

School Newsletter

Issue 16, July 2020



Dear Parents

We are now approaching the end of what has been a very strange final term of the academic year. It has been good to welcome back small groups of Years 10 and 12 to school over the past 4 weeks as well as the children of Key Workers for whom we continue to care every day. We have also welcomed members of Year 9 for a half-day session this week. It has been lovely to see all of these pupils.

There have been many challenges for pupils, parents and staff over the past few months. We know that many pupils have found this time really hard. When I talk to pupils about what they have missed from not being in school, they always say that it is their friends. Many have also said that they miss their teachers. I can assure everybody that the teachers have also missed them. The best part of my day since half term has been seeing our pupils and Sixth Form students arrive at school. I know that parents have found this time hard and I appreciate why. You have been worried about your daughter's education and the impact that this time has had. All that I can say to you is that no matter whether your daughter has kept up with work, is ahead with her studies or is very behind, when we return, we will support her the best we can. The main message that I would like you to give your daughter from me is not to spend time worrying about it.

I would like to thank parents for working with us so well during this time. When I reflect on what we have done well and what we would do to improve in the future, I can think of examples of both. Like the pupils, we were learning how to manage this as we went along. Parents have been very understanding of this and for the greatest part, the messages coming through suggest that we have got it right. There have been suggestions of what we can do better and if we end up in the unfortunate position of having to close again, we will take these suggestions on board.

Induction success

Last Tuesday evening we held a virtual Induction evening for parents and new Year 7 pupils via Zoom which was intended to give them a flavour of what life is going to be like at Upton when they join in September (subject to Covid-19 restrictions of course). It was lovely to see so many excited youngsters with their families gathered together to meet their new Head of Year and Form Teachers. Mrs Pollock and her team did a wonderful job and the feedback from parents was excellent.

On Wednesday morning, the new Year 7 pupils took part in their Induction Morning on Google Classroom. They were split into groups and were involved in various introduction sessions so they had an opportunity to speak to their peers and find out for themselves what lies ahead in September. Some pupils experienced a number of IT technical issues which may have prevented them accessing the activities, however, on the whole this worked well.

Whilst we would have preferred to have had them all on site, I hope this provided a suitable alternative for them to gather together in the current circumstances. We are even more excited to meet them all in person in September.

Uniform

I am delighted to inform you that our new Online Uniform Shop is now live on the school website. [Click here](#) to access this site. We are encouraging parents to purchase uniform online at their earliest opportunity for a click and collect service as this is the safest way to buy your school uniform. As we are not currently able to offer a drop in and try on service, please refer to our measuring guides for assistance with sizing. Many parents have purchased their uniform already and the systems that we have in place are working well. I have seen some photographs of pupils in their new skirts and they look really lovely. I hope that when you take delivery of any new items of uniform you will be able to see what a quality product we have chosen. We spent a long time looking at different types of materials and

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different suppliers to get it right. When the pupils are wearing the uniform day in, day out, I wanted something that would last (as long as you don't wash it with fabric softener!) and therefore would be value for money. The office staff are working right the way through the summer to ensure that everybody can buy their uniform and if you have any questions, please email us at uniform@uptonhall.org.

Return in September

Plans are currently being formulated for the return to school for all pupils following the recent statement from the government. We are following government guidance and have also been in liaison with all Wirral Schools in order to establish how they plan to reopen after the holidays.

I have recently written to all parents to explain how this return to school will work in practice for all of our pupils and students. After a huge amount of consideration, we believe the solution upon which we have decided is the best fit for our school community. We plan to use the first day back for briefing the girls on the practicalities of working in year group bubbles. There are still details that we need to work on over the summer regarding extra-curricular activities and how they will work etc. I will be in touch early in the new school year with any updates that emerge over the summer. If your child is more vulnerable and feeling nervous because of it (including being part of a high risk group) please let us know and where possible we will put additional measures in place to enhance her feeling of safety.

Appearance of pupils in September

The introduction of our new uniform will ensure that all of our pupils are presented really well in September. Can I take this opportunity to ask parents to remind your daughters about all of the other rules regarding hair, nails, makeup and jewellery. They will have been used to wearing all of these things while not in school or when they were in school for single days but once we return, our uniform and appearance policy will be enforced as usual.

Staff changes

We say farewell to a number of staff at the end of this academic year.

- Miss Shelagh McNicholas – Teacher of Art leaves us to start a new position at Bellerive College FCJ in Liverpool.
- Mr Ben Dolan – Teacher of Mathematics will retire after 7 years' service at Upton
- Miss Jan Graham – Teacher of English and former Assistant Director of Sixth Form retires after 26 years' service.
- Miss Kate Gillespie – Teacher of Biology has completed her maternity leave post and is moving on to a new teaching role at Hope Academy in Newton-le-Willows.

