



January 2010 News Bulletin

Dear Parent/Guardian

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a belated Happy New Year? I hope the year ahead will bring you and your family success and happiness!

Record exam results in the summer, followed by the opening of our new synthetic turf pitch have combined to make 2009 a year to remember.

The year ahead is full of promise; we have talented students gearing up for the exam season ahead. Phase two of our building project has started, the sports shed is being demolished and within 18 months our new sports centre should be ready for use. Work has also started on phase three of the building project; within 24 months we should be opening the doors of a newly built Junior High School. I am sure you would agree we have exciting times ahead.

The extreme weather conditions have made for a unique start to the term. I would like to thank all concerned for their support and hard work during this period. Gosforth High School remained open all through this arctic period and our attendance figures remained high on all but one day.

I take this opportunity to remind parents that our agreed policy on the wearing of non-school coats is still in operation. If a student needs to wear a top coat it must be the school fleece or waterproof.

With the January public examinations underway (and the major summer practical exams starting as early as March for some subjects) it is very encouraging that students have already begun to focus on the challenge ahead.

I thank you for your co-operation and understanding.

Yours sincerely

Hugh Robinson
Principal

APPOINTMENTS WITH STAFF

If you need to speak to a member of staff please telephone and make an appointment to meet them in person. **PLEASE DON'T JUST TURN UP UNANNOUNCED EXPECTING TO HAVE A MEETING. STAFF WON'T BE AVAILABLE!**

November GCSE Results

Congratulations to all students who passed a GCSE exam in November. A particular mention must go to our English and Maths study plus students in Year 11 - almost 40 of whom achieved a GCSE in English, Maths or both at Grade C or above in November.

A huge "Well Done!" to all...

BUILDING NEWS 2010

Our new Synthetic Turf Pitch has been well used since the inaugural match on the 2nd December. It is an excellent facility and is available for lettings out of school hours. Please contact John Hall, Assistant Director Site and Contracted Services, on 0191 285 1000 for information.

Now that this facility is in use, our contractors (Sir Robert McAlpine) have turned their attention to the demolition of the old Sports Shed, which any ex pupils amongst you will remember.

In the Summer of 2011 we expect our new Sports Centre to be completed and in use. This will consist of a 6 court Sports Hall, new changing rooms, a Fitness Suite, Climbing Wall, master classroom and a large flexible learning space. For those of you spectating, you will be pleased to know that there will be a facility for refreshments.

Meanwhile work is well underway at the Junior High School. From February, we expect to see steelwork rising from behind the contractors hoarding. Viewing panels are being installed in the fencing so that we can all watch the progress on the new school building!

Year 9-11 Careers Information (IAG)

To build on the success of the Careers Conference in November, all KS3 and 4 students will have the opportunity throughout January to explore the connexions direct website.

Please encourage your child to show you these sites. We hope this will be a basis for discussion around future Career possibilities.

<http://www.connexions-direct.com/whichwaynow/> Yr9

<http://www.connexions-direct.com/itsyourchoice/> Yr11

<http://www.connexions-direct.com/parentcarer/>

<http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u/> (An excellent data base to begin career investigation)

If you require further help and guidance please contact the Connexions Personal Advisors at school.

Newcastle City Council Children of Achievement Awards

On Wednesday 18th November at St James Park home of Newcastle United several of our students were presented with awards in recognition of their achievements.

Jordan Riach
Lewis Wiseman-Ord

Jacob Robson
Shemol Rahman

Nathan Topping
Melanie Brown

Victoria Keenan

These awards are given yearly and include, overcoming adversity, sporting excellence, musical talent and service to the community, amongst many others.

The awards were presented by Fabulous Flornoy of Newcastle Eagles and many staff and parents attended.

Review Day Wednesday November 18th 2009

Thanks to all parents and students who attended review day. The attendance of parents was superb with over 91% attendance overall. This compares very well with subject parent evenings attendance of 51%. A fantastic 99.5% of parents who replied felt the day was very useful (80%) or useful (19.5%) one parent made no judgement.

We appreciate the time parents commit to supporting their child on this day.

SIXTH FORM NEWS

Champion swimmer Lewis Wiseman-Ord has triumphed again, this time at the English Schools Swimming Association national competition.

The competition, which took place at Crystal Palace at the beginning of the October half term holiday, saw Lewis triumph in an event in which he usually does not specialise, the boys' open 400 metres freestyle. Lewis swam against the boys' Olympic champion in this event, and beat him into second place, after leading the race from the start. Lewis completed the race in a time of 4.05, just outside the Commonwealth trials' time.

