



Belmont Community School

December 2016

Dear Parents/Carers and families

As the Christmas Holiday approaches and 2016 comes to an end, we reflect on what has been an exciting but long term at Belmont. Our new staff are settling in well and students have worked exceedingly hard over the past 15 weeks. The science block renovation and extended dining facilities are nearing completion and the students can't wait to start using them for experiments and lunching (in that order!).

This term saw our Section 5 OFSTED inspection; the report can be found via the school website. The inspection reinforced our own assessment of the school and strengthens our resolve to drive through the necessary improvements for the benefit of all of our students.

As well as the usual parents' evenings, we offered all parents/carers the opportunity to attend a 'Raising Achievement Evening' to look at assessments and help you support your children through revision, be it for GCSE or KS3. We continue to try and engage with parents and take on good ideas. If you would like to share your thoughts, then we hold a termly Parents' Forum, details of which can be found on the website. This year Ms Burton has introduced a weekly school text so that we can link you to the website and all the key information therein. Texts are sent out on a Friday so please make sure we have your correct mobile number so that you receive the latest information. We have a school app currently in development and will launch it in the new year, so that you can find out what is happening at the press of a button.

This year we are promoting oracy as a key skill and Belmont students took part in our first debating contest at Durham High School. We believe strong oral skills are vital to a successful career and we are developing opportunities for students to gain experience speaking in public. Those who attended the Remembrance Service and saw our scratch choir perform the newly written Belmont Anthem or were lucky enough to get a seat at this year's pantomime Aladdin will testify to the talent our students possess. This year our new Head of Music, Mrs Summers, has organised a traditional carol service with students performing carols and lessons in St Mary's church. I hope you enjoy reading more about all the students have been doing and the many other successes they have achieved so far this year.

Our new rewards system has been successful with students gaining thousands of merits. We now have a special reward called Hot Chocolate Friday where a special group of students enjoy a treat for their hard work, you can see who has received this award by following our Twitter feed.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents of the perils of social media. Students have all been educated on the dangers of social media usage and the need for self restraint in a public forum, and yet we still deal with issues on a daily basis that have been caused or exacerbated by social media. We encourage parents to monitor their children's activity and hold an ongoing conversation about what is and isn't appropriate. Children under the age of 13 should not be using Facebook or Twitter.

Don't forget that Monday 2nd is a Bank Holiday, Tuesday 3rd is a Teacher Training Day and the students start back on Wednesday 4th January 2017.

I wish you a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas Holiday. Thank you for your continued support.

Accelerated Reader

Students in Year 7 and 8 have had a busy term reading and quizzing to reach targets for this term. We have seen an exceptional amount of reading.

Word Totals (words read from September 2016)

Year 7 - 13,002,978

Year 8 - 17,831,539

We have also seen our first entry into the Word Millionaire Club - congratulations to Logan Powney who has read 1,240,463 words since September. We look forward to more students entering the Word Millionaire Club next term.



Year 11 Blood Brothers visit



A small group of Year 11 students thoroughly enjoyed their visit to York to watch a production of Willy Russell's 'Blood Brothers' as part of their GCSE Literature preparation. The students' behaviour was exemplary and they were a pleasure to be with. Well done!

The Brilliant Club

A group of year 8 pupils were selected to take part in the Scholars Programme run by The Brilliant Club. The Scholars Programme is designed to give pupils exposure to a genuine academic environment and to experience learning in the style of a university student.

Together with Mrs Cooper the group spent the day at Durham University where they found out more about life at university. The pupils have been working with their PhD Tutor Reeta Humalajoki in a series of small group university-style tutorials. During the tutorials pupils have been completing readings and assignments that stretch them to work at level above their current key stage.

The topic they have been exploring is The French Revolution and students have had to submit a final 1,500 word university style assignment answering the question 'Why was there a French Revolution?' They were asked to consider the different interpretations of this major event in History by historians as well as using primary sources to help them make their own judgements. They will find out their results next term.

Student Librarians

The LRC has seen a surge of students signing up to volunteer and help in the LRC. We now have a fantastic team of students who will be helping to issue books as well as recommending books to students at break and lunch. Student Librarians are now working towards Entry Level Certificates.



Scholastic Book Fair

This term the LRC hosted a Scholastic Book Fair offering students and staff the opportunity of buying books at half price. The fair was a great success and made £300. This is one of Belmont's most successful Scholastic Book Fairs as many took the opportunity to buy books as Christmas presents.

Winners of the 5 £5 vouchers to spend on the Book Fair were: Broughan Hardy, Jessica Robinson, Alex Cockburn, Joe Davison and Magnus Peattie.

