



28 March 2018

Dear Parents

March 2018 Blogpost

We started the month with an unwelcome bout of weather that made travel both difficult and dangerous for many; since then we have enjoyed rain, wind, hail, sunshine and more snow. Is it any wonder the British like talking about the weather? Unfortunately, the snow disrupted our Spring Open Day at the beginning of March but I would like to thank all the families and staff who braved the weather to attend. Visitor numbers were lower than hoped for as a result of the weather, but we are showing people around on an individual basis as and when to suit them. If you know of any family who you think might appreciate a Westfield education please do recommend us to them, most of our serious interest comes through this route.

As we approach the end of term and the close of the winter games season we have asked all girls in Senior House to ensure that their lockers are emptied and padlocks removed. We are going to be making an inventory of all the lockers that need maintenance or replacement and need to do this now to ensure that any new lockers are here in time for installation over the summer. If your daughter does not currently have a lock for her locker we would urge you to buy one for her which will help prevent 'borrowing' of kit, shoes, etc and subsequent issues with items going missing. Combination padlocks are an easy answer to the concern about losing keys and are available for a couple of pounds from good hardware stores.

Junior House celebrated a slightly belated World Book Day with the traditional dressing up as their favourite character. There were some amazing costumes worn that day and all the children enjoyed the inter-house book treasure hunt in the afternoon. I hope that everyone has had the opportunity to get to a bookshop to spend their World Book Day token on a lovely new book.

The next week we celebrated National Careers week across the school. We were lucky to have speakers coming in to talk to all the girls about a wide range of careers from engineering to fashion, marketing to finance and HR to publishing and more. We were especially pleased to welcome a number of old girls back to the school and in honour of International Women's day in the same week were pleased that the vast majority of our visitors were successful women. The girls found the whole experience really positive and one speaker has even offered an apprenticeship to any girl in the Upper Sixth interested in her field. As part of this week we also had our second goal setting event for the older girls to consider how to set themselves high targets and then work to achieve them.

In the same week our Upper Three Netball squad won the Tyne and Wear school tournament; as their first proper tournament as a squad we are very pleased for them and hope to see more silverware gracing the trophy cabinets in PE.

One great pleasure to attend was the Early Years and Key Stage 1 Mothers' Day assembly. The children had worked really hard preparing promises, writing letters and learning songs to say thank you.

At the end of term I was privileged to see Black Rod summoning the Commons to hear the Queen's speech for the new session before attending an excellent parliamentary debate in the House of Commons – when Junior House recreated the State Opening of parliament in their democracy strand.

Towards the end of term, the culmination of days of preparation and practice came to fruition when the sports hall was transformed into Fat Sam's speakeasy. Working with boys and teachers from NSB, Mrs Forster and Dr Hardy cajoled, exhorted and encouraged our girls to produce three amazing performances to packed houses. It would be wrong to single out any one of the multi-talented cast of Bugsy Malone as this was a truly whole school performance with the cast, backstage and band all showcasing various girls' talents. If you were unfortunate enough not to be able to get a ticket then I encourage you to book earlier for next year's show. Not to be outdone Lower Three and Upper Two classes put on an amazing performance of Macbeth for parents and guests and have since been eagerly auditioning for parts in our summer production of Joseph. I am constantly amazed at this seemingly bottomless pit of sheer talent from so many girls, it makes me truly proud to be a part of our community.

Last weekend was the Duke of Edinburgh training day for the Lower Five girls in the Cheviots. Although they were sometimes walking through patches of snow, in the evening the air was so cold and clear the girls stayed outside their tents until about one in the morning admiring the starry skies. At the same time Sophie and Annya in the Upper Sixth were completing their four-day Gold walk in the Lake District. Walking through a number of seasons' weather they successfully completed their expedition just before the end of term.

Looking forward to a, possibly, much warmer summer term, from 1st May we expect all Key Stage 1 girls to be in their summer uniform although they may choose to wear summer dresses from Easter if the weather is good enough. In Key Stage 2, after representations from the Junior House Form Council, I have made the summer dress optional so girls may choose to wear it on a good day but for all formal occasions, such as the Awards Ceremony, smart 'winter' uniform will be expected.

I wish you all a happy Easter break. For those girls preparing for their GCSEs and A-levels I hope the revision goes well and you come back to school with plenty of completed exam questions and a list of points to go over with your teachers. For everyone else, I hope you can make the most of opportunities to explore and widen your knowledge.

Yours sincerely



Neil Walker