation considering how the uniform should be improved. Parents and Governors will then be consulted for their views on the work undertaken in school. At the same time Mr Rumsey will be consulting with Year 12, and then Year 11, with a view to establishing a dress code for our Sixth Form. Neither of these changes will come into place before September, but in the meantime our commitment to our current uniform remains.

SUPPORT FOR PAKISTAN

Thank you for your support for our focus on the needs of the people affected by the floods in Pakistan. In addition to the events in school and the non uniform day for Oxfam, particular credit is due to Year 7. Each tutor group was set the challenge of raising enough additional money to buy a Family Emergency Care package through the charity Action Aid. They adopted a whole range of strategies including sponsored 'wet sponging' of teachers, putting teachers in school uniform, car washing, sponsored silences, smoothie sales, raffles and a 'naming the bear' competition. They far exceeded their target, and raised enough money to buy 23 care packages. Congratulations are due to all the young people, Miss Horgan and her team.

POETRY LIVE

Last month a hundred of Year 11 students had the recent opportunity to participate in the 'Poetry Live' event at the Leeds Town Hall. They had presentations from the Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, as well as Simon Armitage, Imtiaz Dhaker, John Agard, Gillian Clarke and Daljit Nagra. I am grateful to Miss Stevenson and the English Team for creating this opportunity; it is a tremendous support for the forthcoming exams.

FRISBEE

Amongst all the sporting opportunities that we offer, it is brilliant that Miss Taylor has introduced Ultimate Frisbee to our choices. Miss Taylor, who competes at international level for Ultimate Frisbee, took a team to compete against Fulneck School where we played two matches. We are delighted to be a part of the first school Ultimate Frisbee fixtures in Yorkshire!

CONGRATULATIONS

Laura Midgley, from Year 11, attended Leeds Civic Hall on the 24th January to receive her "Service Above Self" award from the Rotary Club, presented by the Lord Mayor of Leeds. We are very proud of this recognition which Laura won for promoting a love of literature and reading amongst our young people.

E-SAFETY

The safety of our young people is really important to us, especially when they are on line. Each year we take a moment in our school calendar to raise awareness of safety on the internet. This year events will include assemblies, tutor time activities, new displays, activities in ICT lessons and a drop-in sessions. I am grateful to Miss Large for co-coordinating this. If you would like to find out more about staying safe online, and how to advise young people, two very good websites are www.thinkuknow.co.uk and www.ceop.police.uk.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next few weeks are as busy, including our skiing trip to Austria, the visit of our French Exchange friends and the Art and Photography visit to Paris.

In addition we have our school production to look forward to, 'Return to the Forbidden Planet' which is directed by Mrs Knill and will take place from Tuesday 8th to Friday 11th March. Tickets will be £6.

On Tuesday 8th March we will celebrate the achievement of women across the world with special whole school events marking the 100th International Women's' Day.

We will also be glad to participate fully in Comic Relief day on Friday 18th March. Amongst other events this will be the now traditional non uniform day.

At the end of March we will hold another 'Celebrating Our Community' week, where we affirm the variety of heritage and culture that makes up the richness of our school.

School will break up for half term on Friday 18th February, and return on Monday 28th February.

Thank you for your ongoing support for our school, and I hope the half term break is a great one for you and your family.

Yours faithfully

CHRISTOPHER WALSH

Headteacher