We welcome the following staff in September:

- Mr Patrick Harper - Teacher of Physics (Maternity Leave)
- Mr Jake Wilkinson - Teacher of Physics (Maternity Leave)
- Mrs Faye O'Hara - Teacher of Music (Maternity Leave)
- Mr Joseph Harkness - Assistant Director of Pastoral Care and Intervention

Mr McAleese update

Without doubt, the hardest thing to deal with throughout this period of time was that one of our own colleagues was so severely affected by Coronavirus. I am 100% convinced that the prayers of thousands of people from the Upton, Diocesan and FCJ global communities helped him to pull through. God definitely knew how precious he was to us. I have seen Mr McAleese a few times over the past few weeks and he continues to make steady progress in his recovery. He has been very touched by your kind messages of support and he wanted me to thank you all for your prayers during his long period of hospitalisation. We continue to pray for his complete recovery and return to full health. It is definitely not the same without his Irish charm and wit around school.

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Dates for your Diary

September 2020

Tuesday 1	School Development Day
Wednesday 2	School Development Day
Thursday 3	Years 7, 12 & 13 return
Friday 4	All pupils return
Thursday 17	Year 7 & 8 Parents' Information Evening, 6.30pm (Virtual)
Friday 18	Years 7, 9 and 12 Photographs
Monday 21	Year 12 Initial Assessment Week
Tuesday 22	Year 12 Parents' Information Evening, 6.30pm (Virtual)
Saturday 26	Entrance Examination (1)
Monday 28	Parents and Friends of Upton AGM, 7.00pm*
Tuesday 29	Entrance Examination (2) including SEN Candidates
Wednesday 30	Year 13 Parents' Information Evening, 6.30pm (Virtual)

*Dates in Green with * are to be confirmed pending Covid-19 advice*

Reports

This week we have sent out our remaining school reports. I felt that it was important to summarise how all pupils have progressed both before and after the school closure. In general the reports are a pleasure to read and there is much to celebrate. Where the reports have indicated that pupils will need some support to catch up in the future, where necessary, we will be working on this.

Sixth Form Building Progress

As each day passes, the new Sixth Form building nears completion. The glass went in yesterday and it looks really impressive. I have stood in the building many times over the past few weeks and I can tell that it is going to be brilliant for our Sixth Formers to have such a great space for themselves. Mrs Spiby is working hard on the servery area so that students can buy quality drinks and foods and Mrs Hall and Ms Baguley have worked on kitting out the space with

modern, tasteful furniture. There is a lot to be excited about in returning to this.

School Mass

One of my favourite events of the school year is the annual school mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King in Liverpool. Sadly, this year, this event will not take place. The planning of the mass takes months and this year, we are unable to do this as it is likely that by November, gatherings of such large numbers of people will still be discouraged.

Curriculum Evenings

Each September/October we hold one of these for each year group. We share the curriculum booklets with parents and we pass on information about pastoral care and other issues that are specific to different year groups. Given the restrictions on large gatherings we plan to hold these events virtually using Zoom or a similar online platform. More details of these will follow in September and the dates are mentioned earlier in this newsletter.

Shine Media awards

On Monday 29 June 2020, the Shine Media Award ceremony for 2020 was streamed live. We were one of only 26 schools short-listed across the country for our Green and Gold School Magazine.

We were nominated for 4 awards: Best Illustration (Rosie M, Year 9), Best Community and Environmental Initiative (Whole Magazine), Student Editor of the Year (Jennifer G, Year 12) and The Shine Scholar Award (Isabelle D, Year 7).

We were highly commended/runners up in: Best Community/Environmental Initiative, Student Editor of the Year and The Shine Scholar Award. Congratulations to all the girls involved.

American University Success

We were delighted to learn last month that our former pupil Rosy who left Upton for a gap year in 2019 has been offered a place at not one but 3 top American Universities. Rosy completed the Sutton Trust programme while at Upton and realised that

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she would love to study in the States. Rosy was helped with her application by former Uptonian Steph Addenbrook who also attended University there in 2013. Steph loved life at Yale and subsequently remained in the US and is now married to an American. Rosy is in demand by Portsmouth, Yale and Princeton Universities who all want her so much that they have offered her a full scholarship. Let's hope that Rosy will also be able to pass this baton on to future Uptonians. Well done Rosy!

Race to Australia PE Department Virtual Challenge

As the school celebrates the Bicentenary year, the PE Department decided to do a virtual tour to visit our FCJ sisters across the world. We have virtually visited Liverpool, Ireland, London, Jersey, France, Philippines and are currently on the final leg of the journey to Australia. Congratulations to all that have participated and sent in their running, cycling and walking mileage.

