

23 October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Over a month has flown past since I wrote to you last and as half-term approaches, I felt it was time to update you on what has been happening here at Appleby Grammar School. Across the school there continues to be a hive of activity and there is a real sense of energy about the place.

On Friday 11 October, the school welcomed our local MP, Tim Farron into school. He spoke to the whole school about his role as an MP and his work in his constituency. Students then asked him a range of perceptive questions revealing a deep knowledge of both local and national issues. It was impressive to hear the questions and I know Mr Farron was impressed too. The school's eco-council was instrumental in bringing him into school and after the whole school assembly, Mr Farron joined a workshop with the eco-council. Libby in Year 10 chaired the meeting and the discussion was at a very high-level according to Mr Farron. Good preparation for Parliament he told me! Well done to all the students involved and Mr Wright, who oversees the eco-council. I am also pleased to announce that Mr Farron will be speaking at our Prize Giving next month.

I am also delighted to say that the eco-council's great work has been recognised with the awarding of the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award for this year. This is recognition of the eco-council's impact throughout the school and allows us to fly the green flag. We are now on with sourcing and erecting a flagpole! Many congratulations to all the students and staff involved in achieving the green flag status.

Thursday 10 October, also saw us mark World Mental Health Day with an extended break to incorporate the theme of Tea and Talk. The Sixth Form leadership team really stepped-up to lead the event having delivered a whole school assembly on the topic the Monday before. The hall was set-up in a café style with prompts for students and staff to talk about mental health and it was well attended with money donated to local youth mental health charities. Well done to the sixth formers involved and to Mrs Cannon and Mr Hayman for their work with this. There is always more, schools can do to promote the well-being of both the students and the staff and we will continue to work on this at Appleby GS.

Whole school assemblies on Monday mornings now start our week at school and over the past fortnight we have begun regularly celebrating success as part of those gatherings. Each member of staff now has a 'Golden Ticket' which they can award to a student during the week. The awards are based around the school values and allow the winners of a Golden Ticket to be placed in a weekly draw. One student from key stage 3 and one from key stage 4/5 are drawn out as our weekly winners. They receive an Amazon voucher in assembly. Congratulations to our first batch of winners who are: Tommy G and Oscar P (Y7), Flo M (Y8) and Tayla S, Rogan P and Lance C (all Y11). In addition to the Golden Ticket winners, the top achievement points scorer in each form is given a voucher for a treat from the canteen!

There have been other notable successes to celebrate in assemblies too with several students scooping prizes in Art and DT at the Appleby Show. Mrs Truch and Mr Hunter helped me present the awards and cups to the winners. Some of our sixth formers Zach F, Rosemary N and Imogen G starred in a recent maths event, each winning Bronze at the UKMT Leeds University Maths Challenge. Well done to all the successful students.

At the end of September, the annual European Day of Languages was celebrated in school. We saw registers being taken in five different languages throughout the day, Finnish lessons taking place and the week culminated in a whole-school "Creative Capitals" competition. The entries were varied and of a high standard, including a Warsaw oil painting, a gingerbread Helsinki train station, a depiction of Edinburgh's Christmas market and Greek and Turkish being spoken! The array of European foods on offer was mouth-watering! Congratulations to all who took part.

Battlebarrow Appleby-In-Westmorland Cumbria CA16 6XU
T: 017683 51580 F: 017683 52412 E: admin@appleby.cumbria.sch.uk

www.appleby.cumbria.sch.uk



I want to congratulate the plethora of students who helped with our recent Year 5 and 6 Open Evening. Alongside our committed staff it helped create a very successful evening with excellent numbers (more than last year apparently!) and a positive atmosphere. Thank you to all that attended on the night.

In addition to the open evening, we have opened the school up to prospective students and their parents or carers for slots during the school day and this has proved popular too. It has been really nice to meet so many students and parents interested in joining our school.

I wrote a month ago about meeting the Head at Appleby Primary School and since that date I have been out to many other of our feeder schools. I have greatly enjoyed the privilege of being in other schools, meeting the students there and to build on the work of my predecessor in forging strong relationships with our local primary schools. There are exciting developments to come. I have to say that the settings of these schools is truly stunning too!

