

VJJ/HEV

September 2016

Dear Parents /Carers

I am delighted to welcome back students, parents and staff to the new school year for the first time as the Headteacher of Caldew School. An especially warm welcome to our new Year 7 parents and to those families whose children have joined us in other year groups. It is always lovely to see our students return to school after the summer holiday ready to engage with their learning and in smart uniform. It has been a great start to the new academic year and I am sure your children have come home tired after their first few days back, but I have been impressed with their positive attitude to learning. I have spent a lot my time in the first week going into lessons to see students and staff at work and I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing a wide range of activities taking place and students fully focused on their learning. Our drive this year is to raise achievement even more, with a focus on challenge and stretch for all, high aspirations and high levels of engagement and participation. My theme when talking to students and staff at the start of the year has been for every member of our school community to be the best that we can be.

As many of you know I worked at Caldew alongside the previous Headteacher for the past four years as Deputy Headteacher and I am very proud of what we achieved during this time. I am committed to building on the improvements that the school has already made to ensure our students receive the best education possible. I am passionate about working with young people and I want to ensure that all students at Caldew School continue to enjoy a high quality education and achieve the qualifications that they need for the next stage in their lives, in a school where they feel valued, cared for and where all members of the school community are treated with respect. As well as myself taking on the role of Headteacher, I will be supported by both Mr Hammond and Miss Nordon as Acting Deputy Headteachers, as well as by the Assistant Headteachers, Mr James and Mr Greenwood and the Associate Assistant Headteachers, Mr Moody and Mr Beedie.

News

Exam Results

GCSE – We are very pleased with our results and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our students on their achievements, which are the culmination of five years of hard work and study. We are especially pleased with the high number of A* and A grades achieved by our students; 13 of them having achieved eight or more of these higher grades and nearly 40% of the year group gaining one or more A* or A. This is alongside the fact that 31% of the cohort achieved the EBacc suite of qualifications which is an improvement on last year's excellent result. The number of students achieving Maths and English remains strong and the percentage of students achieving a grade C or above in both these important subjects will again be above the anticipated national average. As a comprehensive school we are also proud to see that every student will leave with at least five or more passes.

This year the government introduced 'Progress 8' as new measure to judge school performance. Progress 8 indicates the average progress made by students in the school in eight subjects; English and Maths, three EBacc subjects and three other subjects and compares the actual results against expected performance. A score above 0 means that students achieved above what their prior attainment indicated. We have calculated we have a positive score for this year's results. However we are not complacent and there remains work to be done. I am very ambitious for all our students and I have high expectations of what they can achieve.

A level – The schools results maintained our strong record at A level with improvements in many areas. Once again we have seen an improvement in the average grade per entry. We are particularly pleased that a third of the students have achieved at least one grade A, but equally so that 100% of students have two or more A Level passes. Congratulations should go to all the Year 13 students on their A level results. There were many stand-out results but a special mention goes to Lucy Wright with 3 A**s, gaining her entry to Oxford University to study Physics. All students achieved the grades they needed to move onto their choice of university or into jobs with training.

New Staff

As always at the start of a new academic year there have been some changes of staff and I would like to welcome the following new teachers to Caldeu School:

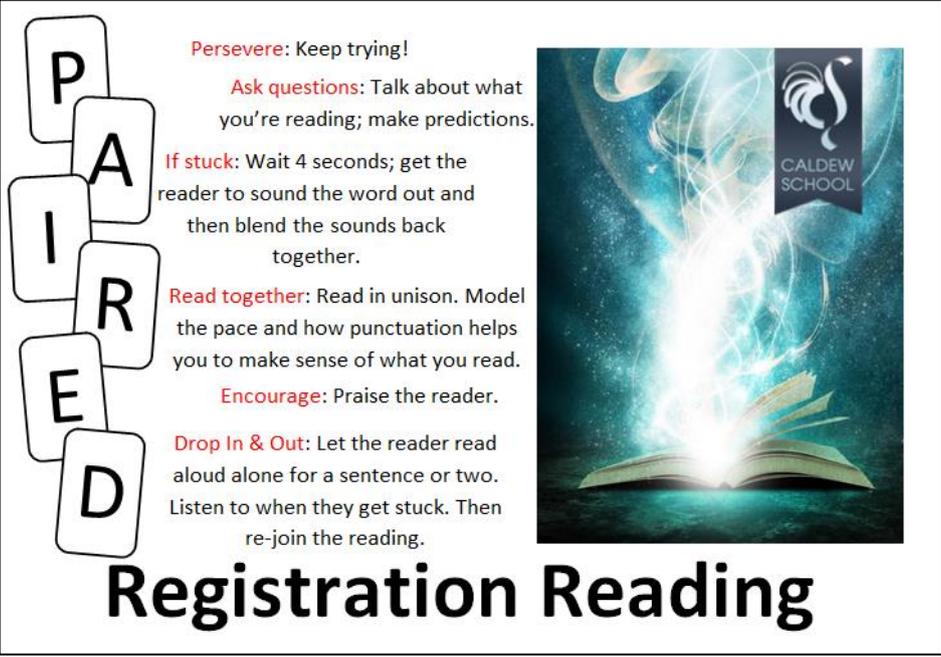
Miss Joanne Atkinson	Head of House (Mosedale)/Teacher of PE
Mr Matthew Huntbatch	Teacher of Computing and ICT
Mr Andrew Runciman	Teacher of Computing and ICT

Borneo

During the summer, eight students from Year 11 and 13 went on an experience of a lifetime to Borneo accompanied by Miss Hewitt. They spent three weeks exploring the country and taking part in various activities including a jungle camp, visiting the Orangutan Conservation Centre and helping to paint a church with the local community. Speaking to the students this week it is clear it was an amazing adventure that has helped them develop as individuals. One student said to me that it had been a “life-changing experience”.

