



Headlines

NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL

Termly Parent Newsletter: January 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Having reflected on a busy few weeks at the end of last term and a busy decade (via the media) over the festive break, it is very much the time to look to the future now. For some, this will involve contemplating their first steps on the career ladder, a university offer or preparation for public examinations. For many others, the focus will simply be on embracing all that the High School has to offer, and with a packed curricular and extracurricular programme on offer there is much to look forward to.

Throughout this newsletter, leaders from across the school talk about some of the foci for their students as we begin a new term and a new year.



Our new Nursery Manager, Mrs Clare Bing, introduces herself...

I would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome that I have received since joining the High School. I am very excited to be here and to be a part of the GDST, bringing my 18 years of Early Years' experience to the school and to lead and support the continuing enhancements in the Nursery and Pre-School.

As an Early Years teacher, I have hands-on experience of supporting children to learn and develop through play, ensuring that the foundation blocks are securely built ready for every child to thrive not only within the Nursery and Pre-School but throughout their whole school career and beyond. I have been fortunate to have been supported in my own studies, not only to achieve a Degree in Early Years, but also in Leadership and Management. Combining these two areas and the skills learnt from both allows me to bring together the working knowledge of Nursery Management

Mr Bailey talks about oracy in the Junior School...

Developing the oracy skills of our students is something that we take seriously in the Junior School, as we recognise the life-long benefits provided by confidence and competence in speaking and listening. Some of the high profile performance opportunities we have seen this term have taken place over the festive period; it has been wonderful to see the confidence of the Nursery and Junior school girls on stage, and to see this confidence develop as they progress through the school.

Our class assemblies also provide an important platform for the girls to share their learning, and to experience being in the spotlight in front of a large audience. Eye contact, voice projection, choral performance, body positioning and enunciation are just a few of the stage-craft techniques we are developing through these experiences.

Music - and choral performance in particular - is an absolute passion of mine, and I firmly believe that every school should be a singing school. The benefits on student wellbeing, collaboration, creativity and school-culture are abundant, but it is also the impact on speaking and listening that



and Early Years Education. This allows me to promote my passion for quality Early Years provision whilst also enhancing the professional team to maximise the opportunities for the children.

I am looking forward to getting to know all of the children and their families within the Nursery and Pre-School, to sharing valuable learning experiences, both within the school and from home, and to extending these to the wider High School community.

interests me. Singing together requires everyone to listen attentively, and memorising complicated lyrics has a huge impact on vocabulary range as well as long- and short-term memory. Perhaps more fundamentally, the sound of young voices echoing through school corridors just makes people smile; listen out for more of this over the coming year.



All areas of our curriculum provide opportunities for oracy development, whether it be debating in English, carrying out peer reviews in design technology, debating sustainability matters in geography or sharing inspiration for artwork. As we progress through this year, we will continue to look for opportunities to develop the speaking and listening opportunities for all students, through the rich and varied experiences on offer here at Northampton High Junior School.

Mrs O'Doherty looks forward to the term ahead...

The spring term in the senior school always heralds the first signs of the public exam season, with mock examinations underway well before we see the first signs of spring flowers. It is a term when we encourage the students to really draw on their resilience and to steel themselves for the hard work which will bear fruits come the summer term exams.

Reflection is something that we all tend to give some time to in January and this is what mock exams are about. Developing a growth mindset which enables the students' self-talk to reassure them that 'I can't do that ...yet' is something we strongly encourage. It is so important that when mock exam results are analysed, students look at the content rather than simply the grade. It is by analysing the specific areas of strength and weakness that they will be able to hone their final revision.

In the wider sense of school life, spring term is a time when we all need to remember that kindness is a value we hold strong at the High School. In those seemingly endless short, dark days of January and February it is easy to allow standards to slip and behaviour towards others to become less thoughtful. Through tutor times, assemblies and by

Catching up with the Sixth Form with Mrs Cantwell...

For 6.2, the intensity of the Autumn Term is behind them, the majority of their academic courses are now covered and the hours spent refining UCAS applications are beginning to bear fruit in the form of university offers.

Those with interviews at Oxford and Cambridge, Medical, Dentistry and Vet schools have benefited from the bespoke interview preparation courses run by Ms Heimfeld and Mrs Carr. The medics also enjoyed the #Now's the Time conference where alumnae and friends of the school, working in a range of different roles, shared their career journeys to date and inspired our students. The Minerva programme has enabled students to experience university style seminars and intellectual challenge at the highest level. Some students are following recent alumnae to study Linguistics, Aeronautical

example, staff will gently guide and support the students to think about the impact of their actions and words and continue to embrace acts of kindness small and large. And speaking of assemblies, I hope you may be interested to learn about some of the topics we cover in our twice-weekly senior school assemblies. Our aim, through the assemblies, is to inspire, educate and enlighten students and both staff and students contribute huge amounts to this.

