



The Magic of Education

By the end of today every student will have met all their new teachers, experienced every subject and will be well and truly in the swing of things. My own Year 11 class have already given me reason to smile this week, as have the hundreds of interactions I have had with our wonderful students from the dinner queue to the playground. You cannot help but be happy when you have so many stories and smiles from the children in a day.

Teaching is the best job in the world, we really do love what we do. It almost doesn't seem right to call it a job, as it is a true vocation. Every day we have the opportunity to share a magic moment with the children, as the light bulb goes on, a face lights up and we know a student has "got it". For teachers too these first two weeks are an exciting time, filled with the hope and promise of meeting new classes and looking into the eyes of the students whose minds we aim to inspire.

I always say to the Year 7s on their first day 'The most important thing in these first few days is that you smile and are happy'. Happy children are children who can learn, make long lasting friendships and feel safe and secure in school; their second home for the next 5-7 years. There are lots of staff, other than teachers, who work tirelessly to ensure that the children have the best chance of being happy in school. From the Pastoral Team who meet and greet them in the morning and care from them through the day, to our dedicated Student Support Reception staff. From the catering staff in the kitchen to the teaching assistants who are supporting students both in the classroom and small group sessions. Everyone plays their part in our school community, putting children first in all that they do.

I have been particularly proud of Year 7 and 11 this week. The photo above captures some of our new Year 7s and three of our Year 11 super stars.

Year 7 have made a fantastic start. They are looking incredibly smart and are confidently finding their way around the school. I have seen some great classwork in lessons already. You can see from the photos below how hard they are working. I have been enjoying finding out about them this week and was really pleased to see so many at the first rehearsal for our Christmas production 'Alice in Wonderland'. We will soon be publishing the full list of clubs and activities that your child can get involved in on our website.

Year 11 have also hit the ground running. I am now living with a Year 11 boy at home, teaching Year 11 and thinking about all of our Year 11s and the excellent progress we expect them to make this year. I hope my own experience as a father and teacher will help me to empathise with the pressures that both students and their families experience during Year 11, so I can better support the Year 11 team in their expert leadership of the students in the year ahead. The students know they have a hard year ahead, but also that their well-being is vitally important; it is a marathon not a sprint and those that start early and work steadily and with organisation invariably do better than those that wait until later in the year and try to cram. We have two key events coming up for Year 11. I would urge Year 11 parents to attend the **Y11 Revision Evening on Thursday 26th September** and on **Monday 30th September we have an evening with Gary Wilson for boys and their parents.** Gary is one of the leading national speakers on raising boys' achievement. Details of both events will be on our website.

Ian Smith-Childs, Headteacher

