

VJJ/HEV

January 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Time is flying by, it seems like only a few days since we returned after the Christmas holidays yet we are already half way through the first half of this term. The start of a calendar year signals the beginning of the last full term of Year 11 and Year 13 students' time at school; it is sobering to think that they now have approximately 13 weeks of school left before the exams begin. For the rest of the students in the main school it is a time to take stock, to focus on targets and make improvements in whatever they do. The school continues to be a busy place; Year 12 have just sat their mock examinations and Year 13 are about to start theirs. Revision and coursework sessions have started for Year 11 at both lunchtimes and after school. Lots of extracurricular activities are taking place that enrich the experiences of our students and help them to develop their confidence and social skills. With this in mind, I would encourage all our students to make the most of the opportunities that the school offers them. Time passes by quickly and we all need to make the most of every minute.

News

An Inspirational Visit - Acceptance without Exception

On Tuesday 24 January, we were very honoured to host a visit from Sir Ian McKellen. Caldew School is proud to be a 'Stonewall Champion'. Stonewall is a charity at the forefront of ensuring equal rights for LGBT people living in Britain and Sir Ian is a founder and high-profile supporter of the charity. As a school, we are committed to working with Stonewall to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. Sir Ian gave a presentation to over 300 students from Years 9, 12 and 13 and his message of tolerance and support was well received. Our students found the talk inspirational and I was very proud of the thoughtful questions they asked him. I was also delighted that Sir Ian made time after his speech to meet our students, chat, sign autographs and have his picture taken. I know that this was really appreciated by everyone. Sir Ian is known for his roles ranging from Shakespeare to modern theatre as well as starring in films, including as Gandalf in the Lord of the Rings and Hobbit films. His visit will be a fond memory for the school community for years to come.

School Performance Tables

As you may have seen in the press, the National School Performance Tables have been released and these show our students continue to achieve well at GCSE. This year they report the new Progress 8 measure that shows the progress students made at GCSE since joining the school, based on their performance at Key Stage 2. It shows that students at Caldew School performed in line with expectations. Our students also performed well above the national average on the Ebacc measure and in line with national results in terms of the number of students achieving grade C or above in English and Maths.

What is the school doing to support Year 11 with revision?

Year 11 have some extremely important weeks ahead of them. Revision is the "Key to Success" and it is important they start their revision early and do not leave things to the last minute. Students have at least nine subjects to revise. As a school we are supporting Year 11 with their revision in the following ways:

- We have both lunchtime and after-school revision sessions for the majority of subjects. Keep checking our website for details of these sessions.
- Year 11 have been given a “Revision Booklet” which contains helpful tips for students on revision. It also contains information and advice from all subjects. This is also available on the website.
- There is also a useful guide for parents/carers on the website which gives ideas and techniques to help support your child to achieve their potential.
- Students can access Doodle to help with their revision.
- Students can also access Moodle for their revision.
- As a school we have joined “PIXL – Partners in Excellence”. Your child has been given details on how to download two apps that can help them with their revision – a Maths app and an English Literature app. This can be downloaded to a PC, tablet or ‘phone. Please encourage your child to use it as it really will help improve their grade.

Maths Revision

All Year 11 students have been issued with CGP revision guides and have logins for the PiXL Maths app which contains videos, written guides and tests on all the content for GCSE Maths. The internet address is mathsapp.pixl.org.uk and the app can be downloaded free of charge for mobile ‘phones and tablets. The school id is CD4634, the username is the student’s surname and first initial and the password is the student’s first name.

English Revision

To support students with their English revision, they can download and use the PiXL English app. The internet address is englishapp.pixl.org.uk and the app can be downloaded free of charge for mobile ‘phones and tablets. The school id is CD4634, the username is the student’s surname and first initial and the password is the student’s first name. This will support students in revising the English Literature texts already studied in Years 10 and 11, revising key quotations and securing knowledge in preparation for the closed book exams.

Students will also receive a revision pack over the next week, complete with sample papers, exam questions and knowledge organisers.

School Council

Last half term was a busy one for the School Council! On the charity front, we sent shoeboxes to Romania as part of the Shoebox Appeal, and we raised over £350 for Save the Children by holding a Christmas Jumper Day on the last day of term.

