



Marden High School

Friday 5th July 2024

Dear All

The Chinese philosopher Confucius said long ago that "Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without." Playing a musical instrument has many benefits and can bring joy to both the performer and to the listener.

There are many benefits that playing a musical instrument can bring, for example:

- Music improves brain, memory and language development
- Music teaches us perseverance and discipline
- Music encourages social and emotional development
- Music fosters creative and critical thinking

For these reasons, at Marden we have been consistent in giving the creative and performing arts particular prominence, even in times when councils and schools have been faced with budget cuts, and when there has been pressure to narrow the curriculum and such an important place in our children's education. It may be that parents and carers are interested in their child learning to play a particular instrument, and we have a wide range of peripatetic teachers that we work with via the North Tyneside Music Hub. If this is the case children, parents and carers can always collect an information sheet from the main reception or our Head of Music, Ms Gibbings. There are different pricing options and we may be able to offer financial support for some families. I look forward to seeing lots of our young people continue, or begin, to develop their musical talents.

Next week sees an exciting Marden event take place at the Tyneside Cinema where our Year 7 and Year 9 students have already sold out the venue as they perform their final presentation of their Home Adventures project they have undertaken with Hand Of. After seven months of co-constructing a music and dance performance utilising the creative techniques and skills honed in the classroom, they will perform with Hand Of and local musicians to create a magical performance displaying all the wonderful features of the North East Coast line through the medium of dance, music, song and film on the 10th July.

The quality of teaching and its impact on learning, well-being, and confidence is of paramount importance at Marden High School. We take great pride in the provision of professional development opportunities for our teachers and classroom staff so that children have access to positive and rewarding experiences. In the coming school year, we will continue to focus on crucial aspects of effective teaching. Most notably, teachers want to be certain that all children are engaged in learning activities and are being challenged and supported appropriately. This requires teachers to know the children and track how each is doing in relation to expected learning throughout lessons and over time. We call this '*Checking for Understanding*' and it allows teachers to be responsive to the learning needs of each member of the class. This has been a focus of professional development at Marden for some time and in the new academic year we will continue to reflect upon and develop this practice.

Our Behaviour for Learning policy emphasises our focus on rewards, and we look to recognise our students displaying positive behaviours key to our community: respect, responsibility and a focus on learning. We are now approaching that time when children are cashing in their house points for end of year awards. So that we ensure continued relevance and enjoyment from the rewards system, we met with a series of student panels recently and were glad to hear that broadly speaking our rewards are welcomed, that children appreciate the opportunity to achieve success, however great or small, that the 'botheredness' shown by staff daily is welcomed, and that at the end of term there are tangible rewards to enjoy. Our next student survey takes place next week and from that we will analyse results and meet with more students to hear their views on school life.

We have certainly had a busy time of extra-curricular events this week. Our transition day for Year 6 pupils was a great success, and we are very much looking forward to seeing all the children in September, and quite a few of them for the summer school during the holidays. Our Year 11 Prom was also a wonderful occasion which felt like a fitting tribute, not only to the quality of 90's music, but also to a year group which in particular is characterised by the bond of close, supportive friendships. They were an absolute credit to the school, commented upon by the staff at the Village Hotel. We look forward to seeing many of the Class of '24 in mid-August as they collect their exam results, and we wish each and every one of them all the very best as they move into the next phase of their education and training. Just minutes ago, at the time of writing, we have finished a terrific sports day, where students have engaged with great enthusiasm and mutual support, and I look forward to reporting on some of the detail of this great event in next week's newsletter. Also this week, our Year 10 students have been on their work experience placements, and so far we have had glowing reports from employers as the students have clearly put their best feet forward in seizing this opportunity.

We have also had 96 Year 9 students undertake an unforgettable journey through the picturesque landscapes of Northumberland as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze Expedition this week. The students, split into small teams, navigated their way through rolling hills, lush green fields, and past historic sites, each carrying their own equipment and supplies. Despite the weight of their backpacks and the varying weather conditions, the students demonstrated remarkable perseverance and camaraderie. One of the highlights of the expedition was the overnight camping experience. Setting up tents and cooking meals in the great outdoors provided the students with a sense of independence and a chance to bond with their peers.

Throughout the expedition, the students were supported by dedicated staff members who ensured their safety and provided guidance when needed, and by the end of the expedition, the tired but triumphant students returned with a sense of accomplishment and newfound confidence. Completing the Bronze Award expedition is a significant milestone in their Duke of Edinburgh's Award journey, and it is clear that the experiences and lessons learned will serve them well in future endeavours.

As we prepare ourselves for the summer, we know parents and carers like to look ahead to the new academic year, to budget for uniforms, equipment and what is needed for a child's day to day school experience. We try to ensure that our uniform policy is flexible enough to support the need for uniform to be affordable. To help with preparations, we are sending our annual 'Remember for September' flyer to all parents next week so as to remind everyone of what is needed for the new academic year.

Thank you for your continued support.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher