



Eskdale School



Friday 16 December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have made it to the end of term (well, nearly, it is Friday morning and we have three hours to go, as I write this!) with the school holidays and Christmas celebrations ready to start. A term that begins in the late summer warmth and finishes in the grip of deep mid-winter has seen a flurry of activity with our students shining in a variety of situations. I'd like to use this newsletter to draw your attention to a few of them and highlight that success.

Our curriculum at Eskdale incorporates everything the students have the opportunity to experience both inside and outside the classroom and the creative element of the curriculum is a key component. It was a shame that the bad weather caused the postponement of our Christmas Concert on Wednesday, as I know how hard the students had worked to prepare. The good news is that the concert will now be on Wednesday 11 January 2023 at 6pm. There is no way that all that commitment is going to waste! You are welcome to join us in the school hall for that event.

Despite that postponement our students have still accessed a range of musical moments this term including, the choir recently wowing the audience with their singing at the Spa concert with the Dalesman Singers and Simply Brass. Ed in Year 11 sang an impressive solo verse. At the Whitby Music Centre there have been concerts too with Ed on clarinet, Elsie on Saxophone, Ellen on bass clarinet, and Issac on trumpet, alongside ex-students and we had a fabulous concert last Sunday, here at school with a band led by Bob Butterfield (our woodwind teacher) and our music teacher, Mrs Edmondson-Preedy playing. Their next concert will be in January in Grosmont Church, so please try and support these excellent bands, who won all their classes at the Eskdale Festival earlier this year. Several of our students played in the Eskdale Concert Band outside in the cold at the Whitby Christmas Festival a few weekends ago and were interviewed by Yorkshire Coast Radio. It wasn't all performing though, as a group of our GCSE musicians travelled to Durham to watch an outstanding concert given by university students from that city.

As you can see, music is very much part of what we do here and January is a brilliant time to take up an instrument. The school offers piano, keyboard, guitar, bass, drums, woodwind and singing lessons. Please contact Mrs Edmondson-Preedy for further details and by way of an appeal if anyone is looking to discard a keyboard at home, please would they consider giving school first refusal, as we could do with a few more. And my personal musical highlight this term was listening to our new Year 7s sing Wonderwall, as they rehearsed ready to perform alongside our Year 10 GCSE music class. They did the song justice!

The creative element of the curriculum isn't limited to music and Mrs Parkin reports on some impressive work in art drawing particular attention to Joe, Jack and Poppy in Year 10 producing excellent reduction prints. Whilst in Year 9 have been working on go crazy with Teesha and Keni's work highlighted here. And Year 11 are well on course as they head towards their GCSEs next summer with wrap up Component 1 successfully completed and Component 2 begun with a strong body of work in place. Jazz's work has been a feature. Year 9 and Year 10 Drama students have stood out this term with outstanding work in this subject with skills and techniques explored really creatively. Year 10 dancers impressed everyone at an event for the local community hosted by our eco-club back in September.

Across the curriculum students have produced some excellent work full of effort and thought. There is real academic quality here with highlights including Year 9 science students who completed a model of the solar system. The work reflected great creativity and amazing attention to detail and even included edible offerings! Elsewhere in science Year 8 have been learning about the lungs, breathing, the heart and respiration. They got to see what the heart and lungs of a pig looks and feels like and were surprised how light the lungs were compared to the heart. In our humanities faculty there has been a buzz too. In geography Year 7 were very enthusiastic about their first fieldwork experience, investigating the microclimate of Eskdale School. Year 8 made some amazing volcano models for their homework, including some erupting models, fantastic cakes and even a performance piece! This year group have also been building a tower from spaghetti & marshmallows to withstand an earth quake after students learnt about the Richter scale and how buildings are now made to withstand earthquakes. Year 9 also worked hard, writing very thought-provoking essays on the ethics of dark tourism, well done everyone! Last month some of our key stage 3 students staged a take over day at the Captain Cook Memorial Museum and featured in The Scarborough News as a result of it. The youngsters had a great time and were commended on their behaviour. The same feedback came when our Year 9s attended a STEM event back in September in Scarborough. It is so important that our students are ambassadors for our great school and these groups of children certainly have been.

