

Strengthening International Connections/Primary Links

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Headteacher's Message



The Spring Term has once again seen much activity and cause for celebration here at The Birkenhead Park School.

It is only when we take the time to reflect on what has been achieved that we fully appreciate how many opportunities are available to our students to broaden their experiences beyond the curriculum. You will get a flavour of these events and activities over the coming pages - there are simply too many to mention here! Raising the ambitions and aspirations of students is central to the aims of our school and I hope you will agree that this is evident once again in this edition of our newsletter.

Just before the Spring Break we waved off our second group of students as they embarked on a trip of a lifetime to visit our partner school in China. I know that they have returned with amazing stories to share and with memories that will last a lifetime. The opportunity to experience another culture as a "traveller" and not just a "tourist" is something that can genuinely change our perspective on life. The BPS students who returned from their visit to Taicang and Shanghai in October have certainly gained in confidence and I know that our second group of students will gain just as much from the experience.

I am very proud to share that our sports teams have excelled this term. We are delighted, not only with the many victories that have been achieved across a range of sports, but also with the way that our students conduct themselves when representing the school. They are a credit to BPS and are wonderful ambassadors for our school.

The spring term is when we hold our parents' evenings for all students. It has been a pleasure to meet with so many parents and I thank you for your continued support. Working in partnership with parents makes such a huge difference to the way in which children and young people can be supported. I know that you share our highest aspirations for your children and parents' evenings

give us a wonderful opportunity to discuss the progress that they are making and acknowledge their effort and achievement.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the students and staff for their continued hard work. Our Stars of the Week demonstrate how proud we are of the achievements and outstanding effort shown routinely by so many students. Many staff have been in school during the spring break to work alongside Year 11 students as they prepare for their GCSE exams so it is full steam ahead as they make the most of every opportunity on offer to them. There may even have been a few Easter treats to share along the way!

Helen Johnson, Headteacher

School Governor promoted to Professor

We would like to congratulate one of our school governors, Dr Aspinall, who has been promoted to a Professor at the University of Liverpool.

Dr Aspinall has been a governor at The Birkenhead Park School since February 2011. As well as teaching undergraduates, she runs many outreach activities for schools and colleges.

Headteacher, Helen Johnson said: "I am so pleased for Professor Aspinall and want to congratulate her on this well-deserved promotion. She is a valued member of our local governing body and has been part of overseeing our continuing programme of improvement to provide the best possible education and opportunities for our students."



Cultural trip of a lifetime for Wirral students

A group of students and staff have been on a trip of a lifetime to visit our partner school in China.

The trip is the second visit the school has made to The Taicang Experimental Middle School in Shanghai after signing a partnership in March 2014 to forge both cultural and educational links for students in both schools.

Taicang is near the Chinese City of Shanghai, and is twinned with Wirral. The Birkenhead Park School is the first school in Wirral to have visited this area of China.

Students and staff visited lessons and experienced life at the school before going on to visit many cultural landmarks within and around Shanghai.

Head of Performing Arts, ICT and PE, Mrs Houghton was one of the teachers on the trip, she said: "I feel honoured to have been given such an amazing opportunity. The school want to continue their discussions with us regarding educational practice and it is an opportunity to further develop and explore elements of our cultural partnership. The visit will also help our students with their own studies and broaden their horizons and aspirations."

The students all had a Chinese buddy for their time in the school and shadowed their timetable and were encouraged to communicate as much as possible.

Dylan from Year 10 said: "I was really looking forward to experiencing a different culture, trying new food and meeting up with students at Taicang Experimental Middle School. It is an opportunity of a lifetime to see what life is like on the other side of the world."

When the partnership began in 2014, the School offered Mandarin classes as part of the enrichment programme as well as martial arts.

Staff and students from Taicang Experimental Middle School visited in November and are due to return in July.

Headteacher Mrs Helen Johnson said: "We really value the international links we have built up and I am so pleased that our students have once again been given this fantastic opportunity to see such a different part of the world and experience a new culture. We offer a varied enrichment programme at the school to ensure our students are given a broad range of extra-curricular activities and this trip is just one of the unique opportunities we provide. I know the staff and students get so much from educational visits like this and we look forward to welcoming our Chinese counterparts back in July."

The Birkenhead Park School is also linked with schools in Germany and Denmark and has recently been awarded the Intermediate International School Award from the British Council for its continued and growing international links.





Stars of the week





Each week we recognise those students across all year groups who have shown excellent commitment to their subjects and are outstanding ambassadors for the school.

The 'Stars of the Week' receive 'Headteacher Recognition' postcards at home before celebrating their achievements with Headteacher Mrs Helen Johnson. This term 48 students have been acknowledged for their hard work and achievements and many have been photographed with Mrs Johnson.

Mrs Johnson said: "I always look forward to celebrating with our 'Stars of the Week' as I think it is so important that we recognise the students who are trying their very best and doing really well. I hope that taking a bit of time out to chat to the students shows them that their hard work has been noticed and they should feel proud of themselves."



