



Marden High School

Friday 15th July 2022

Dear All,

“We have just completed an academic year which has been quite extraordinary.” These are the words I used in my newsletter at the end of the summer term last year, and I might be forgiven for hoping I would not be using these same words again now that we approach the end of this current academic year. And yet ... another challenging year, this time courtesy of a roof which succumbed to the force of Storm Arwen. And yet in spite of, or maybe because of, having to rethink and reinvent how and where we carry out our business of education, we have continued to deliver high quality educational experiences for our children, and to develop our school community in so many ways. Once again I believe it is the closeness of our school community and the sense of belonging that people have within it that has enabled us to work together so well, and I would like to thank all our members - students, staff, parents and carers, governors - for all the contributions they have made to this past year.

At the end of this term we will be saying goodbye to a number of staff. Mrs Scott, Head of Year and science teacher will be retiring after 37 years at the school, and Mrs Rae, technology teacher will be retiring following 35 years of service. We and the thousands of students who have been taught by both these people are very grateful for the dedication and commitment shown by Mrs Scott and Mrs Rae through their combined 72 years of teaching. We also say goodbye to Ms Wallace, our Deputy Head, who has supported me in the leadership of Marden through some key times for the school. We started at Marden together, moving everyone into the new building, eliminated the significant deficit the school had, saw student numbers increase by a third to become oversubscribed, and more latterly managed the challenges of Covid and a roof blowing off. So we have experienced significant challenges together, and throughout, Ms Wallace has been instrumental to the successful outcomes we have achieved, at the same time developing relationships with, and opportunities for, students and staff which have helped them flourish as confident, valued members of our community. Miss Hedworth, one of our specialist support assistants, will also be leaving us next week, to enter the busy world of hospitality, and Miss Murray, geography teacher, will be entering the world of A level teaching at college. We thank them for all their work and wish them all the best for their respective futures.

Last week, a group of Year 8 students visited the Port of Blyth for an exciting insight into the 'Wild Oyster Regeneration Project'. Students were immersed in a range of activities, including checking the oysters in their nurseries, looking for different sea creatures and building marine food chains and learnt about the role of a marine biologist and the importance of their role in monitoring marine life and ensuring we protect the biodiversity of our seas and oceans. Students had the chance to visit the Blyth Tall Ships project, learning about how the ships are built and how the project supports the local community, and went on board one of the ships and observed first hand what life is like when travelling on a voyage at sea. All students involved were really enthusiastic and thoroughly engaged in the whole experience.

This week was the Geography field trip when all our new Year 11 geography students took to the local coastline to examine the issues of coastal erosion and protection at Blyth beach, as well as the theme of rebranding, looking at recent redevelopments in the Whitley Bay area. The students worked hard and were excellent ambassadors for the school, making this day of local exploration a very enjoyable one.

As you are aware, on Monday and Tuesday next week we have our Creativity Festival which we are very much looking forward to. An immense amount of work has been put into preparing for the multitude of different activities students will be enjoying, and especially by Mrs Berriman and Ms Olbrecht, to whom I would like to extend all our thanks for going over and above in getting everything ready. I will be feeding back on the Creativity Festival at the start of the Autumn term, and this will be a useful way to remind us all then what we will continue to work on during next academic year, that is, 'enhancing the curriculum to develop our creative pedagogy, providing opportunities to develop skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, digital literacy and innovation' (School Development Plan 2022/23). In the meantime, we will be posting video and photographic accounts of what our students will have experienced during the Creativity Festival, on our school website.

Due to the Creativity Festival and the shorter week, there will be no extra curricular activities next week. These will commence again on Monday 12th September and will be bookable via the School Gateway. A new timetable for activities will be shared in September.

On Wednesday night we enjoyed the culmination of much work across the course of the last six months as the two year groups who were working with Hand Of and Ex-Easter Island Head performed at the Whitley Bay Playhouse. In two acts, the younger Year 8 students who created the backing track using sounds created on the coastline, in the physics laboratory of Newcastle University and in school each week, were able to present their very own musical interpretation of the coastal landscape we enjoy in the North East, whilst the Year 11 students performed their musical journey which travelled from Holy Island to the centre of

Newcastle, via Blyth and Seahouses. The aeolian music was interwoven with learning about both the local geography and local history. This fantastic performance was yet another reminder of the creative community we celebrate at Marden.

On Thursday we attended the NTLT Star Awards where one of our students was recognised for her brilliant work locally, regionally and nationally. It is always a wonderful night when the students of Marden are recognised for their leadership and in this case hailed as a local hero. The nomination was well deserved and we are very proud that Marden's hope for all students to be agents of change has been once again recognised by the annual event which acknowledges young people and their success.

In the context of getting uniform and equipment ready for September, we have added a recommended value for money calculator to the equipment list and updated the clothing section on the website too. To ensure we support families during a period of time when costs are on the rise, we have continued to ensure that blazers, shirts, skirts, trousers, rugby tops, hoodies, shorts and tracksuit bottoms together with our ties can be bought from a range of outlets so that everyone is ready for learning in September. As part of the update we are now adding a further sense of belonging by adding House Colours to our ties. We have four houses at Marden; Alnwick which is yellow, Bamburgh which is blue, Dunstanburgh which is green and Warkworth which is red. Adding the colour means that students can proudly display the house they are in, as part of the Marden uniform. The current ties will remain as appropriate as uniform but going forward these will be phased out and replaced by the new house coloured ties. For students joining us in Year 7 this September, Miss Laing is emailing to update parents and carers with their child's House and its colour so the right tie can be purchased. If you already have one, then this can be swapped free of charge, and Miss Laing's email will explain how.

As this is the final letter of the academic year I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a pleasant and safe summer, and look forward to seeing everybody back in September. Staff start back on Monday 5th September, and all students begin term at 8.45am on Tuesday 6th September.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher