



## Marden High School

Friday 3rd May 2024

Dear All

Whilst making my routine visits to classrooms this week, it was one of my favourite quotes which came to mind as I spoke to students about the work they were completing with their teachers. The quote is from a very interesting woman, Pearl Buck, an American writer and novelist, and Pulitzer and Nobel prize winner, who famously said: "to know how to do something well is to enjoy it." It is worth reflecting on this, and thinking about how, when we give our students time to engage with an activity and opportunity to practise what it is they are doing, they end up knowing how to do that thing well. In this way they learn to enjoy their creative writing, their trigonometry, their drop shots or whatever it is they are busy with in school. Of course, the same goes for activities our children do at home, so making time and building routines for homework and revision mean that those things too can become enjoyable.

We look forward to another cohort of students working with TICE (This is Creative Enterprise) once again this year. They follow in the footsteps of previous students who have produced some absolutely stunning outcomes in a variety of creative disciplines including art and fashion most recently. The focus this year is music and a dedicated group of students will be working with music professionals on a variety of projects which we look forward to celebrating on our school website in the near future. In addition to the skills and creativity that students develop through these projects, they also gain a very valuable insight into the world of work in the creative industries, helping them to make decisions about their own future career pathways.

Throughout this year, our teachers have been enhancing their teaching practice through professional reading and collaboration. Our aim was to implement educational research and literature into our practice in a meaningful way. This *Professional Specialism CPD* has encouraged teachers to delve into a chosen specialised area of teaching expertise. We have engaged with high-quality literature and collaborated with colleagues to design teaching strategies rooted in our readings. Through classroom observations and subsequent reflections, we have been able to gauge the impact of these professional development efforts. This process has not only facilitated the growth of teaching practices but also fostered greater collaboration among our staff.

In order to support staff and student wellbeing in school we have been working with Ella Fullard, a Yoga Therapist and Yoga Teacher. As well as delivering staff sessions, Ella has led three groups of students in Year 11, as they prepare for their Summer Exams. The students who have taken part have learned how to use breathing exercises and sleep strategies as well as yoga postures to release tension and find calm. Students found the sessions incredibly beneficial, also sharing strategies with their peers.

Monday afternoon saw the Year 8 boys football team play in their last central venue league competition of the year. Having been successful in their previous CVL competitions this year, it was important to finish the season with a strong performance. The team played 4 games on the night, winning their games against Monkseaton High (1-0), Churchill (2-0) and John Spence (2-1), but were unfortunate to concede a late goal against Kings Priory to draw 1-1. A fantastic end to the CVL season, and the boys now eagerly await the publication of the final league table to see if they have claimed top spot.

On Wednesday evening Marden played host to the North Tyneside Schools U13 Girls touch rugby tournament. Rugby is a new sport to a lot of the girls at Marden, but such is the popularity with the sport, Marden were able to put two full squads of 10 players into the competition. For many of the pupils, it was their first taste of competitive rugby, and there was a real buzz of excitement in the air in the lead up to the games. The 'A' team performed well in their games, coming away with a record of two draws and two defeats. The 'B' team however, went undefeated in their games, leaving with a record of 3 wins and one draw. A wonderful event, enjoyed by all who attended, and great to see so many young girls playing a new sport.

Many thanks to all those parents and carers who responded to our survey last week. We had excellent engagement and we are now digesting the data, and in particular some of the detail of comments made which highlight both strengths of the school as well as some suggestions for future development. We always appreciate constructive feedback - it's what makes us, students, staff, parents, carers and governors, a great team. I look forward to feeding back some of the headlines from this survey in my newsletter in the coming weeks.

I have told Year 11 students at the end of this week that as of Tuesday 7th May they will no longer have to wear their uniform. This is a long standing Marden tradition which is exercised when the year group have proven themselves in terms of maturity, effective engagement with their teachers, and a generally sound work ethic. During the exam season Year 11 students will be expected to attend school at all times, and when they are not actually sitting an exam they will be in their normal timetabled lessons where their teachers will continue to prepare them for upcoming exams. This arrangement will last until lunchtime on

23rd May, after which time students will only need to attend school if they have an exam, or if they are invited into school specifically for revision by a teacher. Looking slightly further ahead, I know that students are looking forward to The Prom on 4th July and this will be a wonderful occasion to celebrate their time at Marden. I would like to wish all our Year 11 students good luck for the exam season - they may well be a little nervous before their first exams, but they can be confident that they have been well prepared, and we are confident that they will do well.

Thank you for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Snape', written in a cursive style.

Mr M. Snape  
Head Teacher