

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a very positive start to the new academic year with 92,391 positives awarded since September, maintaining a positive to negative ratio of 96:4. Our new commitment to learning grades have also been launched with 95% of all grades entered recently for the first key stage 3 tracking window being excellent and good, confirming students are committed to mastering their curriculum and how to learn. As we now reach the end of another busy first half-term, I would also like to take the opportunity to update you on some of the events and student successes over the last few weeks.

Sporting Success:

Our sports teams have had a positive start to the new season and continue to enjoy considerable team and individual success in a wide range of sports. Particular highlights this term include:

- Victories for our senior A netball team including 19-1 v Bingley Grammar School, 7-2 v Beckfoot School and 14-3 v BBG Academy. Our senior B team also defeated BGS 7-4 and our U15 A team won 15-12 v BBG Academy.
- Our year 7 boys' football team have had an overall positive start to their league campaign beating Guiseley School 4-0, drawing with Horsforth School 2-2, and then beating Horsforth 2-0.
- Our year 8 girls' football team defeated Rossett School 2-0 in the first round of the English School Cup.
- Our year 9 boys' football team defeated Bradford Forster Academy 15-1 in the Schools Football National Cup and progressed to the second round of the Leeds Schools Yorkshire Evening Post Cup with a 6-0 victory against Garforth Academy.
- The post-16 football team also beat Ermysteds 6-3 in the first round of the English Schools Cup.
- In tennis, the year 7/8 boys' tennis team progressed in the LTA schools competition beating Manor CE School 8-4
- 60 runners competed at the first Keighley and Craven cross-country league at Cliffe Castle with some outstanding performances. Strong performances in the first round of the English Schools Cross Country Cup competition led to the intermediate boys' team progressing to the regional final in November.

The Sound of Music:

Following a very competitive casting process, with over 60 singing and acting roles now successfully cast, rehearsals have already commenced for this year's school production: The Sound of Music. Lead roles are as follows, with a full cast list posted to the website in due course:

Maria	Millie Trevett	Daisy Button
Captain Von Trapp	Alex Ashman Hogan	Matthew Disney
Mother Abbess	Grace Chadwick	
Max Detweiler	George Grant	May Halifax
Elsa Schraeder (Baroness)	Abby Macintosh Dixon	Ava Chaplain
Von Trapp Children	Liesl Von Trapp	Emma Chapman
	Friedrich Von Trapp	Will McCutcheon
	Louisa Von Trapp	Isabelle Atkinson
	Kurt Von Trapp	Adam Disney
	Brigitta Von Trapp	Evelyn Kennedy
	Marta Von Trapp	Mahalia Beevers
	Gretl Von Trapp	Saskia White
Rolf Gruber	Hugh Ameigh	Sam Woodward

We are very much looking forward to the show with its classic songs and the irresistible warmth of its main storyline. The Sound Of Music will run for 3 consecutive nights: Tuesday 7th, Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th February.

Eco-Schools Award

Following some exceptional work by our Eco iLeaders last year which included 9 litter picks, removing hundreds of tree guards in the Easter holidays, organising a Pre-Loved uniform sale and collaboration with local groups such as Climate Action Ilkley, Ilkley Clean River Group and Friends of Ilkley Moor, we are delighted to announce that the school has been awarded an Eco-Schools Green Flag. The reviewers were very positive about the work of the Eco-Committee, led by member of staff Emma Wood, and recognised the great work which had already been completed and the changes which have been made, as well as the action plan which detailed the priorities for this year. These include: a planting day to plant over 300 hedgerows, reducing plastic and paper waste, organising a student gardening club to enhance biodiversity on site and promoting the use of period pants. Well done to everyone involved for continuing to make a positive difference.

Enrichment Fayre

Earlier this term, we held our annual enrichment fayre to showcase the wealth of extra-curricular opportunities on offer at IGS. We currently offer almost 40 clubs at lunchtime and after-school with a huge range of sports, creative arts and design clubs, as well as options including MFL film club, strategy games, chess club, spirited arts, Dungeons and Dragons, Olicana Scholars and Menu Masters.

