Thursday 12th July 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

I’m writing this letter in the midst of a very busy final week of term, reflecting on how proud I am to be the Head Teacher of Baysgarth School. Last Friday, I spent break time with our wonderful students who were carrying out a wide array of fundraising activities to support our chosen charities for the year. Earlier in the day, I took a group of our Year 8 students to Castledyke Primary School, where they received certificates and praise for giving up their own time after school each week to help primary school students improve their reading. These two events on one day exemplify the wonderful calibre of our students and their contributions to our community.

As another year draws to a close it’s time to reflect on our successes and look forward to the future. This year has seen us move into the top 5% of schools nationally for the progress we make with our students; something which makes me incredibly proud. I have never worked with a staff body more committed to ensuring our students achieve the best possible outcomes, and our superb results four years running demonstrate that we are consistently the highest performing secondary school in the local area, outperforming over two-thirds of all Outstanding schools nationally.

The saddest thing about the end to this year is that it marks the closing of our Sixth Form. Nowhere have government cuts in funding for education been more prevalent than in schools with sixth forms, and many schools are currently deciding whether to close or merge their provision. By taking this decision early, Baysgarth no longer has to subsidise our Sixth Form from the main school budget and this means we can maintain high standards across the rest of the school without asking our parents for financial contributions towards essential school equipment. Nevertheless, it is a real shame that the Sixth Form is closing. We are really proud of the achievements of our last cohort of students and we wish them well, knowing that everyone has managed to secure their place of choice for next year.

This time of year is when we look at the handover of responsibilities. Our Year 11 students have been a real credit to the school and the way they have conducted themselves throughout the exam period has been exemplary. They have set an excellent example to the rest of our students and we wish them good luck with their exam results and the rest of their lives. Tyla Branson and Lara Rostron did a superb job as Head Boy and Girl, and following a rigorous voting, selection and interview process we are proud to announce that next year’s Head Boy and Head Girl will be Ben Gath and Erin McWilliam. We look forward to them working with prefects and the School Council to continue to bring about improvements in the school.

Sometimes success brings its own problems and one of the key issues we have been grappling with is how to cope with increasing student numbers. Now that we are full and oversubscribed in Year 7 and Year 8, and this pattern is set to continue for the foreseeable future, we face extra pressure on our dining facilities. As a result we are planning to convert our Learning Resource Centre (LRC) into additional dining space and these changes will take place over the summer. This change will help us in the longer term, as we expect Baysgarth to grow from just under 800 students as we are now, to nearly 1000 students over the next four years. This growth reflects the fact that Baysgarth is now the first choice school for all the families that live in Barton and the surrounding villages. The existing LRC will move upstairs into the area vacated by the Sixth
Form, where we are creating a multi-purpose room with 36 PCs, a library and a variety of seating options to allow students to work or read comfortably, during and after the school day.

The quality of our student dining experience is really important to us and over the course of the last year we have been looking at how we can improve our service to students. We worked with several other local secondary schools on a joint tender to improve the quality of catering and as a result we are moving to a new catering provider from September. Chartwells will be the new supplier of school meals and from speaking to students in other schools we will see improvements in the quality and range of meals offered to students. We are looking forward to this change but we do expect some teething problems in September as the new company settles in, so we ask that students and parents be patient with us as we work together to resolve any issues that may arise in the first few weeks - it will be worth it!

The end of the year is a time to say goodbye to colleagues and welcome new members of staff. Mr Shiels and Mr Beastall are leaving the Design Technology team and will be replaced by Mr Browne, with Mr Wilson taking on the role of Head of Department. Sue Ward is retiring from the post of Technician after 14 years of excellent service to the school. Mr Scott and Mr Lucas are leaving the Science department to be replaced by Miss Saxby and Mr Atkinson, and Miss Fretwell has recently been appointed as Head of Science. Mrs Page is leaving the Art team to be replaced by Ms Howard, who will also be the Second in Department of Humanities and Creative Arts. Additionally, Mr Marshall is leaving the Maths team and Mrs Zukowska is leaving the English/Humanities team, with Miss Carter joining the English department. We also say goodbye to our Science Technician, Jess Akester, who will be replaced by Tom Brice, and we say farewell to Becky Graves, who is leaving the role of Learning Supervisor. Finally, we welcome Mrs Wells to our MFL team who will cover for Mrs Burnham whilst she is on maternity leave. We wish all of our colleagues who are moving on all the best for their futures!

It’s amazing to think that I have been at Baysgarth for four years now. When my team started we set ourselves a mission to achieve excellent outcomes for students backed up by high quality care, and we know we have achieved these aims. However, we never sit on our laurels and we are now looking ahead to the next four years and what we hope to achieve. The school leaders and Governors have agreed a new mission statement that sets out our aims for this next four years:

By 2022, Baysgarth School will:
- Be a leading secondary provider of high quality teaching, learning and assessment, resulting in consistently excellent progress for students
- Be the automatic choice for the communities we serve, where students are healthy, happy and brilliantly prepared for the next stages of their lives
- Be known for its ambitious leadership that promotes strong mental health and wellbeing and develops the skills and knowledge of every member of our community
- Play a key role in building, developing and celebrating strong, tolerant community in and out of school, that improves the life chances of our young people

I hope you agree that these are the right aims for the school and we look forward to working with you to achieve these over the next four years.

