

## **What a start!**

As we come to the end of what has been an incredibly busy half term, I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on the last few weeks and on the start our year 12 and 13 students have made to this academic year. To say our students have been incredible would be an understatement, and it has been wonderful to see what great role models our Sixth Form students are being for those in Years 7 to 11.

Year 12 students have made an excellent transition from GCSE, which is especially impressive considering the uncertainties around learning and exams etc. that happened throughout Year 11. Year 13 students have also moved seamlessly into the main school building and are using the various facilities to their advantage. Many subject teachers have commented on the excellent independent study students have been displaying, and this can be seen around the school building with students working in the atrium, the LRC, the Sixth Form Study Centre and in the various breakout areas. Upcoming assessments in all subjects will give students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and I have no doubt that they will do incredibly well.

Outside of lessons, students have been attending weekly talks as part of the Beckfoot Lectures programme, where they have learned about a diverse range of topics, from Neurodiversity and Life in the RAF, to the Northern Irish Troubles and Driver Safety. Many have also sought to broaden their horizons and have been successful in obtaining competitive work experience placements and University programmes such as Access to Leeds and the University of Sheffield Discovery program. We have had a record number of students joining our Medicine and Oxbridge group, and we have already had external speakers come in to support students in applying to the most competitive courses and Universities.

Students have responded extremely well to the Community Contributors programme, with all Year 12 students volunteering in at least one area of the school, mostly choosing to work directly with younger students, for example in the Paired Reading and Peer Mentoring programmes, as well as helping out in Sport, Science, Tutor groups and in many other areas of the school. We have been blown away by our students' enthusiasm and we are excited by the impact their contributions will make on the wider school community. It was wonderful to see so many of our students helping in the whole school open evening in September, from helping out with parking to giving guided tours and taking the lead in subject areas by talking to parents and prospective students.

Year 13 students have been focusing this term on both their studies and their personal statements and UCAS applications. All of our early entry students have had their applications sent off and we look forward to seeing offers start to come in. We also had a large number of students attend the Apprenticeship fair at Elland road, and it is exciting to see so many students thinking about following a path alternative to University at post-18. Our Year 13 Geography students have also done themselves and Beckfoot proud on their recent trip to Blencathra as part of their A-Level studies.

As a Sixth Form team, we are very proud of what our students have achieved this half-term, and we look forward to seeing what they will do over the coming months. We hope you all have a productive (and restful) half-term break, and we will see you all again in November.

All the best,

Dr Wright