
THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

10 March 2017

I have greatly enjoyed assemblies this week as there has been a volley of wonderful awards to give out, notably the Performance of the Month and a whole range of trophies that seem to have come from the Devon Performing Arts Festival - but more on these below!

I also had a fascinating day yesterday when I attended the Education South West Conference that was conveniently held in Exeter this year. It was interesting to hear some of the changes to the state sector with the transformation into multi-academy trusts, funding issues and the way that their inspections are run. It is at times like this that you realise that the independent sector really has its great benefits! That said, there were some very exciting seminars that I was able to attend on 'High Performance Learning', 'The World Education Forum' and 'Advanced Cognitive Psychology'.

Every now and then, as a Head, it is good to step outside your world and network with others to make sure you are on the cutting edge of pedagogy, advancement of skills and pastoral care. As staff, we get together on most Monday evenings to discuss developments, improvements and enhancements in everything that we deliver so I will be able to take back some interesting thoughts for them this coming week.

As always, the school has been immensely busy with all sorts of wonderful things happening. I really enjoyed the Junior School Showcase on Tuesday when I was able to witness some really confident performances in Spoken English, Poetry and other LAMDA categories. It struck me then how articulate, self-aware and mature even our youngest students can be.

So what else has been happening ...



Performance of the Month



As I mentioned previously, I had great pleasure in awarding Amelia Moody (Lower 5) the Performance of the Month award for February. Amelia is training incredibly hard for the forthcoming English Schools Cross Country Championships, where she will represent Devon having qualified with an excellent 6th place (from 61 of the South West's best runners) at the Regional Finals last month. She is a fantastic example of sheer raw talent and has sailed through all of the qualification rounds, regularly beating some very high profile young runners. She is also very committed and trains on Dartmoor every evening after school, often in the dark! We wish her the very best of luck for the finals next weekend.

Silver medallists at the National Championships

Nicky and Natalie Charity (Upper 4 and Upper 3 respectively) travelled to Wolverhampton last Sunday for the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu National Championships and both made the long journey worthwhile, returning home as silver medallists!

Nicky won three very difficult fights and on her last one, deciding the gold medal, she was desperately unlucky, finishing on a draw only for the judge to give victory to the other contestant! She was so close to the gold but, despite the understandable hint of disappointment, she was incredibly gracious in defeat and delighted with her silver medal!

Meanwhile Natalie put up a truly gutsy performance, having sustained a sprained finger in her five hours of basketball training (playing for the Southwest) the previous day. At one point, it was looking like she might not be able to fight at all but she rose to the challenge admirably and, swollen finger aside, took a very impressive silver.



These sisters are by no means strangers to success having last year won a silver (Natalie) and bronze (Nicky) at the European Championships! All these medals are testament to their commitment in sustaining such a gruelling training schedule, quite apart from their ability to deliver such gutsy performances time and time again!

Great results from the Devon Performing Arts Festival

Well done to all those girls who took part in the 90th Devon Performing Arts Festival last weekend. As ever, they returned with a clutch of prizes following some very strong and wonderful performances. Our huge congratulations to:

Kristina Pavic (Year 5) - Winner (Set Poem)
Annabel Turner (Year 5) - Runner up (Beginner category)
Elisa Neal-Jones (Year 5) - Winner (Elementary category)
Amelie Donovan (Lower 5) - Winner; Thalia Gibbons (Upper 4) - 3rd (Advanced category)
Allegra Freeman (Upper 4) - 'String Solo Advanced' trophy (Distinction)
Alexandra Pavic (Upper 5) - Winner (Open category)

Alexandra was also the overall winner for the flute at the entire Festival, gaining an honour for her performance and an invitation to play at the Gala Concert on Sunday 12 March. Only those who were deemed the outstanding performers from the Festival are bestowed this honour, so it really is a great credit to Alexandra! Well done!

Bella continues to wow the world of theatre!

Bella Attenburrow (Lower 6) continues to run a hectic diary in pursuit of her love of the theatre and last weekend travelled to London to record the original cast album for the musical 'The Battle of Boat'. She performed in the stage production with the National Youth Music Theatre last summer and, whilst the recording has been in the calendar for some time, the outcome was altogether quite a surprise!

The composers were so impressed with her performance at the weekend that they have subsequently asked her to sing the lead role on the demo track for their new musical! This is an outstanding achievement and is testament to Bella's huge talent.

