



Headteacher's Update

16th June 2023

It was with great sadness that I had to share the passing of Derek Best. Derek Best died on Tuesday 23rd May at the age of 93.

He was the second Headteacher of Vyners (the first being Trevor Jaggar). He was appointed in 1967 at the age of 38. This was considered an achievement as Headteachers in those days tended to be much older. Derek was able to sustain the success of the school, which in those days was a grammar school. In 1977, with the reorganisation of education in Hillingdon, the first comprehensive intake came into the school. It was Derek's responsibility to see the transition through. This meant a change of teaching styles in order to cater for the much wider ability range.

Throughout his time at the school, he was called on, on many occasions to give advice to the Borough Education Committee and the Director of Education. A number of initiatives which the school piloted were a cafeteria system at lunchtime (paying for what you had purchased and paid to the cashiers) and the staff appraisal system.

Not only was Derek called upon to advise the local authority, he became heavily involved in the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT). This was not only at the local level, but in addition he was a member of the Executive Committee for many years. He held the position of Vice President and subsequently President of the Association. He had a year out to undertake the Presidency role. In addition to this he was a Justice of the Peace and sat on the bench in Harrow and was a Rotarian.

Derek left Vyners in 1989 after 22 years to take up the post of Principal Headteacher for secondary schools. It was from this role that he retired in the early 1990s.

As a Head he was very fair in the way he dealt with staff, pupils, and parents. He never stopped staff from seeking promotion even if this meant that they would leave the school. Because of his involvement in the wider field of education he knew how to delegate to his senior staff, and he knew them well enough to be able to trust them, getting the balance right between supporting and interfering.

Thank you to Peter Williams, former Head of Music at Vyners (1977-1990) for providing a wonderful snapshot of Derek's life and achievements with us at the school. Our thoughts and condolences go to Derek's family, friends and former colleagues.

Prefect Interviews

As I am sure parents and carers can imagine, being a Headteacher of a large secondary school will mean that you have to deal with many challenges and difficult circumstances. However, in my experiences, these challenging moments are more than offset by the moments of sheer pride and joy that you experience when working with such an array of wonderful young people and staff.

One such moment occurred this week when, as part of the Year 11 prefect selection process, I was able to sit down and meet with eight of the one hundred and seventeen candidates from Year 10 who have applied for a role. It was fantastic to see just how these students have matured, how selfless and courageous they are and just how much they are willing to do to provide support for others in the school community. One question that was posed to the group was in relation to their perception of the biggest issues that the world faces right now. Each of the eight students involved were able to speak passionately, primarily about tackling discrimination and inequality of various forms and I was particularly impressed to listen to how well they were informed about the issues that they discussed.

As we are still in the selection process, it would be unfair of me to name the students in question. However, I would like to sincerely thank them for providing me with the highlight of my week.

Equality and Diversity Fortnight

I am also delighted to have had the opportunity to work with a group of students who have formed a working party that has focused on addressing equality and inclusion related issues within the school community. As part of this work the students, along with Ms Ashe and Mrs Bashord-Hynes have put together a

programme for an Equality and Diversity Fortnight that starts on this coming Monday, coinciding with the VLT equality week.

The fortnight will involve a mixture of events, assemblies and workshops and will focus on a range of EDI related issues. On Thursday 29th June, there will be our first ever **Diversity Day**. Whilst this will be a non-uniform day, we will be asking students and staff to dress in a way that allows them to express their culture, interests or other aspects of their individuality.

We are hopeful that the next two weeks will help us to continue to progress in our journey to being a totally inclusive school. I will, of course, be sharing news from the fortnight in the next newsletter.

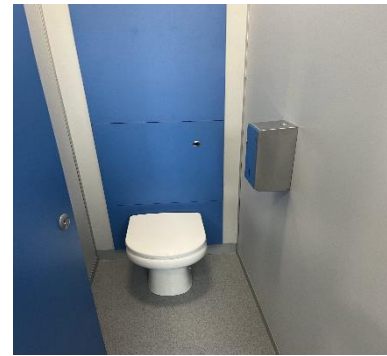
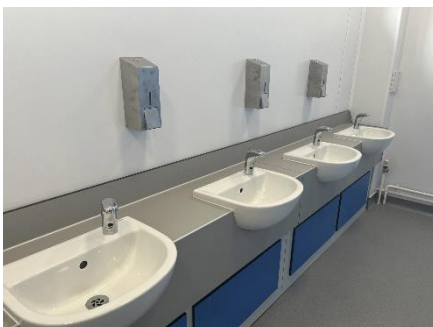
Sports Days

We are very much looking forward to our sports days, which will be taking place at the Hillingdon stadium for students in years 7 and 8 on Thursday 22nd June and Year 9 and 10 on Friday 23rd June. We very much look forward to two great days of friendly competition.

