

Furness Academy
Park Drive
Barrow in Furness
Cumbria
LA13 9BB

Telephone Number:
01229 484270
info@furnessacademy.co.uk
www.furnessacademy.co.uk



Our ref: SPL/mw

March 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

Spring is a great time to be living in Cumbria and despite the efforts of the 'Beast from the East', the lighter nights, the warming weather and particularly the spring flowers really do lift the spirits. It is a great time too to be a student at Furness Academy. The atmosphere in school is really positive; there is a very good climate for learning; there is a confidence about the place; the students seem to be enjoying themselves – at least most of the time!

As you will be aware from our weekly news updates on the school website, Facebook page and from features in the local newspapers, our successes and activities of the first term of 2018 have continued at a pace and the achievements of our students have been simply spectacular and never cease to impress me. More details will be found in our newsletter, but they range from sporting successes with the girls' cricket team and boys' rugby team to the achievements of our Key Stage 3 and 4 STEM teams. Alongside this, there have been residential school trips to Austria skiing and Greece, Spain, Slovenia and Hungary with our staff taking a lead in the projects we are involved in with our European partners. Day events have included a Year 7 Arts enrichment trip to listen to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, a visit to the Storyhouse in Chester to see the comedy 'The Play That Goes Wrong', a Year 9 trip to the 'Big Bang' science conference at the NEC, Birmingham, and there are many others that you can read about in the newsletter. We have also just been treated to another incredible performance showcasing the talents of our students in this year's production of Disney's Mulan. These events and visits of course take a great deal of preparation to organise and run and I am grateful to the dedication and commitment of all the staff who give up their time in order to make these and others happen.

We pride ourselves at Furness Academy on teaching life skills to our students alongside their academic studies. We are all aware of the need to understand our place in the world and the importance of tolerating differences, treating people with courtesy and respect, and that a consideration of these virtues will govern success in our social lives and business. I regularly receive letters, telephone calls, emails and direct comments from people who have visited the school or met our students during out of school activities. They have all been overwhelmingly positive and further enhance the standing of Furness Academy students in our community.

There is something very special about education and working where you grew up that lures and draws you back in, that captures the spirit and imagination and makes you stay. Sadly, some people really are irreplaceable and this year we say goodbye to our longest serving member of staff, Pauline Hughes, Assistant Headteacher. Pauline joined Thorncliffe School as a modern foreign languages teacher on September 1st 1979. To put that in perspective to those of you who are old enough to remember, number one that week in the charts was 'We Don't Talk Anymore' by Cliff Richard, also joined in the top ten by The Police, The Boomtown Rats, Blondie and The Village People. A bygone musical age I hear some sigh, not for me, however, as at that time I was only 5 years old! In 1979 the educational landscape was very different to today. With a passion for teaching, Pauline must have resented the Ofsted obsessed world, the reductive obsession with exam results and the strangling constraints of accountability and league tables that we find ourselves in today. For someone fired up for the values of holistic education, and the importance of developing in young people their self-esteem, their sense of being, personal growth and socialisation, it must have felt like staring into the abyss at times. However, never could any school have wished for a more kind, generous and dedicated servant, who has always been happy to give up her time and energy in pursuit of helping to make young and vulnerable students' lives better and Furness Academy a great place to study and work. It would be impossible to try and list the contributions Pauline has made to the lives of the many students she has helped, suffice to say they have been numerous and far reaching. In fact, generations of young people have been beneficiaries of her care, commitment and inspiration and she leaves after 39 years of continuous service, a feat I imagine will be hard to match, with our best wishes and hopes for a well-deserved retirement.



Furness Academies Trust
Company No. 06895426
Registered Address: Park Drive, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA13 9BB



Staffing Update

We have been delighted to welcome John Rawsthorne, Business Director, and David Mason, Assistant Headteacher, to the senior leadership team and they have both made a fantastic start. We have also appointed Gary Shenton, Facilities Officer, Chloe Moore, Librarian, and Laura Coulson, Finance Officer, to our team. Congratulations must also go to Linzi Stanway, who has been promoted to Assistant Headteacher and our best wishes to Sonya Biggins, Year Manager, who is currently on her maternity leave awaiting her new arrival.

We also say farewell to Lucy Jenkin, Teaching Assistant. Lucy will be a real loss. She is one of our many unsung heroes: a modest and unassuming person who just gets on doing a fine job, forging strong relationships with students and colleagues and thoroughly conscientious at all times. She is a consummate professional and has lately been a reassuring presence in the sometimes intimidating world of special educational needs. I know there are some students who owe their recent success to the nurturing and support they received from Lucy over this last year. Alongside her work and one of the many things Lucy has also thrown herself into, has been supporting the school show and championing our successful 'Top of the Form' team and she will be sorely missed from both. I often feel that one of the ways Furness Academy has the edge is in the quality and dedication of its staff who really bring special qualities. Lucy has been a classic example of this for nearly 10 years and fully deserves every success in her future employment.

End of Term Arrangements

This academic term will end on **Thursday 29 March 2018** at the normal finishing time of 3:10pm. We will re-open for students at 8:40am on **Monday 16 April 2018**.

Finally, many of our students are now fast approaching the business end of school and the summer exam season is nearly upon us. Some have already started and I know that students and staff are working hard to ensure that any deadlines for work are met in good time and final plans have been made to ensure that everyone is using their time as productively as possible. I appreciate that it is a very tense time for the students and also for their families. Thank you in advance on behalf of the school for all your support during this time and their success will be built upon the efforts of everyone involved. Good luck to everybody and, like you, we will be waiting for the results every bit as anxiously, in the hope that if our final predictions are realised this will be another super year.

Yours faithfully



Mr S P Laheney
Headteacher