Message from the Headteacher

It doesn't seem 2 minutes ago since the start of the school year, but here we are at the end of another academic year. They seem to go faster and faster each year!

Over the course of the school year we have had much to celebrate, and 2017/18 was rounded off by a fantastic Founder’s Day celebration and two engaging and reflective end of year services.

Hopefully, through the newsletters, you’ve been able to keep up to date with the opportunities our pupils have had throughout the year, and the many successes they’ve experienced. Whilst everyone is enjoying their summer break, we will also return to school in August for two emotional and fabulous days, as we get to celebrate with our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils on their GCSE and A-Level results.

The end of an academic year also symbolises that our pupils are moving towards the next step of their journey at Blue Coat. Whatever stage of their school career they are at, our young people are developing further into the young adults that they will become, the ones who will hopefully help shape the communities in which they live. They are also discovering their passions and curiosities and using their God-given talents to help shape their future.

The end of the academic year also signifies the end of my first year as Headteacher. As I said in my first newsletter, it is an absolute honour and privilege to be Headteacher of this fabulous school and I have enjoyed every single minute of this year. I look forward to continuing to work with our wonderful pupils, dedicated staff and supportive parents for many years to come.

Looking to the future, thoughts turn to the start of the 2018/19 academic year. Please ensure that you note the key dates for the start of term listed in the newsletter. Can I also ask that when you are undoubtedly purchasing uniform for next year, that you refer to the school website for which items of clothing are acceptable, and which are not. Details can be found under...
Gold DofE

Friday 13th July saw 56 students successfully return from their Gold Duke of Edinburgh assessed expedition in the Lake District. Students had begun their week by staying overnight at YHA Ambleside, beautifully situated right on the shore of Lake Windermere.

There then followed a hot four days of determined walking and camping before returning to the YHA to refresh and celebrate their success.

Girls’ PE

Our Year 8 rounders team are Oldham Schools Rounders Cup Champions for the second year running, beating Saddleworth in the final. Both umpires commented on how impressive our performance was, using phrases like ‘sublime’ and ‘slick’. A special mention must go to Georgia Spratt, our captain, who was voted Most Valuable Player by both umpires. That said, it was a team effort, and the title was thoroughly deserved.

the Parents Tab/Uniform/Shoes - Additional Guidance.
Please pay particular attention to footwear, ie., trainers and ankle boots. Can I also remind you that we have clear guidelines in relation to hair, boys in particular. Any haircut below a grade 2 is considered extreme and not in line with our uniform policy.

In my previous newsletter I said that we had been working with a group of parents and staff about improving communication next year. This will be explained in more detail at the Parents’ Information Evenings, but the main changes are included below.

As always, thank you for your support and commitment over the last year. I hope you all have a rewarding and enjoyable break with your children, and I’m already looking forward to welcoming them back in September.

Yours sincerely,

R Higgins (MA)
Headteacher

Communications

The partnership between parents/carers and school is key if we are to make certain that our students are happy, enjoying school and making good progress with their learning.

Over the past twelve months we have been working with parents and with our staff with the aim of strengthening this partnership by improving lines of communication. As a result, we have refined several school systems to make communication more effective and efficient.

Full details will be outlined in our ‘Communications Policy’ which will be shortly available on our website. However, prior to the summer break we wanted to share with you a number of the key developments, which are outlined below.

Parents’ Evening - From September 2018 we will changing how we organise parents’ evenings. In Years 7 and 8 parents/carers will continue to have one extended appointment with their child’s form tutor, director of learning or a member of the senior leadership team. These discussions will focus on learning behaviours, engagement with school and patterns of achievement.

However, as students move towards their GCSE studies in Year 9, 10 and 11, parents will have the opportunity to make appointments with their son/daughter’s subject staff. This is to allow more in-depth subject specific conversations. Parents’ Evenings at K5 will also follow this model.

Contacting School - Where parents/carers have a question or a concern we would always encourage that they get in touch with us as soon as possible.

To make this easier for parents/carers we have produced a ‘Key Contact Guide’ which will be available in September. This should help to identify the member of staff parents/carers need to contact.

We’ve also worked with parents and staff to establish a clear process which should make contacting us easier and clarify how as school will deal with and respond to any questions or queries parents/carers may have.

As part of this staff will always do their best to respond to parents/carers as soon as possible but there is an expectation that under normal circumstances this would be within two working days.

We hope that these developments will help us to continue to foster strong relationships with parents/carers and make sure communication between home and school is clear and effective. The full version of the ‘Communication Policy’ will be on our website shortly.
**Founder’s Day**

Our Annual Founder’s Day celebration was held this week, which is a public march of witness through Oldham, led by our wonderful Brass Band. We had a lovely service of thanksgiving with music and singing at Oldham’s Parish Church of St. Mary’s.

On our return to school, and after laying a wreath in member of our founder, Thomas Henshaw, students were registered and dismissed to enjoy the rest of the afternoon.

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**Year 8 Battlefields Trip**

Eleanor Bird wrote: “On Wednesday I really enjoyed our time in Bruges. On the boat trip I enjoyed looking at all the different styled buildings.

In Ypres, at the Flanders Fields Museum, I learnt more about the causes that started WW1 and enjoyed looking at the different uniforms and artefacts on display.

At the Last Post Ceremony at Menin Gate, I enjoyed watching the 3 people playing the last post on bugle and seeing our school representatives laying our wreath.

On Friday we went to the trenches at Sanctuary Wood, I found this really interesting because we got to see the trenches, and what it was like for the soldiers.

After that we went to Tyne Cot cemetery where I laid a wreath on behalf of school, in remembrance of all the soldiers that fought in WW1.

Also, I laid the wreath in memory of my Great Great Grandfather who died in the war in Belgium and is buried close by. Laying the wreath was a special moment to represent my family and the school.

Overall I think it was a great experience because we were learning as well as having fun with our friends and enjoying the trip.”

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**Ecosia Search Engine**

Students are currently trialling a new search engine, ECOSIA, thanks to the suggestion of Hannah in Year 7. ECOSIA works just like any other search engine, but with one major difference - they use the profit made from searches to plant trees where they are needed most. Another difference is that they don’t sell your data onto advertisers, and they don’t have 3rd party trackers - unlike some other search engines - which is refreshing.
Toby Johnson-Jones wrote  "On Thursday our first stop of the day was in France. We visited a large mine crater called ‘Lochnagar’. Whilst we were there we found out about how the British used mines to attempt to break through the German lines. Our next stop was the South African memorial called ‘Delvile Wood’. When we arrived, there was a man playing the bagpipes. I found that even though the war was many years ago it shows how the soldiers who died are still respected. The thing that I found the most interesting was how only one tree in the wood remained after the war, and this still exists today. Then we went to our final war memorial of the day. This memorial is called the ‘Thiepval Memorial’ for the British who were missing of the Somme. This memorial is where my Great, Great, Great, Great Uncle’s name is found. I was looking forward to seeing one of my relative’s names on the wall. Through my Grandma’s notes, I found my relative - Charles Richard Keene. His name was on the back, left hand side, facing the cemetery. After this, I read a prayer and a laid a wreath.

I felt that everyone was respecting the many men that died in the battle of the Somme, and more importantly for me, my relative. I felt that I was very fortunate to have had that opportunity. The best part for searching for my relative’s name in cemetery, because it was something I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to do.
Inspiring “Old Blues” - Q & A Session:
Josh Walker (Commercial Pilot - Jet2 Airways)

When were you at Blue Coat?
I started Year 7 in September, 2003 and left after completing my GCSE’s in 2008.

What do you particularly remember from your time at Blue Coat?
I was a keen sportsman, so I always raced to eat my dinner as quickly as I could so that I could go and play football on the back pitch.

What is your best memory of school?
The opportunities on offer at Blue Coat were amazing, and I will never forget the skiing trip!

What are you doing now?
I’m now a pilot for Jet2. I am based at Leeds Bradford Airport and currently fly Boeing 737 aircraft around Europe.

Did you ever expect to be doing what you’re doing now?
Flying was always an ambition, but I was never sure if it was realistic one. Now I have qualified as a pilot, I’m thankful that I have managed to achieve my boyhood dream, and that I get to see so many amazing places around the world.

How did your studies contribute to what you’re doing now?
I saw each subject and exam as a stepping stone towards University, and my ultimate goal to gain a flying career. In my daily work, I am constantly utilising my Maths and Physics knowledge, and these subjects were essential in helping me pass the 14 written exams required to gain my flying licences.

How did your hobbies and interests at the time contribute with what you are doing now?
I think it’s important to have interests outside of your career path. I am a keen footballer and golfer, and I play as regularly as I can. Being involved in sports develops your team-building and communication skills. I am an outgoing person which definitely helps when you’re sat next to just one person on a long flight!

Biology Fieldtrip
Earlier this month, 76 of our Year 12 Biologists headed off to Aberystwyth, Wales for the annual field trip. Students visited a variety of habitats within the Dyfi biosphere, including a rocky shore, sand dunes and lowland raised bog. On the sand dunes students collected data for one of the compulsory practicals required to pass the Certificate of Practical Competence.

There was also a conservation walk around RSPB Ynys-Hir, where students investigated how the RSPB manage the habitats to ensure maximum biodiversity. Accommodation was provided by Aberystwyth University, so students were able to obtain a useful glimpse of what university life will be like.

Recycle for Manchester
Year 7 student, Ella Keech, was inspired by the work she had been doing in Geography regarding plastic pollution, that she has written a blog. The link is below, so have a look, it’s eye-opening!

https://recycleforgreatermanchester.com/blog/one-family-3-days-and-wait-how-much-plastic/
Did you receive encouragement from anyone?
I received lots of good advice from so many staff members. The support I received in deciding the most appropriate A-Levels helped shape my progression to Leeds University.

When did you start flying?
I gained my private licence in 2011, so I could fly 2 or 4-seater light aircraft, and started flying commercial aircraft in 2017.

What’s your advice to those students who may want to learn how to fly e become a pilot?
The best advice I received was go down to my local flying club/airfield, and chat to the pilots there. They gave me the benefit of their knowledge, and gave options as to the best way that to gain your licences.

My own advice would be “Never believe something is too hard to achieve. Good things are never easy, but if you’re willing to commit 100%, you will reap the rewards.”

What are your future career goals?
I enjoy teaching and eventually I would like to branch out and get involved in training pilots of the future.

MFL Visit from RAF Intelligence Trade
On Friday 29th June we were fortunate enough to have a visit from an Old Blue, Sergeant Russell Makinson, who spoke to some Year 9 and 10 languages students about his career.

Russ had offered to come to speak to our linguists about working using languages and his talk did not disappoint. We learnt about how he had learned Arabic to a fluent level from his RAF training, about how the Intelligence Trade of the RAF uses their knowledge of foreign languages to intercept attacks and communicate with local residents abroad, and about how important language learning is in the modern world. We had the opportunity to learn numbers in Pashto and listen for key words in an intercepted radio broadcast.