There will be more opportunities to buy latest fiction throughout the year at each Parents' Even-

Public Speaking Competition

On Thursday 1 December Belmont entered two teams in the English Speaking Union's prestigious Public-Speaking Competition. The first round took place at Durham High School for Girls and we arrived with some trepidation, never having entered this type of competition before. We needn't have worried though, as the students were fantastic and certainly held their own with other teams. Hope Proudlock won the award for Best Chairperson overall, despite stepping in at the eleventh hour. We didn't make it through to the next round, but it was a very close contest, as highlighted by the hour long deliberation from the judges and the extremely positive feedback received by all our participants. The students were Rhianna Steer, Savannah Lloyd and Travis Ross for Year 11 and Hope Proudlock, Cameron Steer and Lauren Stewart for Year 9. We look forward to returning next year.



Calling All Belmont Alumni!

Here at Belmont Community School we are undergoing a project to produce an alumni display. This will contain career details since leaving Belmont Community School. We envisage this display will encourage students to continue with their studies, to show what can be achieved and to encourage students to prosper with hard work and determination.

If you are a past student and would like to participate, could you please send details of when you attended Belmont, your favourite subject, current job, career path, careers advice, fondest memory and a recent photo to Mrs Curry at r.curry@belmontschool.org.uk



Zoella Book Club

Our Zoella Book Club has got off to a great start this term. Everyone is getting stuck into reading a great selection of books, leading to some thoughtful discussion on the topics and issues,

If I Was Your Girl by Meredith Russo

The Twelve Days of Lily & Dash by Rachel Cohn & David Levithan

A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness

Frozen Charlotte by Alex Bell

Lying About Last Summer by Sue Wallman

I Was Here by Gayle Forman

Finding Audrey by Sophie Kinsella

The One We Fell in Love With by Paige Toon

Zoella Book Club meetings are held fortnightly on Tuesdays, 2.30-3.30pm in the LRC with Miss Roe and Mrs France. Our next meeting will be Tuesday 10th January. Look out book reviews on the LRC blog.



County Rowing Competition

A huge well done to Abigail Hindhaugh who qualified for the County Indoor Rowing competition at Maiden Castle. Abigail is new to the sport but despite this finished in a respectable 5th place.



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Aladdin



This year's pantomime, Aladdin, has proven to be a great success.

Students from years 7 – 11 performed in two matinees to local primary students and Parish Pensioners as well as two evening performances.

Year 10 student Jessica Railton played the title role of Aladdin who falls for the lovely Princess Jasmine played by Year 10 Gabrielle Smith. The laughs were generated by the Pantomime Dame, Widow Twankey, performed by year 11 student and Head Boy Travis Ross and our 3 person camel called Horace.

A panto is not a panto with out the baddie in this case the evil Ebanazar, played by year 10 student Emily Bainbridge.

With a cast of over 60 students, a lot of effort and energy was put in to make it a really great Christmas panto. As well as the performers on the stage a team of students worked as part of the backstage team, designing scenery and make up and operating the lights and sound. Performing Arts Teacher, Jane Cooper, who wrote and directed the show said, "The students learn a great deal whilst also enjoying themselves. They have to work as a team, create and refine their performances and develop confidence."



Future Business Magnates

The Year 8 FBM team completed the first challenge of the 2016-2017 competition in November. This challenge was a series of team building tasks. They scored 106 points, and are currently in joint 2nd with the top teams on 107 points. The team now have to come up with a business idea based on the theme "Connecting County Durham".



Year 11 Laing Gallery Visit

Year 11 students visited the Alice and Wonderland Exhibition at the Laing Gallery Newcastle. The exhibition Explores the different ways generations of illustrators, artists, musicians, filmmakers and designers over the past 150 years have been inspired by the story of the girl who went 'down the rabbit hole'. Students were able to see a variety of work celebrating *Alice in Wonderland* by Mervyn Peake, Ralph Steadman, Leonard Weisgard, Arthur Rackham, Peter Blake and Salvador Dali.

Our students were given a tour of the exhibition, they made studies and explored the exhibition. We then worked with the Gallery Education team creating work inspired by the Exhibition. The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience, especially being able to go into rooms and corridors not usually open to the public. The trip was planned to at the beginning of their Wonderland project, they have gone on to have created their own exciting and original personal response to the theme Wonderland as part of their GCSE course work.



Belmont Anthem

As part of a World War 1 project three Belmont County Councillors commissioned a Belmont Anthem, written by a local composer Andy Jackson. On Sunday 13th November 2016 there was a service of Remembrance held at St Mary Magdalene Church, Belmont. It was during the service that the newly established Belmont Community School girls choir performed the piece; also the first time the girls choir had performed in public.

