



HeadLines

Firstly, I would like to say how privileged I felt to be part of the process which selected next year's Head Boy and Girl and their deputies. There were several Year 12s who had come through to the final interviews and they were all exceptional students. Congratulations to Ed Gardner and Jenny Tucker who have become our new Head Boy and Girl and to Alex Brook and Rosie Hutton, their deputies.

Some interesting and thought provoking news items over the past week have given me pause for thought. The first was a report from the Institute of Policy Research saying that schools in England needed better teachers and that teachers would become better with more training, better training and increased observations of their lessons. Julia Margo, Associate Director of the IPPR said that once children's background was taken into account, the quality of their teacher was the single most important factor determining performance. Now forgive me if I have missed the point but isn't that a case of stating the obvious? I know that in this school, the teaching quality of our staff adds value to the performance of our students. That's why I collected our value added award from the SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, not Sandra Samwell's Afternoon Tea as suggested by someone recently). However, I think the point that the IPPR was trying to make was that teachers are not good enough. That is something that is not borne out by my experience of our exceptional teachers or Ofsted's judgement that only 3% of teaching in England is inadequate.

The second news item was about data from NCSL, yet another acronym which in this case means National College for School Leadership, revealing that more than half the teachers who have passed the headteacher qualification [NPQH] do not go on to be headteachers. Whether this is linked to the story about less people wanting to be headteachers because of the pressure caused by inspections is uncertain. If you want my view, and as the author of 'headlines' I will proffer it anyway; I regard teaching and being a Headteacher as a vocation. One has to have a hunger and a passion and a calling. As soon as that disappears, then it is time to move on to something less demanding. The accountability is high but the rewards are immense and I don't mean the salaries of those so-called superheads. The rewards are there to be found in the joy of teaching itself and, in my case, in leading a school where teachers excel and students can achieve at their best so that their education is lifelong and their potential is realised.

Sandra Samwell, Headteacher

HEADTEACHER'S COMMENDATIONS

For Excellent Work in Science: Alex Burgess 8C, Andrew Coe 8P, Glen Taylor 8P, Tasmin Mason 8A, Amelie Lecouche 8P, Ivo Murrell 8C.

For Service to the School: James Price 8A, Oliver Price 8C, Kieran Dukes 8N, Zachary Farrell 8C, Jacob Buckley 8C, James Baxter 8C.

For Excellent Model Making in History: Adam Nayler 7L, Liam Bothwell 7L.

For Excellent Use of ICT in History: Amy Walters 7N.

For Vivid Story-Telling in History: Jess Delaney 7N, Matt Sipton 7N.

For Supporting Student Induction: Ashleigh Coe 8N, Sophie Barnett 8N, Beth Duffield 8N, Zanaba Poland 8N.

For Public Speaking: Toby Podmore 13N, Andrew Mawer 13P, Yu-Fan Zhao 13A.

For Form Presentation: Louise Hendley, Hayley Brown, Letitia Rees-Harris, Susannah Farrell, Christopher Bowman, Tenniola Cole-Etti, Yvonne Yum, Jessica Sharp, Jamie Hoskins, Thomas Braggins, Hannah Marie Shogbesan, James Stagg, Emily Kirton, Alexandra Wells, John Kennedy, Richard Owen, Frazer Milligan, Robin Clancy 13F.

BCG VACCINATION PROGRAMME – INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Information about the BCG vaccination programme has been sent home with all students in Years 7 and 8. If, having read the information, you believe your child should be considered for vaccination please return the completed screening form to Student Services, no later than Friday 23rd May.

Matron

Sickness/absence line

Please will all parents contact us daily if your child is sick, going to be late in due to a medical appointment, or is absent for any other reason. Please call our sickness/absence line on 01442 390103 by 9am if possible.

Gold Letters issued recently:

Letter 165 Year 11 Celebrations

Letter 166 Year 8 Summer Update

Letter 167 Year 9 Triple Science Info Evening

Letter 168 Year 11 'Woman in Black' trip



arts colleges

Library Notices

Orders from the Scholastic 'Cover to Cover' magazine need to be in the Library by the end of the school day, Monday 12th May.

There are still a number of overdue books. Please return them to the Library immediately.

There will be no further loans made to Year 11 and Year 13 and I would be very grateful if any books still on loan could be returned before the start of the exams.

A Queue for Knowledge

Recently, in the Times newspaper there have been articles on the renewed popularity of the British Public Library; we in the HHS library can certainly empathise, as the recent improvements to our learning environment have surprised even those amongst us who surveyed opinion and did the necessary costings. Apparently, when Lady Antonia Fraser found herself queuing to get into the British Public Library, then having to queue for the cloakroom, and then again to actually get to the books, she was not a happy Lady and wrote to the Times, complaining that the 'access policy' adopted by the library was in her words 'access gone mad'. What was she complaining about? That the library has become a popular place for undergraduates to study and, heaven forbid, read books?

Being the national centre for research and reading, the next day a journalist from the Times newspaper went to check it out. As he tried to register for a reader's pass, he was greeted by the words, 'I'm afraid we are rather crowded at the moment, the place is full of panicky students all trying to finish their dissertations'. Apparently, even a distinguished historian author had been exiled temporarily to a windowsill.

Whilst we, in our very humble school library, cannot boast the grandeur of the British Public Library, we can boast about our popularity amongst students. Every day we now have hundreds of students using the library, it is 'the place to be'. We have a fabulous new range of reading material, much of which has been sponsored by you when you have come to parent evenings, for which we are grateful. We also have the comfort of beanbags, sofas and chairs. It has become the place to study for many of the sixth formers. After school, course work or homework is caught up on, and early morning sessions see students tweaking work before submitting it.

What fitter place then is there than the school library to mine for knowledge and to illuminate the unknown? Where better to catch the contagion of learning than here, from other young readers? The British Library is the Plimsoll line other libraries should not sink below, a haven of books and a place for study.

We pride ourselves on offering a warm welcome and we like to think that, as one lady who travelled into London only to be denied access said, 'It is such a wonderful place to study, I don't believe people should be excluded'. Our library does get busy; if you want to get in, come early, and if we are almost full, we shall just work round it.

A Tompkins, Assistant Librarian

English Revision Guides

The English Department now has four revision guides for sale covering most aspects of the English Language and Literature examinations. Prices start at 20p and rise to 60p depending on the size of booklet. Students interested should talk to their English teacher or Mrs Evans for more details.

Mrs Evans, English Department

Sport

FIXTURES

Mon 12th May

Yrs 8/10 County League Athletics Match 4 @ St Albans 3.30 – 7 pm

Tues 13th May

Yr 10 County Cup Cricket v St Albans Boys (A) 3.30 – 7 pm, Yrs 7/8 Rounders @ Kings Langley

Thur 15th May

Yrs 9/10 Rounders @ Ashlyns

Fri 16th May

Yrs 8/10 English Schools Track & Field Cup @ Jarman Park 10 am – 5.30 pm

RESULTS

1st XI Soccer – District Cup Final v Kings Langley lost 5-2



Dates for Your Diary

Blue Week

12th May Yrs 10/11 Science Exam

12th May – 4th Jun AS Examinations*

12th May – 23rd Jun GCSE Examinations*

14th May Yr 10 RE GCSE Exam

15th May SEN visit to Duxford

16th May Yrs 8/10 County Athletics

16th–19th May D of E Bronze Practice Expedition

Gold Week

19th May Yr 9 Triple Science Parents Info Evening 7 pm

21st May – 20th Jun A2 Examinations*

23rd May Rock Challenge at Portsmouth

25th May D of E Silver/Gold Planning Day

* Practical examinations may take place outside of this date range

Summer Term Calendar amendment: The House

Music Festival has moved to Monday 30th June

PTA News

Summer Fair - 14 June

We have a Watford Football Club pennant, signed by this season's team, which we wish to auction to raise funds for the Summer Fair. The pennant is on display in the Trophy Cabinet (House Corridor by Student Services). If you would like to place a bid for it, bring your bid to Student Services by 3.30 pm 13th June.

Flaggs (Estate Agents) will donate funds to us if we display boards (like 'For Sale' boards) advertising the School Fair and Flaggs. Please let us know if you would be prepared to have a board on your property for approximately two weeks before the Fair. Thank you if you have already offered – we still need more.

Keyway Driving School have agreed to attend the Fair and offer a short taster in one of their cars with a qualified instructor.

Please let us know if you would 'Make and Donate' a cake for our cake stall (not fresh cream). Just let us know now, and bring your cake along on the day. Thank you to those who have offered.

Our Raffle this year will have prizes of £100 cash, a Television, £50 cash, and a DVD player - watch out for tickets shortly.

Our next committee meeting is 12th May from 7pm until approximately 8pm in the Library - please come along as we need your help and ideas.

Judith Stallworthy, Chair HHSA (01442 393266 or mobile 07749 727350), email s.stallworthy@sky.com