

July 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

The end of the summer term always represents a time of change in schools, with older students leaving for pastures new and excited younger students on the cusp of joining us, but this summer is one of particularly mixed emotions at the school with sadness at so many members of staff moving on and yet pride and happiness at the exciting opportunities they have generated for themselves.

Well-deserved retirements

After 7, 11 and 18 years respectively at the school, Mrs Healey (Music), Mrs Thomas (Geography) and Ms Boyer (English) are all retiring this summer. We thank them for the wonderful contributions they have made to Helsby over the years and wish them all the very best for their retirements from September.

Exciting promotions

Remarkably, five of our seven Year Leaders have secured promoted posts in other schools from September, their success reflecting well upon both themselves and also the school as a whole. Miss Wilkes is moving to be Assistant Headteacher/Director of Sport at the Doha British School in Qatar, Mr Hogg to be Head of D&T at Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School, Mr Eaton to be Head of English at Weaverham High School, Mrs Knox to be Head of Performing Arts at The International School in Hanoi, Vietnam and Mrs Speakman to be Head of MFL at Knutsford Academy. Together they have given 44 years' service to the school - we thank them for all the guidance and support they have provided during those years and wish them well in their richly-deserved new roles.

Ms Simmonds is also leaving Helsby this summer after 17 years at the school, most recently as Assistant Headteacher. We thank her for her huge contribution to the school, nowhere more so than in supporting Year 6 students to transfer successfully to the school in her role as transition lead, and wish her the very best in her new role as Deputy Headteacher at St George's International School in Luxembourg.

We also thank the following colleagues for all their many and significant contributions to the school over the years: Mrs Hunter, who is moving to be Head of Key Stage 2 Music at The Grange School in Northwich; Miss Rogers, who is embarking on a new career as a Graduate Asset Management Consultant from September; Ms Jacobson, who is moving to teach MFL at Bishop Heber High School in Malpas; Miss Squire, who has taken on a post of Teacher of Psychology at Belvedere Academy in Liverpool; Miss O'Reilly, who will be teaching Art at St Nicholas' High School in Northwich from September; Mr Craven, who will be teaching Maths at The Grange School, Northwich and Mr Stewart, who will be teaching English at Urmston Grammar School in Manchester.

Also leaving Helsby this summer are Mrs Taylor, who has worked as a Science Technician at the school for over 10 years, Mrs Goodwin, who has led the school's office provision since 2013, and Mrs Abbinnett, Cover Supervisor. Again, we thank them for all they have done for the school and wish them well for the future.

In addition to the above we wish Mrs Jones and Miss Stone the very best as they begin their maternity leave absences at the end of this term, and also wish Miss Clarkson well for her wedding this Summer - she will return as Mrs Keith in September.

New Arrivals

Despite the much-publicised issue of challenging recruitment in the teaching profession nationally, I am delighted to report that the strong reputation of the school resulted in large numbers of applicants and very pleasing appointments to replace all of the above in September. Accordingly, we welcome the following to the school and wish them all the very best as they develop their careers at the school:

English: Miss Harrison; Miss Kady and Miss Parker

Maths: Mrs Hartland and Miss Little

MFL: Miss Bargh and Miss Shute

Geography: Miss Smith

History: Miss Wetton

RS: Miss Corlett

Drama: Mr Tolley

Music: Miss Yates and Mr Singh

PE: Miss Crabb

Also noteworthy is the part students played in the appointments of all of the above, forming student 'panels', representing the school in an exceptional manner and forming a key part of the recruitment process.

Existing Staff

It is also a pleasure to report that Mrs Crammond will be taking over as Department Leader for MFL from September, Mr Callaghan as Department Leader for PHSCE, Mr Matthews as Deputy Department Leader for English and Mrs Middlemiss as Assistant Department Leader for English. In addition, Mr Callaghan will be taking on the role of Careers Lead and Mrs Dougherty the role of BTEC Quality Nominee and Statutory Work-Based Learning Lead. I am also delighted that Mr Short will be continuing to teach in the Maths department in September, Dr Leonard in the Science department and Mrs Spencer will be teaching in the D&T department.

Pastoral Systems

New pastoral systems have been put into place for September to strengthen the support we are able to give students at school. More details will follow in the Autumn Term, but key personnel will be the following: Mr Howe, who takes on the role of Student Support & Inclusion Leader; Mrs Tobin, whom we welcome back from maternity leave to the post of Learning Support Leader; Mrs Turner, Mr Shelton and Dr Ravetz, who will take on the role of Progress & Pastoral Leaders and Mrs Robinson, who takes on the role of Deputy Director of Sixth Form. Congratulations are also due to Mrs Wright for securing a role as a Student Support Co-ordinator and to Mrs Lowe on securing the post of Pastoral Administrator.

Away from the aforementioned changes in staff, it has been a very busy and exciting term, with too many successes, visits and extra-curricular opportunities to list here - please see our various social media outlets for full details. However, there are a few aspects of school life this term that I feel deserve particular referencing:

Years 11 and 13

Both Year 11 and 13 students deserve a special mention for the way they handled their very demanding GCSE and A-Level examination seasons. Both the Year 11 and 13 Proms were wonderful occasions for the students to celebrate the end of their examinations and staff at both venues used were full of praise for the way the students conducted themselves during the evenings. Students also enjoyed seeing Mr Dowler again, who kindly attended both events. We look forward to seeing the students again in August when they collect their GCSE and A-Level results and wish them all the very best for their futures next year.

Year 7 in September

Record numbers of students applied to join the school in September 2019 and we increased our Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for this year in order to try to accommodate as many students as possible. As a result, last week we enjoyed welcoming 252 students into school on our Year 6 Induction Days. I would like to thank Ms Simmonds and Mrs Turner for overseeing the transition process and for making sure that our new students felt so welcome. I am sure they will go on to have a very happy and successful time at the school.

Educational Visits

I cannot thank staff enough for all the extra learning opportunities they have given students during this very long and busy term - such provision is a notable strength of Helsby High School. Year 12 residential visits to Anglesey and London, a Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh expedition, the Years 7-10 Rewards Trip to Alton Towers, a Year 8 URENCO Day and the school's winning successes in the Year 8 Cheshire Book Quiz Final and the regional Year 9 STEM competition are among some of the many highlights you can read about in full on our website, twitter and Facebook pages.

On a personal note, I would like to thank staff, students, parents, governors and the wider community for the warm welcome and support I have received since joining the school in January. It is a fabulous school, characterised by the way members of the school community go out of their way to care for and support others (students raised a remarkable £6,808 for charity in the last year) and I look forward to the school developing further in the coming years. We look forward to welcoming students back on Wednesday 4th September and in the meantime, I wish you all a very enjoyable and relaxing summer break.

Best wishes,



Martin Hill
Headteacher