

Headteacher message

As the term draws to a close, I have been reflecting on everything we have achieved since September. And the list is lengthy! The pupils and staff of Alder Grange never cease to impress me with their enthusiasm and energy. All 142 of our new Year 7 pupils have settled in to life at Alder Grange brilliantly; it is lovely to see so many of them involved in clubs and activities. They also worked really hard with Year 8 as mentors and tour guides for Year 6 pupils who came to visit on the Activity day in October, and we had glowing reports about all our pupils during both events.

A snapshot of some the highlights are included here. I am really proud of all our pupils this term, and my first term as Headteacher has been action packed. I have loved every minute; Alder Grange is a wonderful place to be, the staff, young people, and their families who support us all, make it so.

I would like to wish you all a peaceful and restful break and look forward to another exciting term and a happy and healthy 2020.

Mrs Griffiths

FOCUS

Our focus on wellbeing for all has got underway in a variety of ways. We have our Wellbeing hub up and running, pupil wellbeing Ambassadors are taking the lead on this, pupils can access support or just a quiet place at breaks and lunchtimes. We marked Mental Health Awareness Day in taught sessions and form time. We also wore odd socks! Anti-bullying week was also a focus this term; we had workshops from Bee U and the Sophie Lancaster Foundation. We have also been thinking about the wellbeing of others and as always numerous charity events have taken place. Most recently we collected coats for 'Wrap up Rossendale,' and sixth formers have organised a food bank collection.

All pupils are able to join us for a free breakfast daily, from 8.15 where toast and cereal are available. We hope this helps all our pupils achieve better in school, and it is proving extremely popular. Year 11 were particularly encouraged to get a good breakfast before their mock exams this month. I have been impressed with the hard work and quality revision from Year 11; they are taking their role as senior pupils seriously around school on prefect duty and as role models to younger pupils.



Behaviour

The focus on rewarding good behaviour is paying off, record numbers of House points have been awarded this term, lots of pupils have been nominated for Hot Chocolate Friday and even more are being rewarded at the end of term with cinema experiences in the sixth form – these are pupils who are doing it right all the time and successfully completed the fortnightly focus.



Sixth Form Update

In sixth form we have also been welcoming new students from across the valley, and been delighted with how hard everyone is working. Year 13 are already receiving university offers and the Student Union have been active raising money for MacMillan coffee morning and organising social events. The support from current students at the recent open events for current Year 11 pupils was fabulous and feedback was really positive for this event. Any Year 11 parents who were unable to make this event - watch this space for additional opportunities to find out what goes on in ag6 later in the year.

We are also looking forward to welcoming back former students for our annual presentation evening in December, particularly those who are currently studying in universities across the country.

The sixth form will be 10 years old in September and we are keen to get in touch with any former sixth formers out there who are willing to be Ambassadors and come in and visit current students, or who would just like an invite to our 10th birthday party! Drop us an email in school.



I hope many of you managed to see Alder Grange on the BBC recently, when Mr Stocks was surprised by their film crew and given a Christmas Star, after three of our sixth form students nominated him. It was a lovely afternoon and great to see Mr Stocks so surprised.

It was really poignant in November to have the whole school assembled to respect the two minute silence on Remembrance Day. For the first time this year we did this outside next to the Remembrance garden that Mr Haydar and his working group have worked so hard to develop.

PARENT VOICE

We held our first parent voice session this term, and I am very grateful to those parents who attended or completed questionnaires. The focus of the term was curriculum and you should notice better information about homework as a result, other changes will be implemented during the year and a second session will take place in March.

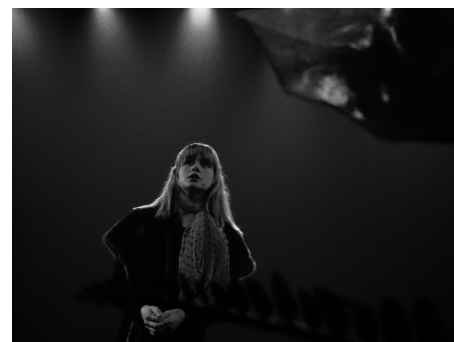
Our first residential trip of the school year took place in September, when Mrs Hesketh took a group of Year 11 and sixth form students to visit Sicily on a Geography trip to see Mount Etna, and other sights, in glorious sunshine.



SICILY

Creative & Expressive Arts

I was particularly delighted to see the 'Little Shop of Horrors,' production in October. This show was months in the making and involved many pupils, staff and parents – it really epitomises for me what Alder Grange is all about, the team spirit and enthusiasm was joyful to see. Big thanks again to Miss Buckle who worked tirelessly to pull it all together – and is already planning next year's show!



Youth Enterprise Challenge



Our Year 10 Enterprise Team pupils have been busy this term supporting the Rossendale Hospice Enterprise Challenge. They have to make a £50 budget generate as much money as possible for the Hospice. They have organised tombola stalls, a Christmas Jumper Day, RAFFLE and a full school marketplace event. The group will be presenting to a judging panel in the New Year, alongside other local high schools in the hope of winning an award.



We'll Done!

MR CARASSALE TOOK A TEAM OF 14 YEAR 9 GIRLS ON A STEM VISIT TO THE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY WHERE THEY WON THE LEGO ROBOTICS CHALLENGE. PUPILS HAD TO BUILD A TRANSPORTER OUT OF LEGO AND THEN PROGRAMME IT TO CARRY A LOAD ACROSS A COURSE. WE HAD THE FASTEST TIME OF THE DAY!

REMINDERS

Monday 16th December - Christmas Marketplace, please bring some spending money!

Tuesday 17th December - Christmas Lunch / Christmas Jumper / Non Uniform Day (£1) for Rossendale Hospice / Former Years 11 and 13 Certificate Presentation Evening.

Wednesday 18th December - Christmas Raffle Draw.

Thursday 19th December - School Closes at 1.15 p.m. for pupils and staff.

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

As ever there is a long list of sporting achievements this term, some highlights are:

- Years 8, 9 and 10 are all Rossendale Netball champions
- Rossendale Cross country Rossendale runners up
- Finally, we had a victory in basketball when U14's won 9-4 against All Saints!



Kickboxing

We have a number of talented kickboxers in school. Including Kaiya and Kyran Henry-Jones who competed at Kickboxing world championships in Niagra Falls.



Football Focus

In football, our Year 7s have been particularly successful, the boys were runners up in Rossendale 7 a side and the girls beat Broughton 6-0 in the Lancashire Football Cup and are through to the next round. Alongside the Year 7 successes; in the Lancashire Cup: Year 8 boys played really well but lost out to Bishop Rawstrone (an excellent individual performance from Man of the Match Jack Tozer), Year 10 boys also just lost out, on penalties. The Year 9 boys are through to the next round of the Lancashire Cup.

The Year 11 boys won the English cup second round; 2-1 against St Monicas, but unfortunately lost in 3rd round to Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy.

Girls football has been even more successful: in the Lancashire Cup, U14 girls football beat Blessed Trinity 14-0 and Ormskirk 5-0, U16 won 7-1 Balshaws and the U13 girls are through to round 4 in the English schools Cup.

Matthew goes for Gold

We are really proud of sixth former Matthew Mackay who represented GB in the World Mountain running championships in Argentina recently. Matthew came away with a team Gold and an individual fourth place.



We have many other individual sporting achievements too – we love hearing and sharing these stories so please keep letting us know.