



Head's Newsletter

Volume 12, Issue number 1
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Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers

This is the first proper Headteacher's newsletter of the year. I hope that your child is settling well into the new term and is enjoying school life.

World Challenge in Uganda

Many of you will know that we went on a World Challenge Expedition to Uganda over the summer. Miss Jones and Miss Dunning led the expedition and everyone returned safely having had a great trip. Part of the challenge was to help to build St. Jude Kasudde Primary School. The Headteacher, Richard Tomusange, wrote to thank me for the work our students had put in. He told me that his school had been ransacked during the Civil War and never really recovered and that his students had to spend part of the day walking to the local well to collect water. He told me that once the roof is on his three classroom block then they would move in even without windows and doors. It made me feel very humble.

Results

The more we all pore all over results from 2018 the better they seem to be. There are always areas to improve in and in the next few weeks national data will help to give more context. The Progress 8 figure should be really strong and put us into the above average category. We have significantly closed the gap for our disadvantaged students, when compared to national non disadvantaged children although we still need to get better in this area. With regards to A level we are pleased with the overall headlines but we are appealing about the marking for English literature as well as art/textiles and Graphics. Should there be any significant change I will let you know. Digging into the data there is a clear link between excellent teaching and students who engaged over a period of time. A few students did come in with a late surge and improved significantly late on in their courses. Most students did well because they worked steadily over a long period of time; now with little coursework most subjects rely on terminal exams at the end of Year 11.

Retirement

I have been a little overwhelmed with lots of lovely messages from colleagues, parents and even the children. Thank you so much. It is the intention of the Trustees and Governors that, on top of a day as CEO, I am employed an additional day a week after Christmas in order to ensure smooth transition and handover. I can manage that! Part of that transition will be to complete the building work that will be in full swing by then (see below).

OPEN EVENINGS

On Wednesday 19th September 2018 we are holding the first of our annual open evenings and this one is specifically for prospective BL6 students. We would encourage all Year 11 students to come along and have a good look around prior to making their post-16 choices. Members of the BL6 team will be on hand to answer questions and there will be talks in the main hall throughout the evening. The open day/evening for main school is being held on Wednesday 10th October 2018 and, although anyone is welcome to come, it is focussed on addressing those pupils and prospective parents in current Year 6. The school will be open for tours from 9.10 am until 12.00 noon and the evening commences at 6.30 pm.

Gold Standard

Many of our students are heavily involved in activities and do some amazing things outside school and this section is to celebrate achievements by students and ex-students. If you have any information for future newsletters, please do email head@brineleas.co.uk.

Race night Friday 21st September

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you about the Brine Leas Race Night that is being held on Friday 21st September. The evening begins at 7pm with the starting gates to the first race being released at 7.30pm. The event is for adults only and we have a very reasonably priced bar to purchase drinks from and we are hoping that it will be a fun evening for all involved. Tickets are £5 and this will get you entry to the race night, your race guide and a drink on arrival. If you want to organise a table of 8 or 10 people and bring along your own buffet/banquet/snacks and nibbles or cheese board etc, then please feel free to do so. Tickets can be purchased from school. Please complete the attached ticket request form and return it with your payment directly to the Finance Office. Please note the Drop Box shouldn't be used on this occasion. Any external requests can be made at the Main School Reception. We hope that you will join us for what we hope will be a fun and enjoyable evening for all. Profits from the evening will go to the Maths Department.

Walk for Parkinson's

Some of you may recall Alan Leese, who for many years was Head of Art at Brine Leas. Alan had to retire early due to Parkinson's disease but he is still painting. His wife, Pat Robinson, who taught ceramics at BLS, has again helped to organise a major fund raiser. On Sunday 23rd September, there is a sponsored walk to support Parkinson's. If you want to take part in a lovely walk around and about Chester you can register really easily by going to parkinsons.org.uk/walkchesterfundraising@parkinsons.org.uk If you are not able to walk on the day, and there are a variety of distances that can be done, then go to the Just Giving website (if you in a position to do so) to sponsor Patricia Robinson.

