

**15th March 2024**

Dear Parents / Carers

### Headteacher's Update

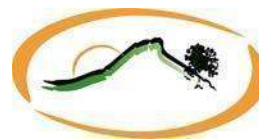
As we approach the end of term I wanted to write to you and share some of the positive developments in our school community over the past five weeks. Whilst we have needed to deliver some very important and difficult messages in the past two weeks it is important to note our dedicated staff and enthusiastic students continue to provide lots of reasons to celebrate. A personal highlight was being wowed by the engaging visit from the Royal Institution Science Show event "Energy LIVE". I am very grateful to Mrs Hope for organising this event as part of her excellent work to promote the sciences to a broad audience of young people in our school and local community. It was also wonderful to see the enthusiasm of those students working with our Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Darbyshire, to showcase International Women's Day. The assemblies and activities during the week were thought provoking and inspirational. We remain steadfast in our commitment to provide these enriching experiences and opportunities to our young people and we look forward to sharing more of these activities with you in our future updates.

### Quick read:

- Staffing update: Our pastoral teams will be restructured for September 2024 to include a non teaching pastoral head of year for each year group with Directors of Key Stage leading.
- Trauma Informed Schools: Staff are taking part in a project which will help us support those who suffer with trauma or mental health issues that are proving to be a barrier to learning.
- End of term reminder: Easter holiday 12 o'clock (midday) finish time.
- Vaping: The parent forum will take place on Thursday 11th April - 5:30pm at Stokesley School.
- Drama news from Mrs. Kent including information on our latest school production "Matilda"; details of an upcoming fundraising concert and review of our Y11 GCSE drama production.

### Pastoral Restructure - September 2024

Early this year senior leaders and the governing board of Stokesley School made the decision to restructure our pastoral team with the aim of having a non teaching pastoral year leader attached to each year group linked to a teaching director of Key Stage. This is in part in response to continued pressures of supporting young people with post-pandemic behavioural and wellbeing issues but also an acknowledgement that our current structure with teaching heads of year adds significant pressure to those colleagues who try to fit in



their pastoral role with the pressures of a heavy teaching load. Following a staff consultation period I can now announce the following from September 2024:

Director of Key Stage Three: Mr Hamer  
Director of Key Stage Four: Mrs Bailey  
Director of Key Stage Five: Mrs Jeal

Pastoral Head of Year 7: Mr Durham  
Pastoral Head of Year 8 - *Current Year 7*: Mrs Dumphy Brook  
Pastoral Head of Year 10 - *Current Year 9*: Miss Mesley  
Pastoral Head of Year for Sixth Form: Mr Dinsdale

*We will shortly be advertising for the upcoming new posts of Head of Year 9 and Year 11.*

Mrs Metcalfe will be taking on a leadership post linked to our quality of education and curriculum development. Mr Wilson will be continuing to support the efforts of the PE department and our expanding series of house activities.

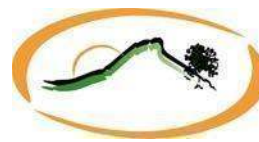
All current heads of year will be working together to ensure a smooth transition to our new structure and I will share the news on the recruitment to our pastoral team at the earliest opportunity.

### Trauma Informed Schools

We are currently taking part in a national project with Trauma Informed Schools UK and the Home Office. Following the pandemic we have seen a surge in young people who have suffered with trauma or mental health problems including those whose troubled behaviour acts as a barrier to learning. The school had already been recognised during the last OFSTED for its outstanding work with young people requiring additional support but we feel it is important to continue to focus on this important aspect of our work.

### End of Term -Easter Holidays (Reminder)

As discussed in my last update, the school closes at lunchtime at the end of each term to allow for important staff training events in preparation for the upcoming term, this term these are linked to the Trauma Informed Schools' Project. On Friday 22nd March school will close for Easter at 12 midday with buses collecting students. Students will be able to collect any free school meals throughout an earlier lunch period on that final day of term. We will have some limited capacity for students to remain in school until the 3:15pm in our OLC (library). Please contact your child's head of year (via [stokesley@arete.uk](mailto:stokesley@arete.uk)) if you wish for this arrangement to be put in place.



