



Marden High School

Friday 23rd December 2022

Dear All

We have achieved much, and enjoyed many successes this term, and the past five days have typified that, a week crammed full of highlights, too many to mention, but including House Assemblies, Christmas Jumper Day (raising a generous amount of money in support of Bone Cancer Research), a fantastic Work of the Week collection, and of course two fantastic renditions of our school production Sister Act. The performing arts, sports and academic extras that happen at Marden are many and varied, all developing valuable skills and interests in our young people, and I think the school production exemplifies the breadth of attributes which make Marden students so special. Each day I witness our students' discipline and work ethic in classrooms, and this is mirrored in the learning of lines, choreographing of routines, and singing practice that I have enjoyed in these last few weeks. The total commitment and joy from all the children taking part was clear to see and hear, and I don't think there was a dry eye in the audience after some of the songs. It is the enthusiasm and commitment of our dedicated staff in "going the extra mile" which inspires our young people produce such performances and to increasingly take on leadership roles such as the student technical crew and backstage crew, and we are very grateful for the dedication of Mrs Berriman and Mrs Gibbings in producing and directing this audiovisual feast, ably supported by Mrs McIndewar in the costumes department. One of the key messages we give our children is to take opportunities that arise, and so it has been good to see this year so many students wanting to be involved in the show. If you were not able to come to one of the performances this week, I am afraid you missed something very special ... but there's always next year.

This term has seen the development of our Year 11 and Year 7 literacy pairings where older students listen to and support younger students to practise and improve their literacy skills, in particular through reading and discussion. Whenever I have seen this in action in the LRC it has been clear that all students have really enjoyed this project, with the opportunities it provides for student leadership and encouraging reading for pleasure. I always think that the Christmas and New Year period is a great time to catch up on some reading, and for parents and children to take the opportunity to read together or discuss books, no matter how old they are. In Ms Taylor's [Literacy Notices](#) this week, there is a whole list of suggested reads for the holiday period and beyond, well worth a look. Also in the Literacy Notices is news of another Young Writers

poetry competition with the theme of Winter Wonderland. In previous competitions Marden students have done very well, so I hope that lots of students give it a go. Remember, there's a poet in each of us, just waiting for the right moment to shine. Don't forget [Wayne Gretzky's](#) iconic quote: "100% of the shots you don't take don't go in".

We have just enjoyed a wonderful Carol Service at St George's Church, and we reflected on the fact that Christmas time is traditionally a time of giving and receiving gifts. The act of giving is something that is common to people all over the world - it is an instinct that goes right to the core of what it means to be human - people like to give each other things. It is a way of one person showing another person that they care, that they like them, that they want to contribute to their lives in a positive way that brings them real joy. We also remembered though, that it is the little things we do for others, the things we say, or the way we look at someone, that may seem superficial, but that actually mean so much to the people around us. These often are the real gifts, and Christmas and New Year is a good time to stop and reflect on how we want our interactions with others to be moving forward. On the theme of Christmas songs, I hope you enjoy this wonderful [British Sign Language Christmas message](#) performed by students and staff .

Our students achieve great things because of the opportunities they have at school. Yes, Marden is one of the highest performing schools in the area, but more than that, each day as students and staff we enrich our lives, taking pleasure and enjoyment from the wide variety of creative, academic, technical and sporting opportunities. That's what we've done this term, and it's what we're looking forward to doing again next term - but not before we've all had a well deserved break. Well done to all our students for what they have achieved this term, and a huge thank you to all our wonderful staff for the dedication, inspiration and sheer hard work that they all give each day.

I hope everybody has a good holiday. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher