



April 2018

Dear Parents

After a glorious start to the term weather wise we are back to proper spring weather now! I was fortunate to accompany Upper Three to Alnwick Castle as part of their History project on castles. It was wonderful seeing the girls enjoy their broomstick lessons followed by a more serious look at how the Barbican would have been stormed by any invaders, complete with sword fighting and showers of 'arrows'. A few days later the girls brought in their own castle models to school which took over Mrs Harris' classroom somewhat!

We were very pleased to host two excellent speakers who gave a Drug and Alcohol awareness talk for parents prior to the older girls hearing the same messages. This was part of our ongoing commitment to support parents and was extremely well received by all who attended. We were disappointed with the numbers who did come on the evening and I would be interested to hear any suggestions for future topics that may prove of wider interest to the parent body.

The following evening, we had our annual Higher Education evening for girls and parents in Upper Five and Lower Sixth. We arranged for six universities and higher education institutions, including Durham, to speak to the audience on a variety of topics including choosing a course, student finance, the collegiate system and making the most out of your time at university. Afterwards everyone had the opportunity to put specific questions to the speakers. The Lower Sixth girls then attended the local UCAS fair the following day and came back to school laden with prospectuses for universities and colleges to which they may apply.

With the run-in towards public exams we are starting to get practical exams, orals and moderator visits in school. We were very pleased when the moderator came to see our Cambridge Technical work from the Upper Sixth. She was so impressed that she has asked if we would consider applying to be a Centre of Excellence for the course as we are teaching it so well.

Unusually, I am going to cast a quick spotlight onto some individuals this month. Jess in Upper Five took a few days out from her revision schedule for GCSEs as she had qualified to play golf in the Scottish Women's Open Championship at Troon. Excitingly she made the cut in her first senior tournament and finished 13th equal playing on the Royal Troon course. The other outstanding individual mention goes to Meg in Lower One who chose to raise money to help the fight against cancer. She organised a raffle and sold bracelets and managed to raise the grand total of £98 which she has donated to the Daft as a Brush charity, for which Junior House raised funds just before Easter.

It was a real pleasure, on the last Friday in April, to hear Sophie and Annya telling us about their Gold Duke of Edinburgh expedition. This was a four-day trek across the Lake District including a wild camp one night. The girls completed this successfully as part of a team which included boys from NSB. This was the final section of their Gold award and we look forward to them being invited to Holyrood or St

James' Palace to receive their award. It is unusual for anyone to manage to complete the Gold Award before they finish school, so the two girls should be heartily congratulated. They also thanked Miss Lamb in their presentation for accompanying and supervising their expedition. It was a timely encouragement to Lower Five as they set out on their Bronze practice expedition along the Northumberland coast. When I met them on the second day they were all in good spirits and working very well as a team.

It was exciting to see the invitations to the Westfield Gala being sent out at the end of April. This annual event in the Westfield social calendar is one I am really looking forward to as it marks a chance for so many parents to get together to celebrate the year just gone in a more informal manner than at Prize giving. I hope to see many of you there and wanted to let you know that if you put together a table of ten, one ticket is free! I'd also like to ask if anyone would like to donate a prize for the silent auction or the raffle? If you are able, please contact Julie Mohon on juliemohon@icloud.com

If you do come in to Senior House take a moment to enjoy the wonderful blooms on the camellias either side of the entrance. We are all looking forwards to Westfield Day on Friday when we will celebrate the history of the school.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Neil Walker', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Neil Walker