



**Friday 23rd October 2020**

Dear Parents/Carers,

As a long, busy and different but still immensely rewarding half term draws to a close, it is a pleasure to write to you with updates on: refurbishment projects in school; our updated risk assessment; Sixth Form open evening for Y11 students and parents; a series of good news messages from performing arts, the Open Learning Centre, art, and Y7; and our work to support remembrance events in the community and link this important event to literacy in our school.

### **Refurbishments (Sports Hall, Sixth Form, DT)**

The Sports Hall refurbishment is well underway and should be completed by the Christmas break - all being well. Soon after that, we will begin the £725,000 refurbishment of our sixth form block ready for the September 2021 cohort to benefit from. Existing students will be rehoused carefully during the build and it will not compromise the teaching and learning that they will receive, or the health and safety benefits of our pod system. Following on from the success we have experienced this year in terms of bidding for condition improvement funding from the Department for Education, the trust is in the process of preparing next year's bid which is for a full upgrade to the fabric of the building in our Design & Technology area. Fingers crossed we are successful again.

### **Update to risk assessment**

North Yorkshire County Council have provided schools with updated risk assessments for full opening of schools during the pandemic this week. We have adopted the updated version and added any school-specific information in orange text. A copy of this latest document is available on our website under the 'Covid-19' tab.

### **Sixth Form open evening**

Just another quick reminder that Sixth Form Opening evening will be taking place virtually on Tuesday 3rd November. The microsite goes live from 5pm but can be viewed at any time during the evening or over the following days and months. There will also be an opportunity for parents and students to drop into live appointments with subject specialists on the evening itself to learn more about the courses on offer, and pose questions via the chat function of an online meeting. More information has been circulated by Mr Weedy, Head of Sixth Form which you will receive very shortly if you have not already.



## Parents' evenings

Over the last week, we have been putting together replacement plans for conducting our parents' evenings which are due to take place across the year. After half term, we will be writing to parents to inform you of how and when these events will take place. We will also be inviting parents/carers in Y11 and Y13 to make appointments for their upcoming events.

## Good news from performing arts

Our very own Stokesley School female singing group *Belissima* have been selected to appear in the Virtual National Festival of Music for Youth. Their video has been sent in and we will shortly be receiving information on when it will go live!

This week, the Y10s completed their GCSE Drama mock exam performance of 'Two' by Jim Cartwright. Although we could not have a live audience, the students really captured the essence of the play's highlights including Reece's portrayal of the neurotic Mr Iger and Georgie and Leon's emotive final scene. The energy and commitment of the students has been amazing and they really pulled it out the bag!

## Good news from the Open Learning Centre

National Poetry Day is celebrated every year, at the beginning of October, with the aim of inspiring people of all ages to write, share and enjoy poetry. This year our students explored the theme of 'Vision' looking towards the future, post-covid, and drawing inspiration from the global internet sensation 'The Great Realisation'. A young British poet, Tom Roberts, penned a piece about the good things that will hopefully come out of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Open Learning Centre invited students to write a poem about their vision of a better world post-Covid. The quantity and quality of entries was astounding. Students of all ages produced some wonderful and emotive poems; their entries were thought provoking, passionate and profound and it was extremely difficult to select a winner. As a consequence, four poems were selected - with one outright winner receiving the additional prize of a signed copy of 'The Great Realisation'. Winners were: Poppy in Y7; Goodness in Y8; and Rowan and Harvey in Y9. Prizes included leather bound writing books with quill pens and an assortment of sweet treats.



### Good news from Y7

Our Y7s have made such a brilliant start to secondary school life. Mrs Metcalfe has recently finished reviewing all of their 'transition bingo' activities completed over lockdown and the summer, and was delighted to report back on some wonderful work. There were 13 students in particular who have been given an 'above and beyond' award presented in today's achievement assembly.

We were also blown away by Samuel who, after a geography lesson on issues that exist within rural and urban areas, took it upon himself to complete a litter pick in his local area. Now that really is 'being the best you can be'!

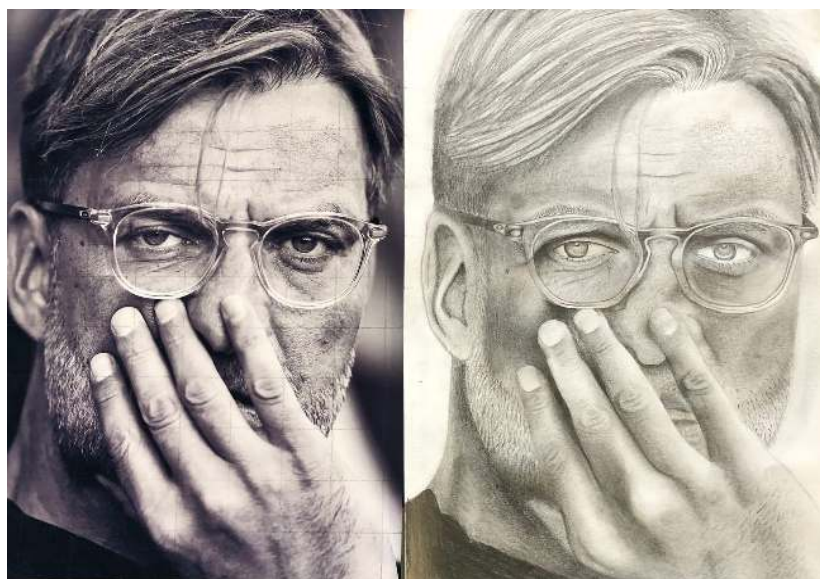
### Good news from the languages department

We have received news from a former student, Florie Brennan, who left us from Y13 in the summer. She has been in touch during her gap year. Having achieved an A grade in her Spanish A level, she is now working as an au pair in Madrid and teaching English as a foreign language. We are very proud of how she is improving her already excellent language skills and expanding her horizons.

### Good news from the art department

Many of our current year 11s engaged extremely well with the distance learning and made excellent progress during lockdown. Most students have caught up to where they would normally be at this stage and are displaying a high level of maturity and independence. We have also noticed a marked improvement in the level of ambition in both classes since we returned to school.

The standard of art students from all year groups produced during lockdown was also phenomenal. For those of you that don't follow us on Facebook, please see below a photograph and sketch side-by-side of Jurgen Klopp created by one of our very talented male students.





## Remembrance: our work in the community and literacy links

Remembrance Sunday and Armistice day will quickly be upon us once half term finishes. We will be commemorating Armistice Day on Wednesday 11th November in School with a live broadcast to students in their classrooms and a respectful honouring of the two minutes' silence followed by The Last Post played by one of our Y11 students. My virtual assemblies in the week straight after half term will also focus on remembrance.

Earlier this year we were asked to take on the organisation of the poppy display on the green in Stokesley. Ms Byrne is coordinating the display and her Year 10 Events Operations class will be working with her to lay out the displays on Monday 2nd November. We are humbled to play this important role in our community and the students are really looking forward to being involved in setting out the display for all the community to see.

Literacy in November will also have a Remembrance Day focus: history and English have teamed up to make this happen. We will be reading a selection of diary entries and letters from soldiers during World War 2. This will give our younger students a better understanding of the purpose of the diaries and the experiences that the soldiers endured. Our older students will also be writing from the perspective of a soldier during any of the major wars. They will be writing in the form of a therapeutic and historical diary that allows them to empathise with soldiers and imagine the scenes they experienced.

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Finally, I hope you can enjoy a change of pace next week, whatever it is you will be doing. We feel very privileged to have such supportive parents and carers and look forward to working with you all again after our short (and much needed!) break.

Yours faithfully,

**Mrs H. L. Millett**  
Headteacher