Alongside assemblies on Film studies, digacy, and International Women's Day this term we also have a wonderful performance of a Piano Sonata from Mr Nathan to look forward to. We shall also be looking outwards during Period Poverty week and National Wellbeing and Workout week and our Eco-Team assembly.



Engineering and International Relations, while others are breaking new ground, with applications for International Environmental Science at Nottingham, International Social and Political Studies at UCL, Computing (Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning) at Imperial, Fashion Marketing at the University of the Arts London and Speech and Language Therapy at UEA, to give some examples.



Catching up with the Sixth Form with Mrs Cantwell...

Of the talented musicians who performed at our End of Term Concert, we are delighted that one has been offered a place at the prestigious Royal College of Music.

6.1s, in their turn, have embraced all the opportunities available to them with great enthusiasm and positivity. They are currently researching their next steps, participating in the Career Start work experience opportunities offered by GDST and using the new Rungway app which enables them to access the expertise of numerous GDST alumnae. An ongoing focus is on the international future that our students will experience as global citizens, earners and opinion formers. Visiting partner schools as part of the Erasmus programme and travelling to San Francisco to explore opportunities for studying and working abroad has given them a new perspective



on the options open to them. Our students are enjoying the opportunities provided by the two-year, linear A Level framework, leaving time and flexibility to explore other areas of interest through the Sixth Form Electives programme. Many have chosen an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), allowing them to research an area of interest and develop skills which will be greatly beneficial once at university. Others have chosen from a range of Massive Open On-Line Courses (or MOOCs), offered by universities across the world, taken the Politics and International Relations, Film Studies or Computer Science Elective courses or joined the Young Philanthropy or Enterprise programmes.

6.1 are looking forward to standing for election to new Sixth Form Leadership and House Leadership teams later this term. The superb House Plays and the reports from House Charity Leaders and the Deputy Head Girl (Charities) in the Celebration of Giving on the last day of term offered snapshots of the impressive work our student leaders do in both fundraising and volunteering.



HOPE Project...



Earlier this year we instigated a new project called the HOPE programme, this is designed to help teachers get an even better understanding of the needs of every student.

HOPE stands for (educational) history, observation, profile and external factors impacting on learning - each element being important in helping us to develop a bespoke programme of learning for each pupil that fits with our rich knowledge of them as individuals. Mrs Curtis is continuing her work on the HOPE project this term, as programme coordinator. Last term she was a regular visitor to lessons to see learning in a variety of different settings and she also talked to many L5 girls. The next stage will include more classroom-based projects and further opportunities for girls to discuss how they learn best.



People...

Aside from our new Nursery Manager, Clare Bing, we welcome a number of other new staff this term:

Emma Blake (Director of Sport), Helen Fisher (Catering Assistant), Sonia Ramskill (Teaching Assistant), James Reynolds (Music Assistant) and Stuart Rose (AV and Theatre Technician).

Term Dates...

Spring Term 2020

Tues 7 January 2020	First day of term starts
Mon 17 February 2020	Half term (1 week)
Fri 3 April 2020	Term ends

Summer Term 2020

Tues 21 April 2020	First day of term starts
Mon 25 May 2020	Half term (1 week)
Fri 10 July 2020	Term ends (12 noon)

Autumn Term 2020

Mon 7 September 2020	First day of term starts
Mon 19 October 2020	Half term (2 weeks)
Fri 18 December 2020	Term ends

Parent Forum - 'Communication'...

This term's Parent Forum Meeting will take place on Thursday 6 February, from 6pm-7.15pm in the Junior School Community Room. The focus of this meeting is home/school communication, and all are welcome. If you would like to attend this meeting, please email admin@nhs.gdst.net, giving the name(s) and year group(s) of your daughters.

Wishing you all a happy and successful year.

Caroline Petryszak
January 2020

Spring Term 2021

Mon 11 January 2021	First day of term starts
Mon 15 February 2021	Half term (1 week)
Fri 26 March 2021	Term ends

Summer Term 2020

Thurs 15 April 2021	First day of term starts
Mon 31 May 2021	Half term (1 week)
Fri 16 July 2021	Term ends (12 noon)