

A message from Mr Dowler, Headteacher Summer 2018

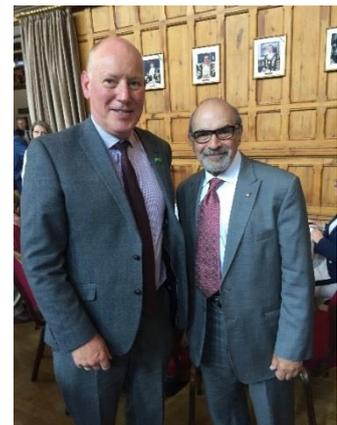
Dear Parents/carers,

Every term in school is very busy, with many events happening. However, the summer term of 2018 has been unusually eventful. Against the backdrop of almost unbroken sunshine, the FIFA World Cup in Russia, a Royal Wedding, Brexit and Mr Trump's visit to the UK, much has happened in our school.

At the start of the examination season we had a phone call from Ofsted to announce that they were coming to inspect the school the following day. We had last been visited in February 2014, so the visit was not totally unexpected. Three inspectors were in school and we were pleased that they confirmed that Helsby High is a good school with many strengths. Their concise report recognised many positive aspects about the school and confirmed that we were making good progress in the aspects we want to make even better.

Despite the hot and sunny weather our Year 11 and Year 13 students prepared very well for their external exams and these went smoothly. We hope that the students' and staff's hard work will be rewarded with a good set of exam results in August. Year 11 and Year 13 held successful Proms at the end of June which were lovely and fitting occasions to celebrate the end of the exams. A level results are available from 8am on Thursday 16 August 2018 with GCSE results available from 9am on Thursday 23 August 2018.

In June I had the privilege of representing the school, with Tom Gardiner (a Head Student), at a Civic Lunch in Chester with Her Majesty the Queen and the new Duchess of Sussex. It was a wonderful event during which we had the opportunity to talk to a variety of interesting people. One of whom was David Suchet (the actor famous for playing Poirot). He told me that he had begun his training in Chester at the former Gateway Theatre. He was pleased to hear how the expressive arts, especially drama, continued to thrive at Helsby (which is not the case in all schools). This was illustrated again at our superb Arts Festival in July which showcased the talents of our young people.



Over the summer our students have been involved in a wide range of educational visits and events. There are too many to mention them all here but they are celebrated in more detail via our popular social media outlets. I know how impressed Ofsted and other visitors to the school are by the range of character-building events our young people are involved in.



Frodsham & Helsby Rotary Club Young Chef competition

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HELSEBY

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For example, in the first two weeks of July alone events have included: A Duke of Edinburgh expedition; an exhibition of Y7 & Y8 genre and author studies; Sports Awards evening; Sixth Form Biology/Photography residential to Anglesey; Y10 careers talks; Rotary Club Young Chef competition; Y9 Go4Set engineering success; Y10 trained in anti-bullying in Manchester and Business visits to Manchester.

Primary school transition

Over the last few weeks our staff and Y7 E-buddies have been busy visiting our partner primary schools and in early July we held very successful transition evenings and two transition days. We have had a lot of very positive feedback about the transition arrangements and I would like to thank all the staff and student leaders for making these events run so smoothly. We shall have a full year 7 group joining us in September 2018 and they will be the first to wear the new style school uniform. All other year groups will stay with the existing uniform as they move through school.



Staffing

As I am sure you are aware, the Governors have successfully recruited my replacement. Martin Hill is currently a Vice Principal at The County High School, Leftwich from where he will join Helsby on 1 January 2019. He was impressed by the welcome he received during the selection process and is delighted to be joining such an excellent school. I will be liaising with him over the next term to ensure a smooth handover.

At the end of the summer term we say thank you, farewell and best wishes to a number of staff.

After 23 years at Helsby, Janice Bradley retires from her post as Head Science Technician and her vast knowledge, commitment, organisation and hard work will be greatly missed.

Also retiring is Debra Bellis. Hundreds of students have benefited from her maths knowledge and teaching over the last 16 years.

Artie Senior is retiring from her post as Schools' Sports Co-ordinator for the Frodsham and Village Schools' Partnership. She has done so much to encourage participation in sport in our partner primary schools for many years and will be greatly missed.

Helen Darlington leaves us to take up a promoted post as Head of Science at South Wirral High School. Her leadership of the Biology department will be greatly missed.

Polly Flood also leaves our maths department to spend more time at home with her new baby. We thank her for her work and teaching over the last 8 years.

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Georgie Tier leaves us for an Art teaching position in Manchester, which is much nearer to her home. We will miss her skills and teaching much more than she will miss the M56 traffic!

Also moving closer to home is Sarah Montague. She leaves us after 3 years' teaching English for a teaching post close to Southport.

We also say farewell to Rachel Musgrave who has been a superb Cover Supervisor and who has also picked up French teaching at short notice.

Other staff who are also leaving us for new challenges include:

Farewell to staff who have joined us more recently	
Hazel Burgess	Teaching Assistant
Emma Fallon	Teacher of Computing
Peter Farrimond	Teacher of Music
Sam Healey	Teacher of Music
Jamie Jones	Teacher of Music
Ellis Moloney	Science Technician
Henry Parkes	Teacher of Social Sciences
Scott Rowson	Teacher of Maths
Jenny Thompson	Science Technician

I would like to thank them all for their hard work and commitment to our school and wish everyone all the best for the future.

As I indicated earlier in the letter, the country has been gripped by the World Cup. Even Mrs Dowler watched it, although I didn't take too kindly to her asking me about Christmas halfway through the second half of England's semi-final! The organisation, preparation, hard work, commitment and humility of Gareth Southgate and his team of staff and players have set a good example (which has not always been the case from previous England squads). I hope that the England team will follow the example of Helsby High School in continuing to work hard to build on existing strengths and improving further.

We look forward to a new school year starting on Tuesday 4 September 2018 and in the meantime, I hope that the fine weather will continue and that you enjoy a nice summer break.

Best wishes,



Mr John Dowler
Headteacher