

February 2025

Parents / Carers

Headteacher's Update

As the days lengthen and the nights grow lighter, we can feel the unmistakable shift towards spring. Our school community contains families from different backgrounds and those working in farming communities will perhaps be more acutely aware of the changes that spring leads to. In assemblies we have reminded students that this season is a time of renewal, a reminder of the cyclical nature of life, and a powerful symbol of hope and optimism. Whilst walking with my family on the North York Moors last weekend, I was reminded of the power of this change, seeing the emergence of new life and vibrant colour in the flora and fauna that surrounded our stroll. We too can embrace this period as a time of growth and opportunity for our students. The spring term offers a fresh start, a chance to build upon the progress made in the previous months and to look forward with renewed enthusiasm. The longer days provide more time for learning and exploration, both inside and outside the classroom. The brighter evenings encourage outdoor activities and a sense of wellbeing, which are essential for both physical and mental health. This spring, we continue our commitment to provide a rich and stimulating learning environment where every student can flourish. We will be focusing on students establishing high expectations for themselves and thinking about how their actions can have a positive impact on others. Our focus is not just on high expectations for academic performance but also on each student's personal development. I have been delighted to see the success of our under 14 netball team who have worked hard to progress to the national finals as well as our students who became "Teamwork Champions" at the Lego Vex IQ competition and now progress to the UK finals in March.

I am equally proud to say that we have exceptionally high numbers of students engaging in extra curricular clubs, activities and community events and it was heartening to see the number of parents and carers who had shared their children's achievements outside of school so that these could be formally recognised within. I would encourage you to talk to your children about their aspirations for this term and how they can make the most of the opportunities available to them. We believe that every young person has the potential to achieve great things, and we are here to support them every step of the way. Just as spring nurtures new growth, we aim to nurture the talents and abilities of each student, working in partnership with you, to allow them to thrive and reach their full potential.



SPA Update

As Sister Act rehearsals are in full swing our voices are rising across the drama department. I have been so impressed with how the set is coming together. Mr Fox's team of backstage crew has been planning, designing and painting to really transform our stage. Well done to Mr Fox and all of the crew.

To further get us in the 70s spirit, this term team SPA hosted a 70s style disco on Tuesday 11th February. With a photo booth, fancy dress competition and dance offs this was a great fundraising event for the department, and fantastic to see so many of our psychedelic students there.

Following on from this I am pleased to announce that in March our school Vocal Group has been invited to perform as part of the Middlesbrough Town Hall Shine Festival on the morning of Monday 10th March. We will be singing three pieces from pop and musical theatre. Parents/carers are invited to come along and support on the morning when we are hoping to impress the judges with our beautiful harmonies and the usual SPA pizzazz.

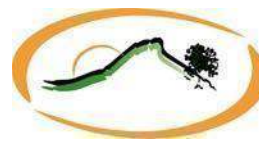
We have a number of theatre trips coming up including a trip to see Driftwood at Stockton Arc and North by Northwest at York Theatre Royal. The latter, directed by the infamous Emma Rice, will take place on the 25th March and should be an outstanding show. As part of the ticket price there is also a post-show talk where our students can ask questions of the cast and creatives behind the show. There are a few spaces left on the trip so please message Mrs Kent if you would like a place.

In the classroom it has been a delight to watch the Y8s explore Darkwood Manor – their commitment to characterisations has been a joy to watch and myself and Miss Pottinger are really looking forward to the performances of their spooky scenes.

Finally, we look forward to inviting all parents/carers to our Easter SPA Showcase on Tuesday 1st April. This year we will be celebrating our ensembles in school and will have performances from Dance Club, Vocal group, Y11 and 10 band along with other groups within school. Get the date in your diaries as it's going to be a wonderful celebration.

Ogden Trust Partnership News

On the 29th January, we were delighted to welcome colleagues from the primary schools who are part of our Ogden Trust partnership. Over the course of the day, 8 staff from 6 schools participated in professional development to support teaching and learning of forces in year 3 and year 5. The schools who were able to join us, will shortly be receiving their boxes of fully funded equipment to support the activities that they met on the day.



U14 Netball

Stokesley U14 Netball team are the Regional Champions and have qualified for the National Schools!

After winning the County Championships in November, the team qualified for the regional finals which took place on Saturday 31st January at the EIS in Sheffield. The winners and runners up from Humberside and North, West, East and South Yorkshire all qualified to compete and we are delighted to report that Stokesley won all their games and were crowned Regional Champions.



The matches were hard fought against very tough opposition, and the team should be extremely proud of the effort, attitude, resilience and support they gave to each other throughout the day.