We were very involved in the creation of a new Code of Conduct, making sure that every student has had an opportunity to contribute ideas and opinions as to what is important for us as a school. This will be extended this term as we consider the Vision and Values of the school and what we think our school should stand for. We're trying to make the school a better place by listening to what the students have to say. Already this half term, we've changed the way we communicate about assemblies and are getting ready to launch a ‘Keep Left’ campaign to keep us moving safely around the building. Watch this space for more!

New Staff

Welcome to the following new staff who joined us in January; Mrs Atkinson as our new Deputy Headteacher who will be strengthening our leadership team, Mrs Riddick in Languages who is covering Miss Gimenez’s maternity leave and Miss Robinson as a Teaching Assistant in our SEN department.

Year 11 Work Ready Day

This annual event took place in January with a series of morning workshops, focusing on the skills required to gain entry into future employment and training. In the afternoon students took part in sessions preparing application forms and taking part in individual mock interviews. Local employers volunteered their time and gave effective feedback to students so that they were able to plan their next steps. Visitors were impressed with the enthusiasm and skills demonstrated and our students found the day enjoyable and beneficial for their future aspirations

Anti-Bullying Poster Competition

As part of Anti Bullying Week we held a competition to design an anti-bullying poster. The winner was Ruby Marix Whitlock (L/RCL) and her posters are now displayed around the school. A copy of the poster is attached to this letter.

Holocaust Memorial Day

We were invited by Cumbria Police to take part in the 2017 Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations. Along with St. Michael's CE Primary School, some of our students participated in a service at St. Michael's Church Dalston on Friday 27 January. Year 9 History students, the choir and orchestra took part in the event. Cumbria's Police Crime Commissioner, Peter McCall was also in attendance.

During the week leading up to Holocaust Memorial Day, there was a display in school to raise students' awareness of the events of the Holocaust.

Former Student's Success

As you may have seen in the press, former Caldew student Jacob Polley (who is featured on our Famous 50 boards outside the Theatre) won the prestigious and lucrative T.S. Eliot Prize for poetry.

Performing Arts News

Our Performing Arts department continues to attract large numbers of students. We have more students than ever entered to compete in this year's Carlisle Music and Drama Festival in March. The Music and Drama categories range from solo performances to large ensembles such as the school choir.

Information

Attendance Matters

As a school we are striving to improve students' attendance as research shows that there is a clear link between good attendance at school and achievement in exams. Students that have 95% attendance or above throughout their schooling have a far greater chance of GCSE exam success. We endeavour to develop life skills in students and in the world of work, attendance below 95% might be questioned. To promote the importance of school attendance there are various initiatives taking place in school:

- Five students have won a £10 Nando's voucher in the Autumn Term 100% Attendance Draw.
- In the Spring Term students with 100% attendance will receive an Easter egg.
- Attendance Week 2017 was a successful week in raising awareness throughout the school community about good attendance resulting in good school achievement and well-being.

Procedure for School Closure

We are now in that part of winter where we are more likely to have inclement weather. We will only close the school as a very last resort and the default position will always be to stay open. At times some bus routes may be cancelled but the school remains open for those students who can make it.

The reality is that there may be occasions when the site is deemed unsafe or we may have insufficient staff that can get into school and in this case we may need to close either fully or for some year groups. If this should happen then the closure will be announced via the school text system, the school website and through local media channels as early as is practical. If you have changed your mobile or email contacts please let the School Office know so that we can update our records accordingly.

Parent View

As you may be aware, Parent View is an online questionnaire that records the views of parents on the school that their children attend and is referred to at times by OFSTED. Feedback from parents is always helpful to us and I would like to remind you that the questionnaire is available to complete at any time at www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk

Upcoming Events

Year 9 Parents' and Options Evening

This takes place on Thursday 9 February (5.30pm-8.30pm) and is an important evening for both students and parents to attend. Options choices are important decisions and you will be able to find out about the process and discuss your child's possible choices with subject teachers. Students will receive their options booklets on Monday 30 January and it is recommended that you read and discuss the information in them with your child.

Date	Description
Monday 6 February – Friday 10 February	Year 13 Mock Examinations
Thursday 9 February	Year 9 Parents' and Options Evening
Monday 13 February- Friday 17 February	Year 11 Inspira Interviews <i>(organised by Mr Greenwood)</i>

Yours faithfully

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