



Dear Parent/Carer,

Headteacher Update – Monday 20 March 2023

It has certainly been a busy three weeks since I last wrote to you all. I would like to take the opportunity in congratulating the Year 11 cohort who last week finished their mock examinations. We now see the Year 11's and 13's move into the final stages of preparation before they enter the period of formal national examinations. For some students, formal examinations and assessments have already started in subjects such as Catering and Hospitality, Design and Technology, Art, Photography and Drama. This is not always the easiest of times for our students to navigate their way through and our support for them during this time will be important in ensuring that they are given every opportunity to do their very best. If they all continue to work hard and have a positive attitude to their learning, revision and preparation, I am sure they will be richly rewarded in August.

It was lovely to hear from so many Year 7 students about their experiences and highlights after returning from visiting Normandy, as part of their languages curriculum. It was an action packed weekend, with students having the opportunity to visit our partner school in Ernee; take part in climbing, archery and zipline activities; visit a French market and Mont St Michel and the Bay; taste snails and frog legs and show off their many talents in the evening talent show! Thank you to the amazing staff team of Miss Lethbridge, Mr Downes, Miss Ellis, Mr Johnson, Mr Foot, Mrs Parish, Mr Carter, Miss Roloff and Mr Bishop who gave up their weekend to organise and run the trip.

We continue to place a great emphasis and focus on maintaining a culture of reading. I would like to thank the library staff and all the students that took part in the recent World Book Day, with this year's theme being *Lord of the Rings*. It was amazing to see how much effort had gone into re-decorating the library and the brilliant costumes that students (and staff) wore on the day. Congratulations to Faith (Year 7), Cassia (Year 8) and Lilly (Year 9) who were crowned the winners of the student competition and Miss Le Guefflec, who was crowned the staff champion.

Coinciding with World Book Day, we also hosted our Festival of Reading. The week included a wide range of fun activities to foster a love of literature. A number of our Year 7, 9 and 10 students were nominated by their English teachers to take part in a creative writing workshop led by ex-Plymstock student, Laura Horton. We also welcomed the author Chris Bradford, who presented his bodyguard event to the Year 7 and 8's. Chris was a big hit with the students.

We were incredibly fortunate that last week we welcomed Dickens Theatre Company, who performed their production of Macbeth. This provided the opportunity for all of our students to experience a 'live' performance of a Shakespeare play. It also allowed our Year 10 and 11s to use this to further develop their knowledge and understanding, as this text is part of their GCSE English Literature exam. I must share how delighted I was of the manner in which the students conducted themselves during the performances; they should be really proud of themselves.

A big thank you to our PE staff who, along with the students, have been enjoying lots of sporting success over the past few weeks. The Year 9 boys team continue to make progress in the Under 14s Devon Cup by overcoming a strong Torquay Academy 4-3 on penalties. The game was close, ending 1-1 after extra time. The Year 9 netball team attended an end of season tournament and competed against 9 other schools, in which they performed incredibly well. Finally, our talented Year 7 girls football team are enjoying a very successful season. They have been crowned champions of the Under 12s PSSP central venue league, without losing a single fixture. They have also reached the last 32 of the ESFA Under 13s School Cup, where they will take on Stoke Damerel Community College in an attempt to secure a place in the last 16 in the country! The team has also



reached the semi-finals of the Devon Cup. I am sure you join me in wishing all of our teams continued success in the sporting arena.

We have also seen some of our students being recognised at a national level for their sporting talents. Finley (Year 10) recently came 4th at the National Enduro Championships (missing out on a podium place by 0.04 seconds) in mountain biking. Finley will now go on to compete in the Southern Enduro Series again this year, and he will be competing in the National Enduro Champs in Wales in June.

Darcy (Year 10) recently travelled to Leeds to represent Plymouth Ladies as a 14 year old in the National Ladies Underwater Hockey Championships featuring teams from across the UK. She was part of the team that secured a bronze medal. This was followed by playing for Devon in the under 16's regional competition with a silver medal being secured. Additionally, this weekend Darcy attended the GB Training Camp in Leeds to continue the selection process for the U19s Ladies for the World Cup in 2024.

Well done to Finley and Darcy and we look forward to supporting you as your sporting careers continue to blossom.

Our staff continue to work hard in providing opportunities for students to gain experiences that enrich them beyond the academic curriculum. Every year it is estimated that 30,000 cardiac arrests happen within the UK. Recently, our brilliant PE staff taught every student from Year 7-11 basic CPR as part of the Me in PE – Restart a Heart. We are very proud of the students' engagement in this programme and the difference they may be able to make.

A group of Year 12s have been engaging in a volunteering programme since January in partnership with Age UK. Ewan, Dom, Ruby, Jemima and Isabella have been attending the Dementia Day Centre. The manager provided the following about the impression they have made at the centre. *'All five students have been amazing; they have all represented the school well, but more importantly represented themselves as kind, caring and compassionate young individuals'*.

A group of Year 9 students enjoyed a trip to City College Plymouth as part of Science Week. They experienced a variety of different career sectors that are linked to Science, including Hair and Beauty, Sport and Public Services, Computing and Health and Social Care. We also welcomed the Focus Training Group and Building who engaged with a group of Year 10s around the work experience opportunities they provide.

Looking ahead...

Year 12 UCAS Conference, Exeter – Tuesday 21 March 2023

Year 12 Geography NEA Conference, University of Plymouth – Wednesday 22 March 2023

Year 7 Parents' Evening – Thursday 30 March 2023

End of Autumn Term – Friday 31 March 2023

Thank you for your continued support of Plymstock School.

Yours faithfully,



Alan Yendell
Headteacher

