

***Head of Division Thoughts:***

What a glorious week at Beechwood. The grounds here are stunning and even more so in the sunshine. The students have now completed a full cycle of our two-week timetable and certainly look well embedded back into Beechwood life. They are still smiling, which is the main thing.

I always love the start of a new academic year; the new stationary, school bag and clothes (yes, I still do this every year much to my husband's bemusement). I love the promise of a new shiny notebook or exercise book and the vow I make to keep it in pristine condition and always write in it neatly. This resolution lasts for a time, but invariably as I get busy, my diary becomes less pristine and dogeared and my writing slightly less legible. Whilst this is frustrating, I know it is a sign I am being productive and working hard. I try to look at each day as a new start and an opportunity to grow and learn. I would even go as far to say I consider the start of each lesson a 'fresh start'. I will be encouraging the students to try to adopt this mindset as they move through the school. We cannot change the past, but we can be in control of our future and a positive mindset is crucial to this. The start of a new academic year is always a good time to look forward and embrace the opportunities presented to us and I will be encouraging all our students to look for the positives in their day and readily accept each challenge they face with enthusiasm.

Speaking of opportunities, we have started many extra-curricular activities this week and I would ask you to encourage your students to sign up for as many as they can. More clubs will be added as Covid logistics allow, but in the meantime please look carefully at what is currently on offer. Education feeds the mind but the extra-curricular is what feeds the soul and makes us well rounded and developed people.

I wish you all a lovely weekend. Mine will be spent eating birthday cake for my eldest's birthday. I am not quite sure how I have an eight-year-old already (I am sure you all can empathise with that feeling).

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 delivered fantastic presentations this week entitled 'All about me'. Students shared information ranging from their hobbies and passions to their fears. **Year 8** students have been completing an English assessment this week and have also begun introductory lesson to their class novel, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*.

**French:** **Year 7** have been learning how to have a short conversation on meeting somebody. **Year 8** have been learning about countries/nationalities and talking about holidays. They have also worked on translation skills and revision of adjectival agreements.

*History:* **Year 7** have been looking at sources, items brought to school by me, and analysing their origins. Homework is to find their own source for next week and photograph it or bring it in to show the class. They will need to write details about it in their books. **Year 8** have continued to learn about Henry VII and their homework is a categorisation sheet.

*Science:* **Year 7** have been looking at specialised cells. We have made a booklet on different specialised cells including red blood cells, sperm, eggs and root hair cells, looking at how and why the cells are specialised. They have homework to make a 3D cell due in for Monday (a couple talked about a cell cake). **Year 8** have been learning about current and voltage in series and parallel circuits. They have also been learning about acids and alkalis. They have learnt the numbers and colours of the pH table and have tested different chemicals to identify them as acids or alkalis. They have been looking at the structure of the Earth including convection currents and different types of plate boundary.

*RE:* **Year 7** have been looking and learning about the history of Beechwood School. **Year 8** have been studying the beginnings of Monasticism.

*Textiles:* **Year 7** have been doing tie dyeing. **Year 8** have completed eco printing. These are in preparation for the products they are going to be making this term.

*Maths:* **Year 7** have been looking at bar charts and grouping data. **Year 8** (set two) have started to study the four rules of negative and positive numbers. Set one have been looking at factors and powers.

*Drama:* **Year 7 & 8** have continued our study of the history of theatre and have concentrated on Greek Theatre. We looked at the key terms of an amphitheatre, the importance of the Greek Gods in Greek theatre. The students wrote and performed a Dithyramb (an ancient Greek hymn sung and danced in honour of Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility) and designed a mask which focused on different emotions.

*German:* **Year 7** have been learning greetings in German and numbers 1 – 10. **Year 8** have been learning how to order food and higher numbers with Euros.

*Art:* **Year 7** have started to explore observation drawing and colour mixing, focusing on primary and secondary colours. **Year 8** are exploring themes to do with still life, words and association of themes relating to the concept.

*DT:* In Product Design this week **Year 7** have had an introduction to mechanisms and **Year 8** have had an introduction to Polymers.

*Food Technology:* **Year 7** completed their first practical in Food Technology. They made Apple Flapjack Crumble. **Year 8** have looked at food storage and equipment.

*Music:* **Year 7** have continued base line assessments covering aural skills and theoretical knowledge. **Year 8** have had a re-cap of the elements of music, concentrating on structure, rhythms and note values. Directed Listening Test: Hall of the Mountain King by Grieg.

***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:

*"Lessons have been more fun than I expected."*

*"I have enjoyed having my classmates around to support me"*

*"I thought I would be tired finishing school at 4pm every day, but I got used to it straight away"*

*"I am looking forward to going to clubs."*

***Achievements / Extra-Curricular Activities:***

Clubs and activities started this week, so please check the timetable that was sent on Parent Mail last week and sign up.

We are hoping that fixtures may be able to commence after October Half Term, but this is under review and we will keep you informed as we have new information.

There will usually be more activities to share in this section, but as you can appreciate things are a little different now. I will share more information each week.