



Friday 27th March 2026

Visit from Sir Alan Campbell

Last week, Year 9 welcomed Sir Alan Campbell, our local MP, Leader of the House of Commons & Lord President of the Council for our fourth consecutive "Question Time" event. Sir Alan discussed his role in politics and answered a series of challenging questions from an expert panel about social, national and regional issues. Year 9 students have been doing work in English around social equality and justice this term, and the questions asked were produced by students in their English lessons on matters close to them. It was a great event showing real agency in action; as always Sir Alan was impressed with the students' questions and engagement.

Year 10 exams

Over the past week and into next week, Year 10 students have been taking part in practice exams across all of their subjects. These assessments provide a valuable opportunity for students to experience exam conditions and begin to understand what is expected of them in a formal exam setting. It is important to emphasise that these are formative assessments. Students are still early in their GCSE courses, with significant learning still to come before their final examinations in Summer 2027. However this experience allows them to start applying their current knowledge to exam-style questions, helping to build both familiarity and confidence. We have been really encouraged by the positive way in which students have approached these practice exams. Many are already demonstrating strong learning behaviours, both in lessons and through their independent study and this will support their progress over time. Following the exam period, students will be given time to reflect on their performance and identify next steps. This will help them to continue developing effective study habits, deepen their understanding, and build confidence as they move forward through their course.

Career Conversations

As you may be aware, this programme involves local business people and professionals visiting school to speak about their unique career experiences. They share insights, career guidance, lessons and tips to motivate and inspire our students to make informed decisions about their future. Similar to a TED Talk, each visitor speaks for 15 minutes or so, about what inspired them to choose their career path, subjects they studied and how these are relevant now, what they enjoy most about their career, and so on, followed by a lively Q&A session where students are able to ask a variety of questions. We are always looking for new speakers to join this successful programme, so if you are interested or know somebody who might be, please do get in touch with me. There is little preparation needed, and slides or demonstrations are not necessary, as speaking 'from the heart' is often more impactful during these events.

Information for parents

I would like to remind everyone about the wealth of information and rich resources that can be found on the [Subject Clouds on our school website](#). Curated by members of staff from each department in school, this area of the website is very useful for students of all ages - as well as their parents and carers - supporting them in a range of activities including revision, homework, careers research, or simply consolidating what has been learned in a particular lesson. For parents and carers this is a particularly good place to be able to quickly find out what their child is studying at different times of the year.

Parents' cars

In the past I have discouraged parents and carers from driving on to the school site to drop their children off in the morning. I have appreciated that most people have understood the need for us to minimise traffic on site whilst children and staff are coming into school, so that we can keep everybody as safe as possible. I know that parents had responded appropriately to this request, but recently we have had parents' cars come on site without due regard for the safety of other people. I will reiterate here therefore that, unless there is a previously communicated arrangement with me reflecting the medical needs of their child, parents should not drive through the school gates onto the school site. Parents should also not drop their children off in the immediate vicinity of the school gates, as per road markings. The last thing anyone wants is for an accident to happen resulting in injury or worse.

Enjoyment

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.

Sports Report

Last Thursday the Year 8 rugby team played in the Northumberland County Rugby 7's tournament held by Kings Priory. Schools from all over the county participated in a fantastic competition and for many of the Marden boys, this was their first taste of competitive rugby. The boys performed very admirably, scoring in every game and managing to beat Bede Academy and Blyth Academy. Overall they came away with a record of 2 wins and 4 defeats from their 6 games. Very well done to all those involved.

The KS4 Basketball team also played in a regional finals tournament on the same day, hosted by the Newcastle Eagles. The players were up against the very best of school basketball talent and despite coming away with a losing record of 4 defeats from 4 games, gave a very good account of themselves against strong opposition. Their KS3 counterparts are in action this week and we wish them the very best of luck in their competition.

The Year 8 netball team played in the North Tyneside Schools tournament on Monday against schools from across the district. The girls played fantastically well and came away with the bronze medal. Well done to all players.

And finally, the Year 7 football team hosted Wellfield Middle school on Monday this week in the semi final of the North Tyneside Cup. The visitors proved to be too strong for our boys winning 8-0 and progressed to the final. A valiant effort from the boys.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher