



DECEMBER
2020



NEWSLETTER

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Headteacher's Update

In the inimitable words of Slade, "So here it is...", the Christmas Newsletter. Given the lack of opportunities for extra curricular activities and the restraints placed upon 'normal' activities, I am pleased that we have been able to produce a newsletter at all this term. You will see that it does provide examples of the excellence and achievement associated with QEGS at the end of what has been such a challenging term with so little happening beyond the classroom. I hope to be able to return to the normal pattern of publications next term.

In this edition you will find a message from the governors which provides some details on what we have been doing on the pastoral side of school and how we have been supporting our students throughout the pandemic.

Finally I can confirm that school will finish on Friday 18th December at 1pm. There has been a suggestion that schools can close on Thursday 17th but that is not an option for QEGS. We are in step with UCC on this matter. We look forward to welcoming students back on Tuesday 5th January.

Following on from my recent Parentmail there is very little for me to add, apart from repeating my wishes for a peaceful and restful Christmas and a better New Year.

Best wishes

Mr Buckland

Governor News

Dear Parents and Carers

The longest school term is drawing to a close and we are all ready for a break. One of the areas that have been in focus for the governing board during this term has been the mental and social wellbeing of the students. As Christmas is a time to show kindness, care and compassion to each other, we thought it was a good time to give you an update.

Pastoral Care at QEGS

The Governors think it important to update you on the work that the Pastoral Team are doing in QEGS. We have been looking at this carefully because many in the team are new, and we are in this unprecedented year when the need for pastoral support within school is high.

At the start of term Allen Martin took up the role of Assistant Head Student Welfare and Colin Munro became the Special Educational Needs coordinator. They both felt that they had been well briefed by the outgoing team and were able to start working immediately over the summer and at the start of the autumn term. The core pastoral team also includes the Pastoral Support Officer, the Attendance Officer, the Heads of Year and the Teaching and Learning assistants. All have been working hard to develop and implement plans to support students as well as constantly looking for others who may need help. There is lots of support within school, both for individuals and in groups, including the Chill Zone and Mindfulness class. These are challenging to organise when combined with the need to keep bubbles separate. The school is also reaching out to maximise the use of external support that may be available in the area for young people. Eden Mind have been particularly helpful, and the Barnardo's Link programme has now started.

The core pastoral team have stressed that pastoral support within school is an issue for everyone.

This is a mantra that has been taken up by all people and departments in QEGS and has ensured a real sense of looking out for each other. From the reception team, who are the outward facing first contact for many at the school, who never quite know what new challenge is going to present, to the dedicated work of the site maintenance team. The Governors have been impressed by the attention to detail of the needs of pupils. The speed that school meal vouchers were put in place for those in need. The sensitivity to the fact that the home financial circumstances of pupils may have changed due to the pandemic, so the school highlighted the Pupil Premium and 16-19 Bursary for those who may require it. This has all been a great support to students.



The transfer of pupils from primary school to QEGS posed unique challenges this year, some children having not been in school since March. The admin team, and Sue Denyer in particular, worked hard coordinating the transfer. As of course did Mrs. Cath Dawson who oversees transition from primary, and Mark Rosa, the new head of year 7. Mark also continues to ensure students get a say in what is going on in school by managing socially distanced Student Council meetings with the student leadership team.

Then there has been the work of the teaching staff and Heads of Year. Constantly being vigilant for the needs of their pupils, looking for changes that may indicate someone needs help, offering support and information in this unpredictable Covid year. This is in addition to teaching in class and preparing, at a moment's notice, to change to the whole new world and skill set of online teaching. Yet still managing to make highly entertaining lip-sync videos for Children in Need, and the amusement of all.

Finally, of course, the students themselves. For them there is the important emphasis on re-establishing friendships yet they still make time to look out for each other. For example, raising at Student Council that information posters need to be in all support bubble areas since they are unable to move around school as they did in the past.

The school is carefully treading the line between building individual resilience and coping strategies, that will hold pupils in good stead in the future, and making absolutely certain that everyone feels supported and knows where to go if they need help. Though there is plenty of work still to do Governors think they have done this really well in a difficult year.