Mobile phones have been in the news over the last few weeks. France has banned them in every school in their country and here government ministers have argued that schools should consider doing the same in this country. We had been consulting with parents since before Christmas and our decision to ban phones had been agreed by Governors before Easter. Studies have shown that mobile phones have a negative impact on student self-esteem and contribute to increased anxiety, as well as bullying. As you have seen from our mission statement, mental health and wellbeing is one of our key areas to tackle over the next four years, and to do this successfully a ban on phones combined with education on safe use of social media for students and parents is imperative. I hope you will give us your full support.
We have had another year of outstanding success for our students. As well as the academic success of our outcomes we have had sporting success, both for individuals and teams. Phoebe Rae was crowned European Powerlifting Champion and Aidan Train has been taken on as an apprentice by Scunthorpe United. Our sport teams won a whole host of different competitions, including Year 7 and Year 8 District Football finals, Year 9 and Year 10 six-a-side Football tournaments, Year 8 and 10 Dodgeball and North Lincolnshire Street Golf. As well as this, we had great success in the North Lincolnshire District Cross Country, with Jake Croft winning the Year 7 competition and Year 8 student, Jake Forman, beating all of his own year, along with Year 9 students to be crowned intermediate boys champion. Additionally, Year 11 student, Sophie Clark, went on to compete for the county and then in the English Schools Championship in Leeds after finishing sixth in North Lincolnshire. As a team we finished in the top three schools in all age categories for Cross Country. Furthermore, Baysgarth finished fourth in the North Lincolnshire District Athletics competition, in which 13 schools took part. Our sports leaders have once again been outstanding this year running a host of primary school competitions with around thirty qualifying as young leaders, something we are very proud of.

On the cultural front we have had two fantastic school productions of Grease and Blood Brothers and are already looking forward to Dracula Spectacular next year. It’s been fantastic to see students of all abilities performing on stage, demonstrating how we are a truly inclusive school determined to develop the confidence, self-esteem and skills of all our students.

It’s now nearly three weeks since our Year 11 students attended their annual Prom night and to see them looking so spectacular reminds everyone at Baysgarth why we do this job. There is nothing more rewarding than working together to get the best out of our children and to watch them grow and develop into wonderful young adults, looking forward to the rest of their lives. We would love for more members of our community to work with us to get the best out of the young people in our communities, and as a school we have really enjoyed our Parents’ Forums where families can come and discuss and debate the ways in which we can improve our school even further. This year we are establishing the Friends of Baysgarth School Group to further promote community links and raise money for the school. If you would like to be involved please let us know!

We are always looking at how we can improve our school and this year we have decided to develop our transition process by giving our new Year 7 students a whole day of activities to immerse them in the Baysgarth culture. For this reason we have postponed our reward trips, scheduled for this term, until Friday 7th September so that we can collapse the timetable and plan out an exciting day for our Year 7s, when the majority of other students are not on site. More details will follow at the start of the Autumn Term.

We have also worked on improving our support systems and strengthening the identity of our Houses by aligning our Learning Managers with a House, rather than a year group. Additionally, Mr Brown will be working specifically with our Year 11 students, as we recognise the extra strains and stresses that this year brings. The names of your child’s Heads of House and Learning Manager are:

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This year we piloted Flipped Learning for our Year 7 and Year 8 students to help them to develop Expert Learner skills outside the classroom. Following this successful trial, Flipped Learning will develop even further with activities that require greater depth of knowledge to complete across every subject. Look out for the new Flipped Learning area of the website available from September, which will be packed full of information that parents can use to support and extend the learning that happens in lessons – www.baysgarthschool.co.uk. We have also secured support from Wren to print our Expert Learner and Flipped Learning resources and we thank them for the support they are giving back to their local community.

It’s been a successful year for the School Council. They have represented the school at various events across the county, including The Great Debate, WE Day Social Action Club 2018 and participating in North Lincolnshire Youth Council meetings. In school, they are working on improving the environment and have successfully bid for funds to buy recycling bins for the site to enhance our commitment to the environment.

You can access and keep up to date with all our news and successes via our mobile app; it’s free to download and easy to use. Simply search for ‘Baysgarth School’ in the Apple Store or Google Play.

I’d like to say a big thank you all for the efforts you have made over the last year to support the school and your children - we can only achieve our successes with the support of our community.

We wish you all a restful summer and we look forward to seeing you in September!

Yours faithfully

Richard Briggs
Head Teacher