Toilet Refurbishment Programme

I am pleased to be able to inform parents and carers that, after some unfortunate delays, we have been able to make our newly refurbished boys toilets on the first and second floor in the old building. This is part of a £65k programme to bring all of our toilets up to similar standard as those in the new building as well as those that are available to girls in the same area of the school that were refurbished as part of the school expansion project. As well as new furniture, these toilets have additional features such as automatic taps and hands free flushing.

We hope that the students will take pride in the new facilities and treat the areas with the respect that they deserve. We have ordered the furniture and equipment for a full refurbishment of the ground floor toilets and this work will take place during the summer break.



Oak Processionary Moths

Despite significant work undertaken on our oak trees in recent years we have had to do more work this week to remove [oak processionary moth caterpillar nests](#) from some of our oak trees on the site. Parents and carers may remember from previous newsletters that the moths are an invasive species that is now embedded in the London region. However, nests may be found in surrounding areas, referred to as the buffer zone by the forestry commission but are not located outside of this area. The caterpillars tend to appear between March and June and whilst posing no immediate risk, their hairs will cause significant irritation to the skin or eyes of humans and animals. Whilst I can reassure parents and carers that all affected trees have been zoned off and students kept away prior from these areas treated; however, I have noticed infected trees in other parts of the community including in woodlands and other countryside areas such as golf courses, etc. If parents and carers do have sightings of the moth caterpillars then please ensure that family members, etc and pets do not interact with them. If possible, report any sighting to the local authority. A link to their OPM webpage can be found [here](#).

Student planners 2023-24

We are now taking orders for a hard copy student planner for next academic year. These are provided for free by the school but, conscious of the fact that many students prefer to work electronically (as well as seeking to limit paper use), these are only provided automatically to students coming into Year 7 in September.

Older students need to request a planner if they would like one. Your son / daughter has recently been emailed a Google Form to complete. If you feel strongly as a parent that you would like your child to have a hard copy planner, please can I ask you to ensure that they complete the form. The deadline is Friday 23rd June

Miss Williams, Business Manager

Sports Update

Vitality Blast 20/20 Guard of honour

On Thursday 8th June some of our students who make up the Super 1s Cricket team were invited to the Middlesex v Sussex 20/20 match at Lords cricket ground. The students were chosen to do the guard of honour for the players as they entered the pitch as a reward for their commitment and performances within Middlesex competitions. The students loved the experience and enjoyed the very exciting game that followed.

Mr Hall, Subject Leader, PE



Junior Borough Athletics

It was Junior Borough Athletics for Years 7 and 8 last Wednesday and many performers achieved great success. Overall the students were very resilient and showed fantastic sportsmanship. Credit to our medal winners, listed below. First place and potentially second place will represent the Borough at Middlesex in a couple of week's time.

1st

Dylan Lewis - 1500m

Sophia Vaughan - 800m

Nathan Griffiths - Javelin

Stefan Falconer-Bailey - Shot put

2nd

Chayden Clarke - 300m

Rayaan Choudhry – Hurdles

3rd

Catherine Gallagher - 800m & Discus

Tom Cheesebrough - 200m & Discus

Amelia-Grace Esegbona - 200m

Fleur Wright - Hurdles

Jordan Karieren - Long Jump



Middlesex Championships

16 Vyners students represented Hillingdon at the Middlesex Athletics Championships. It was a very hot Saturday and some very tough competition but the students did very well.

A particular mention to Sam Jagroop (11W) who came 2nd in U17 100m running 11.08 after injury and Melia Gaynor-Palmer (10G) who came 2nd in U17 Shot Put. Sam will very likely represent Middlesex at English Schools and has been asked to attend inter-counties this weekend.

Jake Cleverley (7F) has been selected for the Hillingdon Team playing in the London Youth Games Hockey Qualifiers this weekend at Redbridge Sports Centre. A fantastic achievement. Good Luck Jake!

Miss Hawes, PE Department

Rounders

On Thursday 8th June the Year 10 Rounders team took part in the Hillingdon borough tournament. After winning both games in the group, Vyners made their way through to the semi-final against Haydon, which Vyners won by a narrow margin.

The final took place against Uxbridge High and with one Rounder in it Vyners secured the win.



