

# Summer Newsletter



It has been a fantastic year at Balshaw's. One of the main reasons to be happy is the return to business with all of the extra-curricular activities that were put on hold during Covid. It is these activities which really enrich school life and develop skills beyond the curriculum. We have also seen a return to the number of trips that are available to our students as we got back to business as usual.

We saw Ofsted visit. They confirmed that Balshaw's "pupils benefit from the opportunities that leaders provide for their wider development." They also found that Balshaw's provides an "atmosphere around school that is calm and respectful." This is because there is "a strong sense of school community" which "helps pupils to develop their confidence and character."

Many parents have been incredibly generous in their support for the school library by purchasing books on our Library wish list. Our aim is to have the best library in Lancashire for young adult fiction. Our commitment to developing confident and enthusiastic readers was noted in our Ofsted report in which the Library "is a hub of activity" and "a range of programmes helps pupils to develop fluency and a love of reading." The student that reads is the student that succeeds- you can never read too many books!

So as you read through the end of year Head's Newsletter, enjoy finding out about the successes of our students, the activities that have taken place and updates on opportunities for your child over the summer holiday.

# Matilda Jr



We had the amazing production of Matilda Jr which showcased the huge talent that we have here at Balshaw's. So much talent that we were able to double cast the production so that the main parts alternated between performances! It is always a special moment to see young people immersed completely in the joy of performance. Putting on a production of this size requires a huge deal of effort from very many people under the direction of Mrs Bache. There were technical challenges behind the stagecraft of the production, such as getting Matilda's ability to move objects with her mind, but everyone rose to the challenge.

I have no doubt that some of the young people in the cast and crew will continue to perform, if not as a career, then as part of amateur dramatic productions.





Balshaw's PTA (Parent Teacher Association) meet on the first Wednesday of every month and this year have put on a whole range of events from Bingo, a family Quiz Night to a Night at the Races and culminated at the end of the year with **#Balfest23**. We had planned an outside stage from a lorry with full sound stage. However, the poor weather brought us inside. Despite this, the event was a great success and was the first time that we had tried organising a music festival.

We had performances from a whole range of our talented students as well as special guests:

- Will Pike
- The Outerlines
- The Leyland Morris Men
- The Lancashire Wallopers

In addition we were delighted to welcome back the North West Reptile Association and their amazing collection of exotic pets who are always amazing. There were various stalls and plenty of food from pizzas to ice cream from Robinsons.



# Fundraising



Staff, parents and students have been incredibly generous over the course of the year and we have been able to raise thousands of pounds for a range of charities. Our Lenten Charity Weeks which happen in the two weeks before Easter saw all sorts of activities taking place for Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Mr Mort even said that he would have his head shaved if he received donations totalling £100. This happened and Mrs Henderson can be seen shaving Mr Mort's head in the image (left).

In total we raised £3505.98 for Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Through sales during the interval of Matilda we also raised over £1000 for Blue Skies which supports Blackpool Teaching Hospital Charitable Fund.

A massive thank you is due to all parents who support our charitable giving. This is a vital part of the school's ethos; generosity for those in need is a value that we want all of our students to understand the importance of.

# Sports Day



In June, our Year 10s went to Runshaw College for their Taster Day. Whilst they really enjoyed their day, they missed history in the making: Worden won Sports Day for the first time since 2010! During the course of the day three of the school's previous records were broken.

The support from the houses and the team spirit was amazing as everyone dressed up in their house colours, waved banners and danced when their house victory song was played for every race their house won!



## Next School Year



## Return to school.

Students return to school on: **Tuesday 5th September:**

- **8.30am** Year 7 arrive and assemble in the Hall
- **11.30am** Years 8, 9, 10 & 11 arrive at the gates and will assemble on the West Wing area.

As always, please remember that if any piercings are done over the summer, that they are done at the start as any jewellery will have to be removed. All make-up, fake tan, acrylic nails will need to have been removed before returning to school. For boys, ensure that they are wearing correct school shoes (not the black trainer-style footwear that is marketed as school shoes).

Regarding groupings for next year, our teachers, Curriculum Leaders, Heads of House and SLT have been discussing our KS3 groupings in school and the need for a refresh of all groups at the end of each academic year. This process has been under discussion over recent months and the determination of these groups has now taken place in readiness for September. These groupings will still maintain and support our whole school policy of mixed prior attainment grouping across our curriculum. Any pastoral concerns or elements have been taken into consideration when allocating groups. These groupings will be in place on student timetables upon our return in September.