Lewis now represents both Gosforth High and England internationally and is looking forward to his next big competition, in Sheffield this year. Success there, in his favourite event, the 1500 metres, could lead to him qualifying for the Commonwealth Games. In recognition of his sporting achievements, Lewis was given a sports ambassador award in November by Newcastle City.

Antonia Reay, meanwhile, was one half of a winning pair at the National Lifesaving Finals at Pond Forge in Sheffield. Antonia, who is in Year 12 and represents Blyth Lifeguard and Swimming Club, won the senior girls' pairs, along with her partner, Amy Wilkinson. The girls came first in the aquatic incident, second in the life support, fourth in the swim and tow and tenth in the line throw.

Dean Shiels, another Year 12 student, has been successful in the regional schools' trampolining competition, held at the Temple Park Leisure Centre in South Shields. He went on to be

successful in the zonal competition, to be held in Hull in the New Year. Success here means Dean is going through to the national competition in Bristol.

Former Gosforth Sixth Form student Andrew Dunn has been awarded the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust's Trophy for Flying Excellence. Andrew, who is now a member of 1114 (Gosforth) Squadron, Durham and Northumberland Wing ATC, was granted the award after impressing instructors during his flying scholarship earlier this year. The 19-year-old joined Air Cadets six years ago and hopes the award will help further his ambition of a career in the RAF, flying fighter jets.

The annual senior citizens' Christmas party was held on Friday 11th December in the school hall and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The party, which was organised by Sixth Form tutor Marjorie Bibby, ably assisted by a number of student volunteers, is a regular event in the school calendar and was attended by over seventy ladies and gentlemen from local retirement homes. The entertainment included a performance by the school choir and the music department and a party tea. The highlight of the event was the raffle and everyone left with a Christmas present, delivered by Santa.

Finally, Sixth Form staff and students would like to welcome back tutors Gillian Bradley and Janet Deavin, who returned from maternity leave in January on a job share basis. We would also like to thank Pamela Styles, who has done a superb job covering for them, and wish her all the best for the future.

NEWCASTLE RECOGNISES GOSFORTH SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS



Staff from across Newcastle came together on Thursday 19th November at the Gosforth Park Marriott to recognise and celebrate the achievement of individuals and schools that have worked to improve participation in physical education and sport.

Voted 'School of The Year for Innovation' Gosforth High and the Junior High School were recognised for running an inclusive programme of playground activities during breaks and lunchtimes which makes a significant contribution to providing an extra hour of activity for students each week. Instructors Leigh Shickle, Richard Harrison and Phil Lumsden who organise and run the Active Playground on a daily basis, collected the award on our behalf.

Individual pupil awards also went to Matthew Loftus (Y11) for participation and competitive performance, whilst Lewis Wiseman-Ord (Y12) and Abi Harvey (Y11) received special awards under a new "One of Us" scheme launched by the Partnership in conjunction with Sport Newcastle, which helps to support students who are already performing at national level. These students received a bursary to help with their expenses and will continue to benefit throughout the year by receiving support from both these agencies.

Congratulations

Music and Drama News

Carol Singing

Well done to choir members who raised almost £200 carol singing for The Children's Foundation and St Oswald's Hospice.

Y8 & 9 Gifted and Talented Transition Music Project

Year 8 and 9 musicians and singers will meet together on January 26th for a day of collective improvisation and music making. They will be led in an afternoon workshop by jazz trumpeter & arranger Nathan Bray who has worked for international jazz stars including Quincy Jones and Oscar Peterson. He will talk about life in the music industry which has recently included work for the X Factor and the BBC Concert Orchestra as well as playing for Dame Shirley Bassey.

Gosforth Schools Pyramid Concert, City Hall, 6th July

This will be an evening celebrating music making across the Gosforth Pyramid from First Schools to Sixth Form. It will include a varied programme from combined choirs and wind bands to ukulele ensembles and steel pans. Tickets will be available from the City Hall box office nearer the time.

Pyramid Grand Ceilidh, Thursday 28th January, Gosforth Central Middle School, 7pm.

Middle and high school musicians have been rehearsing for the next combined ceilidh. Come along and join us in some traditional dancing. Glasses and nibbles provided but please bring a bottle/refreshment. Tickets (£5/2.50) available from student reception.



The Birds of Summer

This year's annual Christmas Show was called the Birds of Summer and was held in the school's Hall. Large audiences enjoyed a unique take on the North American Indian myth about the creation of the Big Dipper. The show, written by Michael Baxter and Paul Kean had themes of the individual, courage, sacrifice for the sake of others and community spirit, as a group of reluctant warriors undertook a mission for the sake of their tribe to end a long winter of cold and hardship.

The cast included all of the Year 10 GCSE dance class, the school choir, a strong complement of actors, all supported by a fine band conducted by Mr Baxter. A highlight was performing to the first and middle schools on Tuesday December 17th where some brothers and sisters were in the audience as well as previous teachers who were impressed by the skills and confidence of the performers.

Science News

KS4 news

Here is what Years 9, 10 and 11 are doing in science!

As you are probably aware, Gosforth High School follows the OCR exam boards Twenty First Century Science course.

The majority of students follow the Dual award course gaining two separate Science GCSE grades, one for their Year 10 work and one for their Year 11 work. Approximately 120 students do the triple award course, leading to three separate GCSE grades. One for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Both triple and dual award science is taught in 12 lessons a fortnight.

Some students, who follow the Social Studies course, take a single award in science and have 6 lessons a fortnight. Within the above there are lots of different routes which are explained below. All awards can be taken at foundation (grades G to C) and higher (grades D to A*) levels.

Core Science

All students do the Core Science course. Single award students follow the course in two years and Dual award students in Year 10. The Core Science grade is the first award for students doing Dual award science.

Additional Science

The majority of Dual award students follow the Additional Science Course in Year 11. This provides progression to A-level Sciences.

Students who demonstrate a preference for vocational type studies follow the Additional Applied course in Year 11. This provides progression to A-level Applied Science, but does not offer progression to Biology, Chemistry and Physics A-levels.

Triple Award Science

The 120 students following the Triple award course cover the same work as those doing Dual award core and Additional Science with an extra module in each of Biology Chemistry and Physics. The assessment is slightly different in that the exams are taken in Biology, Chemistry and Physics rather than as a combination of the three. Triple Science provides progression to A-level Sciences.

Coursework

Each course has its own requirements as summarised below:

Course	Coursework requirement	% of award	Rough timing
Core	Data Analysis Case Study	33.3	Spring / summer Year 10
Additional	Practical assessment	33.3	Autumn Year 11
Additional Applied	Standard Procedures Work related report Suitability test	50	Autumn / Spring Year 11
Triple	Data Analysis + Case Study in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.	33.3	Summer Year 10

Science News continued

So at what stage are each of the year groups?

Year 9

Year 9 students have just started their GCSE Science work. They will have a GCSE module exam on May 21st 2010 that will count towards their final GCSE grade on. It is therefore a very significant exam and we will prepare students thoroughly for it by looking at past papers and going over material with them in class. They will also need to prepare at home using a "Core Science" revision guide which is available from the school shop. (Their class teacher will advise whether they should use a higher or foundation guide.)

In September, using the results of the module and other class tests, the Year will be split into three cohorts as follows:

- Triple award students, selected on the basis of those students who have demonstrated that they are able to study at a rate that will allow them to gain 3 GCSEs, in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
- Dual award students. These students will get two GCSEs. One in "Core Science" and one in "Additional, or Additional Applied Science".
- Single award students. These students will get one GCSE in "Core Science".

Year 10

Year 10 students were put into their various groups in September 2009. Each group is at different stages of the course as follows:

Triple award students: In January 2010, they have sat module exams covering B1,2,3. C1,2,3 and P1,2,3. In January 2011 they will do exams in the 4,5 and 6 modules with the final B7, C7 and P7 module examined in June 2011.

Dual award students: In January 2010, they have sat module exams covering B2, C2, P2. and B3, C3, P3. In June 2010 they will do a synoptic exam based on all the first three modules. They will also sit the first of their Year 11 modules.

Single award students: Public examinations for Single award students start in January 2011. They are, however, doing end of unit tests as part of the Certificate of Achievement in Science.

Year 11

In January 2010, Year 11 students took the first of their Year 11 module examinations. They will complete the course in June 2010.

All students should by now be completing coursework according to the deadlines set by their class teacher. It is vital that this is completed to the best of their ability as it forms a very significant proportion of final GCSE grade. (see above)

Need help?

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact Mr Vennart.

