



February 2014

In Touch

Message from the Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer

Although this is a relatively short term it is also an exceptionally busy one. This is particularly the case for all students in key examination years as their final examinations begin in less than three months' time.

Year 11 students took preliminary examinations in most subjects before Christmas and a number also sat actual GCSEs in Maths and English. They are now busy completing controlled assessments in many subjects and are being directed to attend our extensive programme of support and revision which runs every evening until the end of the examination period. All students will have received a timetable and a letter informing them which evenings they need to attend. Parents of Year 11 students will shortly be notified of the study programme which will run through the Easter and May holidays. We have been very pleased so far with the students' response to these extra sessions. I am very appreciative that staff in all subject areas are giving of their time so willingly to support students well beyond the school day.

Final preparations are underway for our annual Gym, Dance and Movement evening performances which will take place on 18, 19 and 20 February. This year's theme is 'School of Rock' and our students and pupils from all our feeder primary schools will I'm sure once again provide high quality, creative performances to three appreciative audiences. Do try to come along; tickets are available from the school office but are selling fast!

I have again been asked to draw parents/carers' attention to the matter of student eligibility for free school meals. A large number of the students who join us from primary school who have been in receipt of free school meals do not continue to receive them at secondary school. We strongly believe that far more students are eligible for free school meals than are in receipt of them.

Advice on how to apply together with the relevant application form is available via a link from the parents section of the school website; alternatively, this information is available from the school office. I can reassure you that every aspect of the process, from application to receipt of meals, is totally confidential.

It is really important that all of our students with an entitlement to free school meals receive them: the Government introduced the Pupil Premium during the last academic year, which generates additional funding to support students who are on Free School Meals, looked after by the Local Authority or with a parent in the armed forces. Listed below is information relating to the entitlement criteria.

You are entitled to free school meals for your children if you receive:

Income Support or
Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based) or
State Pension Credit (Guaranteed Credit) or
Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) or
Child Tax Credit (with an annual income of less than £16,190)
Asylum Seeker Status

If any of these describes your situation, you are strongly encouraged to apply. If you require any assistance, please contact the school and we will organise for you to have confidential and individual support with the paperwork if you wish.

Finally, following a competitive election with five candidates, I would like to congratulate Mrs Tracy Losada on her appointment as Parent Governor. Mrs Losada has a child in Year 8. We look forward to welcoming her to the next full Governors' meeting in March.

Yours sincerely

P Ward

Enterprise Day

On 3rd, 4th and 5th February, Year 10 were on Enterprise at the Consort Hotel. Every student took part and developed team work and business skills. On each day, four different tutor groups went to compete against each other and in each tutor group there were three teams. Each team member had a different role to play within the team and had a role in the final product presentation.



First, you needed a product and we were told that it had to have a green theme. After that, different members of the team went to different presentations to help them with the role they had chosen and each presentation was presented by a local business person. Then we had to make the product and design a presentation that you could present to another tutor.



Each tutor decided a winning product to represent the tutor and then they had to pitch their product to the judges. The judges were criticising and harsh when it came to questioning the product but they eventually came up with a winner for each day. The winners will go back to compete for the final winner of Year 10 enterprise day.

By Emilia Ashton Year 10

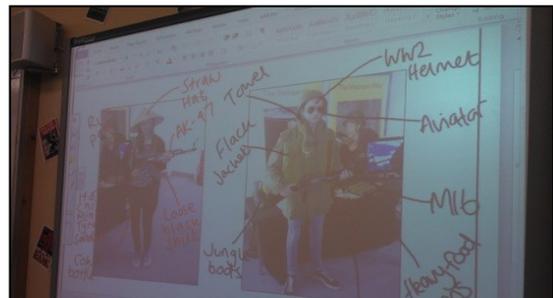
GCSE History trip to IWM Duxford, 7th February 2014

We went to IWM Duxford on 7th February and listened to two people speak to us about the planes and artefacts in the museum.

Firstly, we were given a tour of the American Air Museum. We were told about how the Cold War developed through this tour and by looking at the different types of aircraft used by the USA during the Vietnam War. Next, we were taken to a workshop that allowed us to explore the guerrilla tactics used by the Vietcong in more detail.

We watched videos, held artefacts and were allowed to try on a G.I. and Vietcong uniform (see photographs).

This was really useful because we've been able to use everything that we learned in our practise exam questions and to make our revision more focused.



Using what we learned back at school.

As well as all of this, we were able to see the artefacts close up which was really interesting - especially the Ho Chi Minh sandals that showed that the Vietcong recycled US waste and used it as weapons against them! We really enjoyed this trip and would recommend it to other GCSE students in the future.

