

Headteacher's Update

3rd December 2021

We were delighted to be able to return to what felt like a 'normal' staff conference on Thursday and Friday of last week despite some of the additional health and safety measures that we had to implement. The theme of the conference for day 1 was *high performance* and was very much linked to our mantra of *Every Lesson, Every Day*. We were particularly pleased to welcome our keynote speaker, Alistair Smith back to the school. Alistair is a leadership consultant who has, over a number of years, specialised in learning about and sharing his knowledge of high performing teams and organisations such as Mercedes Petronas Formula One, the London Air Ambulance and Les Miserables. Alistair continues work with the Football Association developing the elite level coaching programmes. Alistair's session was both engaging and thought provoking and provided us all with a number of theoretical and practical ideas that will help our teams on their journeys of continuous improvement.



On Thursday afternoon, colleagues had the opportunity to attend a series of workshops that were led by members of staff, all focusing on the sharing of innovative practice in teaching and learning and the day culminated in the staff working in teams, taking the time to reflect on their learning and planning for next steps.



This year, day two of the conference was delivered by the Vanguard Learning Trust and was an opportunity for all five schools to come together to engage in some thinking about the Trust values and the principles of outstanding, inclusive education. The day was led by the Executive Headteacher, Dr Lecky and included excellent keynote speakers Rachel McFarlane and David Rich. I would like to thank everyone involved in the organisation and delivery of the two day conference and to all staff for their level of engagement. I hope that parents and carers understand the benefits of investing in the professional development of staff and also hope that the impact of such days are seen in the quality of provision that is available at the school.



Face Coverings in Schools

With the likelihood of further restrictions being implemented in the weeks ahead I would like to remind parents and carers that it is now mandatory for all students, except for those with medical exemptions, to wear face coverings in all areas of the school buildings. The only exception to this is when students are seated in their classrooms. I think that it is important to add that students need to arrive at school with at least one face covering daily and the preference is for students to have a reusable fabric covering. In the past week, there have been too many children expecting the school to provide face coverings and whilst we really do not want to sanction children in such circumstances we are now at the stage where persistent offenders will receive consequences. I really would appreciate full parental support for our measures, particularly as it appears that these measures will be in place for some time to come.

Trial Examinations

I would like to briefly congratulate all students in Years 11 and 13 for the positive start that they have made to their trial examinations. I very much appreciate how stressful this period can be for some students so I would stress the importance of requesting support if the process does start to feel overwhelming. My very best wishes for the remainder of the exams.

Judith Weir Visit

On Tuesday of last week we were delighted to welcome Judith Weir CBE to the school's Music department. Judith was appointed to the 395-year old royal post of Master of the Queen's Music in 2014, becoming the first female composer to hold the prestigious role. In this role she has written music for national and royal occasions, including the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations and the UK's official commemoration of the 1918 Armistice. One of her many priorities in this role is the support of school music teachers and their students and it was for this reason that she visited our Music department. After addressing the A-level students as a group, Judith proceeded to spend time individually with every student, listening to the compositions and providing them with advice and constructive feedback. Having spoken to some of the students, I can confirm that they were inspired by Judith's visit and that her words of wisdom were well received. Thank you to Mr Cullum for organising this activity. If parents wish to learn more about Judith and her work they can do so by visiting www.judithweir.com



Pullman Workshop

Year 9 students took part in an exciting workshop on Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy last Wednesday. The highlight of the after school event was taking part in a Zoom call with the author himself. Getting a chance to ask questions and gain an insight into the creative processes of a world class writer was a really special experience. He passed on many great tips on how to get writing as well as talking about how he came up with the ideas for his novels. Perhaps some of our students will be able to take some of these suggestions and become the ground-breaking writers of the future! The event was organised by Oxford University and a number of different schools around the UK took part in the Zoom call. We have now been advised by the university that Vyners won the prize for asking the most thought-provoking question during the Q & A session:

Is fantasy an escape or confronting reality in a different way?

Thank you to Mrs Connolly and the English department for organising our entry into this event. We will be receiving a copy of the 'His Dark Materials' trilogy as our prize.

Awards Evening

With the additional restrictions that are now in place we remain hopeful that our annual Awards Evening will still be able to take place as scheduled on Thursday 16th December. The event will take place over two sessions with the lower school awards for 2020-21 beginning at 5.30pm and the upper school awards at 7.30pm. We hope that these arrangements will allow us to manage the number of people in the school hall at any one time.

Finally this week, I'd like to share two images that were shared with me this week by Year 9 photography students, Elise Allen (9C) and Hannah Bevan (9W). The images, taken on Thursday morning, beautifully captured the first glimpses of snow that fell in the early morning.



Wishing you all a restful weekend.

Gary Mullings
Headteacher

Headteacher's Commendations

Work Related Learning

Leah Patel	8F
Lara Plesu	8F
Hariet Raycheva	8F
Rafay Siddiki	8F
Fiza Siddiq	8F
Alfie Sleet	8F
Shay Vishnuram	8F
Adna Warsame	8F

CARE Value

Jess Hugill	10F
Emma Kennedy	10F
Lena Wozniewska	10H