



19 October 2018

Dear Parents

We come to the end of another busy half term at Westfield with the promise of a chance to relax properly and recharge our batteries ready for the run in to Christmas. School is so busy that it is only possible to capture a flavour of the events and activities that go on each month. Although it has been different, getting used to a two week timetable has mostly run smoothly and the girls have found their days are much calmer and they are more able to focus on work for more productive periods of time. By the time we come back this new timetable will seem normal as it does every year.

Over half term we start our first steps to the transformation of the Westfield site. The demolition crews are in doing their final assessments, new rooms are being cleaned and decorated for the subjects that are moving now and our new lockers are due to arrive with a consequent alteration in changing facilities. We are working closely with our contractors to minimise any disruption to the girls.

When I signed off in September I was heading to Toronto with some of the Sixth Form to attend the annual Round Square International Conference. We all had an amazing, exhausting time and made many useful friends/contacts. The girls have come back enthused and excited about their experiences and all ready to throw themselves into sharing this feeling with as many others as possible. I hope that, as a school, we will be able to offer more exciting opportunities for the girls as we build closer links with other girls' schools across the world including in the UK.

At the same time that we were away, Upper Four had an amazing trip to High Borrans with Miss Lamb and Mrs McNaught. Over the four days, they faced a number of personal challenges and took part in canoeing, caving, ghyll scrambling and orienteering as well as other fun activities around the centre. In their assembly at the start of this week we heard how they are more resilient and how much better they can now all work to support each other and come together as a team.

That particular weekend was extremely busy with our annual MacMillan coffee morning and Lower Five having their first Duke of Edinburgh training walk. I understand that the coffee morning was a huge success with many parents and friends attending and raising over £740 and I would like to thank everyone who supported this by drinking coffee and baking or eating cakes. The uniform sale held at the same time was also popular, raising funds for the Westfield Association.

The annual Westfield Association quiz night was well attended enabling new parents to come together on a social occasion and have fun together. The cup was, as always, strongly contested and congratulations go to Team Keightley which was the winning team this year.

The day I returned from Canada was the annual Mowden Hall cross country event. I managed to attend on the Saturday and it was great to see the enthusiasm of our young runners across a beautiful, but tough, cross country course in the school's grounds. How wonderful to also see the inauguration of

our new Sports flag which you will be able to see flying at all sorts of events this year. It will be an easy locator for the school when places get busy.

This month we have also really enjoyed a visit from leading author Kiran Millwood Hargrave. Her visit was arranged through Waterstones and we were able to invite a year group from NSB to join us to hear her talking about her books, the process of writing and the life of an author. The girls really loved being able to ask her all sorts of questions afterwards then had the opportunity to buy a signed copy of some of her books.

We have also hosted another STEM day where it was great to welcome nearly 70 girls from Mowden Hall, Holystone and South Gosforth First schools to take part in a range of science activities and learn more about careers in STEM. These days help us to promote careers that otherwise girls may feel excluded from but also enable us to reach out into the community to demonstrate the value of independent education to the wider world.

It was lovely to see so many of you at our Harvest Festival last week and thank you for your very generous food and non-food donations which have gone to the People's Kitchen.

Last Saturday we had a wonderfully successful Open Day despite the weather. I would like to thank the huge numbers of parents who invited friends, brought their daughters in or acted as Parent Ambassadors for the school. Altogether we had almost 50 girls looking at the school for a place in either Junior or Senior House.

I'd like to remind you that this term's parents' forum is on Tuesday 13 November from 3.15 until 4pm. If there are any questions you wish to raise I hope you bring them there.

I wish you all a wonderful half term break whatever you do and a buon viaggio to all the girls and staff heading off to Rome for their trip. Enjoy the autumn season and I hope there is the time, and opportunity, for a lovely walk through the falling leaves on a crisp autumn day. I look forward to seeing you all at the Bonfire and Fireworks on Monday 5 November, the day we return to school. I understand a few tickets are still available from the school office.

Yours sincerely



Mr Neil Walker