As we approach the joys of Christmas this newsletter looks back on a hectic and interesting term.

It has been a pleasure to welcome 180 year seven learners into the school. Parents met their child’s Urswick Parent for the first time in October and also completed a questionnaire. I was delighted that 98.5% agreed with the statement, ‘My Child Enjoys School’ and that 96% reported, ‘I feel my child is safe and well cared for at school’. Some parents also took the time to write additional comments:

‘I have already recommended The Urswick School to friends, family and other parents of Year 6 children. Keep up the excellent work’.

‘Thanks for supporting the Year 7s to enjoy secondary school. Much appreciated.’

‘Quite early on we had some concerns about some issues my son was experiencing. These were very well dealt with. As parents we were reassured. The swift response was great. Thank you’.

The last comment is perhaps the most important. From time to time there will always be ‘bumps in the road’. Urswick staff will try their best to deal with issues, but can only do so when we are aware of them. Urswick Parents and Heads of Learning are the best people to contact. I also hold Headteacher’s Surgery every Monday between 3pm and 4.30pm where parents can see me on a first come, first served basis without an appointment.

The parent questionnaires are done anonymously, so I can only respond to some of the queries raised via this newsletter. One parent wanted students to have ‘blazers and proper ties’. The blazers that are much favoured in some other places are expensive and we have always taken the view that hard pressed families do not want to have to spend large amounts on school uniform. The ‘clip on’ ties ensure the tie looks smart and can only be worn with your top button done up. The clips do break occasionally but we continue to regard these ties as the best option.

One parent asked for ‘better vegetarian food’ in the canteen. Every day there is one hot vegetarian dish plus sandwiches and salad pots. I eat the food every day as do numerous staff who are vegetarian. The response is usually positive but not everyone will like everything.

This year ends with Mock Exams for Year 11 in December and begins with Mocks for Year 12 and 13 in January. Good luck to you all and keep revising! We also have the Carol Service, Christmas Lunch and many other events to look forward.

I wish students, staff, parents, governors and everyone associated with the school a wonderful Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

Believe and Achieve

Richard Bam
Executive Headteacher

The Spring Term begins on Monday 6th January 2020

A Prayer for Advent and Hope

Heavenly Father,
As a light that shines even in the darkest places,
Help us to have hope and trust when we are lost or lonely.
As a source of peace even when there is hatred,
Help us to forgive when we are hurt or wounded.
As a source of Joy even in the saddest times,
Help us to remember how to show love even when we are upset.
As we wait for the end of term, and prepare for the joys of Christmas,
Help us to be a school of hope, of peace and of love.
In the name of your Son
Amen
Meet Mercedez - Year 7 Student

We sat down with Mercedez in Year 7 and asked her how her start at The Urswick School has been!

HOW HAVE YOU FOUND YOUR START AT THE URSWICK SCHOOL?

My start has been amazing! I love the school so much it is so new and it was so exciting finding out all the things I can do here.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BEST MEMORY SO FAR?

My best memory so far has been experiencing PE in secondary school. I have also loved meeting all my teachers and they are all so nice.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE SUBJECT AND WHY?

My favourite subject is PE. I love it because you can show your strength. It is a great way to get healthy and active while having fun at the same time.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE URSWICK SCHOOL?

I love the teachers. They are all so nice and caring but also they push you to work hard so you can get to where you want to go in the future.

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

I have lots of interests outside of school. These include running, gymnastics and singing but I also really enjoy reading and writing stories.

STEM Trip to Cambridge University

On Wednesday 18th September nineteen year 11 physics students had the opportunity to visit Cambridge University. We arrived at Selwyn College Cambridge around 11.00 am and had a talk about the history of the University, the collegiate system, student finance as well as the actual application process they would have to undergo to get a place there. We learned that Cambridge has 31 colleges (29 of them for undergraduate study) and a student population of 18,000 admitted per annum.

Next we split our party in two and half of us had a tour of Selwyn College with the rest visiting Newnham College; we viewed the halls of residence, the campus grounds as well as the Harry Potteresque dining hall that students eat in (sadly absent of owls) for both locations.

In the afternoon we went to the world-famous Cavendish Laboratory and attended various sessions relating to the cutting-edge technologies currently being developed at the site where the electron was discovered in 1897. We attended several presentations; Rolls Royce explained how jet engines work and Mathworks told us the importance of computer simulation and modelling in the projects that they are engaged with. We also learned about the hole in the Ozone layer from British Antarctic Survey and about the three ways of finding an exoplanet.