It is really important to put names in your child's uniform and

clothing as we can get any lost items back to them straight away. We find ourselves with lots of expensive clothing (trainers/coats etc.) at the end of every year which students never collect.

#### **All students using Laptops for Learning:**

I am delighted that from September all of our students will be able to use laptops as part of the way that they learn and study together. Other schools are looking to follow this model, but Balshaw's students are now used to being able to work in a collaborative online cloud environment, share files, conduct independent research and redraft work with ease. It is no longer possible to imagine not having this tool for learning at every student's fingertips.



## Staff who are moving on

However, the end of a summer term also means that some teachers retire and others move on to new positions. At the end of this term we will be saying goodbye to:

- **Mrs Thomas** - Mrs Thomas is retiring after being a Food Technology teacher at Balshaw's for 22 years and in that time has taught hundreds of students the life skill of preparing food - many have gone on to work in the catering industry and even more to develop a passion for cooking in their home lives. Mrs Thomas has also been responsible for developing the skills of Food Technology teachers all around the North West of England training them in her role as a leader in the subject. We hope that Mrs Thomas will enjoy time to pursue her own passions in her retirement.
- **Mrs Howells** - On any school staff there are people that you may not meet as a parent, but who are essential in helping the school to run properly. Mrs Howells has worked at Balshaw's for the past 31 years. She was PA to Miss Venn and has continued in this role as well as being responsible for HR and a multitude of other essential processes in the organisation and running of the school. Mrs Howells is retiring to spend more time with her family after committing most of her working life to the school.
- **Mr Greaves** - Mr Greaves has been teaching Resistant

Materials in the Design Technology Department since September 2012. Everyday he drives to Leyland from his home in South Manchester enabling our students to be able to work with wood, metal and a range of tools and processes such as CAD. He is going to be able to work nearer to his home.

- **Miss Hunkin** - Not only is Miss Hunkin a teacher of Maths, but she is also a Balshavian from her student days. Miss Hunkin has been our numeracy co-ordinator and has provided lots of opportunities for our young people to take part in enrichment activities to develop their mathematical skills. She will be missed as she is going to join our sworn sporting adversaries at All Hallows Catholic High School!
- **Miss Kirby** - Miss Kirby is taking on a new role as the subject leader of Maths in a special school. Miss Kirby previously worked in a special school and feels passionately about this role working with vulnerable students with specific learning needs. Our loss will be their gain.
- **Mr Darr** - Our Pastoral Hub Manager had a prior role at Balshaw's as Head Boy! Mr Darr has been in charge of one of the most demanding areas of the school for the past year. During this time he has completed his masters in Psychology and has been recruited to head up a team of psychologists working within HM Prison Service. Much as he will miss the students of Balshaw's, he hopes that he will not come across them in his new role!
- **Mrs Turner** - Mrs Turner has worked part time as another

highly skilled Design Technologist who has brought her passion for the subject to Balshaw's for the past two years. Sadly, Mrs Turner is leaving secondary teaching, but will be developing her own business from home.

- **Mr Horne** - Mr Horne has been with us for the past year teaching art whilst Miss Ward was on maternity cover. He has been an excellent colleague to work with and is much loved by his students for the warmth of his manner. Although we are sad to see him go, we are delighted that he has got a new permanent role as a teacher of Art
- **Mrs Wheeler** - Mrs Wheeler (also a former Balshavian student) has been a part of our highly-skilled and much-valued team of Teaching Assistants who provide such excellent support for our students in and out of the classroom. Mrs Wheeler aims to become an Educational Psychologist and is moving on to take wider responsibility for a pastoral team at another South Ribble secondary school.

We wish all of our leavers the very best and we look forward to introducing the new staff who will be joining us in September.

Other updates you may be interested to know about...

## School Uniform

Balshaw's has its own pre-loved uniform collection. This is in the main entrance of school and you can view the items available by calling in at school. Also, if your child has quickly grown out of any uniform and it is in good condition, please bring it into school. However, South Ribble Borough Council is also running a uniform pop up shop and the details are in the image.