### Vaping communication and parent forum

Thank you to everyone who sent messages to the school in relation to our recent communications around vaping. We very much appreciate your support and the conversations you have described with your children. In consultation with North Yorkshire's Public Health Team and other local agencies we have set a date for a parent forum. The aim is to provide you with information about the concerning developments with vaping and the responses to it set in the context of our school, community and county. The forum will take place on Thursday 11th April - 5:30pm at Stokesley School. If in the meantime you have any questions or further concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch directly with us at school.

### National Reading Champions Quiz

Four of our enthusiastic readers from Years 7 and 8 took part in the National Reading Champions Quiz on Friday 8th March. This involved competing against 26 other schools from around Yorkshire for three hours on all sorts of book-related questions. They were delighted to finish in joint third place which will see them all receive book vouchers as prizes. They only just missed out on going to London for the grand final by 4 points so they should feel very proud of their efforts!

### Personal Development

#### COMING UP: House assemblies

In the weeks after the Easter holidays, we'll be holding our second round of House Assemblies! It's been so great to see the House system developing over the course of the year, and to see students' allegiance to their house growing! As the interest in the weekly totaliser grows, it's so lovely to see students going the extra mile for their house: earning house points in and out of lessons, taking part in competitions and activities, and demonstrating our three core values of ambitious, ready and respectful on a daily basis. In the House assemblies, students who have been appointed as lower school house captains will be given their badge, and students will be awarded with House ties and extra curricular pin badges, so if they think they're eligible make sure that they apply through the appropriate channels! We would hate to miss anybody out.

#### House Ties



To be eligible for a House tie (alongside evidence of their commitment to the school and the house), students must:

- Have at least 500 House Points
- Have fewer than 5 negatives
- Have Attendance of at least 96%
- Have Ambition scores of 3 and 4 in their PRPs



Some students have already applied, but there's still plenty of time to do so before the next House Assemblies if your child would like to. If they're unsure what to do, encourage them to speak to their tutor or pop Mrs. Fox an email - any member of staff in school will gladly support them.

### Pin badges

Students can win pin badges for exceptional commitment to different areas of our extra-curricular school life, and there are a total of 9 to collect.

Red - sports

Purple - arts

Yellow - excellence

Brown - logic

White - representing the county

Green - sustainability

Blue - communication

Orange - representing the school

Sparkly orange - competition winner

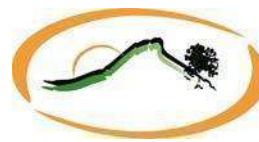
Mrs Fox has loved having emails from parents/carers whose children are eligible for different badges, and from students applying on their own behalf so please keep them coming! Staff who run clubs are in the process of putting names forward for exceptional commitments and achievements in their clubs, but if you think your child is a worthy recipient of a county pin badge (or any other for that matter!), please don't hesitate to get in touch with her ([efox@stk.arete.uk](mailto:efox@stk.arete.uk)).

### Amazing competition news

Since we last wrote to you we have had some amazing news from our local Rotary group. You may remember that students were given the opportunity to enter a Young Writer competition on the theme of Rebuilding. Well, we entered over 70 students into the competition and are delighted to announce that we have two local winners, both of whom have also won the district competition, and two second and third place winners. The two district winners (both of whom have bagged themselves £100!) have had their work passed up to the National competition to be in with a chance of winning that too...watch this space, and well done to all students who entered!

Closer to home, we also ran a school pet selfie competition, with over 100 students sending us their creative (and very cute) pet selfies! We thought you might like to see a selection of the winning shots below, all of which really impressed our panel of judges. We love how many of our students have taken part in competitions this year, and are looking forward to widening our offer as time goes on!





### Enrichment: The Invisible Man theatre company visit

Our year 10 students were treated - at the end of February - to a visit from The Invisible Man theatre company, who delivered a play and follow up workshop focused around choices and decision making. The play was quite hard hitting, but we were so impressed with the maturity of our students, particularly in the workshop where they asked some really thought provoking questions, and gave some really thoughtful responses to some quite difficult questions from the actors.

The workshops were a great opportunity to see the discussion skills that our students are developing in their weekly **LIFE** lessons in action, and to see their confidence in tackling quite challenging topics.