Virtual Sports Day for Years 7, 8 & 9

Well done to the girls that took part in our virtual sports week, completing 10 sports day activities. It was fantastic to see all your wonderful efforts at home. Congratulations to **Fire House** who won overall. Big well done to year 7 great effort from Ava M, Bethany A, Hannah B, Sophie H, Lucia W, Marlene W, and Niamh P. Year 8 was very competitive congratulations to Sarah T, Delilah H, Rebecca F, Ruby M and Rebecca F.

It was great to see some participation from Year 9 with outstanding performances from Cerys R, Elizabeth G, Eliza B and Gabby P.

Well done to everyone who took part!

Armchair Travel on a Global Scale

As part of our online learning, Dr Campbell invited all students to participate in a 'Grand Tour' of different countries. We were very fortunate to benefit from the number of locations that have provided free online videos and museum access during the period of lockdown. Having started in London, we have

been to Seoul in South Korea, and Bali in Indonesia. Next week we are heading to Denmark. The tour will continue throughout the summer vacation and all students are welcome to sign in and participate. There are prizes for the best entries for each country.

Year 7 NATRE Spirited Art Entries

During lockdown our year 7 students worked hard to complete their entries for NATRE's National Art competition. One of this year's themes was "God's good earth?"

Are we spoiling God's good earth? Should we be thankful for it? Can we save it in time from the threats of climate change? The beauty of the earth is celebrated in many religions, but the human spoiling of the earth is a danger and a coming crisis. Here are some examples of the fabulous work done by pupils in 7S:



"Pollution in our oceans" by Tara Fleming.



"Is this how God pictured the earth?" by Rowan Swale-Beswick.



"Is God really looking?" by Morwenna Hughes.

Saving Lives, Trespassing On The Railway Competition

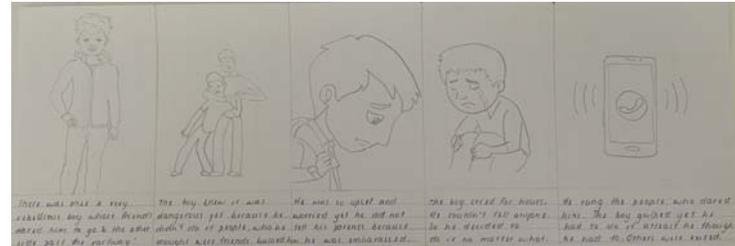
This half term, year 8 pupils during PSHE have completed work on the critical topic of trespassing on the railway. We have put forward 17 pupils' pieces of work ranging from movies, songs, scripts and storyboards about the dangers of going on the tracks. During the topic pupils have learnt about the sharp increase in the number of young people trespassing on the railway and they have been informed of the dangers of this. The competition has many prizes up for grabs including six Go-Pro Hero8 bundles. If any other pupils would like to take part in the competition, select the link to view further information:

<http://downtheline.org.uk/projects/backtrack/>

Entries close on the 30th September 2020.

Here are some examples of the fabulous work completed by pupils in year 8 so far:

Rail Safety Storyboard Extract by D.Paul 8J.



Rail safety!

Rail safety at this time is a big concern

I hope through this rap you can listen and learn

Stay off the tracks, please please please!

We are all begging you from our heads to our knees.

You may think its fun and just a game

But risking your life is simply not the same

Yes the tracks are quieter around this time

But please spread awareness about this rhyme

You never know when a train is on its way

So stay off the tracks to avoid a bad day

Think about your family before you go

Imagine what they'd say, they would say no

Together as young people, what can we do?

Address the situation which is way overdue

Playing on the tracks is such a danger

If someone tells you to get off, listen to that stranger.

Rail Safety Rap by E.Malone 8C.

Anne of Green Gables Audiobook

Staff, students and governors have been busy in the last month of school recording an audiobook of Anne of Green Gables by Lucy Maud Montgomery. This is all to welcome our new year 6 students to our reading community over the Summer break. As part of year 6 transition, the English department have asked each student to read the early 20th century Canadian classic novel Anne of Green Gables.

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They intend to welcome the students to our school and promote the English Department's belief that a lifelong love of reading begins at home, as well as in school. In order to support year 6 in this challenge and to welcome them to our reading community we have created an Upton Hall School audiobook. This audiobook will be sent to parents and guardians at the beginning of the summer break. Staff, students and governors have each taken a turn to read a chapter and hope that this will serve as a warm introduction to our school community.

Beekeeping

Whilst the world has been busy tackling coronavirus, Upton Hall has become somewhat of a haven for local honey bees. This time last year, we had three hives in place for around two months, thriving on the forage of North Wirral. Since the school closure, we have rehomed a total of four bee colonies that have swarmed in the leafy expanse of the school grounds. This brings our total to seven happy hives with up to around 35-40,000 bees in each at the height of Summer.