**By Megan Hobson and Christina Yardy (Y11
GCSE History Students)**



Sam and Sarah dressing up as a G.I. and Vietcong soldier.

German trip 2013

The week before the Christmas holidays everyone was getting ready for Christmas except Ms Williamson, Miss Gracey and Mr Ashmoore who took ten students to Berlin in Germany.



We went there for five days and did many Williamson miles (one Williamson mile is equivalent to one normal mile) as we walked almost everywhere. We visited Check Point Charlie, the Berlin Wall, the Brandenburger Tor (the Brandenburg gate), the Olympic Stadium, the Reichstag (German Parliament), many Christmas markets and much more, as well as spotting many Berlin bears.



We were encouraged to speak German throughout the trip and tried to speak as much as we could but if they didn't understand us, we resorted to just pointing at what we wanted. It was a great trip and was extremely enjoyable.

By Emilia Ashton Year 10

WORLD WAR ONE VIDEO CONFERENCE

On Monday 27th January, a group of Year 8 students took part in a video conference with the National Learning Archives and conversed with an actor playing a soldier named Henry Fairhurst, who served in the Barnsley Pals.

The activity was designed to further educate pupils on World War One and its terrors, and involved a question-and-answer session with Henry to find out as much as possible about his experiences during the war.

During the conference, it was discovered that he served in both Egypt and France, and he was at the Battle of the Somme. He also showed us his kit and other artefacts which was really interesting. He explained the difficulties of life in the trenches and the many different things he had to go through in order to survive, as well as the people he knew that had died or had been injured.

The entire experience was very eye-opening and fun as well as enlightening and everyone really enjoyed it.

By Nemesha Nelson Y8

Wath Student Finalist in National Competition!

At the start of the year many GCSE and A-level students took part in a National competition with the WJEC exam board called '*Inspire Me*'. Students had to write a lively article about their most memorable English lesson. The article was aimed at English teachers. Students had to write an article that would inspire teachers to plan and deliver engaging and memorable lessons.

One of our Y11 students, Amy Smallman came third place! This is an incredible achievement. Amy's fabulous article will be published in the WJEC newsletter. Well done Amy! Read Amy's article on page 4.

Amy's Prize-winning Article: A First Class Lesson

The sun beat down upon us, silhouetting tall palm trees against the azure sky. We gazed at the sight of a faint trail of smoke high above, slowly dissipating as a gentle breeze shifted the warm air, obliterating the last trace of our terrifying descent towards the ocean only hours before. Glancing around at the startled young faces of my companions - classmates - I saw not fear, but wonder in their eyes, as salty water dripped from their hair and onto their uniforms.

We had not expected this.

When we had filed unwillingly into our English classroom for the first lesson of the last half-term of the year, we had anticipated another few weeks of comparative boredom, before we could escape into the sunshine-filled embrace of the summer holidays. Instead, we found a bright-eyed student teacher waiting for us, bursting with enthusiasm for the lessons she had prepared for us.

She invited us to sit down, and then told us to rest our heads on the table and close our eyes. Faintly confused by this, we complied; she began to speak.

At once we were in a plane flying over a vast, tropical ocean. Out of the windows, we could see a huge bank of clouds, dark and ominous, up ahead. The pilot turned to avoid it as it rushed towards us, blasting fierce gusts of wind in our direction. The plane rocked with the turbulence like a ship on a stormy sea. A blinding flash of lightning surrounded us, igniting the plane's tail, and we felt the fire's heat choke us as my classmates and I stumbled out of the emergency exit doors and into the air. The air rushed past us as we plummeted towards the ocean, our fall only interrupted the sharp jerk of our parachutes opening. We landed in the sea in a panicked tangle of threads. And then, by unspoken consensus, the surviving children swam towards a tiny island visible on the horizon, finally stumbling out of the crashing waves awed and bewildered by what we had experienced.

Our illusion was suddenly shattered when our teacher stopped talking and asked us how this made us feel. No one spoke. We didn't know what we were feeling. This was so different from everything that our class had done before that we struggled to find words to describe it.

"Fear," said a voice from the back of the classroom, breaking our silence.

"Panic?" asked another. Soon a steady stream of feelings and emotions was pouring out of us. I had never seen a class full of twelve year olds so animated in a lesson before. Later, we wrote down our experience and began to continue the story: What was the island like? How would we survive? Would someone come to rescue us?

It opened my mind to the possibility that English did not always have to be about deciphering plays written centuries ago, or writing a story that never reached its conclusion because there wasn't enough time in a lesson to finish it.