### LIFE lessons

This mention of **LIFE** lessons feels like a good opportunity just to remind you that students have weekly PSHE lessons through form time, which deal with some of life's more challenging topics, and help to prepare students for their lives outside of school. These lessons are discussion based, and aim to get young people thinking about the world and the challenges it poses. Currently, students are discussing and debating their career options, using **UNIFROG** as a platform to support them ([www.unifrog.com](http://www.unifrog.com)).

Most lessons are part of our planned curriculum, but we very much keep our ears to the ground and ensure that we also plan and deliver reactive lessons where necessary to particular year groups. If there is ever anything that you feel like you'd like to see discussed with students, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



### Y11 and Y13 Matters

Mrs Darbyshire has written to you separately about all matters pertaining to Y11 and Y13 including students' public examination and upcoming celebration events. These letters are available to view on our [website](#). The next update will come out to you in the second week after the Easter break. Students have all signed their Statement of Entry this half term and where a student had more than one public examination in the same slot, they have been given the information in a revised timetable. We have been very proud of our students who have completed NEA and coursework in recent weeks. This has included the Drama practical exam, the Hospitality cooking examination and our GCSE PE students who have completed recordings of their dance, volleyball, swimming and other sporting activities for their coursework marks. Speaking tests are now underway.

### Student Leadership

Student Leaders have been busy supporting a number of initiatives across the last half term. Notably, raising awareness of and performing and presenting our first International Women's Day Showcase. Secondly, they have also been raising funds through bake sales and other sponsored events for the final phase of the Place for Peace which is now open for all to use.

Finally, they have been focussing on our sustainability drive to reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill. We have also received applications for our Senior Student Leader positions which will take place in the last week of the term.

### Assemblies

This half term has seen our senior leadership team and some external guests presenting to students on a wide range of subjects. This has included, International Women's Day, World Book Day, Careers Week, Sustainability and the Big Plastic Count, National No Smoking Day with a focus on the dangers of vaping, an address from the Well-being in Mind Team and two mock results days for Y11 and Y13.

### Attendance and Punctuality

Whilst our attendance remains strong and significantly better than national comparisons, we do have a proportion of students who regularly take days off when feeling a little under the weather. You may have seen or heard adverts from the Department for Education's national drive to improve attendance. The advice is clear, unless your child is genuinely too ill to go to school, it is a parent's / carer's responsibility to ensure their child is in school every day. Your child should aim to have at least **96% attendance** across the year. Children with less than 96% attendance run the risk of underperforming in their examinations by 1-2 grades in each subject. Children that attend regularly in lower years are happier, become more involved in our enrichment curriculum and maintain positive attendance throughout their examination years. For more information about attendance and punctuality, please visit our [website](#).



## World Book Day

Thursday 7th March was World Book Day and there were lots of fun activities in the OLC for students to take part in. These included an emoji book quiz, bookmark making, Book Jenga game, wordsearches, quizzes, guess the book character activity and lots more! It was great to see students enjoying themselves with not a single chromebook in sight! Students also enjoyed reading a six-part thriller story across the course of the day, which was a cautionary tale about getting addicted to your phone and taking too many selfies!

Students have been given a £1 World Book Day voucher which they can take to any bookshop or large supermarket and exchange for one of the free World Book Day books, or use it to get £1 off the cost of any other book. These vouchers are valid until the end of March.

## Drama News from Mrs. Kent

### School Production

The cast of Matilda are really starting to get to grips with the main numbers of the show now and our backstage team is working hard on the set design. Thank you for all the parent support with boxes, paint brushes, costumes and bunting. We have also been kindly donated some props / costumes from a local primary school including a full size Amanda Thripp doll. All donations are hugely appreciated and will help really bring this show to life. News about ticket sales will be released in May and I'm sure we can look forward to sell out shows.

### Fundraising Concert

Our annual fundraising concert will be happening in May. The theme this year will be 'Songs from Overseas' and students will be preparing performances from a range of different countries. We are hopeful that this concert will take place in the new Drama Hall and will be our launch of our fantastic new venue. The date will be confirmed once the Drama Hall is available for use.

### Y11 GCSE Drama

On February 28th the GCSE Drama students took to the stage, floor and classroom to perform for their GCSE Drama exam. Students performed and designed for two different scenes from the same play. Over the space of 4 and a half hours we showcased 43 different performances from 20 different plays. The students were just exceptional and each one of them performed to their absolute best. It was a joy to watch.



