



BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

CHRISTMAS 2019 NEWSLETTER

Dear all,

It is with considerable sadness that I have collated my final newsletter as Borden's Headteacher. Over the last few weeks I have really appreciated parents, students, staff and trustees communicating their best wishes and kind words to me.

Mr Mulligan will be 'Acting Headteacher' from January until August 2020 and will lead the staff and students well. The trustees have appointed Mrs Johnson, formerly Headteacher at Weald of Kent Grammar School, to lead the recruitment process for Borden's next Headteacher. External adverts will be placed next term. In the interim our senior team is very experienced and Mr Artingstoll (KS3), Mrs Smith (KS4) and Mr Brinn (KS5) will provide clear leadership to staff and students.

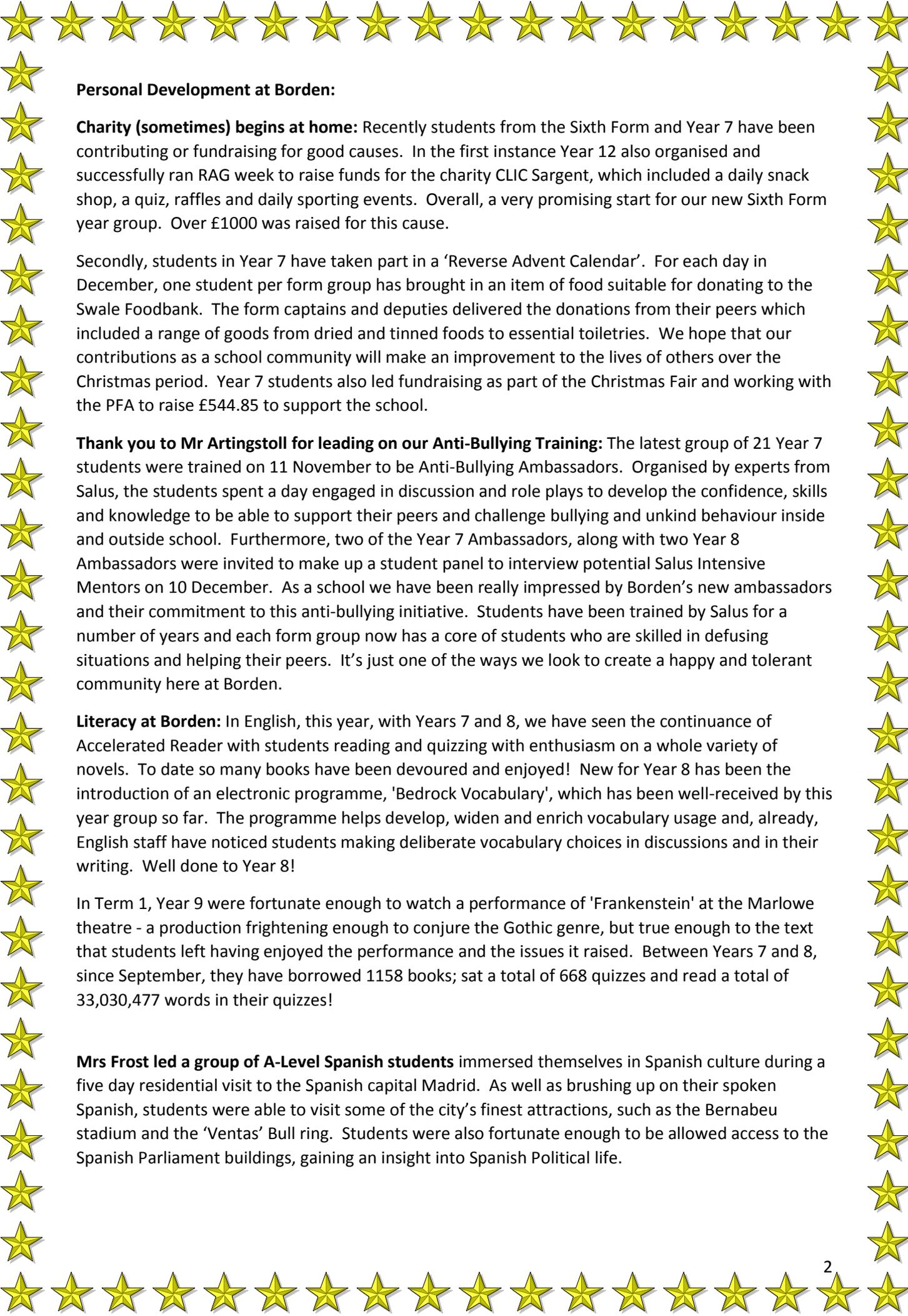
I've very much enjoyed leading the school since September 2013. Obviously Ofsted visited us twice in this period and the school received strong endorsements on both occasions of the quality of education that Borden provides. Throughout my time staff have benefited from the support of parents and we work hard to keep building a vibrant school community. That our attendance is the highest in Swale tells you something about the school we are – one that people want to be at!

In 2013 I inherited a school which had significant financial challenges and am pleased to be leaving the students and staff in a much healthier position. However, whilst our finances are better, Borden understands that people matter, students and staff are at the heart of who we are and what we do. The school exists to serve the local community and be a difference. On the whole we do this well, we can always improve and are always prepared to listen.

When I started at Borden the school had less than 80 first choices from the local community. Over the past six years the profile of the school has changed notably and the school roll is much stronger and healthier than what I was presented with! If my legacy is to ensure the continuation of a purposeful grammar school in Sittingbourne then we have achieved something together that was not a certainty back in 2013.

Personnel News:

- **Mrs Brooker will take up her role as Associate Assistant Headteacher** from 1st January 2020; this is a post she will hold for the remainder of the academic year. Mrs Brooker has previously been an Assistant Headteacher and will bring experience and expertise to the Leadership Group and will focus on raising standards across the school.
- **We have appointed a new Head of Chemistry, Dr Sutton**, who will take up post in April. In the interim **Dr Al-Mударis**, will return from January - March to strengthen teaching in Science.



Personal Development at Borden:

Charity (sometimes) begins at home: Recently students from the Sixth Form and Year 7 have been contributing or fundraising for good causes. In the first instance Year 12 also organised and successfully ran RAG week to raise funds for the charity CLIC Sargent, which included a daily snack shop, a quiz, raffles and daily sporting events. Overall, a very promising start for our new Sixth Form year group. Over £1000 was raised for this cause.

Secondly, students in Year 7 have taken part in a 'Reverse Advent Calendar'. For each day in December, one student per form group has brought in an item of food suitable for donating to the Swale Foodbank. The form captains and deputies delivered the donations from their peers which included a range of goods from dried and tinned foods to essential toiletries. We hope that our contributions as a school community will make an improvement to the lives of others over the Christmas period. Year 7 students also led fundraising as part of the Christmas Fair and working with the PFA to raise £544.85 to support the school.

Thank you to Mr Artingstoll for leading on our Anti-Bullying Training: The latest group of 21 Year 7 students were trained on 11 November to be Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. Organised by experts from Salus, the students spent a day engaged in discussion and role plays to develop the confidence, skills and knowledge to be able to support their peers and challenge bullying and unkind behaviour inside and outside school. Furthermore, two of the Year 7 Ambassadors, along with two Year 8 Ambassadors were invited to make up a student panel to interview potential Salus Intensive Mentors on 10 December. As a school we have been really impressed by Borden's new ambassadors and their commitment to this anti-bullying initiative. Students have been trained by Salus for a number of years and each form group now has a core of students who are skilled in defusing situations and helping their peers. It's just one of the ways we look to create a happy and tolerant community here at Borden.

Literacy at Borden: In English, this year, with Years 7 and 8, we have seen the continuance of Accelerated Reader with students reading and quizzing with enthusiasm on a whole variety of novels. To date so many books have been devoured and enjoyed! New for Year 8 has been the introduction of an electronic programme, 'Bedrock Vocabulary', which has been well-received by this year group so far. The programme helps develop, widen and enrich vocabulary usage and, already, English staff have noticed students making deliberate vocabulary choices in discussions and in their writing. Well done to Year 8!

In Term 1, Year 9 were fortunate enough to watch a performance of 'Frankenstein' at the Marlowe theatre - a production frightening enough to conjure the Gothic genre, but true enough to the text that students left having enjoyed the performance and the issues it raised. Between Years 7 and 8, since September, they have borrowed 1158 books; sat a total of 668 quizzes and read a total of 33,030,477 words in their quizzes!

Mrs Frost led a group of A-Level Spanish students immersed themselves in Spanish culture during a five day residential visit to the Spanish capital Madrid. As well as brushing up on their spoken Spanish, students were able to visit some of the city's finest attractions, such as the Bernabeu stadium and the 'Ventas' Bull ring. Students were also fortunate enough to be allowed access to the Spanish Parliament buildings, gaining an insight into Spanish Political life.



In the last few years Miss Phillips has really strengthened Music at the school. Students in music have been very busy this term, organising their own Winter Concert, participating in the Joint Swale School Concert and the Carol Service. The Winter Concert was held at Borden on Tuesday 3rd December and featured performances from the School Orchestra, Choir and String Group. There were also two rock bands and a variety of soloists. A special well done to those who performed a solo or duet: Toby Heather, Lucas Fox, Toby Clark, Joseph Fowler, Tom Fassenfelt, Jerome Osoba, Robert Pym, Martin Chamberlain, Callum Walach, Gabriel Bestow and Ben Sutehall. At the Joint Swale School Concert on Monday 9th December, Borden students joined together with 6 other primary and secondary schools from Sittingbourne and performed a range of pieces in an evening concert that they had rehearsed in the afternoon.

Students will also be demonstrating their musical talents again at the Carol Service on Tuesday 17th December. There have also been many successes in music grade exams this term, so congratulations to Tom Smith and Thomas Friday who already have their exam results. Well done also to all of those who have taken exams this term and are still waiting for their results.

Sixth Form news: Year 13 have made a purposeful start to their final year at Borden, with many students focussed on attaining their aspirational target grades. Several members of Year 13 completed Oxbridge, Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry applications back in October and are currently waiting for the interview stage of their applications. It has been rewarding to see students' applications for University and Degree Apprenticeships coming together as the year draws to a close.

Thanks to Mr Brinn (AHT) and Mr Whiting (HoY 13) who organised a **Personal Development Day** in December for the Sixth Form and were visited by an excellent outside speaker who provided much insight in revision techniques and important life skills. Mr Whiting commented that 'it is my belief that students will take the skills learnt on this day to adapt their approach and motivate them over the coming weeks and months as their final exams approach.'

Miss Andrews-Lucas (HoY 12) added that Terms 1-2 has started with our new Sixth Form students being introduced to a VESPA model of thinking, which promotes skills relating to organisation and exam practice, whilst also building upon their effort and attitude towards their studies. This has been supported by a workshop in which students were able to learn new revision and study skills from a very well respected external organisation, in addition to a workshop on Unifrog to promote career aspirations.

Under the care and leadership of Mrs Edwards Year 11 students have had a busy and productive Autumn term. With a number of boys returning to school in September with their Statistics GCSE successfully completed, the emphasis has been on thorough preparation for their forthcoming Mock Exams in January. Excellent preparation for MFL Speaking exams and extremely hard work before the IT deadline have shown that the boys are keen to achieve well. Sporting success for the Year 11 football team and excellent performances from our Year 11 musicians and dancer have balanced the academic work that has gone on this term. With applications for Sixth Form places firmly underway, she wishes the boys well for their Mock Exam revision over the holiday period.

Bah Humbug - Mock Examinations: Year 11 - 13 mocks occur in Term 3 and, whilst everyone needs a break from work in the holiday, it is vital that all students make the most of this time to start revising for these assessments. The new national experience in 2018-19 saw tougher marking across exam boards and students cannot view mocks as an experience to 'show them what they don't know.' Rather it is imperative that students set themselves up well for their summer examinations by taking their preparation for January and February assessments seriously. At this stage, the process of

revision is as important as the mock results. No Christmas is complete without packs of highlighter pens, flash cards and a revision schedule!

Our Librarian, Mrs Brown is pleased that the Library continues to be a popular area for students to study and read. The whole area has recently been updated - carpet and chairs have been replaced, the newly painted walls are now adorned with inspirational quotes, and new signage has been added. New book stock is constantly added, encouraging our students to enjoy reading for pleasure, and our Year 7 and 8 boys continue to enjoy Accelerated Reader lessons in the library. Many schools have closed their libraries in recent years, but we have deliberately made decisions to value and keep ours at the heart of the school. It is a resource that is used well by all key stages.

Sport at Borden:

With regards to the Autumn term Mr French reports that Term 1 and 2 saw some fantastic performances by Borden's football sides across the age range - unfortunately we have not been able to completely replicate the fantastic form many year groups were in last year, but all the same the boys have produced a number of notable performances:

KS3:

Year 7: won the district league. The A team had a spirited cup run but were knocked out in the third round. The Year 7 B's are still going strong and face Harvey Grammar in the quarter finals. Some stand out performers from these squads include Alex Barnes, David Akande and Ryan Farren.

Year 8: Performed well in the district league but struggled for cup form, leaving the competition after the second round. Notable performances were given by Josh Casey and Hadley Tossell.

Year 9: In a repeat of the second round of the county cup from the previous year where Hundred of Hoo school were comfortable winners, the Year 9 side rallied superbly in a closely fought contest, narrowly losing 4-3.

KS4:

Year 10: enjoyed their football this season and in particular causing Mr French no end of stress by insisting on going behind in almost every fixture only to bring it back and win - most dramatically in their game against Westlands! Unfortunately their cup run was also to be curtailed in the second round against Simon Stock in a high spirited match. Stand out performers: Tom Green, Jake Lumby and Harry Gough.

Year 11: Many Year 11s have been busy representing the school at senior level while in the cup they made it to the third round where a very strong Howard side narrowly won 2-1.

Senior Football:

2nd XI: As last year's league champions and with a strong squad hopes were once again high. At the time of writing Borden 2nd XI are currently in the top spot, however both teams in 2nd and 3rd have games in hand so exactly where they will finish is yet to be seen. Harry Kiddle has set an excellent example as Captain this year and will continue to lead the 2's in their quarter final in January in the cup! Other notable performances from Conor Mudima and Jason Pemberton-Mola.

1st XI: As with the 2's a very strong 1st team squad looked capable of bringing home some silverware. Unfortunately a few dropped points from matches that they were winning till the last few minutes cost them top spot in the league. Notable performers: Dylan Tubb, Dan Lott, Will Meeks.

January will see the return of rugby and hockey training and fixtures.

Christmas presents: Parents and students are strongly advised that valuable electronic devices, smart phones etc. should not be brought to school. Whilst they are not necessarily banned items, the school cannot take responsibility for their security.

Procedure for exceptionally severe weather conditions: Should there be severe weather in the period between Christmas and Easter the school will remain open unless widespread dangerous travel conditions prevent this from occurring. If this should occur we primarily communicate via **the home page of the school website** (last winter we found that our Facebook and Twitter links proved to be a speedy form of communication). In addition, information of closures and partial closures will also be posted (if still available) on www.kentclosures.co.uk and it is from this source that the radio stations will obtain their information. You should assume that the school is open unless such a message is broadcast.

Uniform: Generally standards of uniform are very good and reflect the pride students have in their school. We are very appreciative of parents' efforts and co-operation in this and many other areas. Whilst the uniform card is not used at lunch time this does not mean that boys can wear non-uniform items. Items such as jumpers, winter coats and school track suit tops should be worn to keep warm, not non-uniform sweatshirts. Jumpers should be grey v-neck rather than any other colour or style. **'Badged' uniform is available at 'Forsters School Uniform Shop' on East Street.**

Start of term: The new term begins on **Monday 6 January 2020** and will follow **Timetable Week 2**.

Best wishes to you and your family at this time.



Jonathan Hopkins, Headteacher