Merry Christmas

Compared to most schools, QEGS has had a high number of children attending school, which is partly due to very good procedures at school, partly due to families being determined to get children to school, and partly, to be honest, a bit of luck. Whatever the reasons, high attendance levels have made a big difference, and made it possible to deliver something approaching a "normal" term academically. Let's hope we can continue like this during the coming winter months.

Finally the governing board would like to give a huge thanks to all staff at QEGS for their dedication and care to our students, and wish them all a very well earned rest.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Jean Jenkins and Tine Boving Foster on behalf of the Governing Board.



A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols



It has been a severe loss to the School that, since March, Coronavirus has brought about a temporary cessation of musical activity. First, our School Choir's entry to the Carlisle Music Festival was cancelled; second our Orchestra and Choir Tour to Belgium; and, third, all face-to-face musical activity. If it were not for our dedicated and industrious instrumental and vocal teaching staff, who got to grips quietly, calmly and efficiently with online teaching, I fear a whole hoard of young musicians could easily have been lost. My thanks goes out to them.

We are, however, reminded of the unwillingness to give in of the School's pupils and staff as they return with added vigour and fervour in their latest musical endeavour - A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

The last evidence that I can find of such a service from the School is in 1981 under the then newly appointed Head of Music Colin Marston. I have also found a copy of a service booklet from the one the year before, which reads 'Thirty-Second Annual Festival of Lessons and Carols'. The format, the readings and some of the musical selections of that service have been the inspiration for this year's Festival and one which we hope to take with us into the future.



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith

Socially-distanced, hand-sanitised, masked/unmasked (when and where safe to be so), safety-risk assessed, bubbled, symptom-free, out-of-isolation, ad infinitum, have all our pupils and staff tirelessly rehearsed and filmed in St. Andrew's Church Penrith to stitch together what we hope will be a wonderfully comforting way for pupils, families and staff to feel as though the sense of the life of our School still remains with us.

Throughout the filming of the Festival, the resilience of the pupils and staff has never before given me so much cause to see the relevance of our school motto - *Semper Eadem* (Always Constant). Despite the set-backs of this year and the challenges that we have all faced, it is comforting to witness, once again, the consistency of effort, determination and grit which Elizabethans always show time and time again - to them belongs all of the praise.

Please join us on the school website and social media pages on Christmas Eve for our airing of, after 39 years, Queen Elizabeth Grammar School A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

Mr Roberts
Head of Music



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith

Y7 BOOKBUZZ SCHEME

This year, as in previous years, we have taken part in a reading programme called **Bookbuzz** for Y7 students.

The programme is organised through the Book Trust and aims to help schools inspire a love of reading in 11-13 year olds.

This term, as part of their introduction to the library, all Y7 students have received a gifted book free through the scheme from a choice of 17 carefully selected titles.

More about the scheme can be found at www.bookbuzz.org.uk. The website also offers a wealth of information about books and reading ideas for all ages including author profiles, games, activities, blogs and videos.

Pictured are students from 7AGM and 7EW with a selection of this year's Bookbuzz books.



Arts Award Success

Many congratulations to Sam Almond who has successfully gained a Silver Arts Award from Trinity College, London.

The award is offered in school to Y12 students which, if completed, culminates in a Level 2 Award in the Arts. It provides students who are not necessarily taking arts A levels the opportunity to explore their own creative side.

Sam, a budding singer-songwriter, now in Y13, completed around 95 hours of work earlier this year to gain the qualification, which is equivalent to a high-pass GCSE. For his personal arts challenge, Sam wrote and recorded four songs, loading the recordings onto YouTube to reach a virtual audience during lockdown. In addition, for his leadership in the arts challenge, he organised the musical entertainment at the school's annual grandparents' Christmas party in 2019, auditioning acts and compering the event.

Sam was extremely focused on gaining his award, despite the additional challenges posed by lockdown, and received high praise for his work which was fully deserved.

Sam said:

"I decided to do Arts Award because I had been practising guitar for quite a long time and I'd written a few songs and I wanted to get them out there. I thought this would be a good opportunity to get out of my comfort zone and force myself to do that. I've learned how much hard work it takes to create music - I remember how many months the production took after the initial recording session."

Sam is pictured here with his certificate.



QEGS Supporting Local Charities

After an incredibly challenging year for all, supporting our local charities has never been more important. The Salvation Army work tirelessly to bring joy and hope into so many people's lives over Christmas time and, due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions, their work has been especially difficult this year.

Therefore, QEGS arranged a Foodbank Appeal with a difference. In order to avoid bubbles mixing and to ensure the donations could be quarantined, the school mini buses were parked in separate locations on the school site and used as drop off points from the 7th-9th December. Each year group were allocated a different day or drop off point and the appeal was a huge success—both mini buses were bursting at the seams with generous donations!

For many years, QEGS has worked with Cumbria Family Support — a charity which ensures those living in deprived and isolated areas, where support is limited and families may be struggling, receive the help they need. This year, we were unable to wrap and donate Christmas gifts to the charity as we would normally due to Covid. As such, we held a non-uniform day on the 11th December to raise money to buy gift vouchers which will be distributed to families who need support this Christmas. We are pleased to announce the non-uniform day raised a grand total of £814.95!

We would like to thank everyone who supported our appeals.



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith

QEGS raises over £2,000 in fundraising events for Children in Need

2020 has been a tough year for everyone. The COVID-19 outbreak has left the nation with a number of complications but we are determined as a community to jump back from it. An example of our community working together was Children in Need. BBC Children in Need fund over 3900 children charities and, given the increasing levels of mental health and losses due to COVID-19, the money raised is crucial to the cause. So that inevitably meant Children in Need, Friday 13th November, was more important than ever this year. Charities and social work have been severely crippled by these challenging times and QEGS as a school were set on raising enough money to support the country's children in need during this unprecedented year.

A team of eager Year 12 volunteers was assembled, but had one problem to face – how was this going to be possible whilst abiding by COVID-19 restrictions? Working hard in their free time, this team managed to do it, raising a substantial total of approximately £2020. This was twice the amount of the previous year despite the limiting guidelines!

The fundraising events were difficult to organise but, with much effort, were carried out successfully. They consisted of a non-uniform day, a bake sale for each year throughout the week and teacher karaoke. We had some, dare I say, entertaining posters put up around school and the excitement was gradually rising. Eventually, (with some complication and problems arising along the way) everything was put in place and ran smoothly.



The bake sales ran during lunchtimes selling cakes by the minute, alongside the voting stations for the teacher karaoke – both safely controlled by students from the year group. Year 7 set the record by raising an enormous £290!

The wide spanning support was outstanding from teachers, parents, guardians and students alike. With teachers volunteering their free time for the karaoke, which included the likes of ABBA from the History Department, The Human League from the R.E Department and much more, putting a smile on many people's faces! We were also grateful for the army of student volunteers for running the bake sales and providing cakes for the sale. It would not have been possible without the support.

This all goes to show how a community, especially a school community, can come together and achieve so much by working together. It makes us all think how we can come together during this pandemic and makes other's lives just that little bit better. Well done to everyone in the school for the support.

Inayah Shah 12MG



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith

ABRSM Exam Results

2020 has seen many activities curtailed or cancelled and ABRSM music examinations were no exception.

However, students showed incredible fortitude and commitment by continuing to learn remotely and, as we move back into a scenario of being able to access ABRSM exams again, we are delighted that the following students have been successful in these challenging times. We celebrate their well-deserved achievements.