Multicultural Week celebrations in the Junior School and Pre-Prep

Our younger students have enjoyed some really fun celebrations of Multicultural Week over the last five days. From Inuits to Arabic, the girls in Year 3 have been immersing themselves in the different cultures of the world, learning about all the many communities, what they are called and even how to say 'yes' and 'hello' in several different languages! It really is quite impressive.

Downstairs in the Pre-Prep the subjects have been slightly more food focused and I passed by the Junior School Hall earlier today only to see a mountain of food, ready for their International Banquet. Earlier in the day, the Reception class had also been treated to a Brazilian masterclass, learning how to make pao de queijo (cheese bread) which they all thoroughly enjoyed. Our grateful thanks to Mrs Trehern for sparing her time and coming into school to lead this activity.



More fun in the Pre-Prep



I absolutely love the energy of the Pre-Prep and all the little ones have such inquisitive minds. It's not unusual to be bombarded with questions and their love of learning is clearly evident in all that they do. This week has seen a huge variety of activities from finger-puppet plays (Years 1-2), creating beautiful invitations for the Mother's Day tea party right through to germinating seeds in Reception to see which of them (sweet pea, dwarf bean, marigolds or normal pea) would root first. And all this in addition to the phonics and other staple subjects within the curriculum!

Fantastic opportunity at the Commando Training Centre, Lymstone

We received a call this morning from the Royal Marine CTC offering tickets to anyone interested in attending their concert on Tuesday 4 April. There are only a limited number available and they come with the opportunity for a special tour of the Training Centre before the concert! Whilst they are aware that we are an all-girls' school, we are advised that from 2018 there will be vacancies at Lymstone for female marines! Any interested students would need to be accompanied by an adult and should call Colour Sergeant Richard England on 01392 414368 for further information.

Netball update

It has been yet another busy week for netball with numerous fixtures across the year groups. The Junior School have been absolutely flying and the week started well with three Under 10 matches (A, B and C teams) against Exeter Cathedral School on Monday.

Every single member of Year 5 got to play in one or other of these matches with the A team narrowly losing 12-11, the Bs winning 12-0 and the Cs (playing their B team) drawing 2-2.

On Wednesday, the Under 11 A and B netballers enjoyed some competitive home matches against Stockland Primary School. The A team won impressively 24-5, although the score was in no way representative of the high quality of the game, and the B team battled hard but unfortunately lost 4-6.

And yesterday, we enjoyed a clean sweep with all bar one of our teams winning against Taunton School. The Under 15 A & Bs both played away, with the As returning victorious (21-7) whilst the B's unfortunately lost. In the home games, the Under 14 A team took a convincing 28-7 victory, boding very well for next week's hugely anticipated National Schools Netball Finals, with the Under 14 B & C teams also emulating these excellent performances to cap off a perfect, sunny afternoon on the courts!



Summer celebrations – Book the dates!



As I mentioned last week, we have arranged a couple of summer celebrations and would ask that you reserve the dates now so you don't miss the opportunity to join us in toasting the year's highlights and successes. The first is on Thursday 29 June when we will be celebrating all of the Upper Sixth achievements in a special school assembly and it would be great to have as many parents as possible to join in the festivities.

Likewise, on Wednesday 12 July, our last day of the summer term, we look forward to a big celebration in the Belmont Chapel at 10.45am for parents of Year 3 – Lower 5 students. So do please come and join us in marking the end of the academic year!

I also know that the Pre-Prep will be holding their own summer celebration (we felt that the above event might be too enduring for the younger aged girls), details of which we will announce shortly.

Upcoming dates for parents of Year 5 and 6 girls

Please do come along to support your daughter in the upcoming house netball matches, both starting at 2.15pm:

Year 6 – Wednesday 15 March

Year 5 – Monday 27 March

These are always fun events to watch, whilst chatting with some of the other parents and the girls love showing off their skills to the parents! Tea, coffee and cake will be served and we would love to see you there!



Likewise, on Friday 24 March we will be holding the Junior School (Years 3 – 6) Swimming Gala from 1.30 – 3.30 at The Pyramids so do, please, feel free to come along and support your daughter!



And finally, don't miss our exciting 'Primary Education Debate' that we are hosting next Wednesday 15 March from 5.30pm – 7pm and, do please, spread the word to any friends or contacts!

This is an excellent opportunity to discuss current issues in primary education, (including the effects of recent government cuts in the state

sector) as well as the benefits of smaller class sizes, single sex learning, the outdoor classroom and how parents can best prepare their child for school.

For more information and to register, please go to www.maynard.co.uk/education. Fizz and canapes will also be served!

Have a great weekend!



Sarah Dunn
Headmistress
