

Head of Division Thoughts:

I honestly cannot believe it is already October and we are over halfway through this half term. With only two weeks until our two weeks Autumn break, it is important to reflect on what we have achieved since the start of term. For our Year 7, they have started a new school and have been learning new systems, procedures and making new friends. For Year 8, they have been getting used to not being the youngest anymore and coping with increasing academic demands. We have also welcomed some new Year 8 students who are settling in well to Beechwood life. In addition, these young people have had to not only cope with their schoolwork and extra-curricular activities, but do all of this in very uncertain, sometimes worrying and strange times. I remember vividly my Grandparents talking to me about life during WW2 and how life changed for them. I am not trying to say we are suffering the same hardships they did, but we are now living through a part of History which will be talked about for many years. I sometimes find it difficult to process and comprehend the situation we are in and accept this 'new normal' and whilst our children are generally resilient, it will be on their minds. I have been so proud of the way in which they are all coping and adapting and I take my strength and determination to carry on from their acceptance of it all and willingness to just give their best all the time. I sometimes think adults can learn a lot from children at times like this.

In teaching, every so often you get what I like to call 'the warm fuzzy feeling' that reminds me why I do this job and why it is important. Year 7 very much gave me one of these moments in their PE lesson this week. Their determination, hard work and peer support was outstanding. Mr Golby and I were exceptionally proud to be teaching that lesson.

I wish you all a wonderful and restful weekend.

As always if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Rebecca Smith

Curriculum Notes:

Here are some highlights from some of their subjects:

English: **Year 7** students have just begun reading their class novel 'Stormbreaker' by Anthony Horowitz; many of them are Alex Rider fans and have shown real enthusiasm so far. **Year 8** students are continuing to read 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'. Their contextual understanding of the novel continues to develop as they shared their research findings on the Holocaust.

French: **Year 7** have reinforced the alphabet and spelling names and started French numbers. **Year 8** have reinforced the present tense of ER verbs, learnt negatives and have been talking about TV programmes.

History: **Year 7** brainstormed "the qualities of a medieval monarch" and created a spider diagram. Their homework is to produce an election campaign which will be presented to the Witan (your class). Your campaign can include a speech outlining your candidate's strengths and the other candidate's weaknesses. You can include a poster and anything else that you think will help persuade The Witan that your candidate would make the best king. Use information from the sheet given in class to support either William Duke of

Normandy, Harald Hardrada, Harold Godwinson or Edgar The Atheling. **Year 8** watched a video clip about Martin Luther and the Reformation. They learnt about "Henry's Great Matter" and explained it. They also learnt about Henry's six wives and selected the most suitable in their view. 8HG completed a homework debating whether Henry VII was a usurper or the rightful heir to the throne.

Science: Year 7. **Year 8** started a new topic this week, Our Changing Planet. They learnt about the structure of the Earth and the theory of continental drift along with completing research tasks on the formation of different rock types.

RE: Year 7 completed the History of the School and had a test. They have moved on to the Life of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat the founder of the Sacred Heart Order. **Year 8** have studied the lives of St. Benedict and St. Francis.

Maths: Year 7: Set one have been learning about Factors, Prime numbers, multiples, negative numbers and multiplying and dividing. Set two focussed on calculating using the four operations. **Year 8:** Set one focused on calculating prime factors to find the highest common factor and lowest common multiple. Set two have been consolidating their knowledge of adding and subtracting decimals, negative numbers and factor trees. They are starting to learn how to calculate the area of triangles.

Geography: Year 7

Drama: Year 7.

German: Year 7 have been learning the German alphabet, major cities in German and how to say where you live. **Year 8** have been learning the future tense and what activities you will do in the holidays.

Art: Year 7 are looking at developing various uses of media to express their art. First, they are creating the colour wheel. **Year 8**, after creating various observational drawings of objects and training themselves to see visually Year 8 are starting a new project.

DT: Year 7 have been making their pop-up cards which they have really enjoyed doing. **Year 8** have been making jewellery.

Food Technology: Year 7 have made Garlic and Rosemary Plait this week in Food Technology. **Year 8** are looking at nutrients with a particular focus on vitamins and minerals.

Music: Year 7 learnt about note values and rhythms, then discussed time signatures and how to write rhythms for music in 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4. The students wrote their own rhythms down on a stave, learning also how to draw treble clefs, bars and bar lines. **Year 8** listened to and analysed Mussorgsky's 'A Night on a Bare Mountain', then compared it to last week's 'In The Hall of the Mountain King' by Grieg. We also watched a Lloyds Bank advert without the sound, discussing what music the students would compose for it, we then watched the advert with two different pieces of music, then analysed and discussed them.

Spanish: Year 7 have been talking about their age and their brothers, and sisters. Students will be learning numbers and the irregular verb *tener* and the adjective agreements *un / una*. Some students will be able to talk about other people family. **Year 8** have been describing eyes and hair. Students will be learning/revising the irregular verb *tener and ser*. Some students will be able to describe other people eyes and hair

Computer Science: Year 7 have been looking and at online safety and appropriate behaviour. They are now doing a ppt presentation in pairs on online collaboration and cyberbullying. **Year 8** are completing their topic on computing systems. Their key words are: Operation Systems, processor, communication and programs. They have been considering who wins in a game of noughts and crosses using machine against human!

Student thoughts:

Each week I speak to students about how they are feeling and what they are enjoying. I also overhear some of their conversations. Some of the quotes of the week:

"I am so pleased I got a part in We Will Rock You"

"I am really happy Art club will be starting again soon."

"I cannot believe how fast this term has gone already."

"The chicken burgers are really good."

Achievements / Extra-Curricular Activities:

It has been lovely to see many JD students taking part in our clubs and activities. It is never too late to join though, so please encourage your children to sign up to what is on offer.

I was delighted to see so many of our JD students sign up for and get roles in We Will Rock You. 23 students in the Division are taking part. A special congratulations to **Amelie Beaumont** who has been cast as the leading lady, Scaramouche. I can't wait to be a part of putting on the show with the fantastic Performing Arts Team. You will all be amazing.

Maths – A reminder that the Maths Department sell scientific calculators for £7 should your child need one. This is cheaper than most high street shops.