Duke of Edinburgh

2016 has seen 13 students qualify for their Bronze Level Award. There are a further 15 students who have completed three sections, Skill, Physical and Volunteering. We hope to be able to offer them an opportunity to complete the full award in the spring although GCSEs have to be their priority.

Looking forward we have 30 students signed up for the Bronze award , many of whom are already well through three sections. Several of this years qualifiers are looking forward to starting their Silver Award.

After the Christmas break we will be starting the Expedition training and planning their adventures in the fairer weather.

Thanks to all of our staff who give up their time freely to help the students with their awards.



Belmont Choir Carol Service

Our first Belmont Choir Carol Service was a success. Families and the local community were invited to come along and sing Christmas carols at St Mary Magdalene Church, Belmont. The service combined performances by the Belmont girls choir, boys choir, solo instrumentalists and sing along carols. The students did amazingly well, we are looking forward to next year's service already!



Fundraising

A chilly November morning didn't put our Y11 and some of our Y10 girls off completing an in-school Race for Life in aid of Cancer Research. Between them the girls raised nearly £500. Fantastic achievement ladies.



In addition to this, students have held a number of Bake Sales in-

cluding ones for Mcmillan Cancer Trust, Cancer Research, Edu-Cake and Cele-Bake Event and Help 4 Heroes. We participated in Jeans4Genes day and Christmas Jumper day.

Sage Brass Workshop & Concert

Recently two year 9 students (Annabell Frewin-Wood and Kimberley Scott) and one year 7 (Emily Frewin-Wood) took part in a brass workshop day and concert at The Sage Gateshead. They really pushed themselves out of their comfort zones by moving from the elementary group into the main band and performed brilliantly in the concert too.



Certificate Presentation Evening

It was great to see so many of our 2016 leavers at the Certificate Presentation evening recently. Ex- students and their families were invited into school to receive their certificates, have some refreshments and catch up with staff and each other.



Attendance Awards

We were very proud to have 2 ex-students, Thomas McGranaghan and Ellen Richardson, presented with 100% School Attendance award. The students, along with Mr Marsden and Mr Nesbitt, attended the awards evening at Durham County Cricket Club. This Local Authority Award is for young people who have achieved a 100% attendance record during the whole of their secondary or primary school career. This is a tremendous achievement and one which, I am sure you will agree, is worthy of recognition and celebration.



Art can do many things



It can be a form of expression, relaxation, enjoyment. It can make a statement, make someone stop and think about an issue. It can celebrate, motivate and it can change lives. Our year 7s explored their ideas about remembrance each student creating a poppy, some included text and poetry, collage and drawings. We created artwork which was displayed in the school reception and taken by school representatives to the local remembrance service.



Year 9 and 10 Art and Photography Trip to Beamish Open Air Museum

As part of the GCSE projects in year 10 Art and Photography we took the students to Beamish Open Air Museum with its wealth of exciting visual stimulus to inform students thoughts and ideas about time gone by. Art students are currently studying Vintage Britain, this gave them an opportunity to make observational studies, take photographs and experience life in the North East during the 1820's, 1900's and 1940's. Photography students are currently developing their own personal Alphabet – looking for the letters in the environment both natural and manmade. Beamish provided many exciting opportunities for students to develop their technical knowledge and skills in photography.



Friends of Belmont

We are now the proud owners of a school minibus. A huge thank you to Friends of Belmont who, through their various fundraising activities, have bought the minibus! The bus has already been used extensively for school trips, footballs matches etc.

Thanks to the Friends of Belmont for yet another amazing Christmas Market recently. A great event, well attended.



We must also say a thank you and goodbye to Mr & Mrs Hirst, who have retired from their roles with Friends of Belmont. They have held pivotal roles within the Friends of Belmont for many years and they will be sorely missed.



Hot Choc Friday

This term we have introduced "Hot Choc Friday". This is an opportunity for staff to vote for students who have gone "over and above" that week, five students are then invited to the Head teacher's office for hot chocolate and cake. This has proven to be very popular with students.



Science Lab Refurbishment

Our Science block has undergone a huge refurbishment this term. The project has cost half a million pounds which has been funded by the Local Authority. We are hoping that students and staff will be settled back into the new classrooms fully by our return to school in January.



Our PSHE & SRE Programme in Years 7-10

We believe that promoting the health and well-being of our pupils is an important part of their overall education. We do this through our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) course. This looks at many topics including all kinds of relationships, physical / emotional health and living in the wider world. The aim of the PSHE course is to help our pupils make safe and informed decisions during their school years and beyond.

Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is an important part of the PSHE course. We will be teaching lessons about SRE in the Spring term which will include topics such as (puberty; relationships and communication skills; prevention of sexual abuse; body image; sexting and social media; pornography; consent).

