



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our first Newsletter of the new year. Whilst Christmas may seem like a distant memory, I hope you all enjoyed a restful break at the time. The children settled back into school very quickly, eager to continue their learning, and coped admirably with the additional requirement to wear masks in lessons. We were very pleased with the sensible way they adapted, and they never fail to impress us with their positive approach to school.

As ever, we have hurtled through the first few weeks at one hundred miles an hour, with lots of events taking place and opportunities for the pupils. I hope that you enjoy reading about some of the highlights in this newsletter. I'd particularly like to draw your attention to a wonderful video from Kier showing the new Farm Lane school site.

As you are aware we have had high rates of COVID in the school, but thankfully this peak appears to have passed. I want to thank you for your continued support during this time. I know that some of our families had a difficult time, with all family members testing positive and some being quite unwell. It is great to be welcoming these pupils back to school.

Kind regards

Headteacher

Key Dates 2022	
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February	Curriculum Day
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> February	Olympic Values (special assembly)
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> February	Learning Council Meeting (lunchtime)
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 7 Interim Report issued to parents
Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> – Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	Spring half term



### Farm Lane update

Kier have sent us a promotional video that was filmed in the early Autumn at the Farm Lane site. There have obviously been more building developments since then, but I hope you enjoy seeing the scale of the school and the fantastic facilities that are going to be available to our pupils. It also showcases interviews with some undergraduates and apprentice trainees about their role in the construction project, that may hopefully inspire some of our pupils.



### Little Shop of Horrors Rehearsals

Rehearsals are going brilliantly for our school production on **5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> April** (save the dates!) – **Little Shop of Horrors**. The children are very enthusiastic in rehearsals and it's wonderful to see so many of them singing, dancing and acting altogether. Thank you for the parent taxi service that is ferrying them to and from rehearsals (including on Sundays) – it is much appreciated!

Over the next few weeks we will be sourcing props for the production, the list is quite extensive and we may call on you to see if you have any of the items we could borrow.



Miss Smith will keep you updated with the rehearsal schedule on the VLE, where there is a section for the pupils to keep checking regularly.

#### RRSA

Since starting our journey towards becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School we have been working hard on our application, writing our action plan for embedding rights across our school community and gathering evidence and information in support of this. We will submit our documentation to UNICEF before half term and we hope to have positive news about Bronze school status to share very soon.



Mrs Cox would like to thank the steering group for their enthusiasm in our first ever meeting, and the staff for their input, ideas and support.

#### Eco Committee

The Eco-Committee are a fabulous group of HSL students who are passionate about protecting the environment and dedicated to making our school as environmentally friendly as possible.

Over the last few months all our committee members have been conducting an Environmental Review to understand what environmental work our school is already doing, and what we need to improve.

Now that the review is complete, our Eco-Committee are going to design an Action Plan of changes they would like to make, which they will introduce in an assembly before the end of this term.



## The Wellbeing Hub

We would like to remind parents that the school have signed up to a one-year subscription for 'The Wellbeing Hub'. Parents will have already received an email informing you how to log in. This is a wonderful resource and we hope that both pupils and parents will find it helpful in promoting wellbeing.



We have updated our website so pupils and parents can access 'The Wellbeing Hub' via the [Pastoral Support page](#).

## PTFA Quiz

### Save the Date

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022 7pm – 10pm**

Our fantastic PTFA are hosting a quiz night – more details to follow - but please start sharpening up your quizzing skills, it will be lots of fun!



### Recruitment of staff for September

As you may have seen from our website, we are in the midst of a significant period of recruitment for teachers and some key support staff, who will be joining the team in September.

Details for each role are on our [website](#). If you think you may be interested or know someone who is suitable please do apply. Above all else, we are looking for highly skilled colleagues who share our ambitious vision for the school.

### Sports update

On Wednesday after school HSL pupils have the opportunity to participate in football club, coached by volunteers from Leckhampton Rovers FC. It's been great to see so many boys and girls turning out each week. Here are some of the photos of all the action.





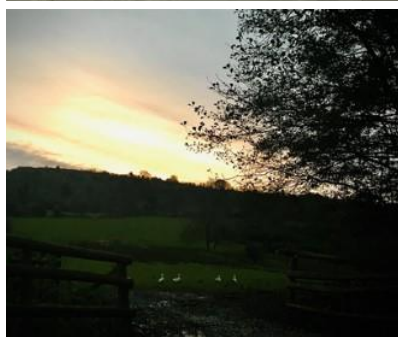


## Twin Town photo competition

To celebrate 70 years of twinning between Cheltenham, UK and Göttingen in Germany, Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Twinning Association, in conjunction with Cheltenham Camera Club and Stadt Göttingen (Göttingen Town Council), have organised an amateur photo competition. The Twinning Association want to celebrate the towns and show how close the friendships between Cheltenham and Göttingen have become over the years.

The competition organisers have asked for images relating to the theme of **'Celebrating My Town'** and that highlight a special image of Cheltenham town. 35 images will be selected by a panel of judges. Göttingen will also select 35 images from their own competition, totalling 70 photos, representing every year of the twinning link. First, second and third prize winners will be chosen from the 35 selected photographs.

Some of our pupils have entered and below are a few of the beautiful photographs they have taken. Good luck to each of them!





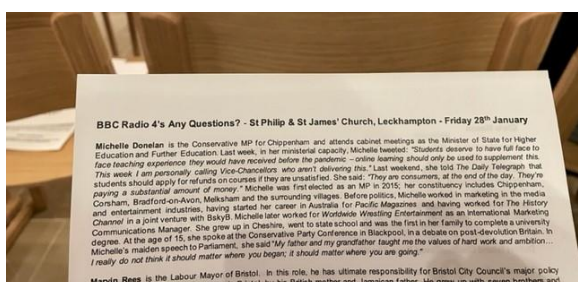
### Thick jumper day

On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> the pupils were asked to wear a thick jumper, as the heating in the main building at Balcarras was turned off. This is an annual event at Balcarras School that we were happy to support. The money raised in donations was sent to WaterAid. Thank you very much for your contributions.

## Radio BBC4 Any Questions?

We would like to say a huge thank you to Reverend Nick Davies of St. Phillip and St. James' Church, who invited us to select 3 pupils to attend a recording of BBC Radio 4's Any Questions?, on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January at the Church.

The show goes out to an audience of 1.6 million listeners over Friday night and Saturday morning and is hosted by Chris Mason. Maisie, Seb and Harry were the lucky pupils whose names were pulled from the hat and they prepared some brilliant questions for the panel which consisted of Marvin Rees (elected Mayor of Bristol), the Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP (Minister for Higher and Further Education), Dale Vince (owner of Ecotricity and Chairman of Forest Green Rovers), and Alice Thomson (author and journalist for The Times).



It was fascinating to see how the programme was made, with the producers selecting only 6 questions from the hundreds they received from the audience. To our delight, Harry's question was chosen, so he was invited to sit at the front and had the wonderful opportunity to ask the panel what they thought about his chosen topic (in his case whether he should go to University). He got lots of different opinions and we were very proud of him!