



## Marden High School

Friday 12th January 2024

Dear All

In assemblies this week we explored the achievements of three people: Henry Walker, Gary Lineker and Lisa. Concerned about the impact of rationing on his business as a butcher in the years following the second world war, Henry Walker made the decision to diversify into the manufacture of crisps, and set up what was to become one of the most successful businesses ever. Our students now recognise Gary Lineker as a TV presenter, but I was keen to make sure they understood his place as one of the best footballers ever with his goal scoring records and reputation for sportsmanship that he demonstrated throughout his career. Lisa attended Marden High School and was a good student, getting involved in many aspects of school life including sports and art exhibitions. She went on to study art and is now a senior partner in a leading graphic design company in the region. These may have been the musings of an old man during his Christmas holidays, but my message to the students was that these three people all had two things in common. They all had potential before they became successful - just like all of our children - and they all realised great achievements by making the most of opportunities and working hard every day, and this was the advice I hope the students took away: Gary Lineker - "there are no shortcuts to success. You have to put in the hard work day in and day out" ; Lisa - "If something needs doing then do it properly so you can take pride in it"; Henry Walker - "So when life gives you potatoes, make crisps."

In the same vein, during Reflection Time this week, form classes began the new year by exploring our school motto and theme of the week "Carpe Diem". They reflected upon the idea of 'seizing and creating the day we want', considering what they want to achieve in 2024, advice they would like to give themselves as they begin a new year, and the changes which they would like to be a part of. This week's *Literacy Challenge* celebrated this theme with students invited to write a poem or create a piece of art representing the idea of "Carpe Diem". We look forward to seeing students' creations published on the Literacy Cloud. There is a new Literacy Challenge emailed to students each week, and this is a great opportunity for developing vital reading, writing and creativity skills, as well as boosting house points.

As you will be aware, a key aspect of our Marden values is understanding and celebrating diversity, equality and individuality, and this has been highlighted in our three year School Development Plan as one of our

key priorities. Celebrating our differences and diverse backgrounds, enables us to promote respect and a sense of belonging for each and every member of the Marden community. This term we see the first gathering of a group of students and staff who will be planning a number of cultural events to celebrate our own diversity and the rich variety of life around the globe, and I look forward to being able to invite you to these in the future. This group will also discuss and research matters associated with diversity and equality within our school with the aim of Marden always being that safe, non-judgemental space that we all value, where guidance, advice and support can be found.

I hope during the Christmas break that lots of people were able to enjoy some reading. I know that many did and that quite a number of people - including myself as I borrowed a number of excellent books from our school library - used the opportunity to rekindle a love of reading, with all the benefits that can bring, quite apart from the enjoyment of getting lost in a great story. Researchers have discovered that regular reading can actually increase your brainpower. Just like running exercises your cardiovascular system, reading regularly improves memory function by giving your brain a good workout. Whenever you read a novel, you have to remember lots of information about the story's plot and subplots, the characters and their relationships, and the environment in which the story takes place. We are able to remember this information due to changes in brain neurons (nerve cells). Memories are created through the connections that exist between these neurons—either by strengthening these connections or through the growth of new connections. So reading helps this process – it can help you learn how to store new information and recall memories more effectively. We really do have a great library - our Learning Resource Centre - which is very well stocked with many interesting and exciting books, expertly curated by Ms Taylor and her student team, so I recommend all our students have a look around it at some point next week, and either continue, or start, the excellent habit of regular reading.

This week marks the deadline for digital auditions to be submitted for students wishing to participate in this year's Marden's Got Talent, our annual talent competition show. We welcome students to send in a video of them performing their talent to be included in the show. Previous years' showcases have included a range of talents from singing to surfing and martial arts to magic tricks. Students can send their auditions to [mgt@mardenhigh.net](mailto:mgt@mardenhigh.net) to get involved.

Year 11 parents are invited to a remote parents' evening next Thursday between 4.00pm and 7.00pm. Reports will be emailed out on Monday with instructions about booking appointments, and accessing them, via the online parents evening system.

Prior to the Christmas break, the Year 9 boys played Volleyball games at the Central Venue League at Whitley Bay High School, winning three games on the night and finished second overall in a really impressive display of skills and team work. In the Key Stage 4 competition, the Year 10 Marden boys upset the odds by beating the Year 11 Marden boys to win the tournament. The Year 11 boys took the defeat gracefully, finishing in third place overall. This was a lovely way to end the term with a display of some high energy and skilful performances.

On the same night, the Key Stage 4 girls Badminton team played in the finals of the North Tyneside Schools competition at John Spence. Having previously played all schools in the area, the team had finished in the top three schools and qualified for the finals night. After some scintillating badminton, the girls finished in second place overall. A magnificent achievement for the team and thoroughly deserved.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape  
Head Teacher