



A WORD FROM LISA BYRON, HEADTEACHER

Welcome back and Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and enjoyed the festivities and the special time with family and friends.

The start of a new year can be exciting and motivational, with changes pledged and resolutions made. But it can also be a source of anxiety as we are faced with the pressure to become new versions of ourselves. In fact, it is often in the smallest of actions or changes that we can feel our happiest, and it's important to remember that change should only happen for the right reasons.

NEW YEAR PRAYER:

Thank You Lord for giving me
The brand new year ahead.
Help me live the way I should
As each new day I tread.
Give me gentle wisdom
That I might help a friend,
Give me strength and courage
So a shoulder I might lend.
The year ahead is empty,
Help me fill it with good things
Each new day filled with joy
And happiness it brings.
Amen.

We were extremely saddened over the holidays to learn of the tragic passing of a former student, Elliot Ayre, who passed away on December 27. Elliot was a popular and hard working student who was well liked by his teachers and fellow students. On Friday, we dedicated our morning mass to Elliot and will continue to remember him fondly as a community. We pray for his family and friends at this extremely difficult time as they try to come to terms with their loss.



Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord,
And let perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in peace,
Amen

LAST WEEK'S EVENTS



In the last two days before school finished for the Christmas break, our whole community were well and truly in the festive spirit! Our Sixth Form students had a wonderful time at their Dinner Dance held at Ramside Hall Hotel. Students enjoyed a three course meal and lots of dancing and it was lovely to see them celebrating together.



On the penultimate day of term, all of our students took part in our Advent services, led by our Chaplain Emma. They enjoyed performances by our wonderful Vocal Ensemble and were given the opportunity to add a tealight to our crib, a reminder of the light that they bring to the world and how they can help that light to shine. Emma also talked about the courage shown by Mary as she embarked upon an unknown journey of being chosen to be the mother of Jesus, and how we can apply that courage and faith to our own lives. The services were also an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our students throughout the first term, with many students receiving rewards for attendance, ClassCharts points and excellent effort and achievement.



On the final day of term, we held Christmas Accessory Day and loved seeing our students dressed in all of their festive wear. Staff then waved students off from the bus bays before gathering for a Christmas Liturgy and celebration to end a very busy term.

January

- Monday 9- External exams begin for some of our Vocational courses- good luck to all.
- Monday 9- Year 11 will receive their new Six Week Plans this week in preparation for their next set of mock examinations. They should ensure they bring their purple folders into school.
- Thursday 12- Sixth Form Progress Evening. Parents should have received the link to Schoolcloud to make appointments. If you are unable to attend but would like feedback on your child's progress, please don't hesitate to get in touch with school directly.

COMING UP THIS WEEK



LAST WEEK'S ACHIEVEMENTS



High Five Friday nominations will resume next week. In the meantime, we are proud to share some other exciting achievements from both in and out of school from the end of last term.



Just before Christmas, our Learning Mentors Michael and Thomas delivered £250 worth of toiletries to the Angel Trust in Bishop Auckland as well as various hygiene hampers and Christmas treats to Woodhouse Close Community Centre. Many thanks to all of our staff, students and families for their generous donations which made this possible.



At the start of December, the Future Business Magnates (FBM) students from Year 8 began Challenge Two of the competition, with a visit to Beamish Museum to explore both the 1900s town and 1950s town. All eight students were brilliant at investigating the new inventions of the era which will hopefully spark some thoughts for their own business ideas!



Annabel Cooper in Year 13 participated in the Scottish National Swimming championships in Edinburgh last month, achieving two Personal Bests. Well done, Annabel!



Last month, Nelle Richardson (8R) and Amirah Warn (9O) both qualified to dance at Blackpool in the Nationwide Finals, competing in Classical and Modern Sequence. Nelle placed 4th in Classical Sequence and Amirah placed 8th in Modern Sequence. Their passion and determination certainly paid off and both girls should be extremely proud of this amazing achievement in what is such a tough competition.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- ❑ **Thursday 19 January-** Year 9 Progress Eve
- ❑ **Monday 20 February-** Half Term. School reopens on Monday 27
- ❑ **Monday 27 February-** Year 11 mock exams begin
- ❑ **Thursday 16 March-** Year 7 Progress Eve
- ❑ **Thursday 23 March-** Year 11 Progress Eve
- ❑ **Thursday 30 March-** Year 10 Progress Eve
- ❑ **Monday 3 April-** Easter holidays. School reopens on Monday 17 April
- ❑ **Thursday 27 April-** Year 8 Progress Eve

LRC BOOK OF THE WEEK

How To Be More Hedgehog, Anne-Marie Conway

Lily has a stammer and when a video of her practising a school presentation is posted online, she feels humiliated. She wants to hide away but knows that she must face her fears if she is to find her own voice. This heart-warming novel incorporates themes of friendship, bullying, parental separation and environmental issues. It sensitively explores what it's like to live with a stammer and will help readers to develop empathy and understanding.

