

19 December 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

As we approach the end of a very busy Autumn term it is important to reflect upon all that has happened since September. New students and staff alike have made a great start at the Academy, and we have seen many exciting new developments, not least launching our new and innovative sixth form offer included within the West Coast Sixth Form. This has been particularly well received amongst our year 11 students who will form the first ever cohort when they enter year 12 in the next academic year. This new venture will provide a broader range of subject option choices for Workington Academy students to study at sixth form and delivered here in the Academy.

Over the Autumn term our largest ever year 7 intake have made a fantastic start to their secondary school career, building new friendships, developing their Form Group teams, involving themselves in new experiences, clubs and learning new skills.

Year 7 discos, trips and events have all been well attended and supported, culminating in their Energi Christmas Social Event, which was a fantastic success. Unfortunately, due to the continuing poor weather, Derwentwater Day has still not taken place, but please rest assured that this will take place within the Spring Term. Nevertheless, we are delighted with the progress our youngest students have made throughout this term, as they have settled in brilliantly to secondary school life.

Our year 7 students have won numerous awards in recognition of their success and achievements both in and out of lessons throughout this term. Students have shown great dedication and passion for learning, which has been recognised through numerous 'Super Seven', 'Headteacher Learner of the Week' and Home-Learning Club Awards, awarded to students for fantastic work completed both in the classroom and at home. Particular impressive pieces of home-learning have been created as part of the War and Conflict module studied in English and as part of the Key Stage 3 Language for Learning initiative, designed to help students to expand their academic vocabulary.

Year 7 students have also shown impressive talent in the world of sport, with our year 7 A Netball team remaining unbeaten in the Allerdale and Copeland League and having beaten opposing teams with numerous high scoring victories, scoring an impressive 83 goals in six matches. The Year 7 boys football team reached the Allerdale Football Final and were narrowly defeated by Netherhall and both our year 7 boys and girls indoor football teams finished runners up in the Allerdale five-a-side indoor football tournament. X-Country runners have also been successful throughout the autumn term on both a regional and national level, with Leyton Roberts going on to represent Cumbria and finishing twelfth in the U12 National Cross-Country Championships at Lilleshall. On an international level year 7 student Zinedine Hodgson travelled to Serbia to compete in the World Karate Championships, where he was crowned World Champion. Zinedine's brother Elliot in Year 9, also attended the same competition and achieved a Silver medal in his age category.

Our KS3 students have spent time participating in a number of community events. Earlier in the term, 96 of our year 7, 8 and 9 students were given the fantastic opportunity to appear in the film, 'The Ballad of Lucy Sands' dressing as the Victorian children of Workington and participating as extras in a number of scenes. The screening of the film is expected to be early in 2021, when our students will be able to see themselves on the big screen.

Miss Perkin's form 8PBE have collected an enormous 151 items for Animal Concern Cumbria and were able to present the representatives from the charity with their donations. The charity was overwhelmed by the work and generosity of the class, and to show their gratitude they brought in some puppies to visit the form.

Some of our year 7, 8 and 9 girls have also spent time supporting Flimby Primary School by helping staff with their Healthy Living Day. They attended the school to promote the importance of sport and healthy eating and were invited back to help with the production of the school's annual Christmas play.

The term has ended with a selection of our students writing Christmas cards to the elderly residents of our local care homes. The students have written some lovely messages and have invited the residents to write back, which is a project we will be focusing on in the new year. The Christmas cards were delivered by hand by our 'Stars of the Week' and some of the students participating in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme which is now well underway. The students involved in this scheme have almost completed the sporting element of the program and are now preparing for their expedition in the spring.

In preparation for option choices, year 9 have been investigating STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects. We have had a visit from 'Bloodhound Education' who ran an excellent engineering workshop allowing students to build and launch their own rocket. This was a very successful day thoroughly enjoyed by all and students will be delighted to know that we have a number of similar events planned for next term.

Students in years 8 to 10 were visited by Samantha Harvey a few weeks ago, who I am told is a YouTube star! She delivered an outstanding vocal performance and spoke to students about online bullying and how to stay safe online. Students thoroughly enjoyed her performance singing and dancing along.

Likewise, Key Stage 4 students have had an incredibly busy term. Year 10 students have approached their new GCSE courses with enthusiasm and resilience and have now started to complete end of unit tests to measure their progress. The year 10 students are also using tutor time to look at planning their revision, revision techniques and top tips when revising. This has been well received by the students and will support them during their revision at home.

There have been some excellent rugby successes in year 10, with Ellis Nixon being invited to attend a player development program with professional Rugby League side Newcastle Thunder. In addition, Ethan Fazer has been selected to attend the Cumbria Development Program for Rugby Union with the potential pathway into the County Squad. For the girls, Beth Smith, Evie Little and Katie Mason have been selected to participate in the Newcastle Falcons Development Squad and have received some excellent feedback from the coaches. We are delighted to have so many talented players, and wish them every success.

The Art Department have completed a successful research trip to the Baltic Art Gallery in Newcastle with the photography students. The students got to experience an art rock band and visit the Gallery, which should provide valuable inspiration for their further artistic studies.

Year 10 students have also started preparing for their work experience placements in the summer term. The majority of our students have now secured placements with businesses and local employers. It was very encouraging to read the positive acceptance letters and feedback from employers about our students and we will look forward to visiting them on placement this summer.

Work with 'Hello Futures' continues; representatives have worked with students in a range of year groups delivering assemblies and workshops. Students have had the opportunity to develop their study skills, growth mindset and an understanding of apprenticeships. Year 10 students were also invited to apply for their summer programme, a three-night residential experience in the Lake District involving a whole host of activities completely free of charge.

Year 11 have now completed a very intensive period of trial exams and study sessions. They conducted themselves extremely well in the exams, displaying excellent resilience. Following the trial exams, we held a well-attended evening to help parents to support their child with GCSE study and revision. Similar such events will be held next term, and a big thank you to those who attended.

Year 11 students recently had a talk from NCS, a national programme arranged locally by Inspira offering a three-week programme for students this summer. The programme offers one week in the lakes following outdoor pursuit activities, one week at the University of Cumbria attending workshops and developing life skills and a third week completing a social action project. This amazing opportunity is available to any year 11 at a cost of £30.

Y12 students have all had the opportunity to brush up on their interview skills when 16 employers visited the school to conduct speed interviews and offer CV advice. Students said that they found the experience really helpful, especially as they are currently trying to arrange their summer work experience placements. Some of these students have had the opportunity to apply for the Realising Opportunities programme to help support them in applications to highly competitive universities. This has been extremely well received and we hope that it will prove successful when they make their applications next year.

Many year 13 students have been attending university interviews this half term including Chloe Stephenson at Cambridge University, along with Daniel Bell and Rosie Bell attending Oxford University. We wish them all the very best of luck.

Some of the sixth form students have taken a break from all of their hard work to collect food items for the local food bank, and have even dressed as elves to serve Christmas dinner to the younger students. November also saw the Sixth Form Winter Ball. Students joined together to celebrate the festive season at The Helena Thompson Museum with dinner and dancing in a veritable grotto. A good time was had by all.

There have been a range of trips within the sixth form including art students visiting the Baltic Art gallery in the North East to explore a range of contemporary artists for inspiration for their own work. The students involved have since supported with the national Big Draw project, helping students from primary schools across Cumbria with their art work. Further trips have included product design students visiting Blackwell Arts House, history students attended a lecture by David Starkey, applied science students visiting the University of Cumbria as well as visiting Innovia films in Wigton to see science in action in the workplace. Finally, Health and Social care students were able to visit the recently established University of Central Lancashire campus in Whitehaven, which specialises in nursing courses, to see the facilities available. As you can see, it has been a very busy term!

I was particularly delighted that the Senior Team Maths Challenge saw four sixth form students competing against some of the best schools in the county. Josie Banks and Alex Nicholson in year 12, along with Daniel Bell and Matthew Glover in Year 13 performed very well, rising to the incredibly difficult challenges posed to them. Overall, we were placed third, making us the the best performing comprehensive school in Cumbria. Well done!

Finally, I would like to wish our whole school community a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The Academy closes at 3pm on Friday 20th December, and reopens to students at 8.40am on Tuesday 7th January 2020.

Yours faithfully



Mr D Bird
Headteacher