



## Headteacher's Update

5<sup>th</sup> November 2021

It has been a productive week as we returned to school after the half term break. The clocks have gone back and the temperatures throughout the day have definitely fallen throughout the day. We were also able to wish our colleagues and friends a very happy Diwali as celebrations took place across the community on Thursday.

One of the things that we are looking to do through the updates this year is to give feedback on some of the areas that parents highlighted in the parental survey that took place in the summer term. One issue that was highlighted was the lack of trips, visits and other enrichment activities throughout the past 18 months. There have been obvious reasons for this. However, I do now hope that parents and students are able to recognise that our enrichment activities are moving closer toward pre-pandemic levels and I hope that parents enjoy reading about some of the activities that have taken place in recent weeks.

It has also been refreshing to be able to welcome visitors back to the school. On Tuesday evening we were delighted to welcome families to the school for the Sixth Form Open Evening. Families had the opportunity to take a tour around the school as well as spend time in subject areas of interest. The families that I spoke to found the evening to be informative and beneficial with regard to their child making their post-16 options choices. Thank you to Mrs Harvey and the Sixth Form team for their hard work in organising this event.

On Wednesday, the up and coming 'boy band' *Here at Last* visited the school to talk to Year 9 and 10 students about mental health issues and share a number of their songs with the students. The students responded fantastically well to the young men, listening intently to their advice about managing mental health as well as their rendition of their tracks. I think that it is fair to mention that things got a little bit hectic during the lunch break when they were signing autographs for the students but it was done in a very good nature. My sincere thanks to the group for visiting us and thank you also to Mrs Bashford-Hynes for organising the activity.



Inter house competitions are also underway and it was great to restart with Year 10 and 11 with the boys competing in football and girls in netball. All students engaged fantastically and got into the spirit of the events. The Year 10 boys winners were Huxley

with the girls in John Miles coming away victorious. In Year 11 the outcomes were reversed, with John Miles taking it for the boys title and Huxley the girls. Well done to all involved and thank you to the PE department for their hard work and support.

Finally, on this theme, I would again like to congratulate Mr Beale and his Year 13 A-level Politics class for their appearance on the BBC *Newscast* programme last week. It was fantastic to see the students being so engaged with the COP26 conference theme and presenting themselves and the school in such a positive light. The programme is still available on the BBC iPlayer. The link to the edition can be found [here](#). As a school, events on the international stage have reminded us of the importance of this issue. A small, but dedicated 'ECO' group has now been formed in school and we will be communicating some new initiatives in due course.

### Coronavirus Update

Having monitored the situation closely throughout the past few weeks we have taken the decision that all staff, students and visitors will be required to **wear face coverings** in corridors and other busy communal areas such as canteen queues **from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November** until further notice. The use of face coverings in classrooms, etc. will remain voluntary for students and staff when they are working in close proximity to students. I would ask that parents do not write to me about this matter. I fully understand that there are different views held within the wider community regarding face coverings, vaccinations, etc. but the fact that views vary should be understood by everyone in the community and that we do not simply respond to the views of individuals on such matters. We look at the best available information when making such decisions and do so in the best interest of the wider community. Thank you in advance for your support. We will, of course, take further steps as and when they are required.

### Warner Brothers Visit

Some movie magic and secrets of the cinema were revealed in a post-Halloween treat to 38 spellbound Media Studies, Performing Arts and Drama students on Tuesday this week on a trip to Warner Bros. Studios and The making of Harry Potter Studio Tour.

The students who participated on the trip were treated to a 1 hour lesson on cinematography techniques and the importance of the fine details of set design, costume, props and make-up for the franchise to create a believable cinematic experience for global audiences.

Once on the studio tour itself students were entertained by wand wielding 'Death Eaters'; a walk along Diagon Alley; the sight of countless bottles of lotions and potions; alongside the chance to enter a full scale working Hogwarts Express steam train and be enthralled by the sight of a life size fire breathing dragon.

Some even tried riding broomsticks as if playing a game of the dangerous sport of Quidditch.

Dressed in Vyners bottle green school uniforms all students entered the Great Hall of Hogwarts school ready for a banquet of fun and wizardry and indeed the sense of wonder on offer was hugely entertaining for all, so much so there were no moaning Myrtles to be heard.

Luckily, there was no sign of Lord Voldemort except for his faded green cloak of reduced powers and there was no need to turn any Vyners student into a ferret for misbehaviour. On the contrary, members of the public commented on the exemplary behaviour of all.



### Local Authority Parental RE Survey

The invitation is open to all parents of children with school aged children. They do not need to have any prior knowledge of the subject, but they will be critical in helping to understand the experiences and views that parents have, and in determining how the Faith and Belief Forum can develop parental engagement and understanding of the importance of religion and worldviews in their child's learning and development journey.

*Invitation to complete online survey: Are you a parent of school age children? We'd like to hear your views and your children's experiences of RE. This questionnaire from the Faith and Belief Forum is part of research into 'Stakeholders' attitudes towards Religion and Worldviews' carried out by the Open University and Inform at Kings College London and is funded by Culham St Gabriel's Trust. We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes of your time to respond to the questionnaire, found by clicking here: [Parental views of RE and Religion and Worldviews](#).*

### Invitation to attend virtual parent focus group

Are you a parent of a child between 5-15 who takes an interest in what your child learns in RE? This focus group with the Faith and Belief Forum in partnership with Culham St Gabriel Trust, the Open University and Inform, asks about your experience of your child's learning of RE. Firstly, how have you found their experience, what are your thoughts and ideas on RE as it is currently? Secondly, what do you think of the introduction of the Religion and Worldviews proposal? Find out more and give your views by attending a virtual focus group on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 4.30pm-6.00pm.

If you would like to join the focus group or ask a question, please email [anna.lockley-scott@faithbeliefforum.org](mailto:anna.lockley-scott@faithbeliefforum.org) or [amy.ark@faithbeliefforum.org](mailto:amy.ark@faithbeliefforum.org)

### Advice for parents / carers during the coronavirus

The local authority has re-issued guidance from the NHS Trust that provides guidance for parents and carers during the pandemic. The guidance, which includes a FAQs document can be found [\[here\]](#).

### Headteacher Commendations

#### Work Related Learning

James Young	8C
Hana Ahmed	8F
Gurleen Bhinder	8F
Megan Bristow	8F
Aidan Clarke	8F
Ricardo Clarke	8F
Revin Concessao	8F

#### Community Work

Franklin Rowlands	9H
Miguel Mueses Furlong	9M
Padraig Mueses Furlong	9F