**THE GREAT BIG SCHOOL UNIFORM POP UP SHOP & ADVICE SERVICES 2023**  
In Partnership with TippyToes Babybank

**Do you need uniform for September 2023?**

- We have collected clean, wearable, outgrown or unused South Ribble uniforms - available from two locations in our borough. All families welcome, all stock is free, we are here to support you & encourage reusing & recycling
- Our partner advice services will join us on different days - such as Citizens Advice, CAP Debt Advice, DWP, Gateway Officers, Lancashire Fire & Rescue & many more. Find us on facebook for further details - [www.facebook.com/schoolpopshopSR](https://www.facebook.com/schoolpopshopSR)

For all queries contact: [sam.jones@southribble.gov.uk](mailto:sam.jones@southribble.gov.uk)

**POP UP SHOP WILL BE OPEN:**  
**Civic Centre, Leyland, PR25 1DH**  
Monday 24 July - Friday 28 July 10-3pm  
Monday 31 July - Friday 4 August 10-3pm  
Monday 7 August - Thursday 10 August 10-3pm  
**Withy Grove Sports Hub, Bamber Bridge, PR5 6YJ**  
Monday 14 - Friday 18 August 10-3pm

# Water Safety

At the time of writing this newsletter, the weather has been so poor that the greatest risk from water is that of flash flooding. However, every summer the temptation to cool off or play in water has tragic consequences for young people. Here is some important information from Lancashire Fire Safety Team.



## Could you study A-Levels at Eton College?

This is not such an outlandish idea. Former Balshavians have gone on to study at elite post-16 providers such as Gordonstoun College. The Head Master of Eton College is offering fully-funded scholarships:

*Are there talented boys in your current Year 10 who might benefit from a fully funded Sixth Form boarding place at Eton?*

*If so, we would love to make them aware of the Orwell Award. This is a Sixth Form programme targeted at boys with academic potential, for whom an opportunity to go to a boarding school, free of charge, might be transformative. While students with this profile have been coming to Eton since 1440, and are absolutely integral to our vision of the education that we offer, this award seeks to reassure and encourage boys, especially those with some particular reason to board, that a place at Eton is within their grasp.*

*Up to 12 free Sixth Form places a year will be offered as Orwell Awards to Year 11 boys studying in UK non-selective state schools.*

*The easiest way for your students to find out more is through the suite of films that we have uploaded to [www.etoncollege.com](http://www.etoncollege.com)*

*/OrwellAward. They can find out more by contacting the Admissions Office [admissions@etoncollege.org.uk](mailto:admissions@etoncollege.org.uk). We look forward to hearing from them.*

*The Orwell Award will recognise that academic achievement may have been held back by personal circumstance, and so will not be offered to only those with the highest grades. Instead, applicants will be assessed on academic potential and against specific criteria such as if a boy has refugee status or is a Looked After Child, if a boy is in the first generation of his family to go to university, or if they are in receipt of the Pupil Premium.*

*The Award is named after author and Eton alumnus George Orwell, himself the recipient of financial aid, and aims to give recipients access to a transformative experience. Funding will cover a Sixth Form place, including boarding, and includes additional financial allowances to enable boys to fully participate in the life of the school.*

# International Sporting Success for Balshavians

We are always delighted to hear news of the successes of our students outside of school. We have students who keenly pursue a range of talents and interests to a high level. Two of our students have gained international standings in their sports.

Finley Hough is now ranked as the European number 5 after competing in the European BMX Championships in Besancon France. He will go on to compete in the World Championships this August to see if he can maintain or improve his world ranking.

Another talented student is Nadia Breska who gained a 1st place medal in the IAIGC World Championships bronze level in Florida. Despite the early mornings and intensity of the competition, Nadia and her sister, Blanka, were back in school on the Monday morning after flying back!



# Work Experience



Another activity which has returned to schools since lockdown has been the opportunity for Year 10 to undertake work experience. We are grateful for the way that employers have been really generous with their time and effort to provide valuable experiences for our students. We were also overwhelmed by the positive feedback that we have had from employers about the excellent attitudes, sensible questions, genuine interest and manners that were demonstrated by our Year 10 students.

It is a huge task to organise work experience for 185 students, but when they get so much from it and the employers provide such wonderful feedback, it is all worth it.

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# And so much more...

There is so much that I could talk about in this end of year newsletter about the opportunities and experiences that have been available to our young people throughout this year. Whether it has been foreign travel to places like Warsy in France to bringing the culture of Brazilian Samba to a wet and rainy Leyland.

Please encourage your child to get involved in as much as possible- you get out of school what you put in. My greatest regret about my school days was that I thought I was too cool for school and didn't join clubs and activities. I wish so much now that I had done more that was available to me. From translation competitions (we have national winners here) to public speaking (yes- competition winners here) to Lego projects, sports, coding, art, science club, drama and so much more.

The more that you do, the more successful you will be!

I will leave you with some other images that are highlights in the school year and wish you all a safe, happy summer where you will be able to have quality time together whether you get days out, a holiday or enjoy time at home.

Mr Steven Haycocks

Headteacher.