

11th February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

As half term approaches, we are now more than halfway through this academic year and it seems such a short while ago when I wrote to you all for the first time in September. It has been a busy couple of weeks at our schools and the build up to the summer exam season for our Years 6, 11 and 13 is well and truly underway.

I want to start by sharing with you an article that was published in the Brent and Kilburn Times, celebrating some of the fantastic work that our students have been doing to help improve the environment. We were visited by Brent councillors Krupa Sheth and Thomas Stephens on February 1 to celebrate various environmental projects set up by students.

Eco leaders and a leadership group made up of Preston Manor students, set up a project called Eco Manor last year to help raise awareness of environmental issues on Earth Day (April 22). The group is now working with transnational environmental company Veolia to make positive environmental changes to their community and school. One project late last year saw a group of year 12 students enter Veolia's Sustainable School's Competition.

The councillor added: "It's very encouraging to see the enthusiasm of young people, and to hear their innovative ways of helping us on our collective journey to reach zero carbon emissions by 2030." The full article can be read here <https://www.kilburntimes.co.uk/news/education/>

On Wednesday afternoon, our Year 11 students received their post 16 examination results in an event that we use every year to help our students understand the importance of the actual results day in August. One of the key messages that we shared with our Year 11 is that the grades that they received can only get better with hard work and dedication. I am pleased to say that the majority did really well in their exams and have a strong foundation now working towards their future exams. Of course, there was some disappointment too, but our staff took time to meet with students and look at how we can improve. There is still time to make a huge impact but responsibility starts now - striving for excellence. When we return from the half term break, our Year 11 and Year 13 students will only have **47 school days left** until the formal exam season starts... such a short space of time to work as hard as possible, especially when these results will be with them for the rest of their lives.

I want to give another little update on our amazing Year 6 D.I.V.A.s who started work on 'Values' last week in their session, that focused on challenging and understanding stereotypes and discrimination. This week they had the honour of meeting two very inspirational women, London Fire Brigade Group Commander and Staff Officer to Commissioner Andy Roe, Pam Oparaocha and Professional cricketer Naomi Dattani. The Year 6 D.I.V.As had a wonderful time listening to their inspirational stories of how they progressed and achieved their goals in their career.

The Lower School also recently welcomed in our School Improvement partner Mr Anthony Peltier who came to look at our teaching of Phonics, Reading and Writing across the school. Mr Peltier, being a School Improvement partner, works with a range of schools across Brent and the greater London area and as such, is well placed to support us and make informed

judgements as to how well we are delivering Phonics, Reading and Writing to our students. The school was very pleased with the positive feedback that Mr Peltier has provided:

'Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good. We visited classes and observed good learning behaviours with pupils on task and engaging in the lesson. Pupils are courteous and respectful to each other and were eager to share their learning with me.'
'Leaders have made reading their number one priority. They have improved the school library and ensured pupils are timetabled to use it. It was clear when listening to pupils read; that they enjoy reading a range of books. Some of the pupils talked enthusiastically about their favourite authors.'

Mr Peltier also commented on the very positive 'Reading Culture' that has been established and is clearly evident around the school and in discussions with the students. Mr Atkinson would like to thank all the Lower School parents for their integral role in supporting the children in learning to read and providing a sense of value and enjoyment from reading. Parents are doing this through listening to their children reading daily at home, as well as reading to their children regularly at night before they go to sleep. Together we are having a massive impact on our students' reading and enjoyment of reading and books.

Following Mr Peltier's visit, we also welcomed our Lower School Governor, Ms Kinna Patel, to school on Wednesday. Ms Patel came in to school to focus on the schools teaching of PSHE, Relationship Education and our support for the students' mental wellbeing. Again, the school was very pleased with the very positive feedback that we received from Ms Patel in terms of the improvements that we continue to make in this crucial area of the school curriculum. She commented on how engaging the resources are that the school is using and how engaged the students' were in their lessons on Internet Safety. Ms Patel was very surprised by the depth of thought and understanding that the students are able to apply to their questions and answers in this topic. Ms Patel also spoke to a group of students from across the school about the teaching of PSHE, Relationship Education as well as behaviour and how safe they felt around the school. The students were open and honest, as usual, and provided some excellent feedback about their thoughts on these topics. We are pleased about how positive our students are about their school.

It has been a busy first 21 school weeks this academic year at Preston Manor, but a really positive 21 weeks.

Whatever your plans are for next week, please stay safe and enjoy the week. School reopens at normal times on Monday 21st February.

Yours faithfully



RUSSELL DENIAL
Executive Headteacher