J Vennart

Post 16

Despite the cold, dark days our A level Science students have enjoyed an enriching Autumn term. 11 year 12 pupils practised being Medical students for 4 days at Nottingham University (Medilink). Lectures which ended at 11pm did little to dampen their enthusiasm and they are now working even harder to achieve their required A level grades.

London was the destination for our A2 Chemistry students who took part in a 2 day intensive revision course in preparation for their January A level module exams whilst closer to home A level Physics students attended Durham University's Christmas lecture on using light as a medical tool.

In addition to organised lectures/ courses our students are actively encouraged to attend Newcastle University "Insight" and Café Scientifique lectures. These are open to the public – perhaps you could make it a family outing!

Finally an exciting link has been established with PEDAR (Professional Engineering Development and Retention - North East)

13 AS students who expressed an interest in an Engineering / Science career have undergone interviews to set up (vacation based) industrial work experiences. PEDAR will also work with our successful students to set up links with relevant employers and help with future career choices.

M McEwan

Assertive Mentoring (AM)

This year we have implemented a new strategy at Key Stage 4 called Assertive Mentoring. This is an initiative whereby some students are assigned assertive mentors who monitor their progress closely throughout the year. The process involves the student and the mentor in:

- A discussion about the student's most recent predicted grades identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- Checking progress through regular half termly meetings where students are given a predicted grade for each subject based on recent assessment by class teachers.
- Providing encouragement and support.
- Monitoring progress and setting new targets to ensure that the student is working to the best of their ability.
- Keeping in contact with parents - parents of students involved may choose to contact the mentor at the start of each assertive mentoring phase to ascertain their child's progress (see dates below).
- Organising intervention with subject staff/learning mentors where and when appropriate.

This term the initiative has proved to be an extremely supportive strategy and credit must go to the students involved for fully embracing AM. The AM team have been very impressed with the majority of students who have shown commitment to attending after school catch up sessions, meeting coursework deadlines and generally remaining organised and staying on top of their work. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents who have been involved in encouraging their children and supporting them during such an important year.

The AM fortnights this year are on the following dates:

- Monday 25th January 2010
- Monday 22nd March 2010
- Monday 3rd May 2010

I would like to personally thank the assertive mentors, learning mentors and all subject staff who have invested lots of extra time in these students this term. The students have been extremely lucky to have such dedicated staff.

If your child is in the AM cohort then feel free to contact your child's assertive mentor at any time.

We hope that this term the students continue to build on their achievements so they are fully prepared for their exams and GCSE results day is a day for celebration.

Best wishes for 2010.

P Chahal

Responses from parents and carers questionnaire

All the parents and carers were invited during review day in November last year to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

630 completed questionnaires were received. In total, there are 1708 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	37	87	59	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	270	44	329	54	8	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	216	36	352	59	27	5	3	0.5
My child is making enough progress at this school	215	36	346	58	35	6	4	0.6
The teaching is good at this school	212	36	372	63	8	1	1	0.1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	171	29	360	62	52	9	2	0.3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	122	21	379	66	69	12	1	0.1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future	215	37	342	59	20	3	4	0.6
The school meets my child's particular needs	190	34	348	62	22	4	5	0.8
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	266	46	284	49	28	5	5	0.8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	115	22	360	68	44	8	10	1.8
The school is led and managed effectively	259	45	303	53	7	1	4	0.6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	282	48	296	50	8	1	4	0.6

We are very pleased that the overwhelming majority of parents agreed or strongly agreed with these key objectives of the school. Students are currently being consulted for their views via an on line survey. Written comments made on the questionnaires have been examined and circulated. Thank you to all parents who participated in this survey.

SPORTING SUCCESS

Cross Country

Congratulations to Alexa Parker, Lewis Hogg, Jack Reed and Adam Ewart who have been selected to run for Newcastle Schools in the forthcoming County Championships.

Swimming

Congratulations to our U15 boys team who have successfully qualified for the National Schools Swimming Team Championships in Coventry on Saturday 6th February.

Team: Alex Wheeler, Oliver Bratley, Jamie McGee, Andrew Burn.

Squash

Congratulations to our U15 boys, U15 girls and U19 boys teams who have successfully qualified for the knockout stages of the English Schools' Squash Championships. They are now currently in the top 32 teams in the country.

School Coats

School uniform clearly states that if a coat is to be worn on cold or wet days the only coat allowed is the school coat comprising of the outer shell and fleece. Either or both can be worn.

Whilst wearing the school uniform no other coat may be worn.