

Celebration and raising aspirations are two recurrent themes of our assemblies here at Bedale but today was exceptional. Our Y11 assembly today involved presentations of awards to 42 students who have completed their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze programme. They each received a certificate and a badge for their efforts but their greatest reward is surely the sense of achievement and what it means in terms of raising their aspirations for the future. As young leaders, the hope is that not just these students but ALL Bedale students will carry forward the lessons learned into post-16 and beyond! At the start of the week, it was gratifying to see the next D of E cohort from Y10 beginning their programme with a day of intensive training. Led by the team from Alfresco Adventures and supported by Mrs Wilson, Mr Kelly and Miss Bradbury, the students learned about essential equipment, practised cooking on stoves and were taught how to put up their tents. There was also a session on orienteering. Mrs Wilson has added that the DofE would not happen if so many of our staff and members of our community did not put themselves out to become assessors namely Mrs Wagstaff, Mrs Bradley, Mr Barnes, Miss Allsop, Mrs Brittain, Mrs Lumsdon, Mrs Davies, Mr Mugisha, Mr Wild and Mr Bilby, and the list is huge for our community assessors. Thanks especially to some of the football coaches - Andrew Yellend, Steve Collins and Peter Hazelton and to Helen Tirant the Brownie Leader, Emily Adams at Crakehall Dance Class...the list is too long to say thanks to everyone. I would like to add a personal thanks to Miss Bradbury and Mr Kelly, whose help, support, and humour have been invaluable and made it even more fun for everyone.

In other assemblies this week students in Y9/10 have heard from a member of the University of Newcastle's "Bright Futures" team, with Y8/9 students also hearing from York College staff. All visiting speakers are helping to ensure that ALL Bedale students know that, with high levels of commitment and a positive attitude to learning, they CAN achieve great things.

Our Y8 travellers returned from their Battlefields trip where they visited the sites of many famous battles from WWI, creating some great memories along with a deeper understanding of the scale of the conflict in WWI. Earlier in the week students attended a very moving ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres, where they paid respects and listened to a moving rendition of the Last Post.

On the sports pitches, our students have been performing very creditably in a range of sports but pride of place must go to our U16 Girls football team. Under Miss Temple's guidance, girls in Y11 and Y10 have combined really well to represent Bedale with distinction, beating St Aidan's, a much larger school, 13-0 in the first round of the county cup. More impressive than the emphatic scoreline was the team spirit that emerged with all girls playing "the Bedale way", highly competitive but, ultimately, respectful of the opposition and always "sportsmanlike" in their behaviour, particularly the officials. It was also great to see so many other students supporting the girls and some of our outstanding GCSE PE students using their refereeing qualifications to help with officiate the match. The boys, on the other hand could not quite match their exploits of last season and were knocked out of the cup by Huntington School from York. With the score at 2-2 after extra time, unlike last year where we sneaked through, this time the curse of the dreaded penalties came back to haunt us! Mr Bielby has asked me to attach a timetable advertising an opportunity for any keen athletes who want to keep training indoors throughout the year.

Next week, we look forward to a very focused "revision week" ahead of the AP1 assessments. In the middle of it all, however, more than a hundred students from every year group will be taking time out of classes to complete the "Restart a Heart" training. This event, organised by Mr Childe and the NHS Ambulance Service is part of our school wide focus on health and citizenship. The day is designed to provide training in CPR and emphasise to young people how the learning of certain skills could enable them to save a person's life (there are over 30,000 cardiac arrests outside hospitals every year, and the survival rate is less than 1 in 10).

On a personal level, it is with much sadness that I am signalling my departure from the school at Easter 2019. However, having come initially for just two terms with a very specific role to perform, I feel that now is the time to step aside. I have been delighted with the way that staff have supported me every single day to transform the culture and ethos of the school to the extent that the reasons for my appointment largely no longer exist. It is right, therefore, that the governing body should have the room to make long-term, sustainable plans for the leadership of the school that build on what has already been achieved. With this in mind, I have attached a letter from Jan Reed and Steve Ingram, co-chairs of the Governing Body, outlining similar views. I know that I will be leaving a school that is very much "on the up" and with a growing reputation for having high expectations. However, I will not be resting on my laurels. Between now and Easter, you can rest assured that I will be relentless in my pursuit of further improvements so that my successor will be inheriting a lovely, vibrant school where students and staff are continuing to pull together to achieve "Excellence for all".

Have a fantastic weekend.

## Attachments

Important letter from Governors regarding the Headship.  
North Yorkshire Sports Athletics Event / Trials