

Darlington 11-19 Practitioner Newsletter

Issue 33, December 2020

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Welcome

I have been Principal at Darlington College for 6 years, and the vibrancy of educational life in the town as told in our 11-19 newsletter never fails to amaze and inspire. As we approach the end of 2020 we reflect on a year like no other in recent times. The impact of Covid on our schools, colleges and wider community has been intense and challenging. The tales in here of lockdown activities, support for young people's wellbeing, virtual learning, and charity activities in the community, help to tell the story of an extraordinary year. Despite the difficulties, our young people have grown, learnt, achieved, and gone on to success. This year many people have been keeping up our spirits with messages, quotes and poems. This is my favourite, as it sums up the resilience, hope and humour of teachers and support staff everywhere, day in and day out, during the pandemic.

In the words of the wonderful poet Lemn Sissay:
'How do you do it?' said night
'How do you wake and shine?'
'I keep it simple' said light
One day at a time.'

To everyone working in our schools, colleges and learning and skills teams during Covid - you're doing a fantastic job. Wishing you a happy Christmas and New Year and please look after yourselves and your loved ones over the holidays. Stay Safe.

Kate Roe

*Principal and Chief Executive,
Darlington College*



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Haughton charity hair raiser



The assistant headteacher at Haughton Academy ended up sporting a mohawk haircut for a week in a bid to raise £500 for a local foodbank.

The winning staff team from a virtual 'Not in a Pub Pub Quiz' took the opportunity to spin the 'wheel of misfortune' containing a range of styles, including the Tin Tin, mullet, complete shave and the mohawk.

It landed on the Tin Tin but when it came to the chop deputy headteacher Su Gill gave the hapless volunteer a mohawk instead.

"I'd not had a cut since February and it was looking a bit unkempt," said Mr Palmer. "It feels nice and cool now." The event was organised by assistant headteacher Catherine Robson when she heard her colleague saying he needed a haircut.

She said, "He is such a good sport and always volunteers to help. He said his hair was out of control and it was great to do this for charity." Darlington foodbank, on Whessoe Road, is operated by King's Church and is helped every Christmas by Haughton Academy, which collects food hampers.

Covid-19 has seen a 40% increase in the use of this vital emergency food resource, which has been supporting approximately 410 young people and families. King's Church is also currently supporting other foodbanks in the local area to help meet the current needs. Mrs Gill, who has never cut hair before, said, "His hair was very soft and there was certainly a lot of it. I was quite pleased with the result. I might have a new career in the making!" Mr Palmer said, "It is really important to do something now for the foodbanks which are really busy because of the pandemic and will be in even greater demand over the school holidays."



Anyone wishing to donate can do so at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/haughtonacademy or visit <https://www.kingschurchdarlington.org.foodbank/donations/>



Designs for life



Former Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College student Kirath Ghundoo popped up on our Instagram feed this week. Kirath, who studied both Art and Art Foundation at the college, is a successful surface pattern designer who specialises in bespoke wallpapers and prints for interiors, fashion and lifestyle products. Her clients include high profile names such as Harvey Nichols, Hyundai, Vivienne Westwood, and Susie Bubble.

Alongside the creative elements of her work Kirath is also very passionate about encouraging the BAME community to become involved in the design industry, something she speaks at length about in the upcoming edition of Elle Decoration magazine.

Kirath comments, "It's a magazine that's supported my journey throughout my design career ever since I started in 2011. However, this feature is a special one that explores diversity and inclusivity within design.

I'm proud to be featured as an Indian designer and hope my journey encourages people from the BAME community to pursue a career in design. To my knowledge there is a small minority of BAME designers within my industry I am aware of and want to see MORE standing loud and proud, killing it !!! 🙌🏻👩🏻👧🏻.

Within my culture a career in the arts or design isn't the typical job route, luckily I have a very supportive family who've understood my creative wackiness since childhood!

I was just saying on my stories yesterday how lockdown has encouraged and given me the time to slow down and reconnect with old ways of working. Reviving ideas from my A-Level and Art Foundation days 20 years ago @qesfcdarlington and creating artwork that showcases my handmade side. You could say I've been reminiscing!"