Holocaust Memorial Day a poignant reminder for students



A group of Year 9 students were part of a special commemoration event as part of Holocaust Memorial Day.

The students went to the Floral Pavilion where they heard a first-hand account of the experiences of Holocaust survivor, as well as a presentation from students who had recently visited Auschwitz. A Statement of Commitment was made by GCSE students, while Yahrzeit candles were lit in memory of those that had lost their lives.

Head of Humanities Miss Dawes said: "This was a very special opportunity for the students to hear from someone who had been through the reality of what they are told about in the classroom. The theme for the national memorial day was 'Don't stand by', something that is relevant in so many areas and we can use to remind the students to consider their individual responsibilities and not be bystanders to bullying, hate crime and prejudice."

Students given **training** from **LIPA**

Students have taken part in a unique range of Performing Arts workshops delivered by LIPA (The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts).

The ten week course was run by LIPA graduates and funded through an outreach scheme. Workshops included dance, acting, back stage technology and music, and aimed to develop an enjoyment and understanding of the elements of Performing Arts.

Head of Performing Arts, ICT and PE, Mrs Houghton said: "These enrichment sessions aim to raise the aspirations and achievements of our students and show them the options for further and Higher Education within the Arts."



A look into the future for students



Students have been given a glimpse of the opportunities they can aspire to during visits to the University of Liverpool.

Our Year 7 and Year 9 students have been to the University this term with both groups taking part in science masterclasses. Activities included getting inside an inflatable planetarium, making moisturising cream and learning about the risks attached to different types of volcanic eruption.

The Year 7 students also took part in a series of sessions delivered by graduates and student advocates from the University who were able to talk about their experiences and time in higher education.

Gearing up for Road Safety

The Wirral Road Safety Team has been in twice over the last term to talk to our Year 7 and Year 10 students.

The focus of the Year 7 session was pedestrian safety and crossing the road, while the danger of distraction was the key theme of the Year 10 input. With students at this age often passengers in vehicles, messages around passenger

safety, the importance of seatbelts and not distracting drivers were highlighted.

Subject Lead for PSHE Miss Garnett said: "Being aware of the dangers of the road as a passenger, pedestrian and driver are so important. These sessions are a great way to get our students thinking about the possible impact of the choices they make."

Wirral Paperback of the Year Award



Students have been part of a group of secondary schools on the Wirral working together to judge the Wirral Paperback of the Year Award.

Eleven students went to Wirral Grammar School for Girls to hear from 8 of the 15 shortlisted authors who talked about their books and writing careers. The students then got the opportunity to meet the authors and get their books signed.

Kimberley from Year 8 said: "I really liked it when the writers read from their books and told us about what they liked to read when they were at school. I'd love to go again next year." The schools will now choose their three favourite books from the shortlist which will be announced on 4 May before the final judging event on 29 June 2016.

Warming up for the future

Primary school pupils from Christ Church CE Primary and Bidston Village Primary warmed up for secondary school life at The Birkenhead Park School through primary liaison events.

Groups of Year 5 students from both schools took part in PE and ICT taster sessions as part of our primary liaison work with schools in the area.

Headteacher Helen Johnson welcomed some of the students and visited them in the sessions throughout the morning. She said: "The children were all very excited to be here and got to experience just what we have to offer at The Birkenhead Park School. They were shown our Year 7 Base which helps ease our younger students from primary to secondary education and ensures they feel confident, safe and secure as they continue their learning."

One of the children said: "It was so much fun, I really enjoyed having a go on the computers and the PE was great too." Two other local primary schools (Portland Primary and The Priory Primary) took part in a Tag Rugby festival at our school before being taught the traditional Haka dance which was led by four of our Year 8 leaders. Pupils from the school also took part in a Tri-Golf Festival just before Easter.

The festivals are part of the school's Outreach Programme, where teachers provide PE sessions and inputs to primary schools in the area.



Sport

It has been a busy term of fixtures with some fantastic performances and effort from all our teams.

Highlights have included our Year 11 team getting into the finals of the Wirral Table Tennis Tournament, our Year 7's getting through to the Merseyside County Final of the New Age Kurling competition and an array of impressive football and netball matches.

Our Year 11 boys were also crowned Winter League Volleyball Champions at the end of last term as well.

Subject Lead for PE Miss Ponton said: "I am always so proud of our sports teams and the effort the students put in. We have had some brilliant results this term and have got a full fixture list of games coming up in the summer and I want to thank everyone for their support."



Term Dates 2015/2016

Summer Term 2016

Closed: Monday 18th April (Staff training)

Term Opens: Tuesday 19th April

Closed: Monday 2nd May (Bank Holiday)

Term Closes: Friday 27th May

Half Term: Monday 30th May - Friday 3rd June

Term Opens: Monday 6th June

Term Closes: Thursday 21st July



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Wirral Academy Trust