

From the Principal

Hello everyone.

This is a very foreshortened newsletter this term because everyone (young people and staff) have been incredibly busy over the last few weeks and there has been little time to put pen to paper.

The GCSE exams this year were a much bigger ordeal than they have been in the past with most of the young people sitting 23 papers. It's easy to forget what a journey they have been on to get to that stage and so a huge well done to everyone (including all the staff!) who have supported them.

Alongside that we have had more work experience opportunities with George continuing his independent placement in the cinema, Peter dog-walking and Josh W working hard at the garden centre.

There have been lots of education trips and activity trips ranging from Alton Towers to walks in the Lakes, alongside the regular things like sailing.

It is also the time of year where we top off the Therapeutic Outdoor Learning (TOL) programme with a range of expeditions, all of which seem to involve wild camping and pooing in plastic bags! They are hard work to organise and challenging for the young people to do but worth every effort when you see them return having done things they never expected to be able to do. As usual we have had canoe camps on Windermere and the Scottish Borders and this year a number of young people went to the top of Scafell, camping at 2000' before they summited. For Josh P, adding the highest point in England to his Ben Nevis and Snowdon successes gave him the full set which he has also summited on TOL camps.

Gardening has been quite a big feature with a blitz on the allotment which has seen young people and staff digging for victory. The plot now looks much more cared for and we have an exciting range of vegetables and flowers growing.

Colleen and Josh C have led a similar blitz on the garden and have been hugely creative, planting more flowers, making decorative features, insect homes and putting some aside as a 'wild area'. The bench they made has been appreciated by all and has been regularly used on the warm days we have had recently.

Sporting features have continued to be a strong theme and I have lost track of the number of events against other schools that Lucy, our PE teacher, has volunteered us for; Bocchia competitions, tag rugby, rounders, athletics and football have all featured and the performances on Sports and Open Day reflected the huge leap in participation we have seen. It has been great to see young people adopt a more positive approach to sports in general and to see fitness levels improve.

Sadly it is also the time of year to say goodbye to some people. Josh W moves back to Newcastle and his unique take on life will be greatly missed. He has made huge strides since coming to Whinfell and should be very proud of what he has achieved. He goes back to his home area with a fistful of qualifications and is going to attend college locally.

Anthony also heads home to attend college and will be greatly missed although everyone will at least be able to remove their ear defenders and savour life returning to a normal volume. Anthony again has moved on so much and leaves having done his GCSEs and been accepted for a college course.

Callum also heads into the sunset, but not too far because he has chosen to remain in Kendal, has a job and will live independently in his own flat. This is great because in the same way that he regularly came into the office uninvited to offer us his cynical (but always funny and often valid) views on the world, we can at least now do the same. We know where you live, so expect lots of visits! Callum has been with us a long time and I can speak for all the staff and say that it has been a pleasure to work with you. Seeing your success is really gratifying for us all. Well done!

So, an apt note on which to end. A hard working and exceptionally busy term for young people and staff alike but one that has been rich with opportunity and 'personal bests' not just in sports but right across the lives of us all. We go into the holidays in a positive frame of mind and I hope that you all have a relaxed and enjoyable break.

For our leavers, good luck with the rest of your lives. We have been lucky to have you at Whinfell; remember the lessons learned and what you are capable of. We hope that you stay in touch with us and most important of all, enjoy life; you only get one crack at it!

Chris

Dates for your diary:

Autumn Term starts:

Monday 2nd September

Half Term:

14th October - 25th October

End of Term:

Friday 20th December

KS3 Local History Study

The young people in Key stage 3 education have been learning about Kendal this term in humanities.

This included a day visiting Kendal museum looking at old maps, Kendal Castle, Kendal's first castle site, Castle Keep and Moot Hall.



National Citizenship Scheme

The National Citizenship Service Award is a government-backed programme created to enrich, challenge and empower young people. Offering an excellent experience and opportunities for young people to develop their skills, the scheme is widely recognised in both education and the workplace. On completion of the scheme, participants receive a certificate to add to their CV and celebrate their achievements.

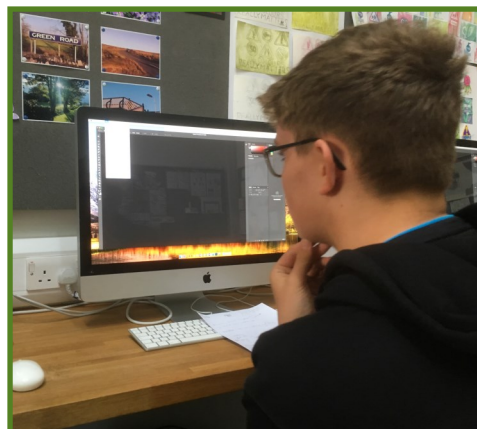


Three young people from Whinfell School secured places and began the scheme with activities at Lakeside YMCA, pushing personal boundaries physically, mentally and socially. They had to complete a range of tasks such as raft-building, climbing, camping, fell walking and team-building exercises. Their progress so early into the three week course was admirable so encouraging for the next stage when they will experience a more independent life staying at the Lancaster University campus.

The course continues in September with the charity awareness and fundraising section of the award for which they have discussed big ideas and are making plans. They now have more exciting times to look forward to on their return to school after the summer break.

Kendal College Taster Day

At the end of June, year 10's took part in a taster day at Kendal College. The young people chose their preferred subjects and attended four different sessions throughout the day. Of the many highlights, the one that stood out the most was the enthusiasm given to all their chosen activities. They were a credit to themselves and to the school, well liked by the college lecturers and the pupils from other schools. Jack D spent the morning at the Art campus, living his dream in a room full of iMacs, using Photoshop to design logos. Josh and Tristan thoroughly enjoyed the joinery session both excellent in planing wood. Jack K interacted maturely and supportively with peers from other schools encouraging them to join in and work as a team. Tristan was set a challenge in the mechanical department to complete a tyre change within 6 minutes. He and a peer from another school worked well as a team, managing the task with seconds to spare. A thoroughly enjoyable day which will no doubt have provided the young people with ideas and aspirations for their further education.



Young Leaders in Sport

This term three young people have been training to be young leaders in sport, run by officials from the London 2012 Olympics at Ulverston Leisure centre. The training means they will be able to officiate at sports in different levels of competition. It has been amazing to see the confidence of our young sport leaders Jack K and Tristan grow. They have run inclusive sports at another school, teaching younger pupils' the rules and officiating and have now been chosen to officiate at The Cumbria School Finals in Cumbria. All three young people have previously made it to compete in the finals of Table Cricket at The Cumbria School Games, winning back in 2017. This year it has been fantastic to see these young people now go on to not only to officiate at the final but mentoring other pupils from The Lakes School to become young leaders.



Inter School Rounders Competition

Six local schools met for a rounders competition this term hosted by Kirkbie Kendal School. This is the first time Whinfell have played in a rounders competition. As we are such a small school, three pupils from Queen Elizabeth School joined Whinfell pupils. It was great to see the young people work so positively and show real sportsmanship with their new teammates. They worked so well together they won all five games, going on to win the competition overall.



Kendal Tag Rugby Festival

Kendal Rugby Club put on a fantastic festival of tag rugby. Whinfell School took six young people to learn skills and play matches. Three young people in the group had never played tag rugby before, despite this and the 32 degree heat (it was a scorcher!) we went on to win one match and draw in the second. A great result for Team Whinfell.



Sports and Open Day

Sports Day was blessed with great weather and it was nice to prove that it doesn't always rain in Cumbria! The fell race was a huge success with a lot of new personal bests and a new overall record time (well done George C). As always what was great to see was the sportsman-like manner that was evident with early finishers going back along the course to encourage those behind.



After the race a splendid feast was appreciated by all and once again thanks to Paula, Julie and all their helpers for laying it on. With full bellies we headed for Kendal Green and the 'track and field' events which was a great balance between competition and fun.



I thoroughly enjoyed the day and hope that our visitors did too. It was, as always, lovely to see so many parents attend (not to mention children and dogs) and it all added to the relaxed, family atmosphere that we value so much. Thanks for your support.

