

Junior Division Journal

13th November 2020

Head of Division Thoughts:

The weeks are flying by with just over four weeks until our Christmas break. Whilst many of our wonderful traditions at this time of year will have to be adapted to be COVID-19 safe, I do hope that the students will join us in making the most of what we are able to achieve and we will still have some Christmas fun and joy. There is still much to look forward to and I have talked about some of these at the end of this journal.

I do not enjoy getting grumpy; however, I have had to be a little grumpy this week with Junior Division. There seems to have been a lack of focus and concentration from many students this week which has been disappointing to see. I appreciate that life is not what we want it to be at the moment, but we are so lucky to still have our wonderful school open for learning, students really need to be making the most of this time to push forward with their studies whilst they have limited external distractions. I would appreciate it if you can reinforce this message at home as well.

In the general busyness of this term, I apologise that I totally forgot to share and celebrate the wonderful news that our very own Mrs Newton and Mr Simpson are just seven weeks away from getting married. Having got engaged earlier this year, the misery of COVID-19 has led them to bring the wedding forward from next year. They will be using our beautiful Chapel and I am sure you will join me in wishing them all every bit of love and happiness for the future.

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** wrote some fantastic speeches as part of their writing assessment. They were required to persuade fellow spies to invest in a gadget they have designed. Next week they will be delivering their speeches to their fellow peers (they will be presenting as undercover spies!). **Year 8** are continuing to read their class novel 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'. This week students met a character 'The Fury' for the first time and discussed what their first impressions were of him using evidence from the novel.

French: **Year 7** have been completing their end of module tests. **Year 8** have been learning about how to describe their opinions on different types of books and reinforcement of present tense of regular verbs

History: **Year 7** are learning how King William the Conqueror controlled England - this week's lesson was about the castles that he had built. **Year 8** finished watching the Catherine of Aragon programme and learnt about Henry VIII's defensive policies. They should have enough information now to start working on their essay "Was Henry VIII a man or a monster?". This should take two homework sessions.

Science: **Year 7** are continuing separation techniques looking at distillation and then designing an experiment to extract the 2 solids (one soluble and one insoluble) from a mixture. **Year 8** have finished their electricity, magnetism and space topic and are now revising for a test. 8HG has a test on Friday 20th,

and 8B has a test Monday 16th. They have also looked at the rock cycle, the gases in the Earth's atmosphere, and the carbon cycle.

RE: **Year 7** have been learning about the life of Abraham and the work he did. **Year 8** have been learning all about Mother Theresa and the work she did and how she lived her life.

Maths: **Year 7.** Set one: They have been revising algebra and completing their end of Unit 3 test. Set two: have started unit 3; basic algebra, collecting like terms and simplifying expressions. **Year 8.** Set one: started unit 3 working with 3-D shapes. Set two: have been introduced to pie charts and have learned how to interpret data from these charts. They are also learning how to convert data from a table and put it into a pie chart.

Geography: **Year 7** had fun sketching a portion of the exterior of Beechwood school this week. Using their knowledge of different weathering processes, they annotated their sketches to show their understanding. **Year 8** have been developing their knowledge of key migration terminology, considering why people migrate and exploring the history of immigration into the UK.

Drama: **Year 7** have been continuing with our Pantomime topic. They have participated in a whole class story-telling warm up game. They have started to work on a variety of creative tasks to help them plan their own pantomime. So far, they have completed a mind map to set the scene for their pantomime and created a list of bullet points for their story line.

German: **Year 7** have been doing their chapter one listening, reading, and writing assessments & preparation for speaking assessment. **Year 8** have been preparing for their speaking assessment and revising Chapter 5.

Art: **Year 7** are working in pairs to create an informative, decorative sheet on the artist Pablo Picasso. **Year 8** have completed their tasks on 1PP and in the process of building their mini structures in relation to their photos taken around the school.

DT: **Year 7** are continuing to make their picture frames. They have been busy decorating them. **Year 8** have also been working on completing the decoration for their frames.

Food Technology: **Year 7** have made a pasta bake where they learnt how easy it is to make a cheese sauce. **Year 8** have learnt about sensory analysis. They also evaluated the dishes they have made so far.

Music: **Year 7 and Year 8** have done further Directed Listening Tests this week, answering questions on music, using their knowledge of instrumentation, dynamics, tonality, pitch, rhythm and tempo. We discussed the possibility of putting on an informal class concert at the end of the term, just within each class.

Spanish: **Year 7** have been learning ¿Qué te gusta hacer? What do you like to do? They have been looking at giving opinions using me gusta+infinitive. They have also had a vocabulary test. **Year 8** have been learning ¿ Te gusta tu casa o tu piso? ¿Por qué? - Giving their opinions. They have been extending sentences by using negatives and intensifiers. They have learned to talking about their best friend's likes and her/his house. They have a vocabulary test next week.

Computer Science: **Year 7** have been continuing with their touch typing as this is such an important skill to learn. **Year 8** are completing the topic on Logic gates, truth tables, logic expressions, Boolean logic.

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 cannot believe we convinced Mr Waite to take part in the Ice Bucket Challenge,” (Neither can I)

“I am really excited for the charity week.”

“It is only 50 sleeps until Christmas.”

“I wish we could have sports matches.” (Me too!)

Achievements / Extra-Curricular Activities:

Every year we create shoeboxes to give as gifts to people in need at Christmas. We are starting to prepare for these now. Could you please send you child into school with a shoe box, wrapping paper and Sellotape before Monday 14th December. These can be stored in my office in a named bag. Details about what will be needed to fill the shoe box will come home soon, but items such as toiletries, puzzle books, sweets/chocolate, gloves, hats etc are all suitable items to be included if you wanted to start adding a few items to your shopping trollies. These shoe boxes are well received every year and we have great fun putting them together on our community service day.

I am also planning a Christmas Party for Junior Division as part of their charity week. During that week students are coming up with some fund-raising ideas of which I will send more details soon. My plan for the party is to have a small Christmas Fair, where students can have some fun at the stalls run by staff and 6th Form and then play some games. We are also going to be holding a raffle where students can pay to add their name to the hat – the winner will be permitted to pour ice water over me during the last week of term. I also have some other staff volunteers, including Mr Waite – well done Year 7 for convincing him. I did not have the guts to ask!