

Another busy fortnight...

November 4th 2019

I write these updates every two school weeks so this edition has been sandwiched by the half term holiday. I hope students and their families had an enjoyable time away from school and managed to spend some quality time together. Half term already feels like a long time ago as things move apace towards winter and for our Year 11 students the forthcoming Mock Exams that begin in a month's time. This is a very important part of the process here at Kelmscott to help students maximise their potential in the real exams. Thank you in advance for supporting your child through this process. They should be doing about three hours a night on their GCSE work and revision, chunked down into sessions of about thirty minutes in length. Do speak to your child's form tutor or subject teachers if you would like any support in supporting your child. We have started a coaching programme with a group of Year 11s to help support them further. Students have been allocated a member of staff as a coach and are meeting with them regularly to monitor progress, attendance and such like as well as setting them targets to improve. Do speak to your child about this if they are on the programme. Please be aware of an important evening coming up on the **21st November** where families can get more information about how to support your children. More information to follow in due course.

We started the week before the half term with a Training Day for staff. This is the first time we have approached a Training Day in this way but we were very pleased with how it went. We spent time looking at some new exciting ways of teaching your children that teachers will be trialling this term. We also examined what we teach to students, when we teach it (across the five year Kelmscott journey) and why we teach it at that time. Some very interesting discussions were had that will shape future work we are doing later on this year.

We finished the last half term with our Open Evening for families of prospective Year 7 students. We have been working very hard on this since September to ensure that the school was ready to receive our visitors. Every inch of the school had been cleaned and prepped to show off what a fantastic school we are. As I'm sure you remember from the Open Evenings you no doubt attended, each department shows off what they do on the night and colleagues are on hand to answer any questions that families might have. We were deliberately outnumbered on the night by our own students who did a stunning job of selling our school to our visitors. To see the pride on their faces as they showed around visitors, answered questions or performed in the choir or such like was a joy for me to behold as Headteacher. They really were a credit to the school and their families of course.

We had a record turn out on the night and I was really chuffed to receive some stunning feedback about the school, its staff and of course the students. It was a great way to finish the half term. My sincere thanks to all involved.

The last day of term saw a return to Kelmscott for the Globe Players who were in performing their version of Romeo and Juliet. Again the feedback from students was very favourable with many of them saying how much they enjoyed the performance and how much better equipped they feel to understand the play. These things always take lots of time to organise, many thanks to the English Department for their efforts and energy in putting this opportunity on for our students.

Following Open Evening I conducted a number of tours around Kelmscott for prospective parents. I was also privileged to show around Councillor Grace Williams who is visiting schools in the Borough who have a new Headteacher. It was a pleasure to welcome her to Kelmscott and also to hear that she had heard that Kelmscott was a school very much on the up. Tours around the school, as always, were a really enjoyable experience; focussed students, impeccable behaviour and exciting lessons wherever you looked.

I have been to two meetings in the last fortnight that focus on the borough's SEND provision and funding. These have been informative and useful but ultimately there are some challenges that the Borough and in turn we will face when it comes to Special Needs provision in the future. These are not insurmountable and I am confident we can still provide an exceptional education and care for our SEND students but it is something to be aware of nonetheless. If you think this might affect you, do please get in contact with myself or Maria Codrington our SENDCo and we will be happy to talk you through it.

Finally, you may have seen on our Twitter account last Friday that the Art Department put on a Day of the Dead celebration. As Ms Dempsey explained, "Halloween is normally a night of terror and mischief but the Mexican Day of the Dead is an amalgamation of Aztec and Catholic traditions dating back 2000 years. The purpose of the day is to show love and respect to dead ancestors." Our students had a fabulous time engaging with this on Friday and the Art Department was full of students designing art work, decorating biscuits and generally enjoying being fully creative. Many thanks to the department for putting this on, testament again to the commitment and enthusiasm of our staff.

Mr Sam Jones

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