

14 December 2018

Dear Parent(s) / Carer(s)

As we approach the end of 2018, may I thank you for the overwhelming support that you give us. I draw so much energy from knowing that you are very much with me on our journey as a school and I wanted to share some of the highlights from this term with you.

Examination Results

The Department for Education published their 'Performance Tables' in October 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>) and although we must be very careful in the conclusions that we draw from these, I am delighted to see that our school has been ranked as one of the highest performing schools in Derbyshire. I am also pleased to report that this goes hand in hand with very low fixed-term exclusion rates, no permanent exclusions and higher than average attendance rates. Of course, like any school across the country, we have our fair share of difficulties but for the most part, our students conduct themselves as you would expect from them at home; with maturity, manners and with a sense of personal responsibility.

Staffing

With the growth of a school comes more opportunities to offer further development for our staff. Miss Faulding (Mathematics) started her new post as 'Head of Student Voice' in September and more recently, Mr Hilton (French/German) and Mr Aikman (Geography) have been appointed to lead 'Teaching and Learning' in classrooms. In addition to this, Mrs Barlow (Head of Year 6 and 7) will see her role expand to become the school's 'Designated Safeguarding Lead'. She will be your first port of call regarding any safeguarding issues and as the school's anti-bullying lead. We have called our new anti-bullying strategy, 'We Choose Respect' which we hope will raise the profile of this part of our school culture.

Enriching the School Experience

Students will have noticed that we are building a new Science laboratory to accommodate our growing numbers and to update our facilities. You will be pleased to hear that we have also recently submitted plans for an extension to our dining hall so that the student experience at break and lunchtimes improves next year.

I am also pleased to report that our school enrichment programme continues to be a feature of our provision. In October, Mr Wood led a successful Humanities trip to the Bay of Naples, Italy and in December, Mrs Garner took a group of 50 students to Hamburg to visit the German Christmas markets. Our links with The Universities based in Nottingham continue to strengthen too: in English, Miss Mugridge led a Year 11 trip to Nottingham Trent University for the 'Peripheral Voices' student English conference and some of our Year 7 students were selected for the 'Ambition Nottingham' programme. Well done to everyone involved.

We were delighted to welcome Estelle Morris, Baroness of Yardley, PC, who used to be a member of Government under Tony Blair, to our school to speak to our student leaders about her life in politics. It was fascinating to hear someone who has been at the heart of Government share her experiences. She answered a range of very articulately expressed questions from students covering a range of issues.

Perhaps though the biggest joy this term is to have seen our students begin to embrace our mantra for this academic year, namely 'Students in the Driving Seat'. This is perhaps best encapsulated by the Year 8 Charity group who have raised over £1,200 so far for this year's chosen school charity, 'Guide Dogs for the Blind UK'. I also see more and more students who are quickly developing in maturity to take the lead in school from role modelling exceptional behaviour and attitudes to their work to becoming learning support workers and buddy readers. Finally, a further example of student leadership can be seen with a group of Year 10 students who are planning a 'Business Breakfast', involving employers from the Amber Valley and beyond. I understand that this venture has already received recognition at a national level.

The New Year

We return to school on Monday 7 January 2019. Please may I ask that the Christmas holidays are used to check your child's uniform. In particular, please ensure that trousers are not 'skinny' fit and that footwear is a black shoe, not a trainer. Please may I also remind you that hair must be in a natural colour and not cut too short, that only one pair of stud earrings is permitted (one stud in each ear and no hoops please) and no doubt beautiful Christmas nail colours and adornments must be removed before we return back to school in January. Please see your child's planner for full details of our uniform policy.

Christmas wishes from all of us at John Flamsteed Community School

'He was a huge man in a bright red robe (bright as holly berries) with a hood that had fur inside it and a great white beard that fell like a foamy waterfall over his chest....

Now that the children actually stood looking at him... he was so big, so glad, and so real, that they all became quite still. "I've come at last," said he. "She has kept me out for a long time, but I have got in at last" (The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe - C S Lewis)

I love the idea of Christmas arriving to relieve us of our worries and troubles and I often think about this particular passage at Advent. However you choose to celebrate Christmas, I wish you a peaceful time with joy and love in all that you do.

With my very best wishes for a peaceful Christmas and a happy new year.

Yours sincerely



Mrs L J Walton
Headteacher

Save the Date

PS - If you know anyone who has a child in Year 5 who might be applying to John Flamsteed for September 2020, tell them to keep **Thursday 11 July 2019** free for next year's open evening in a change to our usual September date.