### Science in Schools Show

As part of our partnership with the Ogden Trust we were delighted to welcome the Royal Institution to Stokesley School. The Royal Institution is an independent charity creating opportunities for the public and scientists to explore science together. The Ogden Trust is a charitable trust that exists to promote the teaching and learning of physics, by enabling innovative physics teaching to take place and facilitate collaborative working between schools and other organisations. They spent the whole day at our school delivering their Energy LIVE! Show to our students and the wider community.



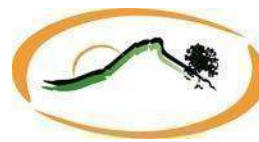
Energy LIVE is an exciting audience led show, delving into the different stores of energy and how they affect our lives. Through lively, fire-based demonstrations they take the intimidation out of the terminology around energy and show us just how simple this subject can be.

Seven primary schools within our Ogden Trust Partnership participated in the morning show and on the afternoon, Year 9 Stokesley School attended the show. In the evening, we were thrilled to welcome families from our local community to a different show which focused on the science of how we launch a rocket into space by looking at how to overcome the forces and combustion reactions.

This experience involved around 500 young people from our region, who left the show fired up about physics and a newly-enthused approach to science.







### Royal Institution - Masterclass Update

As part of our partnership with the Ogden Trust we were able to facilitate training from the Royal Institution for our sixth form students for them to develop their presentation and communication skills. The initial training took place in October, and since then, groups have been working hard on the content and resources for their workshops to make them ready to deliver to our primary schools. The workshops cover a variety of areas - the evolution of the atmosphere, structural engineering, circuits and using microscopes to study cells. The sixth formers have now started rehearsing their masterclass workshops with our year 7 students and teacher to develop their science communication and presentation skills. 7-Hermes were delighted to be taught by Alfie Gibson when he presented his workshop around the evolution of the atmosphere, and loved the opportunity to produce a storyboard and then present what they had learned to each other.



### Ogden Trust Update - Outreach work with Primary Schools

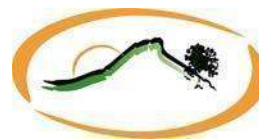
On 11th March, Mrs Hope spent the afternoon at one of the Arete Learning Trust primary feeder schools to help them launch their celebration of British Science Week. She delivered a whole school assembly on the theme of time including a demonstration of explosive volcanic eruptions and their role in the evolution of our atmosphere and the importance of science in our everyday lives. She then ran 3 workshops on the role of physics in music where the students were able to make their own straw oboes and lolly stick harmonicas which I am sure all the parents enjoyed as much as the students did!

### Linnet Aircraft Restoration Project Update

Since September 2022, our students have been able to work with a group of volunteers to restore a vintage aircraft to its former glory. Last year the students focused on refurbishing the engine of the aircraft. This year, the focus is the fuselage.

The group have worked to detach the moving parts of the fuselage, remove and preserve the instrumentation from the cockpit and stripped the skin off the frame so that they can now begin the work of restoring the skeleton of the craft. During this process, they found the remains of mice that had made themselves a home in the plane whilst it was in storage!

The team were also invited to speak at a national meeting of the Vintage Aircraft Club to talk about the work that they were doing and to share with others their experiences.



The volunteers are doing a marvellous job of enthusing the students with their love of vintage aircraft and supporting them with developing their subject knowledge of flight and the engineering of aircraft. It has been wonderful to watch their confidence, communication and teamworking skills grow.

We thank Julian Hill and Martin Slater and the other volunteers and organisations who are supporting this unique experience for our students.



## Dates for your diary

Monday 18 March

Wednesday 20 March

Friday 22 March

Monday 25 March - Friday 5 April

Monday 8 April

Monday 15 April

Monday 6 May

Thursday 23 / Friday 24 May

Monday 27 May - Friday 3 June

Y10 parents' evening 3.30 - 6.30pm

Y10 & 12 PRP 2 reports go home

School Term ends at 12pm

Easter holiday

Summer term begins

Y7 parents' evening 3.30 - 6.30pm

May Day Bank Holiday

Y12 Geography Trip to Holderness

Whit half term holiday

Yours faithfully

**Mr M Fenwick**  
Headteacher