Sport fixtures have been a feature of school life with football, netball and rugby all being played. In boys' football the Year 8s won their county cup match against KSGS with a nerve-wracking 2-1 penalty shoot-out win following a 3-3 draw after extra-time. Congratulations to the team for getting through. Our Year 11s agonisingly lost 1-0 to UCC in extra-time in the county cup tie. They played with great spirit as did our Year 9s who lost to the same opposition. Year 7 are through to the next round of their county cup after a convincing 4-1 win at St John Henry Newman School, Carlisle. In netball, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 girls' have all had fixtures against local schools in Penrith and Kirkby Stephen. Mrs Walton reports on how determinedly the girls have played in all the games. In rugby, our Year 8 boys took on UCC and have used that experience and their lunchtime training sessions to help prepare for a county cup match this week.

And, it is not just sport that has taken place outside with Educational Visits in Art to the beautiful county of Northumberland and an outdoor adventure residential for Year 7 across the border at Lockerbie. Both are part of the growing educational visit offer here. A full list of that offer has recently been sent to all parents. Whilst, the expedition was last summer, Year 13 Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award participants Ryan, Fred, Oscar and Lee gave an informative, humorous and interesting talk to family, staff and governors earlier this month. It is some achievement to gain a Duke of Edinburgh Gold, so many congratulations to all.

I am keen to garner feedback from parents and carers on the way we as a school communicate with you, as key stakeholders. Your support is integral to the success of the school and your child or children here. There is a link embedded here <https://forms.office.com/e/8VCnghK2wV> which will allow you to answer three questions about this type of general school communication. There will be other opportunities in the year to respond to more specific communication. Could I ask parents to take a minute to answer the questions to help us (and me as the new Head!) get this right. There is also a link to the school's ParentView www.appleby.cumbria.sch.uk/parents/parent-surveys which parents are encouraged to complete at a time which is convenient. There will be reminders throughout the year.

On the subject of communication, one of the things I have been busy with since arriving at Appleby is improving the quality of the information on the school's website. The link to that is here: [Appleby Grammar School - Home](#) we are working hard, so you as parents can access the information you need about the school. Please look here first and if the information is not there, we will try and add it. As part of this communication there is a calendar of forthcoming events for the rest of this term attached to this newsletter. Anything printed is of course always subject to change, but hopefully you will find this helpful. There is also a calendar on the website, which is updated as events are added or amended. Our social media Facebook page has more traffic on it than before and is a good way of keeping up to date with what is happening in school. We also have two big whole-school events with our Prizegiving (for prize-winners and their parents) on Thursday 14 November and our Sixth Form Open Evening on Wednesday 27 November. Please feel free to promote the Sixth Form Open Evening with friends and family.

As you can see from this newsletter there has been so much going on and still much to come, including our Sponsor Day this Friday 25 October. I have very much enjoyed meeting many of you at the recent school events, including at the Year 7 Parents' Evening last week. I look forward to meeting more of you at the forthcoming school events. Thank you for the warm welcome and continued support of the school. That support really makes a difference.

I will close by wishing all our community an enjoyable and peaceful half-term break.

Best wishes



Mr PJ Nicholson
Headteacher

Calendar of Events (23 October to 20 December)

- 24 October – Year 11 Mock Interviews
- 24 October – Ski Course, Parents' Meeting – 6.30pm
- 25 October – Sponsor Day
- 06 November – Ski Course, visit to Kendal Dry Ski Slope (1 of 2) – 3.30pm
- 09 November – AGSF Christmas Fair – 10.00am-3.00pm
- 11-15 November – Year 11 Mock Exams (week 1)
- 13 November – Ski Course, visit to Kendal Dry Ski Slope (2 of 2) – 3.30pm
- 14 November – Prize Giving – 7.30pm
- 14 November – Year 10 Science and DT visit to Manchester Museum of Science and Industry
- 18-22 November – Year 11 Mock Exams (week 2)
- 27 November – Sixth Form Open Evening – TIME
- 02 December – Nasal Flu Immunisations (Years 7-11)
- 04 December – Rotary Club Food Competition
- 05-06 December – Year 11 Astronomy Masterclass Residential to Borrowdale
- 10 December – Year 8 Parents' Evening (virtual) – 4.00-7.00pm
- 12 December – Christmas Jumper and Christmas Dinner Day
- 13 December – Year 11 Mock Results Day
- 20 December – end of term – school finishes at 2.00pm

Reminders

Parking and Drop-off at school

Parents are reminded that there is **BUS ONLY** access to the parking area in front of school from 8.30-9.00am and from 3.15-3.45pm. This is for the safety of all our students and staff. Parents are politely asked to respect this without exception. Please also note that only students with mobility issues should be dropped off inside the main school gates.

Thank you for helping to keep all our students and staff safe.

* * * * *

Notifying school of your child's absence / medical appointments

Please remember to use the new email address: attendance@appleby.cumbria.sch.uk to notify us if your child is absent through illness or has a medical appointment during the school day. This email address goes directly to the Student Reception Team who will update your child's record accordingly.

PRESS RELEASE

Students at Appleby Grammar School Awarded a Prestigious Eco-Schools' Green Flag



Local MP, Tim Farron, visited Appleby Grammar School last week at the invitation of the school's eco-council. Taking part in a school assembly, he shared how he entered politics and his role as a Member of Parliament. He fielded a host of questions on topics including farming, flood prevention, energy generation, job creation, migration and animal rights. He then joined a meeting of the eco-council and led a workshop giving valuable advice on public speaking.

Students at Appleby Grammar School recently received international accreditation for their exceptional work in promoting sustainability and raising environmental awareness amongst their peers. The school will now be flying the Eco-Schools Green Flag, awarded (with merit) for actions taken last academic year. The Eco-Schools

programme, established in 1994, is now implemented in over 70 countries worldwide. In 2023-24, more than 1.4 million pupils attended an Eco-School in England.

The students used Eco-Schools' tried-and-trusted seven-step framework to create positive change. Initially, a student-led eco-council was established. This committee took responsibility for spearheading their school's environmental initiatives, first conducting a thorough review of their school environment and curriculum before developing a year-long plan of action. Their action plan focussed on 3 key issues: biodiversity, waste and the marine ecosystems.

This year's Chair of the eco-council, Year 13 student Olivia S said, "The eco-council has helped improve the school community, as well as our local environment. As a school, over the past year, we have focused on marine conservation, issues on waste and the biodiversity in our local area. As the leader of the biodiversity group, it has been a pleasure to watch the transition of things like our new wildflower garden, the new diversity in our woodlands due to the bat and squirrel boxes we made and installed, and our cleaner surroundings, thanks to the litter picking we did. Tim Farron coming in for a meeting was extremely helpful, not only for his input on the eco-council but also for his insights on how to get into politics, offering work experience placements and sharing his story on becoming an MP."

Year 10 student Libby W, who had written to Tim Farron to invite him to the school, stated, 'Having Tim Farron as part of our Eco Council meeting was a great opportunity to share all the amazing things, we achieved last year. We have made a big difference and we haven't finished yet! Tim Farron helped us open our eyes to many more opportunities, and to remember that a lot of little things can make a big difference!'



Headteacher Phil Nicholson praised students and staff involved saying, 'The work the students have put into gaining this award is most impressive. They are dedicated and thoughtful young people and with Mr Wright's guidance they should be very proud of both their award and the impact of their efforts.'

Eco-Schools England Manager, Adam Flint, said: 'The Eco-Schools' Green Flag is an international benchmark that demonstrates a commitment to fighting climate change and a high standard of sustainable practice. Students and staff who earn this award deserve recognition for their dedication towards protecting our planet. Every day, they demonstrate that each one of us can contribute to making our planet a better, more sustainable place.'



Year 7s receive a free book of their choice from BookTrust's Bookbuzz initiative to get them started on their reading journey at AGS.



From Cypriot honey cake, to being greeted with a "Kalimera!", from clay meatball pasta to a gingerbread Helsinki train station, the entries to the Creative Capitals competition were beyond our wildest imaginations!



Students and staff enjoyed National Poetry Day today by taking part in a House competition which involved reading five poems (one in each lesson), linked to the theme of 'Counting', and answering a quiz question on each one.



Well done to all our students in their matches for AGS recently.





Students and staff marked World Mental Health Day on Thursday 10 October with many wearing yellow items to show support.



The Year 12 biology students are learning about cell division as part of their A Level studies.



The Year 7 games club got off to a flying start! The students enjoyed playing a variety of board games. They also worked together to build Lego models and constructed different jigsaws.



Sixth form students enjoyed a production of Shakespeare's 'Othello' at The Witham, Barnard Castle on Wednesday night. A compelling performance by The Elysium Theatre Company, conveying the issues within relationships and race still pertinent today, resulted in a rich and rewarding experience to complement the study of this text for A Level Literature.



AGS Golden Ticket



A Level DT students are working hard on their flat pack furniture project. Creating scale prototypes in a recent lesson.