In addition, there are also a vast number of leadership opportunities available from year 7 through to Post-16, with over 600 applications for roles of responsibility received from students.

Refugee Action

Earlier this month, we were privileged to provide a venue for an away day organised by local residents and IGS parents, Felicity Tomblin and Sue Staton, in conjunction with Refugee Action Bradford, where we welcomed refugee families and those seeking asylum who are living in the wider district. Families from Nigeria, El Salvador, Iran/Iranian Kurdistan and Sudan enjoyed a fantastic day together, enjoying creative arts workshops led by local artists and IGS parents, Gill Gilroy and Juliet Gutch, as well as experiencing orienteering on Ilkley Moor led by IGS Associate Assistant Headteacher, Matt Carr.

The whole day was very uplifting and we were pleased to be given the opportunity to make such a positive difference to the lives of others. A particular well done goes to the following students who took time out of their weekend to volunteer, showing kindness, care and compassion: Jack Winterbottom; Oscar Staton; Daniel Tomblin; Reuben Tomblin; Alex Ashman Hogan; Jess Bragg; Xanthe Gutch; Grace Widdup and Izzy McBain.

Literature Festival

We were delighted to be asked to be a host venue for a number of events for the Ilkley Literature Festival this year during three weekends in October. During this well renowned festival, visitors have been treated to a wonderful range of talks celebrating reading and writing. It has been a great opportunity for our students to be involved in volunteer roles and be part of this historic festival. Special thanks go to our student volunteers, our PTA volunteers for organising refreshments, and to our staff members working behind the scenes to make everything run smoothly. We are really looking forward to being part of next year's 2023 Golden Anniversary Festival celebrations!

Cambridge Estelle Prize Winner

Congratulations to Esme Gutch in year 13 who has won the prestigious Queens' College (Cambridge) Estelle Prize for English following her essay on the pleasure and value of incomprehensibility in a selection of Virginia Woolf's literary works and essays. The judges described Esme's work as "probing, thoughtful, and purposeful" and were highly impressed by the way Esme brought wider reflection on

Woolf's career to bear on her understanding of the novel, and on the problems of writing about what can't quite be grasped or articulated.

Oxbridge Success

New data compiled by the Telegraph has revealed that Ilkley Grammar School is in the top 5 schools and colleges in Yorkshire for the number of students successfully securing places at Oxford and Cambridge. Based on offers received in the autumn of 2020, 9 IGS students secured offers and this places the school only 1 place behind the most successful comprehensive school across Yorkshire on this measure and in line with the most successful independent school. While it is right not to be fixated by just two university destinations, with many students now actively choosing apprenticeships, work, or competitive courses at other universities, this is an important achievement for a non-selective state school which is committed to inclusivity as well as excellence.

Trips, Visits and Competitions

This half-term has seen our new year 7 students enjoy team-building activities with their tutor group and band at Nell Bank and they have also participated in the Great European Bake-Off run by the MFL department. The winners of this competition are still being decided as the judges were overwhelmed by the quality and creativity of the entries.

Politics students have also held a lively Question Time debate attended by MPs Robbie Moore and Naz Shah, whilst our post-16 design students visited Jonathan Carey Designs (JCD) to support their product design A Level course, learning about the commercial design and manufacturing process. Year 13 student, Oliver Mason, was announced as the overall winner of the One Sheet Challenge furniture brief and was presented with a full-size version of his winning design, kindly manufactured by JCD: an amazing games table finished in burgundy laminate on a black MDF core.

International trips are now fully resumed with our GCSE French students currently in Coutances as part of the well-established French Exchange programme which is in its 77th year. Year 9 students are also visiting Belgium during half-term for the Great War Battlefields Tour where they will visit the Vimy Ridge monument and tunnels, the Tyne Cot Cemetery and will take part in the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate.

Key Dates and Term Dates 2023-24

The 2023-24 term dates have now been finalised and are available on the [website](#). NB: The only date which remains TBC is Friday 5th July 2024 as this is dependent on the Red Kite Alliance training day which has not yet been confirmed.

Have a lovely half-term break.

Carly Purnell

Headteacher