Cambridge was certainly a beautiful place to visit and it would be great if this trip has kindled ambitions among the year 11 physics students to return here as an undergraduate in physics or engineering!

Mr Brosnan - STEM Co-Ordinator

Urswick Gives Racism the Red Card!

During October, The Urswick School was proud to demonstrate our support for the Show Racism the Red Card campaign. The students all learned about the history of this campaign and about its links with the world of sport. We supported their ‘red’ campaign by wearing our customised Urswick wristbands, which were given free to all students. On Thursday 17th October Year 7 and 8 had a special assembly delivered by Jack Ferguson from Arsenal Football Club who spoke to our students about the importance of standing up to all forms of racism and prejudice and the work being done to eradicate racism from the sport of football in particular.

Ms Braggins - Deputy Headteacher
Wellbeing Award for Schools

We are excited to announce that The Urswick School has signed up to the Wellbeing Award for Schools, developed by Optimus Education in partnership with the National Children’s Bureau (NCB).

The award focuses on ensuring effective practice and provision is in place that promotes the emotional wellbeing and mental health of both staff and pupils. The award will accredit the excellent provision we have in this area already, as well as enabling us to develop these practices where necessary. There are eight objectives against which we will be measured, focusing on our overall commitment, our positive promotion of student and staff wellbeing, our provision in terms of curricular and pastoral support and any necessary interventions we offer.

The process will also involve student evaluations and parental feedback from a sample group of parents.

Tanya Blacksley (Head of Health and Wellbeing) is leading on this work, working closely with Deputy Headteacher Martha Braggins as well as Heads of Learning and the wider staff body.

ART CORNER

Self Portrait by Hakan Yilmaz, Year 11

CHANGE OF DATE

INSET day will be on Monday 20th January 2020 (and not on Friday 24th January as previously stated.)

The Official Urswick School Scarf

This is the only scarf that students can wear to school. The Urswick School Scarf can be purchased from reception. £5

Stepping Stones

The Stepping Stones project is well under way this term and is already having a positive impact on our students. Meetings take place weekly between Year 7 pupils and their designated Year 10 mentor where they discuss their transition and how they have settled into The Urswick school life so far.

Well done to all of our students on the Stepping Stones mentoring programme, keep up the fantastic work. Here we have some photos of our mentors in action running team building exercises and discussions with pupils in year 7.

Ms Blacksley - Head of Health and Wellbeing
The Urswick School sportsnews

Kent Orienteering League

The School’s Orienteering team are once again competing in the Kent Orienteering League.

Having finished second in the County Schools’ championship last year, they are again sitting second in this year’s event after the first two rounds of ten.

Orienteering involves running through forests to visit control points as quickly as possible, using a map and compass to find the points.

The events take place roughly once a month on Saturdays until July. The team compete against at least 20 other schools.

Mr Le Fevre - School Games Organiser

Year 9 Victory

The Year 9 team provided an excellent performance against Petchy Academy this term. Even with some players missing, they showed great character and teamwork, eventually winning 5-3 with two goals each from Tasharne 9MOS and Medhi 9PUA, alongside a goal from Javan 9STL which cemented the victory.

Well done Year 9.

Mr Lashley - PE Teacher

Sports Prefects 2019/20

After many applications, the Year 9 and Year 10 sports prefects have been selected for the 2019/20 academic year.

Well done to:

Yassir Temimi 9LLE
Khatwib Muwanda 9BRM
Daniel Otamendi 9LLE
Javan Remy 9STL
Jayden
Greenaway – White 9STL
Keira Nakintu 9PUA
Sherrie Aguis 9LLE
Maria Zapata 9BEA

Benjamin Opoku 10LAH
Bruno Pereira De Barros 10UNR
Israel Oketade 10TAB
Danielle Bahissi 10LAH
Kayla – Louis Slater Fox 10TAB
Ellie Hope 10BEK
Kallum Fray-Graham 10CPF
Sabina Olchowik 10UNR

Mr Lashley - PE Teacher

Parental Engagement Events

Thursday 23rd January – Year 11 Subject Evening - Start Time 5:00pm
Thursday 6th February – Year 12 & 13 Subject Evening - Start Time 5:30pm
Friday 14th February – Year 9 Progress Day
Friday 13th March – Year 8 and 10 Subject Day
Friday 15th May – Year 7 & 9 Subject Day
Friday 19th June – Year 8, 10 & 12 Progress Morning
INSET Day: Monday 20th January 2020