During the course, pupils will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually and in an age appropriate manner. Each pupil's privacy will be respected, and no one will be asked to reveal personal information.

Some parts of SRE are compulsory - these are part of the National Curriculum for Science. Parents can withdraw their children from all other parts of SRE if they wish to do so. However, we believe that the presentation of sexual images in social and other media make it important that all young people have a place to discuss pressures, check facts and dispel myths.

Football News

Our Year 7 footballers have made an excellent start to the season, winning many of their games and showing great commitment and teamwork. The team have recently qualified for the County 5 a side final which is in January. Special mention to Year 8 Joseph Wharrior who attended district trials and made it through to the final trials.

Our other football teams have made inconsistent starts to the season.

Training for the boys football takes place on a Wednesday, girls on a Tuesday, 2:30—3:30pm.

Design and Technology has a facelift

The autumn term has been a busy time in the Design Technology and Alternative Curriculum area.

September saw the launch of the brand new GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition course with a group of Year 9 students while another group of Year 9 students embarked on their WJEC Constructing the Built Environment course.

Our year 11 students are making excellent progress with their Controlled Assessment work in Food, Electronic Products and Resistant Materials Technology courses and in their final year of their Construction course too.

The biggest changes to the department can be seen in our workshop area.

The acquisition of some new equipment along with the repositioning of some existing machines and the construction of a dividing wall between the workshop and adjacent classroom have transformed the learning environment.

The workshop boasts a new non-slip safety floor along with enhanced dust extraction on the machines while the classroom area has been transformed.

A new carpet, repaint, new benching, additional electrical sockets and 4 new computers have created a bespoke classroom for design development and CAD/CAM.

The Year 11 students are already benefitting from this improved ICT access as they develop their Electronic Products and Resistant Materials projects and we look forward to even more investment opportunities in the future.



Extra Dining Room

As a result of parental consultation surrounding our dining facilities we approached the Local Authority to help create an extension to our current dining hall.

Our extension is nearly complete and looking great so far!



Sports at Belmont

Basketball has been running after school this half term on a Wednesday. The students who have attended have had the opportunity to further develop their physical, cognitive and social skills in basketball and have enjoyed the competition against other students. We will be looking to arrange basketball fixtures against other schools next term. Finally, a special mention to Azuolas, Kasparus and Kristipus Grinius who are all currently playing for Durham Wildcats development squads.

Due to the huge popularity of the Infinite Air Club we will be extending this to Tuesday night as well as Thursday. There is a fee of £5 for this activity which includes transport to Infinite Air when available and 1 hour of trampolining. Students will need to collect a letter to attend this club and pay before the session. This club runs from 2.30-4pm.

Every Monday from 2.30-5.00pm table tennis coach Paul Henderson runs coaching for students interested in developing their skills in this sport. Players are welcome from all year groups and no experience is needed. Students who have attended the club have gone onto play at club standard and represent the school. Brand new equipment has been purchased to support the club including table tennis bats, ball and an electronic serving machine.

The PE department is delighted to be accredited as an assessment centre for Sports Leaders UK and have registered students on both the Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership, Level 2 Award in Sports Leadership and the Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership. Students will need to plan and deliver a sports session to a group of students and complete 10 hours of voluntary sports coaching. Any student who would like to take part in this awards programme need to attend after school on a Tuesday from 2.30-3.30pm in room 17. There is no cost to students to complete the qualification and at the end of the course students will gain a Nationally recognised qualification. Students will also gain vital leadership skills and be given opportunities to gain additional sports specific coaching awards.

The year 10 sports leaders did a fantastic job leading the Primary School Sports Hall Athletics competition on Friday 4th November 2016. Over 100 primary school children attended the event and the leaders had to demonstrate the activities and officiate the different events. Jennifer Lloyd Edwards the competition manager for the School Partnership said the leaders were a credit to the school.

Extra Curricular for next half term.

The following activities will run throughout next half term:

All of the activities (except Infinite Air) are free for students to attend and no previous experience is needed. PE kit is needed for all clubs.

Monday - Table tennis/ Badminton/ Basketball (all in Sportshall) (MCO)

Tuesday - Infinite Air (NRO) / Sports Leadership (GTA) / Boxing (SMI) Fitness room (MCO) Girls Football (SLA)

Wednesday - Dodgeball (GTA) Indoor 5 a side (SMI) Fitness room (MCO)

Thursday - GCSE PE Intervention / Infinite Air (MCO) / BTEC Coursework

**Our students, staff and governors hope you have a great Christmas break.
School re-opens to students on Wednesday 4th January 2017.**