Why do bees swarm and what happens?

Honey bees are social insects and the honey bee colony functions much like a living organism. Just as individual bees reproduce, the colony must reproduce, too. Swarming is the reproduction of a honey bee colony, and it occurs when an existing colony subdivides into two colonies. Swarming is essential to the bees' survival. If the hive becomes overcrowded, resources will be scarce and the

colony's health will begin to decline. So occasionally, a number of bees will fly out and find a new place to live.



When the colony gets too crowded, the workers will start making preparations to swarm. Worker bees tending to the current queen will feed her less, so she loses some body weight and is able to fly. Workers will also start raising a new queen by feeding a chosen larva large quantities of royal jelly. When the young queen is ready, the swarm begins.

At least half of the colony's bees will quickly leave the hive, prompting the old queen to fly with them. The queen will land on a structure and workers will immediately surround her, keeping her safe and cool. While most bees tend to their queen, a few scout bees will begin searching for a new place to live. Scouting may only take an hour or so, or it can take days if a suitable location proves difficult to find. ("Why Do Bees Swarm?" ThoughtCo.) We were lucky enough to spot the swarms in the grounds and rehome them into hives, an engineered structure which is perfect for bee colonies. One of the swarms was actually our most successful colony from last year, which had split.

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Golden Lady Honey

With local farmers pausing crop production in favour of haylage and silage, the usual Summer forage will be fairly late this year, so our expected honey yield will be lower than we would have liked. There will hopefully still be plenty available come the Autumn.

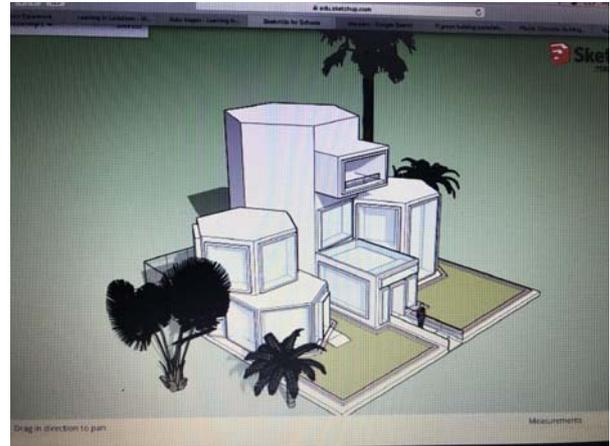


The Upton Hall Beekeeping Society will be running again next year for all year groups. If your daughter wishes to get involved, she can join the Google Classroom using class code ybycxhu.

Mr Seed, Mr Jones and Mr Binns

Year 10 Virtual Work Experience

Usually, the whole Year 10 cohort takes part in a five-day work experience programme. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus, this was not possible this year. Instead, we offered pupils the chance to take part in a virtual programme based on the built environment where twelve pupils learnt about the industry and also designed a pavilion for a location in Dubai. The fantastic work these pupils produced earned them all a Silver Industrial Cadets award.



All other pupils took part in a week-long employability programme in association with Oak Academy and LearnLive. The programme covered a wide range of skills, building on their hard work from PSHE during the year.

'As you write it'

The Drama Department have promoted the following 'Playwriting Competition' on Google Classroom (to all years) over the last few weeks. This could be an exciting opportunity for one or more of our students.

The BBC One Show, have launched a playwriting competition called 'As you write it' in which children and young people (ages 7-16) can write and enter a script to be commissioned and performed on stage at The Shakespeare North Playhouse (Liverpool) when it opens in 2022. This is an exciting opportunity for participants to see their ideas come to life on stage,

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and will hopefully inspire the next generation of playwrights.

The UHS Drama Department encourages all budding playwrights to get involved. All you need to enter is an idea for a play, a short description of up to four main characters and the first few opening lines. You also need to state what having your play performed would mean to you.

The deadline for competition entries is Monday 31st August 2020.

For further information you can visit the following BBC website:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1SCKS8VmFFGvyqqKbaGGyds/as-you-write-it-your-play-on-stage>

Good Luck!

Science Modelling

Year 7 recently finished a project on Respiration and part of this was to make a model of a mitochondria.

We have had to try to think of as many ways as possible to make learning fun during school closure. There are many examples but as I am a Scientist, I thought that I would like to share this one with you.



In spite of COVID19 our staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that our pupils were offered the best possible education in these strange and unprecedented times. Having read the reports it is wonderful to see that in spite of all the challenges so

many of our pupils have made excellent academic progress.

On behalf of all the staff, I wish you all a good summer in spite of the challenges that we all face.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Mrs Andrea Gaunt
HEADMISTRESS