Miss John, PE Department

Our Year 9 rounders team became Borough champions yesterday, winning their Borough Tournament. After 2 wins and a draw in their pool, Vyners progressed to face Ruislip High in the semi finals and with some fantastic batting, we progressed to the final with a 9.5 - 3.5 win!

A well organised Bishopshalt team awaited us in the final but Vyners came out victorious with a 1 rounder margin! Well done to all involved for a fantastic team performance.



Miss Powick, PE Department

Acrobatic Gymnastics

On 7th June Naomi Baker-Lopes flew to Poland as part of a cohort representing Great Britain in the Rzeszow International Acrobatics cup. Naomi competed in the 11-16 category and after three days of competing against 26 other partnerships, from other countries like Israel, USA and Georgia, she came 5th place in a very tight final. Naomi now goes on to a trial to compete for Team GB at the European Championships in October. This is Naomi's first time competing abroad on the international stage; an amazing achievement.



Art Exhibition

We would like to invite all families and friends of the school to the art and photography exhibition that will be taking place next Wednesday 21st June from 3.30pm to 6.30pm in the school hall. The exhibition is a showcase of the excellent work that has been completed by students as part of the GCSE and A level examinations. There will be some lovely Pimms to refresh you and some new Art to marvel at. This is a yearly opportunity to celebrate what we do and refresh the work on the walls.

It would be lovely to see as many of you as possible. Please click [\[here\]](#) for further information.

A & E Pressure

The London Borough of Hillingdon and NHS North West London have asked schools to share information with parents and carers regarding the additional pressures that are being faced by A & E due to the hot weather. There is also an information leaflet [\[click here\]](#) that provides information about where to get the right help when you need it. I would ask all parents and carers to take the time to review the information provided.

Health issues related to the current warm weather are causing our A&Es to be busier than usual, with waits of up to 11 hours in A&E at the moment. A&E is for life threatening emergencies. There are lots of NHS services that can help you. Knowing where to go, and when, will help you get the right care when you need it.

Your local high street pharmacy can provide advice and over the counter medication to help with hayfever. You can also contact your GP surgery or call 111 when your GP is closed.

In this warm weather, when we also have a very high pollen count at the moment, make sure you follow our top tips to prevent yourself becoming unwell.

Tips for coping in hot weather

Keep out of the heat if you can.

If you have to go outside, stay in the shade especially between 11am and 3pm, wear sunscreen, a hat and light clothes, and avoid exercise or activity that makes you hotter.

Cool yourself down. Have cold food and drinks, avoid alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks, and have a cool shower or put cool water on your skin or clothes.

Keep your living space cool. Close windows during the day and open them at night when the temperature outside has gone down.

Tips if hot weather sets off your asthma

Keep taking your regular preventer inhaler so you're less likely to get symptoms. And carry your reliever inhaler with you at all times so you're ready if symptoms do come on.

Go for regular asthma reviews to check you're on the right meds for you, and you're taking your inhalers in the best way to get the benefits through the summer months.

Use your written asthma action plan so you know what to do if hot weather triggers symptoms.

If you're using your reliever inhaler three or more times a week, or you've noticed the hot weather's made your symptoms worse, book an extra catch-up with your doctor or asthma nurse.

Keep inhalers in a cool place out of direct sunlight so they continue to work well. Try keeping your reliever in a cool bag when you're out and about on a hot day. Don't add any ice to the bag though, because your inhaler needs to be kept dry.

Keep an eye on pollen forecasts and find out more about why staying on top of your hay fever symptoms with antihistamines is good for your asthma too.

Plan any outdoor activities for earlier in the day when the air quality tends to be better, including exercise.

Tips if you have hayfever

Your local high street pharmacy can help with advice and over the counter medicine around hayfever.

Wear wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes

Shower and change your clothes after you have been outside to wash pollen off

Stay indoors whenever possible and keep windows and doors shut as much as possible

Vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth

Do not cut grass or walk on grass or keep fresh flowers in the house

Do not smoke or be around smoke – it makes your symptoms worse

Do not dry clothes outside – they can catch pollen

Friends of Vyners

A reminder that Friends of Vyners are holding a Quiz Night on Friday 23rd June 2023. Please [click here](#) for further details.

The FoV '100 Club' has been an incredibly successful fundraising tool for our parents' organisation and has helped to provide our students with a wide range of facilities and resources that are often difficult to acquire from within our main school budget. Congratulations to all of the recent prize winners from the Friends of Vyners '100 Club' draws. Please click [\[here\]](#) to see the May 2023 winner. If you wish to participate in the '100 Club' then please complete the application form [\[click here\]](#) and forward it to 100club@friendsofvyners.co.uk.