Reading

The ability to read fluently and understand texts is vitally important and we have identified this as a focus for our school this year. In our tutor groups, students are supporting each other by reading together in registration once a week. Paired reading means that students actually read aloud, in unison which can seem a little strange at first! Students will need to have a suitable reading book with them. You might want to try this at home too so here’s the guide that students have been given to get them started...



Persevere: Keep trying!

Ask questions: Talk about what you’re reading; make predictions.

If stuck: Wait 4 seconds; get the reader to sound the word out and then blend the sounds back together.

Read together: Read in unison. Model the pace and how punctuation helps you to make sense of what you read.

Encourage: Praise the reader.

Drop In & Out: Let the reader read aloud alone for a sentence or two. Listen to when they get stuck. Then re-join the reading.

Registration Reading

We know that students are used to reading aloud regularly to an adult at primary school and we would encourage students to continue with this. It would also be useful to talk to students about what they're reading, checking that they understand it: get them to pick out key information; ask them summarise what they've read; ask them to predict what will happen next; give them statements which they have to identify as true or false in the text. All of this will make a huge difference to students' reading skills, helping them in every subject that they study.

Information

Safety at the Start and End of the School Day

Parking and access to the school is a continuing challenge. The road at the front of school gets very busy especially at the end of the school day and the safety of our students is obviously our priority. To that end I would like to remind you that:

- Students should not be picked up or dropped off in the Visitors Car Park (next to Reception).
- Parents picking up students from the Sports Hall Car Park need to park in a designated space either by 3:00pm or wait until the buses have departed at 3:20pm.
- We do stop cars from leaving the Sports Hall Car Park until all the buses have left. To ensure students' safety no cars should be moving through the car park when students are walking through it to reach their buses.
- No cars should be parked in the bus bays along the front of the school at the end of the school day.
- Cars should not stop or park on the footpath opposite the school. It is dangerous for students to cross the road and increases the volume of traffic.
- Parents should never park in the roadway leading to Nestlé. This is a private road and is extremely busy with lorries constantly needing access to the site.
- If parking is not available at school there is a car park a short walk away in Dalston village.

Students Cycling to School

We encourage students to cycle to and from school as this is a healthy and environmental way for them to travel. However we want students to do this safely. The road outside school gets very busy, especially at the end of the school day and students sometimes ride out of the school gates without looking. Last week we narrowly avoided a serious accident. As a result, students must now walk their bikes off the school site. If your child rides their bike to school, please can you talk to them about how to do this in a safe manner. We also strongly encourage students to wear cycle helmets. As we move into the darker mornings and evenings, please ensure students wear appropriate bright/high visibility clothing and their bikes are fitted with lights.

Attendance

If you need to discuss your child's attendance or if your child needs to be absent from school for any reason you need to contact the school before 9:30am on each day of the absence. You can either 'phone to speak to Mrs Richardson (Education Attendance Officer) on 01228 710044 or send a text message to 07860 002 169.

Contacting Staff

Communication with you as parents is the key to ensuring that together we can improve the outcomes for students. You can find the e-mail addresses on the dedicated staff page on the school website and they will normally respond to you within 24 hours. If you wish to speak to a member of staff then please contact the school's reception. As most staff teach the majority of the day, they may not be available to take a call. They will return calls as soon as is possible, although in some cases that may not be until the following day. I would encourage all parents to contact us as soon as you have any concerns or questions. Dealing with issues quickly means that they rarely become insurmountable. As always, if you have any concerns about how a matter has been dealt with please

do contact myself, Mr Hammond or Miss Nordon directly and we will make every effort to address your concerns. My personal school email is included at the foot of this letter and I welcome any communication from parents

A Full School...

The school has never been fuller which is testament to the faith parents, both locally and out of catchment, place in us. The school now has around 1100 students and over 160 staff employed to ensure that they receive the best experience possible. We are already due to contest admission appeals in the coming weeks as I would say we have reached the point that, without extra space, we are sadly unable to accommodate any more students.

Upcoming Events

Year 7, 10 and 11 Target Setting Evening

This takes place on Wednesday 14 September (5.30pm – 8.00pm) and will be a chance for parents and students to meet with their Form Tutors to discuss their individual academic targets set for this year. There have been national changes to the way GCSE exams are to be graded with the introduction of a 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest) grading system that replaces the A*-G grades in a number of subjects. Students' targets have been set to reflect this new grading system and Form Tutors will be able to explain the new system to you at this evening. For Year 11 it will also provide the opportunity to review where students are on their GCSE courses and how they can start the year in the most positive fashion possible. It is also an opportunity for you to raise any other issues or concerns that you have.

Year 13 and Year 12 Parents' Evenings

The Year 13 Parents' Evening takes place on Wednesday 5 October (5.30pm – 8.00pm) and will give parents an opportunity to discuss AS results from the summer as well as providing further guidance on strengths and weaknesses as the UCAS deadlines approach. Year 12 will have their Parents' Evening on Wednesday 12 October (5.30pm – 8.00pm) which will reflect on how well students have started their A level courses

I believe the relationship between students, parents and teachers is fundamental to students achieving their potential and I am very much looking forward to working with you over the coming years to ensure the best outcomes for your children.

Yours faithfully

Ms Vicki Jackson
Headteacher

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