



29 November 2018

Dear Parents

As we reach the beginning of Advent for another year, I'm going to take a moment to look back before I look forwards.

This month has, as always, seen a huge amount of activity in Westfield. We started with the amazing PTA Bonfire and Fireworks. I'm sure that everyone who came will agree how much family fun this event is, with its stalls, tasty food and of course the excitement of the fireworks which were truly spectacular. I'd like to say a special thank you on behalf of everyone to Mr Deevy who choreographs and provides the firework show each year.

Later that same week it was a pleasure to welcome so many parents to the school to enjoy the poignant and moving Key Stage 2 assembly "Archie Dobson's War". This was very much a prelude to our commemoration of the centenary of the Armistice, when the entire school observed a minute's silence before Junior House planted their poppies and the Head Girls laid their wreaths. In order to remind us of the events just over one hundred years ago we have kept the containers of poppies inside school on windowsills overlooking the memorial garden. Another event this month linked to the Great War was the annual Cook of the Year competition. As a bit of a foodie I always thoroughly enjoy this day and was amazed by the creativity and flair with which the finalists produced their two-course meal in the style of the times. Entries varied from an amazing high tea complete with scones and meringues through 'Saturday pie' and corned beef hash to lamb hotpot in trench cans! Desserts included an amazing chocolate trench cake, traditional apple charlotte and a superb 'Dig for Victory' hedgerow fruit pie. All of this cooked from scratch in just three hours!

Our Transition girls had an amazing time with Northumberland Wildlife Trust when they went to join them for Forest School to help build winter homes for wild animals before too much of the rain and colder weather struck.

We have also been busy with lots of parents' evenings this month, including a key event for Upper Five girls where they had the opportunity to take a first look at the 28 option subjects available in the Sixth Form. I'm really proud to be able to offer such a huge range of courses, in part due to our working relationship with Newcastle School for Boys where some Sixth Form teaching is shared. I was also pleased to be able to announce a new Sixth Form qualification that we are creating in tandem with NSB to recognise the extra input that our girls, and their boys, gain in the Sixth Form.

We were also pleased to welcome potential students for next year's Upper Three to a taster day where the girls from Junior House and the external candidates could mix together, have fun and try out some of the lessons they will experience in Senior House as well as exploring our lovely grounds.

Early Years and Key Stage 1 had their perennially popular 'Bedtime Story' event where they snuggle up in sleepwear, enjoy a cup of warm cocoa and listen to all sorts of people reading them some favourite bedtime stories. There were a few sleepy heads at the end of that afternoon! Not to be

outdone, the girls of Key Stage 2 also donned their pyjamas and enjoyed a movie night, complete with popcorn, hotdogs and nachos, kindly provided by very enthusiastic EEE club members.

Last week we took the Sixth Form to a drive awareness course. This annual event brings home the dangers of careless driving to an audience who are just starting to drive themselves. It is hard-hitting and pulls no punches but all the girls who have been talk about what an impact it has had on them and how it has changed their behaviours on the road for the better. In stark contrast to that, Friday was our Round Square fundraising day which kept the International theme this year and saw all the girls, and staff, dressed up to represent many countries around the world. In the afternoon of fun activities including nail-painting, gunk-dipping and ice-cream eating we raised just over our £1000 target which goes to pay for the education of two disadvantaged girls in Starehe School in Kenya who totally rely on us for their education funding.

Finally I want to mention our Upper Five girls who approached me asking to raise funds for Hadrian School. Some of the girls have worked there on Service days or as part of their work experience and they were really shocked by the hate crimes that took place there earlier in the year. The classes have created a wonderful 'hand of friendship' wreath picture and raised money through cake sales and other endeavours to give something back to the school and show our support for them. We have also decided to support Hadrian School through the collection at this year's Carol Service.

Looking forward, we start the season of Advent on Monday, a time of huge excitement and expectation for the girls, and excitement and exhaustion for most adults! I look forward to seeing you at some, or all, of the events coming up in our approach to Christmas. The key dates for your diaries being the PTA Junior House Christmas Fayre straight after school on Thursday 6th; the Christingle Service on Sunday 9th at 3pm in the Dining Room; the soiree on Tuesday 11th at 6.30pm; Junior House Nativity on Friday 14th; all of this working up to the Carol Service at All Saints' Church at 6pm on Tuesday 18th to really get us in the mood for the holiday which starts at 3.30pm the following day. I am also looking forward to being able to send home the school magazine for the past year which is a real celebration of the wonder that is Westfield. I hope you enjoy reading it when it arrives and sharing it with family and friends.

Best wishes

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

Neil Walker