A special mention to Rejoice who was voted Overall Player of the Tournament by her fellow players.

Results were as follows:

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|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| v Bradford WON 8-4 | v Woodhouse Grove WON 13-7 |
| v Silverdale WON 7-4 | v Pocklington WON 17-2 |
| v Wolfreton WON 17-5 | v St. Peter's WON 13-7 |
| v Penistone Grammar WON 13-7 | |

We would like to thank the local clubs the girls attend for their continued brilliant coaching and support, and the local school in North Yorkshire who wished us good luck and have since sent messages of congratulations to the team.

The National Finals will take place at Sheffield on Saturday 22 March. If anyone would be willing to help support the team by sponsoring them please contact Miss Stewart in the PE dept. This would help the team purchase some additional equipment and kit. We wish the team the very best of luck in the finals.



Lego VEX

Last year, Mrs March-Shawcross successfully entered a raffle and won a bumper pack of Lego VEX IQ robotics education equipment for the school.

This kit has been used to set up a lunchtime club in school for students to develop their knowledge of robotics, engineering, and problem-solving and teamwork skills.

On the 1st February, the team went to Whickham School to compete in one of the regional tournaments for the first time.

The morning gave the 11 participating teams an opportunity to show off their individual driving and coding skills and the afternoon was a frenzy of 1 minute ranking heats where teams worked with each other to score as many points as they could. After this, the team were in fourth place. For the grand final, we were paired with a team from Fell Side Primary School, and through excellent teamwork to develop strategy, and communication during the match, the teams went on to secure joint first place in the Team Work Challenge and were presented with their award from Mark Ferguson, the MP for East Gateshead and Whickham.



To say that we are impressed with their first competition triumph is an understatement!

The team have now been invited to the UK finals at Telford in March.

Standards and Equipment

Thank you to our parents and carers for your support in efforts to ensure your children arrive on time and in full uniform since the start of this term. It is fantastic to see the students smartly presented and ready to learn. We have expanded our uniform loan store to try and support on the inevitable day that a shoe breaks or a tie has been lost, and students are aware that they should speak to their tutor or head of year during the morning line up to borrow items of uniform they require.



One item which has begun to creep in is hoodies. Please remind your child they are banned in school and will be confiscated if seen. The only thing that should be worn under the blazer is the shirt, tie and a school jumper if you choose to purchase one. Jackets must be worn over the blazer as an outer layer. We understand that students may need to bring mobile phones to school for various reasons, but we will be reminding students that these must not be used during school hours, and any student found to be using one will have their phone confiscated.

Next term we will be focussing on equipment, lesson attendance and supporting students to reduce the number of lesson exits that occur. We have recently noticed more students asking to leave lessons to go to the toilet or get a drink of water, as well as a small number with timeout cards. We would like to encourage parents and carers to review your child's Class Charts and note how many authorised lesson exits they have.

From the start of next term students will not be allowed to leave lessons to get a drink of water. We have explained previously that all students should bring a water bottle to school and fill this up on a morning, at break or at lunch time from one of the many water stations around school. Please can you encourage your child to check that they have their water bottle with them which is part of the required equipment list for Stokesley School. If you need to purchase a new 500ml water bottle, they will be available to buy from the school shop before school or at break time.

We will continue to sell bottled water and other drinks at break and lunchtime as well as the access to free drinking water across the school. Students will be reminded of this expectation in form time on their return from the half term break.

Heads of Year will also monitor the frequency of students leaving lessons for other reasons and may be in touch with parents and carers where concerns exist. At the heart of this, is an ambition to ensure that students are fully engaged in their lessons and learning to achieve the very best outcomes. We are sure that as parents and carers you will understand our responsibilities to ensure students are maximising their learning time.

As a reminder, all students are expected to bring a school bag which they keep with them throughout the day. Students should also have a fully charged Chromebook for use within form time and in lessons.

Ensuring your child is prepared for the school day helps to avoid conflict and accruing negative comments and crucially means they can make the most of their time whilst in school.

Thank you for your support.



Dates for your diary

3rd March	LegoVex National Championships
4th March	Y12 Geography trip to Middlesbrough
5th March	GCSE Science Live! – Sheffield
7th March	Y13 Economics & Sociology trip
10th March	Shine Choir Festival, Middlesbrough
11th March	Y12 RI Masterclass
13th March	Y12 Parents' Evening
20th March	Y10 Parents' Evening
25th March	Oxbridge Seminar, Thirsk (Y12)
25th March	'North by North West' theatre trip
1st April	Ensemble Concert
3rd April	Y7 Parents' Evening
7th – 21st April	Easter Holiday

Yours faithfully

Mr M Fenwick
Headteacher