

Friday 30th September

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are still busy working away in the background, developing a regular newsletter feature, to keep you all updated with events at school, however, whilst that is still in development, I thought I would write to you to keep you up to date with the great work from our pupils and our staff.

This week, we have been celebrating European Day of Languages, with a Bake Off on Tuesday (with some very impressive entries!), a French rewards breakfast for some of our Year 8s and a quiz for our Year 7s, who feverishly searched the school for different ways to say 'Hello,' in a variety of different languages. You may or may not know, that we had some Ukrainian pupils join us, and as part of this week, some of our forms have been learning different Ukrainian phrases to make them feel a welcome part of our community.

Last night was our annual open evening, and it was the first time this was a face-to-face event since before the Covid-19 pandemic. Not only was it great to welcome over 900 visitors to school, but it was even more pleasing to see the excellent work staff and pupils alike put into making this a successful evening. Pupils from across all year groups helped out as tour guides, the choir and subject experts, and the feedback we received about them made me exceptionally proud. Special mentions, however, must go to Sophie, Oliver and Charlotte in Year 11, and Coby and Billy in Year 7, who delivered incredibly passionate and moving speeches to our prospective parents and carers.

Today has been our (rather damp!) sponsored walk day. Despite setting off in great walking conditions, the weather eventually turned, and we had to cut the walk short. Nonetheless, there were still lots of smiles, and our pupils were a credit to the school and yourselves. I have been bursting with pride listening to members of the public who credited our pupils on their manners, politeness, and how they were looking after our wider community through tidying and litter picking. Hopefully everyone will dry out soon, and we look forward to working with the pupils with regards to how we spend the sponsorship money to further improve the school once it is all collected.

We have been overwhelmed this year with applications from pupils to participate in our Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Mr. Dodd had the difficult task of drawing the names out of the hat due to the numbers of people applying. Whilst we are really pleased that so many people were interested, we are also aware that there are a number of disappointed young people, so we are currently exploring the opportunity as to whether we can either extend our cohort or run a second cohort later in the year. We will keep you updated.

It was fantastic to meet lots of parents and carers on Wednesday evening across the two talks that I delivered, and this will be the start of a strong working partnership between us as school, and yourselves as parents and carers. I shared with those who attended that our areas for development this academic year will be centred around three key themes: communication,

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curriculum and culture. I have briefly summarised these at the end of this letter for those unable to attend.

Many of you already follow us on Twitter, where we share lots of our pupils' successes and achievements. To ensure we continue to try and reach as many of our families as possible, we are now on Facebook. Search for Woodhey High School, and you will be able to see great news, including a sneak peak of our choir performing at last night's open evening.

Lastly, it would not be an update from me if I did not continue to stress the importance of excellent attendance. Attendance across the school continues to remain far higher than it has over previous academic years, for the same time period, however, we know we can continue to improve this. Each day I have the privilege of walking around school and seeing excellent lessons, such as Samba compositions in Music, volleyball lessons in PE, and some really exciting and exotic cookery lessons in Food Technology. When pupils are absent from school, they miss out on lots of excellent lessons and exciting opportunities, so attending as often as possible is vital. Our attendance target remains 97%, and we have already started to communicate pupils' attendance levels with parents and carers this academic year so that you can be aware as to your child's attendance already. This will continue to grow and develop throughout the academic year.

Once again, thank you for your continued support since my last letter. We continue to be humbled by your positive feedback, and it has also been great to hear from parents and carers about your child's successes outside of school, from BMX racing, to Waterloo Road filming and many others; please continue to share these – we love to hear about them! We also appreciate all of parents and carers who get in touch with us directly when things do not go to plan – this allows us to resolve issues far quicker.

Hopefully our next issue will be in our newsletter format, but if not, I will be sure to write to you again to provide you with more exciting updates.

Yours faithfully,



Mr D Watson
Headteacher

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ST7 4DL.
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School Priorities: 2022/23

Communication:

- Communicating in advance – letting people know what is coming up
- Positive communication, sharing success
- Supporting parents and carers to help pupils learn
- Use of social media
- Timeliness of school responses

Culture:

- Behaviour (both recognising excellent behaviour and challenging poor behaviour)
- Enrichment and extracurricular offer
- Careers provision
- Excellent attendance
- 'Personal development' curriculum; teaching knowledge that supplements the academic curriculum and prepares pupils for life after school

Curriculum:

- Unashamedly academic
- What are we teaching our pupils, when, and in what order
- Supporting all pupils to learn and remember key knowledge
- Reading
- Delivery of the curriculum; Woodhey teachers delivering excellent lessons
- Broadening horizons and raising aspirations

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