Mrs Gilbertson

Singing

Tanya Darling: Grade 8 Merit

Martha Hudson: Grade 8 Pass

Jonty Hansford: Grade 6 Distinction

Grace Addison: Grade 6 Distinction

Sam Murray: Grade 3 Distinction

Emily Airey: Grade 3 Distinction

Piano

Carys Ilett: Grade 5 Distinction

Classical guitar

Jonty Hansford: Grade 6 Merit

Marcus Chappell: Grade 4 Merit

Magnus Villadsen: Grade 3 Pass

Aidan McRoy: Grade 2 Pass

Saxophone

Lucy Harnwell: Grade 1 Distinction

Theory

Charlie Hudson: Grade 5 Distinction

Amy Graham: Grade 5 Merit

Millie Shepherd: Grade 5 Pass

Musical Theatre

Charis Pattimore: Grade 5 Distinction

Millie Shepherd: Grade 8 Distinction



Student Commendations

Commendations have been awarded to the following students:

Deputy Headteacher's Commendations

Thea Illet 7EW

Megan Rushton 7BH

Josie Wright 7BH

Neev Renton 7EW

Zahren Shah 7OPJ

Scarlett Gibson 7OPJ

Amina Arif 7OPJ

Han Fei Weng 7OPJ

John Evans 7OPJ



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Friends of QEGS NEWS

Friends of QEGS may currently be a virtual Parent's group but we are no less busy for it! Since September, we have been holding regular zoom meetings – to keep in touch, and to continue with those activities that we are able to keep going. Now, with promises of a vaccine on the horizon and a return to normality at some stage in 2021, we are also looking forward to losing the cyber-facade and doing actual stuff!

We had a great response from many of you when it came to Black Friday's internet shopping bonanza. My inbox pinged all weekend with donations from EasyFundraising and continues to do so in the run up to Christmas - perhaps a little less so since lockdown eased, which pleases me even though it means fewer donations, as it suggests people are going to actual shops. We do not get updates from AmazonSmile but I expect we will be getting some income from them too over the next few months. Thank you to all who have taken the trouble to contribute this way.

We were unable to hold our annual Christmas Fayre this year but had enquiries from some of last year's stallholders, which is encouraging and hopefully means we will have interest in it for next Christmas. Meanwhile, we are tentatively starting to plan a summer fayre, which may be our only event this school year but would be great if it can go ahead.

We held our AGM on Friday 11th December and minutes will be posted on ParentMail soon. Lucinda Weymouth and I stepped down from our committee roles after more than 4 years but will continue to support Kate Saudek, who has taken over as Chairman, and Sam Bramwell, who is our new secretary. We thank them both for stepping up to the plate and wish them well. We also thank everyone who has helped us out over the last few years, which have been great fun.



We have now held all the numbers clubs draws for 2020 and the winning numbers for November and December, which were drawn at Friday's AGM, are attached below. Congratulations to everyone who won - thank you for taking part, and good luck to everyone for the remaining draws in 2021. I have emailed all the winners so, if you have a winning number but have not heard from me, please do get in touch via friendsofqegs@gmail.com.

Have a very Merry Christmas and may 2021 bring back hugs, kisses, and handshakes for us all!

Best wishes

Alison Almond

Alison Almond and Lucinda Weymouth stepped down from their roles as Chair and Secretary of FQEGS respectively at the AGM on Friday 11/12. I would like to thank both ladies for their extraordinary commitment and service to the school during their period of office and for all the time they have been involved in fundraising for the school. They have helped the FQEGS raise significant sums of money in support of the acquisition of our new minibus and in helping to equip the Birnie Building. Their organisation and communication skills have seen many events from Christmas Fayres to Open Evening Barbeques go off with aplomb and raise much needed funds in the process. I hope they will continue to help out, in less prominent roles, for as long as possible.

Mr Buckland

	Money	November 2020 numbers	December 2020 Numbers
1 st prize	£50	152	155
2 nd prize	£40	171	124
3 rd prize	£25	41	154
4 th prize	£20	132	127
5 th prize	£20	107	27
6 th prize	£20	94	136



Diary Dates

December 2020 / January 2021

Thursday 17th December	Y9/10 Citizen Day
Friday 18th December	End of Term
Tuesday 5th January	Spring Term commences
Thursday 14th January	Y13 Parents' Evening
Tuesday 19th January	Y10 Parents' Evening

For more events and up-to-date calendar information, visit the homepage of the school website and access the [School Calendar via Google Live](#) which is regularly updated



Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith