

20 December 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

As this half term draws rapidly to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to review our progress so far this year and look ahead to 2020.

Since half term, the national picture for school performance has been formally released and we are once again thrilled at how our ex Year 11 students compared to others nationally. The performance tables which can be found at www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/find-a-school-in-england confirm our students performed in line with the top end of schools in the country.

At Key Stage Four, our school progress score, which measures the rate of progress made from students' SAT scores to GCSE was significantly above the national average and places us in the top 30% of students in the country, including selective schools. In addition, our attainment 8 score, which identifies the quality of grades achieved by students places us in the top 30% of schools nationally. The Blandford School students performed so well that we were 4th in Dorset (there are 19 secondary schools).

Within these figures, we saw the high ability perform 'well above average', with 65 Grade 9's (awarded to 4.5% of students in the country). Pupil Premium students performed very well and are 'closing the gap' with non-Pupil Premium children, science performed above the national average with their results placing them in the highest 20% of schools. In addition, maths continues to flourish doing even better in 2019 than 2018, and 2018 results were very good!

All the above bodes really well for students who remain with us in Years 7 – 13 as well as students who have left us to commence apprenticeships/college courses. Our awards evening this week celebrated their success as well as the success of other students including Post 16 and Post 18 with several ex-students returning from university.

As for other school activities this half term, we held a Winter Concert on 12th December which was the first being organised by Mr Guy Readman, Music Subject Leader. Mr Readman only joined us formally in January 2019, so this is his first Christmas with us. A massive thank you to those who entertained us.

The Winter Concert was, of course, the same day as the General Election. During the week prior to the Election, the North Dorset candidates were invited to TBS for a husting with a Sixth Form audience, ably orchestrated by Mr Langford. All students in Years 12 and 13, some of whom were eligible to vote, took part in the husting, listening to all responses and offering opinions of their own. The event was designed to engage young people in the democratic process and provided inspiration for a Mock Election which took place in the school on 12th December. The election was led by Sixth Form students, some of whom stood as candidates, whilst others played a role in campaign teams and in organising voting on "polling day". The result of this election was:

1st Place – Sidney Jenkinson, Liberal Democrats (31%)

2nd Place – Joseph Silk, Conservatives (25%)



3rd Place – Nathan Scott, Labour (22%)

4th Place – Louie Didcott, Green (20%)

The “turnout” was approximately 60%, similar to the General Election. It was a closely fought race, with all the candidates acquitting themselves very well in presenting their priorities. The level of engagement in our democracy was a credit to the Sixth Form and the wider school community.

The Head Boy, Mansoon Tamang and Head Girl, Rosie Platts are exceptionally busy as well as enthusiastic! In our weekly meetings we are covering a wide range of topics including recycling, catering, charity boxes in The Kitchen, more water fountains, donations for the Food Bank and a Sixth Form Spring Ball (amongst other things). They have a very good team of students working with them so luckily they are learning the art of delegation!

Our younger students have also been very busy recently with a group of Year 7s being lucky enough to go to Bryanston School to watch the joint production with TBS of Les Misérables. Thank you to those who bought tickets for Les Misérables – a truly stunning production. Attached is the review from the Blackmore Vale which I thought you may like to read. Many, many thanks to the students who put hours into rehearsal time as well as Mrs Bowerman-Ellis who was balancing Les Mis whilst preparing students for public exams.

Year 7 students have also been helping to support the Blandford Foodbank appeal before Christmas which is always a truly worthwhile cause at this time of year. To finish their first full term, each Year 7 tutor group will be putting together a class charter to present to the rest of the Year Group in assemblies in the New Year. They will be championing the ethos and morals that they believe in as a tutor group and how that helps us all to succeed in working together to achieve our goals. The Year 7 motto of "Positive Mindset, No Excuses" will continue to be their focus in ensuring that students put as much effort into their school work as possible and display a positive attitude to all the challenges we face together.

Year 8 students have put together and donated shoe boxes to The Samaritan’s Operation Christmas Child this year. These shoeboxes contain presents in the form of toys and necessities for boys and girls around the world and will be distributed to the neediest.

Sporting success – Jack Roper and Emma Sterk have just succeeded in a Kick Boxing event and both have been awarded a Black Belt. Our lower years badminton teams are now North Dorset winners and are going to the County Finals – well done to them! Netball Academy and senior training is extremely well attended with up to 70 girls training regularly each week. The girls have played in a number of matches and tournaments. Special congratulations goes to our U14 squad who finished 2nd in North Dorset and progressed to the County finals, plus our U19 team who finished runners up in the County Challenge Cup recording 7 wins, one draw and one loss. This event was officiated by young leaders from TBS.

Special congratulations to Grace Taylor in 7HAW who recently received a letter from the Blandford Mayor congratulating her on coming a close second in their Christmas Card Competition. She has since received another letter from the Mayor with the Carol Service Booklet which included her design on the front cover. I have included her beautiful artwork below.

A massive thank you to JP Morgan for donating £500 and a £50 beauty hamper to the Art Department to buy a new camera and resources for students.



Trips so far this year include a PCA trip to LA, a Year 9 trip to Warner Bros. Studios and a Year 9 visit to Bovington Tank Museum. Year 10 attended a Crime and Punishment day at Shire Hall, Dorchester and some of our Key Stage 3 students saw the Nutcracker at Bryanston School.

Planned trips for 2020/2021 include Berlin in April for Years 11, 12 and 13; PGL Chateau du Tertre in June for Year 8; a Spanish trip to Seville for Year 10 students; a Key Stage 3 ski trip; a Sixth Form visit to China; another trip to Iceland for Key Stage 4 as well as a Year 7 activity weekend. More information on these exciting opportunities in due course.

Festive greetings from myself and the team at TBS, we look forward to seeing students again on Monday, 6th January 2020.

Best wishes

Sally Wilson

Sally Wilson
Headteacher