The last couple of months have been a learning journey where I have grown as a designer in many ways, that's another Instagram post in itself! Topped off with this fantastic feature as lockdown lifted, let's champion 'Diversity in Design' forever evolving and chasing our dreams ❤️ #BAME"

It is always lovely to find out what our ex-students have been doing since leaving college, especially when it is such a positive story. You can see more of Kirath's fantastic designs at www.Kirathghundoo.com or follow her in Instagram @kirath_ghundoo.



Healthy Selfie!



Over lockdown and our remote learning time, Wyvern Academy staff, pupils and their families were challenged to [#HealthySelfie](#) activities with lots of participants contributing to the positive actions of exercising and spending time with their loved ones.

This initiative promoted the many benefits of exercise such as improving self-esteem, reducing anxiety, improving attention and confidence, which was all part of the wellbeing drive actioned to help get everyone through the most extraordinary term on record.

Learning & Skills new venue

Study Programme learners at Learning & Skills have moved from their previous setting in Tubwell Row to a bigger and better venue on Horsemarket. Learners aged 16 to 18 now enjoy more space, better facilities and a central location in Bennet House. The former Citizen Advice Bureau 4-floor building has been refurbished for the learners who moved in October. Study Programmes are a range of courses for 16 – 18 year olds that develop their personal, social and employability skills, including work experience with an employer to increase their chances of gaining employment or an Apprenticeship in their chosen area.

Pictured outside Bennet House are Learning & Skills Tutor Debbie Brown along with Study Programme learner Vickie Stainer. Vickie was a student at Carmel College. She has completed SETPD qualifications with Learning & Skills and is now focusing on Customer Service Level 2, with an aim of securing an Apprenticeship in that area.



Vickie is currently working on a reception for her work experience. For more information about Study Programmes at Learning & Skills and how they can help Year 11 school leavers or other 16 - 18 year olds please contact Malcolm Bleasby (Malcolm.bleasby@darlington.gov.uk, or 01325 406422).



Darlington Young Carers



Darlington Young Carers offers support to young carers and young adult carers from 5 to 25 years, where caring responsibilities for a family member are having a negative impact on emotional well-being, social opportunities, family relationships, education and future aspirations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we have continued to offer support by:

- Hosting online support groups (including transitions and sibling carer support)
- One to one sessions via Zoom and Teams to ensure emotional well-being is supported
- Regular check in messages to families
- Posting out well-being packs full of lots of goodies including colouring books, pens, hand creams, headphones, sweets and craft activities. A big thank you must go out to Xcel Church in Newton Aycliffe for donating one round of these packs
- Increasing our use of social media to share information and promote methods of self-care
- Running competitions throughout the summer holidays with prizes including books, craft kits and stationary
- Utilising Class Dojo to host a well-being programme for primary school service users covering issues such as emotional resilience and regulation, friendships, bullying and internet safety
- Organising food parcels for those in need
- Attending online professionals meetings for families

A few of our service users painted canvases for the revamped waiting area at the Mulberry Centre and took part in a Healthwatch consultation around experiences of young people accessing healthcare services.

We are currently organising 32 family carers breaks for families to spend some quality and fun time together.

We are still taking referrals into service. To request a referral form or if you have any enquiries please email dyc@humankindcharity.org.uk or contact our Senior Practitioner Cheryl Hunter on 07584 391789. Our office number (01325) 483038 is still in use but as staff are currently working remotely it is best to email or contact Cheryl.

You can also follow and contact us on Facebook and Instagram – just search ‘Darlington Young Carers’.



National creative writing competition success



Three Creative Writing students from QE are celebrating after having achieved great success in national writing competitions.

QE's Creative Writing Club, part of the college's Supplementary Programme, is open to all students and provides budding writers with the opportunity to produce and share stories, poetry and play scripts amongst other pieces of literature.

For her poem 'Octo', Naomi Savage has won a trophy along with £100 after finishing in the top five of the national Through Their Eyes competition. Her entry tells the story of a spider which has entered someone's home but from the spider's point of view.

Naomi, along with Patrick Alderson and Lucy Kilpatrick, has also enjoyed success in the University of Chester's National Flash Fiction Youth Competition.

The three students' entries finished in the 'Very Highly Commended' and 'Highly Commended' brackets of the contest with Naomi's piece, entitled 'King of Nothing', providing a detailed description of the journeys of an isolated wanderer.

'Hurricane', written by Patrick describes how a character awakens to scenes of devastation yet again and Lucy's entry, 'Spaced Bird' is a surreal exploration of space travel through time.

Paul Heselton, Creative Writing Club Co-ordinator at QE, comments, 'Naomi, Patrick and Lucy have done exceptionally well to fend off competition from students across the country and finish in such high rankings. The three stories are beautifully written and they should be incredibly proud of themselves'.



Year 7 Building Resilience Day



Year 7 youngsters at Longfield Academy took part in a “Resilience Day” to help develop their skills in team building, problem-solving, and communication.

Working in form group bubbles, the pupils linked up with the Army Engagement Team on a series of fun learning activities while also getting the opportunity to discuss a range of military careers.

James Raw, Careers Lead at the school, said, “We organised the event to help develop the pupils’ understanding of careers within The British Army, but also to encourage important core skills that they can use in all areas of their school life to help them maximise their potential.

The day was a resounding success and we will be looking at how we can incorporate more team-building exercises in the near future. The pupils were really engaged, and the Army staff were very complimentary, so we expect great things from the class of 2025!”

Despite the pandemic, the event, which took place over two days, was able to go ahead because it was outdoors and the weather stayed fine.

Under normal circumstances, participating organisations would be present in the hall, but unfortunately that is not possible this year. Instead, further education providers will create and supply presentations.

In addition to the presentations, several organisations will take part in a question and answer session via Zoom. The presentations and the Q & A sessions will be available to view on the school website.

“We feel it is really important to maintain two-way communication between the pupils and some of the key providers, rather than it just be presentations,” said Mr Raw.

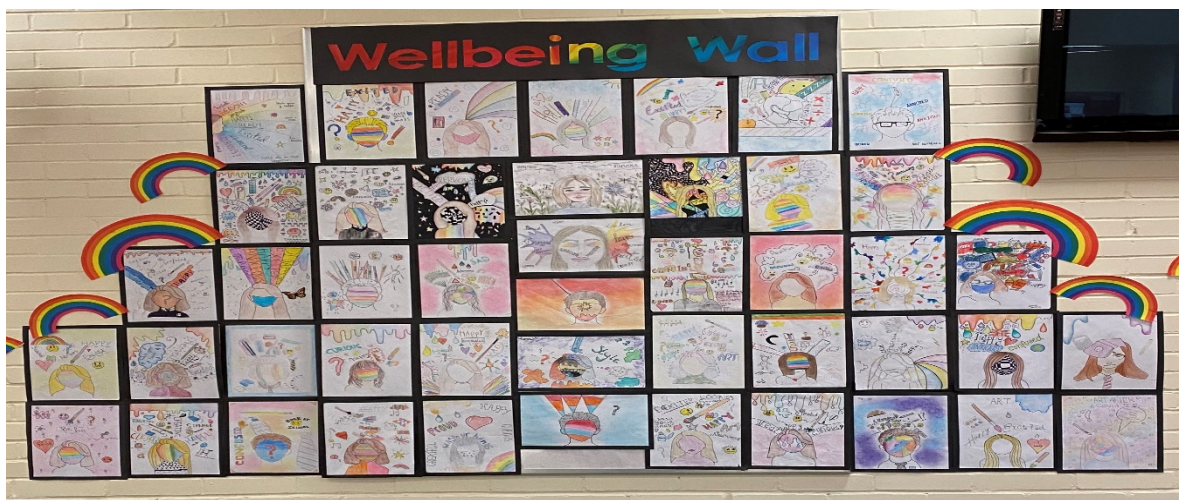
“The school places great emphasis on careers guidance, and helping pupils make the right choices, so our aim is to carry on with a rich and varied programme, making full use of the technology we have at our disposal.”



Wellbeing wall

Students at Hurworth School have settled back into school superbly since we reopened to all students and it has been lovely to see the building 'alive' again!

As part of the wider recovery curriculum students and staff have had the opportunity to participate in a number of events welcoming everyone back into the community including tying wishes to a hope tree, planting spring bulbs and painting individual rocks to contribute to a whole school rock river as a visual way of acknowledging recent events whilst still moving forwards together as a school.



Another activity which has taken place is the creation of a Wellbeing wall in the school canteen to display the superb work students did when considering the impact which the time away from school had had on them.



Making the grade

Staff and students at Haughton Academy celebrate after exam results improve for the fourth year running.



