

September 2009

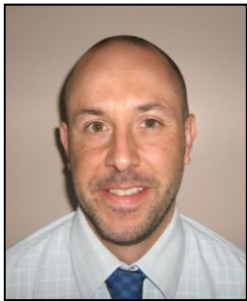
Welcome

Welcome to all new students as they start their life at Kirk Balk. I hope you have a happy and successful time here. Remember to always do your best and you will never feel you have let yourself down. Aim for 100% attendance and the higher grades in all subjects.

To all other students, welcome back and I hope you are fully refreshed after the summer holidays and looking forward to an exciting new year at Kirk Balk where a lot of changes have taken place to help you learn and aim high.

The staff have also managed to have a holiday and have returned keen to succeed in supporting students in their learning.

A number of new staff have joined us this year.



We are very pleased to welcome Mr Dabell who will be teaching mainly Year 7 and some ICT classes.

Dr Haine is our new Teacher of Science. She did some of her teacher training with us and we are very pleased that she has chosen to stay on at Kirk Balk School.



Mr MacDougall has joined the Science and Mathematics departments. He has experience in both subjects so I am sure he will bring cross curricular links into those areas.



Mr Paramore joins the Mathematics department. He is a very experienced teacher and we look forward to him working with our students as we continue to raise standards in Maths.

Mr Sawyer is an additional teacher in the Technology Department. He will be teaching mainly resistant materials but will experience other technologies throughout the year.



Jennifer Johnson is our new Science Intervention Classroom Support Assistant.



Victoria Fry is a new Non Teaching Assistant



Nikki Parkinson is a new Classroom Support Assistant.



We welcome back an ex-student Emily Smith who is our Apprentice in the main Reception Office

I am sure you will join me in welcoming all our new staff and in wishing them a successful career at Kirk Balk

Congratulations

Congratulations to Miss Linsley who got married over the summer holidays and is now Mrs Moore.



Key Dates for Autumn Term 2009

Event	Date
Year 11 Revision Skills Evening	Wed 30 September
Half term	Mon 26 October – Fri 30 October
Year 7 Parents' Evening	Wed 11 November
INSET Day	Fri 27 November (students do not attend)
INSET Day	Mon 30 November (students do not attend)
Year 10 Parents and Assessment Evening	Thurs 10 December
Christmas Concert	Tues 15 December
Term ends	Fri 18 December

Results 2009



We now have received most details of the Key Stage 4 results. I am again very pleased to announce some brilliant results!

You are probably aware that the Government now measures school success on the percentage of students who attain 5+A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, including English and Mathematics. This year, so far, we are standing at 39%. The figure for 5+ A*-C GCSEs or equivalent is an outstanding 67% (11% increase from last year). A massive improvement and I would like to thank students, staff and parents for all their efforts to make this possible.



Building Schools for the Future

On Friday 17 July, a sod-cutting ceremony was held at the school to mark the start of building work.



Summer events

Kirk Balk Memories project

A small group of people attended this project to share their memories of Kirk Balk school. They brought in photographs, memorabilia and stories to tell. There was a wide range of old photographs and documents set out in the meeting room for people to look through. There was also the chance to look around the school to see the many changes which have taken place throughout the years. There was an examination entry certificate from a Hoyland Boys school from 1899 which was sent to us by a lady in Cornwall, who had found it inside the pages of a second hand book. Also on the day there was a display of photographs taken around the school site by our photo project group.

Mrs Whittlestone is hoping to organise another memories event in the future.

Photo walk

This was a full day at Worsbrough Country Park, which consisted of a walk around the park, using digital cameras, a tour of the mill, picnic, craft activities and a look around Wigfield Farm. This event was very well attended with 21 people in total and was a true family event



including students from Kirk Balk School, primary schools and younger children with their parents. This was inspired by the photo project which has been taking part at Kirk Balk School

Walking group



The walking group met several times during the summer holidays and enjoyed many walks around the local area. This included around Hoyland, Stainbrough, Wortley, Elsecar and Tankersley. All of the walks were

well attended with between 8 and 15 people. The next walk at Cawthorne is approximately 3 miles long and will take place on Thursday 24th September meeting at Kirk Balk School Bungalow at 10.00. The next walking programme is currently being decided. For more information contact Louise Whittlestone on 07826027771 or through school.

Craft sessions

There were many different craft sessions which took place at Kirk Balk School during the summer holiday. There were many different activities including making masks, hand puppets, walking characters, door hangers, key rings, bookmarks and placemats using sewing materials. We also decorated ceramic egg cups, mini mugs and watering cans. One session was spent making model aquariums, fish and sea creatures! Look out for October Half term craft sessions.



Bradford trip

There was a trip to the Bradford National Media museum which took place on Saturday 1st August and involved families from Kirk Balk School including primary pupils. There was the opportunity to look around the museum, learn how to operate a television camera and see how programmes are made. The group also went to the IMAX 3D Cinema within the museum to see the new Harry Potter film.

Megan Sylvester



Over the summer Megan continued her diving success coming 6th in the world championships in Rome, but was eclipsed a little by Tom Daley's performance.

Duke of Edinburgh Expedition

The following Year 11 students successfully completed their Silver Duke of Edinburgh Expedition on 15 July and were passed by an external assessor. They battled traditional Duke of Edinburgh weather of sometimes torrential rain to cover 30 miles over 3 days in the Yorkshire Dales. They even managed to climb Pen Y Gent with full kit:

Dale Sunderland, Jacob Didsbury, Hannah Ryan & Rachel Jones.

As well as this, 15 Year 10 students completed their Bronze expedition in the Peak District, again, all passing. These students are:

Megan Pickering
Sam Sidebottom
Dom Chamber
Kim Robinson
Sarah Newbold
Emily Garvey
Laura Wood
Tom Mallon
Kieran Lawless
Tom Wigglesworth
Nathan Denman
Josh Reekie
Ricky Beever
Seb Scothorn
Alex Owen

Students Get Ahead in Engineering

From 28th to 31st July, Matthew Burgin, Rachel Cooper and Rebecca Jones, attended a specially designed Engineering Experience residential course at the University of Sheffield. This free course was part of a major initiative funded by the Department for Children Schools and Families, called Get Ahead with STEM! In partnership with STEMNET and the WISE Campaign, The Small Piece Trust ran the course to encourage students from hard to reach backgrounds and particularly girls, to consider engineering as a possible career in the future. Over the four days, nearly ninety pupils had the opportunity to learn about engineering through a series of presentations and practical exercises.

Working in teams, they tackled “real-life” challenges on projects designed and facilitated by young engineers from industry. These organisations included Doncaster’s Jaguar Land Rover and the Royal Navy. Projects included designing and building a vehicle which could withstand a front collision whilst carrying two passengers, and building a safe and stable model rocket which has to lift a fragile load to a certain height and flight duration. As well as working on the design, building and test elements of the projects, they developed life skills such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, time management, finance and presentation.

Attendance

Last year student attendance dropped, particularly around holiday times. We did not meet the requirement for attendance of 92%. A main reason for this was parents taking their children on holiday in term time. You will be fined if you do this unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Please can you make every effort in making sure your child attends every session except when they are genuinely ill. It is a proven fact that students who attend over 95% will improve their examination grades substantially.

All Years 10 & 11 have module examinations in November, January, March, May and June. GCSE exams start in June.

All these dates can be found on the students’ calendar.

Independent Learning

This year we have a focus on trying to develop our students so that they can learn independently. Teachers will be encouraging students to complete tasks by working in groups or on their own.

Aspects of independent learning include:

- problem solving
- planning and organising
- using evidence, making decisions and judgements
- leadership, negotiating and influencing
- open mindedness and managing risks

Holidays in Term Time

May I remind you that holidays should not be taken during term time. On very rare occasions I can authorise an absence, but this certainly will not happen in the following cases:

- If the student is in Year 11 – GCSE examinations
- If the student has a module examination near the time of the proposed holiday
- If the student has internal examinations/ assessments near to the time of the proposed holiday
- If the student has an attendance level that would fall below 95% should the holiday go ahead.
- At any time in the first half of the Autumn Term.

May I also remind you that the Local Authority can now fine parents who chose to disregard these guidelines. Should you still wish to apply for permission, please make sure you complete the correct Holiday Request Form which can be obtained from the School Office.

Parent Governor Elections

Please find attached to this Head’s Info, details about Parent Governor Vacancies on the School Governing Body. All completed nomination forms should be returned to Miss P Remington, Headteacher’s Personal Assistant by Monday 28 September, no later than 3.00 pm

Homework

All your children should receive a homework timetable this week.

Please support your child by checking that the homework is recorded in the Planner and that there is a quiet place for it to be completed.



It is anticipated that your child should be doing between 1-2 hours homework per night, depending on the year group.

Over the years at Kirk Balk, homework is equivalent to an extra year at school. Please encourage your child to complete all homework set. Even better, ask to see it and discuss how well you think they have done it.



*Ruth Dawson
Acting Headteacher*