Building Work

- **The chimney** - For those of you travelling into Nantwich from the north or the east a local landmark since the 1960's has been our chimney on the C block. As we are having new boilers the chimney is no longer required and is being taken down. It has put up quite a fight and will have taken about 5 weeks to demolish. Apologies to those who live adjacent to the school for the noise this has created. Once down I will say a few words but won't be shedding tears.
- **D Block** - Blow me down with a feather.... we will extend D block even if I have to do the brickwork. Piling should be done over half term – again, apologies if you live locally as this will be noisy. Completion should be round around Easter. We will gain two new laboratories at the end of the project.
- **Toilets in C Block** - I am hoping that work on the toilets in C block will take place in the autumn term although I have not got a date on them yet. This will give us some extra toilets- cubicle doors will go from floor to ceiling as well. In an emergency we will still be able to unlock the toilet door.
- **Roofs** - I don't know why, but I always want to spell the plural of roof with a v (that's rooves not voofs!); it is strange how you have a mental block with some spellings. Anyway, moving on.... Work on the Sports Hall roof and the main hall and canteen starts this term. New fascias will be fitted around the hall as part of this project.
- **Impact on Students** - As ever with building projects the safety of everyone on site is our biggest concern. Parts of the school will be cordoned off and there will be ongoing risk assessments. We are confident that there will be minimal disruption to teaching and learning.

Given the scale of this building work part of my role after Christmas will be to finish these projects. This will allow the new Head of School to focus on running the school and concentrate on the core purpose of education; teaching and learning.

Future Maintenance and Developments

- **What's next?** First of the funding for capital projects comes out of a different funding stream than the school budget. The local Authority have asked the school to commit to an 8 form entry - this is 240 students. Governors and Trustees have agreed to this but, at this moment in time, have decided that to go any bigger would fundamentally alter the characteristics of the school. The building work currently being done caters for the number of students that are currently on the books. 240 in one year group and 215 in the each of the other four year groups. So to expand further we need to cater for an additional 100 students. We will be requesting funding from the Local Authority to do a feasibility study.
- **What's required?**
 - More toilets.
 - Additional canteen space (our canteen kitchen is smaller than some of our partner schools).
 - Replacement of existing mobile classrooms (this may come out of a different bidding pot of cash).
 - Additional standard classrooms.
- **What are we thinking of?** It is a really inefficient use of resources to have temporary classrooms whilst a new build takes place. We are looking to a radical solution where we may build on existing yard space and then knock down some of our existing building to create a new yard. For example this could be a project that ends up with the technology block being demolished once a replacement two storey block has been built.

Get Stuck In

There are loads of clubs and societies at BLS. On Friday 14th September, Year 7 have 'SOC Fest' where they have the opportunity to see what opportunities there are and sign up.

Challenge Yourself

My final 'Meet and Greet' assembly had the theme of challenging yourself to do new things and not be afraid of failing. I read, under the careful direction of the librarian, some books which I would not normally have chosen for myself. I can strongly recommend all of them:-

'Where the World Ends,' by Geraldine McCaughren

'Terminal Optimist,' by John Young

'The Bubble Boy,' by Stuart Foster

Finally.....

We have had a good start to term, everyone looks very smart. Let's carrying on with those very high, in fact sky high, standards.

Andrew Cliffe
September 2018

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 13 th & Friday 14 th September	-	Year 13 Exam Resits
Monday 17 th September 2018	-	Year 9 Information Evening (Please note: this is not Options Evening)
Tuesday 18 th September 2018	-	Year 7 Pastoral Parents' Evening & Instrumental Evening
Wednesday 19 th September 2018	-	BL6 Open Evening
Monday 24 th September 2018	-	Year 7 Menai Information Evening
Saturday 29 th September 2018	-	Activity Day for Year 5 and 6 pupils
Monday 1 st October 2018	-	Year 12 Parents' Introduction Evening
Tuesday 2 nd October 2018	-	Year 10 Information Evening
Wednesday 3 rd October 2018	-	Academy Awards Evening
Friday 5 th October 2018	-	INSET Day
Wednesday 10 th October 2018	-	Open Day and Evening
Monday 22 nd October 2018	-	Curriculum Enrichment Week begins (Year 8-10 and Year 12-13)
Monday 22 nd October 2018	-	Year 7 Trip to Menai departs
Monday 22 nd October 2018	-	Year 11 Work Experience Week commences
Monday 22 nd October 2018	-	Year 13 Geography Field trip departs
Friday 26 th October 2018	-	Year 7 return from Menai
Friday 26 th October 2018	-	Year 13 Geography Field Trip returns
Friday 26 th October 2018	-	School Closes for Half Term
Monday 5 th November 2018	-	INSET Day
Tuesday 6 th November 2018	-	School Re-opens to Students