Pupils were praised for their excellent exam results during the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic which saw traditional exams cancelled and grades set on teachers' projections. Head boy Ewan Page led the way with an incredible 10 grade 9s, while Fahey Underwood gained six grade 9s, one grade 8 and three grade 7s.

She plans to study A levels at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College in law, psychology and criminology. She said, "I find the workings of the human mind fascinating and think criminology would be a really interesting career."

Principal Jonathan Lumb said, "This has been an incredibly difficult period for our pupils due to the unprecedented circumstances, but they should not be penalised because of the global pandemic.

They have worked incredibly hard over the last five years in our school and deserve the grades that they have been awarded. The cohort now need to celebrate their success and enjoy their moment when they receive their well-deserved grades.

The ethos of hard work, resilience and determination, that we are instilling in all of our young people, is paying off each year and we are very proud of every one of them. We are delighted with their results and each year we are continuing to show improvements in all areas of Haughton Academy."

Other high achievers were:

Stella Gill with three grade 9s, six grade 8s , one grade 7; Emily Guy with three grade 9s, four grade 8s, three grade 7s; Erica Marasigan, two grade 9s, four grade 8s, four grade 7s; Megan Allen, two grade 9s, one grade 8, five grade 7s; Adam Garnett, four grade 9s, five grade 7s, one grade 6; Jack Stead, one grade 9, six grade 8s, three grade 7s; Reece Johnson, two grade 9s, five grade 7s, three grade 6s; Katie Gale, three grade 8s, six grade 7s, one grade 6; Lucy Costa, one grade 9, two grade 8s, seven grade 7s; Abbie Keneford, one grade 9, one grade 8, five grade 7s, one grade 6, two grade 5s; Dylan McCormick, one grade 9, two grade 8s, five grade 7s, two grade 6s; Sophie McMullan, eight grade 8s, one grade 7, one grade 6; James Morton, seven grade 8s, two grade 7s, one grade 6; Bethany Wanless, one grade 9, three grade 8s, four grade 7s, one grade 6, one grade 5.



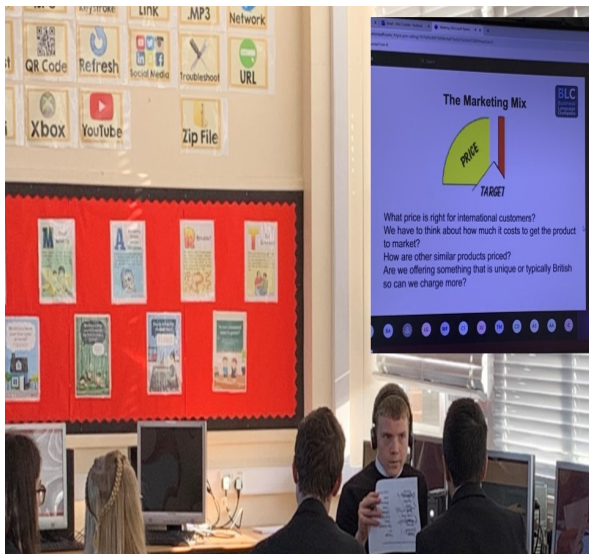
Every Second Counts!

Longfield Academy has developed and embedded a range of 'Retrieval Strategies' within the curriculum. Creating and using these across the school not only provides a common language that pupils become familiar with, it promotes a consistent approach to learning. The retrieval strategies ensure that pupils have the tools to develop their memory and recall.



In September, as Year 11 pupils walked into school each morning, departments joined the leadership team on duty with specific stations set to use the 'Quiz' retrieval strategy. Year 11 pupils were quizzed on their subject knowledge and much to their delight, were rewarded for correct answers given. Departments will carousel, ensuring the breadth of the curriculum is covered and pupil potential is maximised, as pupils learn that...Every Second Counts!

European Languages Day



Wyvern Academy's Year 11 GCSE French pupils took part in the Virtual Business Language Champions European Challenge. This was to mark European Languages Day which is celebrated around Europe on 26th September every year.

Pupils were tasked with promoting Maynards Jelly Babies in a virtual international trade fair in France. They used Microsoft Teams to work with pupils from other schools across the UK and French native speakers. As another part of their task they had to make a hotel booking over the phone, arrange a meeting with a French client, design a promotional video and present it - all in French!