This one English lesson showed me that above all else, writing is an art, not a science as we had been led to believe by our past experience. You're allowed to get lost inside another world inside your head sometimes. You're allowed to close your eyes and let a reader's voice echo through your mind, painting vivid pictures. You're allowed to let yourself go a little and become someone else for a while.

When you write, you don't *have* to focus on giving your story a coherent beginning, middle and end. You don't *have* to plan your similes and metaphors before you start – or even plan at all, if that works for you. There is not just one way to tell a story, and you shouldn't try to follow a specific method for the sake of fulfilling artificially-imposed lesson objectives. In that lesson, I learnt that words represent the freedom to think and to feel, and to express yourself freely with a depth of emotion few other means are able to achieve.

I was truly inspired.





Children In Need

In November 2013, we raised just over £2000 for Children in Need by having a non-uniform day, cake sales and activities all around school.

Half Term Activities

Following on from the success of our October Holiday activities, we are planning a number of activities for our students to take part in during the February Half Term Holidays as well.

In October, we offered Beauty School, Rotherham United Football Skills Club, and Basic Cooking and Home Survival Skills for our older students.

During the February holidays, we will be opening Beauty School again as well as offering an Xbox game design day and a day out climbing. These activities are free to students on the Go For It Scheme and incur a very small charge for all other students. Contact Miss S Owen on 01709 879029 for more information.

Wheelchair Basketball

Our PE department will be hosting a basketball wheelchair coach and setting up a basketball wheelchair game for our students on Thursday so they can see what it's like to play this game for themselves.

Christmas!

The Christmas Concert and Pantomime were a great success again this year with many students showcasing their considerable talents. We also held our annual hamper competition again in December. Every tutor group created a hamper full of goodies—that's over 90 hampers in total. Our hampers are then taken out to the elderly and those in need in our local community. Here are some pictures of the hampers...



(left) Members of the Student Council who helped to deliver hampers with Mrs Cunningham and Headteacher, Mrs Ward.

Anti Bullying Week

During October 2013, we celebrated Anti-Bullying Week with lots of activities to raise awareness of bullying issues. We have lots of ways to deal with bullying in school including Resolve, our anti-bullying panel, and Safe Havens, a lunchtime retreat where vulnerable students can come to socialise and make new friends.

School Clubs and Activities

We offer a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities for our students to take part in. Currently, students can do activities from art club, sports, boxercise, science club, film clubs (in foreign languages as well as English), media club, scrabble club, craft club, Minecraft computer game design and many other things in between. Clubs are available at lunch times, after school, on weekends (sports) and during the holidays. Please call Reception on 01709 760222 for more details.

Staff Fundraising

Members of staff will be completing a sponsored walk at the end of March to raise money for various local charities...The Child's Heart Surgery Fund (Leeds), Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice and Wath Cricket Club's junior development fund, which a number of our own students benefit from. The walk is 50 miles, from York Racecourse back to Wath CC. Some of our students who are members of the cricket club will also be taking part over a shorter 20 or 10 miles.



Valentine's Day Poems

L O V E

So here it is
Love
Is
Dangerous
It is a storm
Violent and unpredictable
It is the wind
Sudden and fierce
It is a fire
Raging and hot
It is the sea
Changing and filled with ups and downs
Highs and lows
It is the shadow
Dark and unknown
It is the apocalypse
Near and unstoppable
It is the gamble
It is the game
The one
No-one
Can win
The one
Everyone
Wants
To
Win
Love is the beating heart
It keeps us all going
It is hope
The final remnant in Pandora's Box
It is strength
It is faith
It keeps us on our feet
Love is what it is on the tin
Rewarding
Challenging
Teaching
Fragile
Fierce
Perfect

Will You Be My Valentine?

I won't try to woo you with meaningless words
Or cheap gifts
No
I won't offer a carefully crafted speech and call
it 'heartfelt'
Because it isn't
No
I will give you my heart
Brutal, pure, cracked
In all its flaws
It is yours
I offer you not a card that repeats itself year after
year
I will give you my heart
Lethal, deadly, fragile
Romance is not what it is to others as it is to me
It is dangerous
A game
A gamble
Only the clever ones win
Only the liars make it through
I give you my heart
I am no liar
I will lose
And you will win
Because the gifts you gave
Were cheap
The words you gave
Were meaningless
The card you gave
Was repeated
The speech
Was not heartfelt
It was crafted
Carefully
So I give you my heart
Because it's all I have left
And then
I say
" Will you be my Valentine? "

