



## Headteacher's Update

12<sup>th</sup> November 2021

I would like to start this week's update by thanking students, parents and staff for their support as we returned to face coverings in corridors and communal areas for the first time since July. As mentioned in my previous update, this and other measures have been taken to try to ensure that we are not in a position where a significant number of students are having to miss important time in school due to an outbreak in the community. The numbers of positive cases at school are currently remaining stable. However, I can report that I attended a local authority briefing yesterday, part of which was a public health update. Parents and carers may be interested to know that the two age groups with the highest proportion of positive Covid cases in recent weeks are the 10-19 age category and the 40-49 age group. This, according to public health, is primarily due to the link between children and their parents. It is also the case that the number of cases in outer London boroughs is considerably higher than those in inner London. I can also report that the uptake of vaccinations amongst children in Hillingdon currently stands at 34% but this varied hugely from school to school with as little as 8% uptake in some schools right up to 100% in others. In summary, whilst Vyners seems so far to have been protected from the worst of the recent upturn in infection rates, it is important that none of us are complacent about the wider context.

As was the case last year, it would also be great if parents could ensure that their child has their own bottle of hand sanitiser that they can carry safely in their pocket or school bag. We have plenty of sanitiser units in school but the convenience of having your own handy bottle will make it far more likely that excellent hygiene standards are maintained.

### Staff Conference and Occasional Day

I would like to make parents aware that the school will be closed to all students on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>, Friday 26<sup>th</sup> and Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November. On the Thursday and Friday all staff will be engaged in our annual staff conference (INSET days), whilst the Monday is an occasional day that is related to the Queen's platinum jubilee. I will write to parents in more detail about the content of the INSET days in due course.

### Police Feedback

Our local Police liaison team has asked us to remind students and their parents about safe travel to and from school. Although incidents are rare, the main issue for school aged children is robbery and this can, at times, involve weapons. The main advice is to travel to and from school with friends and to avoid 'hot spots' such as

Uxbridge High Street. As a reminder, we will be working with the Police Liaison team to conduct searches for weapons using the knife arches throughout the year.

### Parents Evenings

I would like to thank all parents and carers who engaged in the Year 13 Parental Consultation Evening on Thursday. These events continue to be conducted remotely and it was the first consultation evening of the academic year. We did receive a number of comments from parents via our survey about consultation evenings. The main two issues related to the length of appointments and the availability of staff. I think that it is worth reminding parents that appointments have always been 5 minutes in length. However, when the activity was conducted face to face some appointments exceeded the time limit, which had a knock on effect for other parents waiting for their appointments. It is also important to note that 5 minute appointments allow for 12 meetings in an hour and a maximum of 36 appointments (back to back) in three hours. Given that this is the case we would always ask that where parents require more time to discuss a specific issue that they do so by making an appointment with the relevant member of staff at a suitable time.

I have also previously commented on the fact that some staff teach several classes within specific year groups and that it is simply not possible for all parents to speak to specific staff on a dedicated evening. However, we believe that it is important that all parents gain a rounded view of the progress that their child is making and that they should be able to speak to a fair proportion of their child's teachers. I have asked Mr Beale to look at this issue that is specific to key stage 3 and key stage 4. I am sure that we can find a satisfactory solution prior to the main school evenings that will start in the spring term. I will update parents prior to the end of the autumn term.

### Entry to the school

I would like to make parents aware that we have further added to our security systems at the school. This is mainly through additional fencing and locking mechanisms on the new internal gates (within the main boundaries). In addition to these systems, the main pedestrian gates will now automatically unlock at 8.00am and will relock at the start of the school day at 8.30am. With this in mind, I think that it is timely to remind parents that students should not be on the school premises prior to 8.00am unless they have been specifically asked to do so by a member of staff. This provides a 25 minute window in which all students should be on site and ready for their tutorial or assembly.

## Remembrance

On Thursday of this week, the entire school community came together on the quad to participate in our Remembrance Day ceremony. As in previous years, the students were impeccable in the way that they conducted themselves from the moment that they left their classrooms to the point after 11.00am when they returned. The First World War poem *For the Fallen* was read aloud by Deputy Head Girl, Kika Bedborough (13C) before the playing of the *Last Post*, which was beautifully executed by Joseph Saunders (13H). It was at this point that the staff and students paused for two minutes of silent reflection before the playing of the Reveille. I would like to thank Kika and Joseph as well as Mr Beale for his excellent Remembrance assemblies throughout the week and Mr Cullum and Mrs Bashford-Hynes for their support for this event.

## Theatre Visit

This week, Quantum Theatre came to Vyners to perform 'A Christmas Carol' to Year 8, as well as a selection of Year 10 and 11 students. It was a wonderful experience for all-involved. The students thoroughly enjoyed seeing the story that they are reading in class brought to life on the stage and the actors commented on what a wonderful audience the students were. We look forward to welcoming Quantum Theatre back to school for further productions in the future!

**Mrs Nicholls, Subject Leader, English**

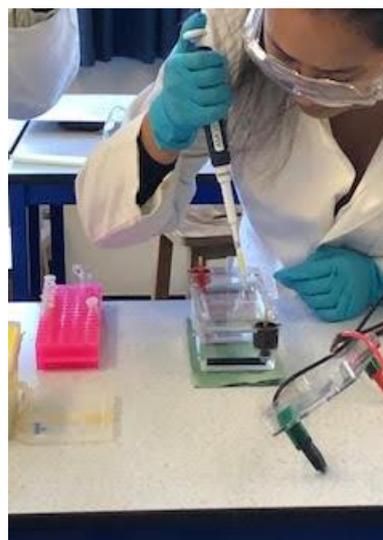


## Year 13 Amgen Biotech Experience

The Year 13 Biologists have just completed a fantastic Genetics course developed by Amgen. The Amgen Biotech Experience (ABE) is a global innovative science education program that introduces students to the excitement of scientific discovery and builds bridges between school and the real-life biosciences. ABE prepares the next generation of scientists and innovators and provides access to cutting-edge science. Students isolated, manipulated and used electrophoresis to process DNA samples from a fictitious crime scene. Their results

allowed them to identify the culprit and exonerate innocent suspects.

The equipment and samples were loaned to Vyners for the two weeks and allowed our students to get hands-on experience of experiments only open to University students in their second or third years.

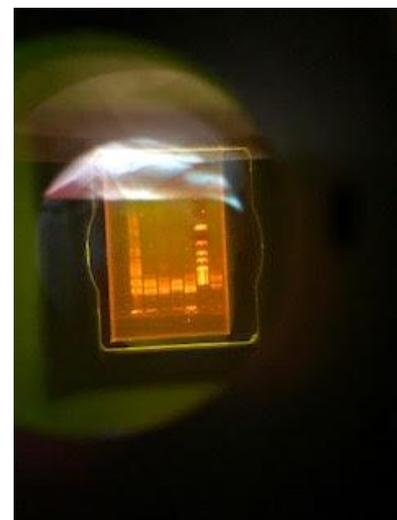


Students had to wear specialist protective gear to use the chemicals involved and the results gathered were amazing.

I would like to thank Amgen for continuing to support Vyners with this project as I understand we are now part of a very small select group of schools and colleges mainly based around the Cambridge area.

I hope this introduction to practical genetics has spurred some of Year 13 to consider this cutting edge area of Science when completing their UCAS forms.

**Miss Holt,  
Subject Leader  
Science**



**Gary Mullings  
Headteacher**

## Headteacher Commendations

### Work Related Learning

Alisha Butt	8F
Sean Coxwell	8F
Sadie-Jane Dempsey	8F
Daisy Everett	8F
Jude Flemming	8F