



## Marden High School

Friday 16th December 2022

Dear All

As you know every week I have the privilege of inviting a number of students down to my office to present them with certificates for Work of the Week. I know that this is always a difficult decision for teachers in selecting pieces of work for these awards because the quality of work is so high across the board. The students that join me to discuss their work therefore typify the sort of effort, pride and care that our students put into their work, and I am always so impressed not only by the quality of their outcomes, but by the ability of our young people to talk cogently about what they have been learning. By way of celebrating these high standards I want to share with you just three examples of some of the superb gothic Christmas writing I witnessed in recent Year 7 English classes, many of which read as though penned by much older hands:

*The knocker echoed with an ear splitting loudness throughout our old, terraced house. Past the stairs decked with lengths of wreaths, our grand door stood tall, at the end of our beautifully decorated hall. I answered. "Charlie! I thought you weren't going to answer! I was starting to get cold..." Staring at the visitor, I tried to make out who it was through the thick snow and mist. The snow was pelting my best friend, Samuel, hard on the back and he looked very fed up with it. I let him in and, with a sigh, he took off his snow boots. He'd worn them, I'd guessed, to fight through the snow. Looking around, he gawped at the Christmas splendour that was our house - in fact, it was more of a Christmas grotto than a Victorian house.*

*Later that evening, the moon was at its highest and the table was set perfectly once again. As the family started to tuck in to their glorious dinner, Charlotte felt someone pull her perfect little plait. Obviously being a young girl she screamed out with pain and her mother and father were outraged with this behaviour. But while getting scolded she could have sworn she saw a little girl run past the pillars behind the table...*

*The placid, illuminated moon gleamed in a pearlescent ball of glimmering light through the thicket of trees. The wild, mangled bushes grew thick and tangled in the overgrowth of thorns like sweeping vines that snaked up the thick, heavy trunks of oak trees old as time. They swayed gently like feathers in the wind on a calm day as a soft shower of snow drifted peacefully down from the grim, rumbling clouds. All traces of*

*any flowers that once stood proud now lay droopily under a heavy sheet of snow cold as ice. The chattering noise of the wildlife nearby echoed throughout the woods.*

I could have chosen many more, equally well crafted pieces, and I think you will agree that the atmospheric description and sense of foreboding they conjure is impressive indeed. Well done to all our students and staff for all the fantastic work that has been produced this term.

Key Stage 3 students have all received their DC1 reports now. Having conducted some parent voice last year, we have already made some changes to reports. Historically, DC2 has always contained a comment about your child's progress within the report. Going forward, instead of this, you will be invited in, prior to the remote Parents' Evening (4.00pm-7.00pm), for a 'face to face event' (4.00pm-6.00pm) to look at the work in your child's books and read the feedback from their key assessment points. Your child's Head of Year and members of the senior leadership team will also be available to speak to at this event. Student work is also available to see on Google Classroom, and from January, we will be 'inviting guardians' so that you can access your child's Google classroom directly. Please ensure that we have an up-to-date email address for you on school comms.

The dates for the 'face to face' events are as follows:

Year 7 - June 13th/ Remote Parents' Evening June 15th

Year 8 - 25th April/ Remote Parents' Evening April 27th

Year 9 - 13th February/ Remote Parents' Evening February 16th

More information will be shared nearer the time.

Ofqual, the examinations regulation body, have released updated information recently regarding 'Resilience in the exam system' in 2023. Within this, they set out the support that has been put in place, for example, formulae sheets for GCSE maths, physics and combined science, and the spacing out of papers in subjects. In an extreme situation, where exams could not take place for all students nationally, work that has been assessed, for example mock exams, could be used to formulate a grade for students. Ofqual's full update can be read here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-resilience-in-the-exam-system-in-2023/supporting-resilience-in-the-exam-system-in-2023>

This week Year 9 students have had the opportunity to find out more about the world of work by taking part in a Careers Speed Dating event. Representatives from a wide range of industry sectors including the NHS, Royal IHC, Accenture and Careers at Sea came into school to speak with our students and answer their questions about job roles and responsibilities. The students were extremely engaged and asked some excellent questions. Later on in the day the students were given time to reflect on their experience through class discussion, carrying out independent research on career pathways and updating their Globalbridge profile. The feedback from both students and employers was very positive, typified by this quote from North Star Shipping: “Just wanted to say thank you for letting Careers at Sea attend your careers talk with the students. The behaviour was probably the best I've seen throughout schools, just to let you know. Had a huge amount of interest regarding the Merchant Navy, which to be honest I didn't expect.” We look forward to holding the event again next year.

As I am sure many of you are aware, there has been quite a bit of illness around recently, affecting students and staff, and staff absence is the reason that we had to postpone our Key Stage 3 E-safety evening for parents which was scheduled this week. I am happy to say, though, that we have rearranged this event for the new year, and it will now take place on Wednesday 11th January from 5.30pm - 6.15pm. There will be a short presentation on what parents need to be looking for when their children are using various social media platforms and web-based gaming, as well as an opportunity to ask questions and ‘troubleshoot’ in a relatively informal environment. Light refreshments will also be provided, and children are welcome, but not essential. I look forward to seeing lots of people there.

This week coming on Tuesday and Wednesday is, of course, our school production of ‘Sister Act’. There are still a few tickets left for both showings, so if you haven’t already, you may want to think about getting one and enjoying what promises to be a great night’s entertainment.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape  
Head Teacher