**Both poems are written by Namesha Nelson
in Y8**





Literacy Corner



Word of the week - term 3

B Q O F X R B J T P Y H P E O
 P R G O B M P J R J T O L C A
 E D H M G R E O N M I M H P R
 D T I X X C P O Y T L O P A Z
 S B A Y Q A S L W O A P Z W G
 W D F R G X D Q T D U H I N A
 O M C A A E V E R N Q O A W X
 A D N X A P L K D V E B W M P
 S D Q T B H E R D E S I G N V
 A G N R P Z S S V Z W A Z N O
 C O D M Y T Q F D G C B Z S B
 P P A H G J F W H W C F M D Z
 U P J Q I R J F H W O N T L A
 P L V Z S M R G I L B I M X C
 T N E U R G N O C F B S B D D

Here are this half term's Word of the Week. Well done to everyone who managed to use them in your lessons!

Have a go at finding them in this wordsearch!

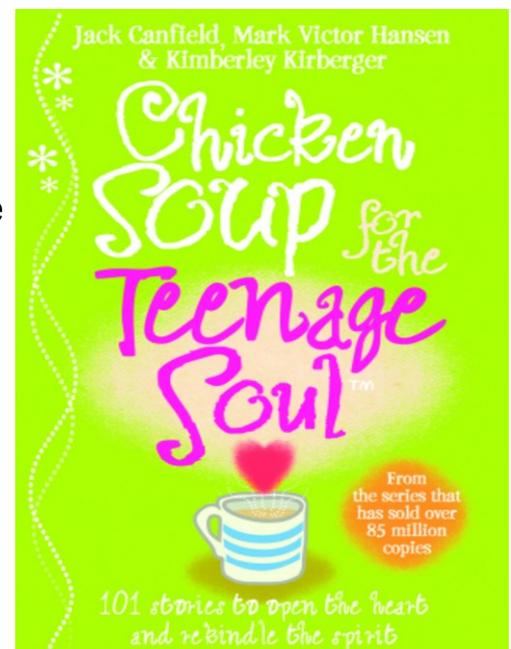
CONGRUENT
HOMOPHOBIA
SEPARATE

DESIGN
PAMPHLET

EQUALITY
PROPAGANDA

This half-term's Featured Read

Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul is your handbook for surviving and succeeding during the exciting teen years with both your sanity and sense of humour intact. It contains invaluable lessons on the nature of friendship and love, the importance of belief in the future and the value of respect for yourself and others. It also deals with tough issues like death, suicide and the loss of love. You'll relate to and learn from the inspirational stories, without feeling criticised or judged. Like a good friend, *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* will be there for you when you need someone and cheer you up when you're down.



ATTENDANCE FEATURE

NEW EWO

I would like to inform you of our new Education Welfare Officer: Mrs Tyler, who started with us at the end of January. Mrs Tyler was formerly employed in the Children and Families Department within RMBC and is now looking forward to her new venture.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME



All parents should have now received a letter regarding new legislation relating to holidays in term time. As a result of this legislation, the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form, more commonly known as the holiday form has a different format. Can I ask that ALL parts of this form be completed in advance of taking any holiday and the form returned to the Attendance Office at least 1 month prior to the commencement date of the holiday.

MEDICAL ROOM

Parents please note that any child who attends the medical room at school does not have to be taken home. Over recent years, students have gone to the medical room with the most minor of ailments and the medical room staff have a duty to contact you and give you the option of collecting your child or sending them back to class. It is your decision! After all, if your child can walk to lessons and sit in a chair behind a desk, that is all we ask them to do.

Can I also take this opportunity to inform you that if your child suffers from any aches, be it headache, toothache, stomach ache, ear ache which can easily be treated with pain killers please send the medication into school with them together with a note from yourself authorising your child to take the medication in school. Your child can deposit the medication with the medical room staff for safe keeping and can administer it as and when required.

If you have any questions concerning any of the above please contact Mr A. Clapham on 01709 765317

Mr A Clapham
(Attendance Office)

Dates for your diaries:

World Book Day: Thursday 6th March
Y8 Careers Review Day: Friday 7th March
Y8 Next 3 Years' Evening: Tuesday 11th March, Hall 7pm

Rock Night: Thursday 3rd April in the Main Hall.
Tickets are £3.
See Mrs Hole in F1.



Fascinating Facts

The most popular theory about Valentine's Day dates back to the time of the Roman Empire during the reign of Claudius II, 270 A.D. Claudius didn't want men to marry during wartime because he believed single men made better soldiers. Bishop Valentine went against his wishes and performed secret wedding ceremonies.

Comedy Corner!

What do you call a very small Valentine?

A Valentiny!