The English faculty have provided opportunity for Year 7 and the Reading Ambassadors to attend a panto in Scarborough recently and again the students' behaviour was excellent. This was a great example of older students helping younger ones and is an element of the school I like to see us develop. The Sports Leaders programme is another place this happens and they have helped organise several primary schools events this term. Huge congratulations to two students, Lexi and Romy, who are the Winners of the Rotary Writing Competition. They both wrote inventive and compelling stories to emerge as the winners. Very well-done girls! A Massive thank you to all students who have returned library books and if anyone is having a sort out over the festive period any donations of books or games for the library would be greatly appreciated, as we continue to keep this vital space in the library in operation. There are a host of activities in there and keeping it updated is important.

Today, we have had a Christmas accessories day in school and we have raised some money for our soon to be decided school charities. I will let you know what they are in January, when the students' final votes have been totted up. It could well be that PDSA is one of them as Year 7 have already had a successful cake sale for that charity. Many thanks to parents, carers and students for their generous donations of cakes and biscuits for that event and to Mrs Plant for masterminding the whole thing including the persuasive writing task that underpinned it all. That task saw Year 7s write a speech, which they presented to me in an effort to persuade me to let them have a cake sale, which was successful as you have just read! It was a real pleasure to listen to the students present their case in tutor time.

This links to a vital part of the school's development which is the adoption of three core values and three core skills. You may remember being contacted as one of the key stakeholder groups in our school for your views on these values and skills. Thank you for those of you who replied. Governors, staff and most importantly the students were also canvassed and three values emerged as clear winners. These are: Respect, Kindness and Honesty. Likewise, the core skills were clear cut with Communication, Reading and Responsibility selected. In 2023, these will grow in importance and become the DNA of our curriculum and what we do here. If our students leave us with these values and these skills we feel we will have done our job. Exam results are of course important too, yet these values and skills are so powerful for any person to possess.

This term I have seen evidence of some of these values already, such as at our whole school Remembrance Service, where nearly 500 people stood in perfect silence to remember the sacrifice of others. Or in the responsible fashion that Year 11 undertook their mock exams last month. Their

maturity was most impressive, as that is not always the case with students sitting these exams in my experience elsewhere. Responsibility was also shown by the Gardening club helping to put wood chip down near the 3G parking area. In lessons, Reading will feature more and more heavily and the work Mrs Sharp has done with some of our key stage 4 students through the National Tutoring Programme is already reaping dividends.

There is so much more I could continue on with, like our sport where there have been individual (like Jackson in Year 10 with a black belt in Ju Jitsu) and team (our U16 boys' football team) successes in football, rugby and cross-country. I intend to focus on this area in my newsletters next term as the winter season draws to a close. Congratulations to all students who have represented the school and to so many that play and compete outside of school in sports as wide ranging as swimming and martial arts.

I'd like to thank all the students, staff and parents for their support of our great school and making my first term as Head an enjoyable one. My staff and I realise that we can always be better and what I see here every day is a committed group of professionals trying their best for the students in their care. We will listen and aim to make improvements in areas such as communication (the website is being updated more regularly now with the curriculum area refreshed for a start!). I will signpost important information for parents and of course when we have the written report from our recent Ofsted visit, then that will be shared. At time of writing we are still awaiting that.

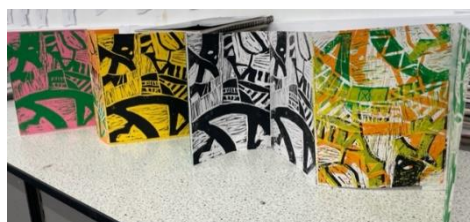
It is appropriate here that I thank two members of staff who are leaving us at the end of term. Both Mrs Lisa Collier, who has been part of our SEND team for many years and Mrs Lisa Thompson, who has headed-up our admin team are moving onto new ventures and we all wish them well and thank them for all they have done for the students here. They will be missed.

I will conclude now by wishing all our families a restful and happy Christmas. I would encourage our students to lend a hand about the home with the tidying and washing-up! That will make a real difference! I look forward to welcoming all our students back to school on Wednesday 4 January 2023, when school reopens for the new term.

Yours Sincerely,



P J Nicholson
Head of School



Stainsacre Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO22 4HS

Tel: 01947 602856 Finance: 01947 602130

Email: post@eskdale-school.co.uk

Website: www.eskdale-school.co.uk