Around the school, pupils were greeted by their teachers in a variety of different languages including Spanish, German and Arabic.



Virtual Marathon



Kind-hearted college staff are running to the rescue of a hospice whose fundraising efforts have been decimated by covid-19.

Supportive staff at Darlington College are dusting off their running gear to stage a virtual charity marathon and proceeds from the co-run will be donated to St Teresa's Hospice, which needs to raise £3m a year to continue its work.

Marketing and engagement manager at Darlington College, Claire Turner, said, "When we heard about the plight of the hospice we all wanted to do something to help so we asked staff and came up with the idea of co-running a virtual marathon."

Darlington College Assistant Principal Mike Chapman with his son Hendrix as they prepare to join a virtual marathon in aid of St Teresa's Hospice.

For more than 30 years St Teresa's Hospice has provided free care for people living with life-limiting illnesses and their families in Darlington, South Durham and North Yorkshire but its ability to generate income has been severely curtailed with the cancellation of events and the closure of its charity shops because of coronavirus.

Day services have been transferred to telephone only, while in-patient visitors must phone in advance, with numbers being limited to two per patient. Vital community services, including home and rapid response care, are continuing and while the charity shops have closed, the hospice eBay shop is still being operated by staff.

An on-line appeal has been launched with a Just Giving Page <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/HugToStTs> and members of the public can also become official 'Friends of the Hospice'.

Darlington College has been an avid supporter of the hospice in the past and has just recently arranged a delivery of vital personal protective equipment for nurses and health care staff.

St Teresa's Hospice chief executive Jane Bradshaw said, "Support like this from Darlington College really does warm my heart. Not only does it raise much-needed revenue so we can continue our work in these unprecedented times, but it also shows that we are not being forgotten about. We can't thank Darlington College enough for their help and I'm really looking forward to watching runners' progress during this marathon effort."



Virtual Marathon continued

Claire said, "Each staff member who signs up has agreed to run a mile, documenting their journey along the way, either with a couple of pictures or a short video. We will use this to show progress on our website and social media. We will post reports on people's progress each day and hopefully, if enough people join the event, we will be able to go even further. The mile documentation can be submitted at any time within the next two to three weeks and can be as creative as people want it to be. A college Just Giving page will be set up to take sponsorship and it is hoped we can raise as much money as possible for such a worthwhile cause."

To sign up to take part runners should email marketing@darlington.ac.uk with their details.

Teesside University update

Winter university courses are available to view online from November and most will run throughout January, February and March on a part-time, often flexible basis. A range of courses are available.

https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/parttime/winter_courses.cfm

Our 'speak to a student' live chat is open. Please invite your students to visit the chat to speak live online to our fantastic student team about student life at Teesside University.

Our team is made up of undergraduates and postgraduates from a range of courses, countries and study backgrounds. Our chat is live on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, please visit our page for specific times.

All chats are hosted through tawk.to on our website and are text-based so no webcams or mics are needed. It's a great opportunity for your students to get a real student perspective on life at university.

Our speak to a student chat runs alongside our main chat which is managed by our student recruitment team. If your students have specific course and/or admissions queries they are welcome to visit our main chat at [tees.ac.uk](https://www.tees.ac.uk) as usual. Our speak to a student chat is a great addition to this service.



QE's Interact Club win prestigious awards



Students from QE's Interact Club have continued to support the local community during lockdown. Members of the college's club have sent over 3,000 letters to the most vulnerable members of the community and provided party supplies to residents of Abbeyfield Darlington Society, ensuring their VE Day celebrations went off with a bang. The students have also donated healthcare items, sweet treats and over 100 homemade scrub bags to key workers within the County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust.

As a result of their charity and community work, the students have been awarded two prestigious national awards. QE's student group, which has close links with the Rotary Club, was proud to receive the Rotary Best Project Award for their 'I Promise' project, in which members outlined their intentions and commitment to helping others in the coming year. Promises ranged from raising funds for 200 polio vaccinations to helping to clean local beaches. The second award, the Rotary National Young Citizens of the Year, recognises the scope, innovation and impact of community projects throughout the UK. During the past year, students have taken part in a wide range of activities designed to have a positive impact upon their local community.

These activities, linked to their initial promises, include: Working with Age UK to serve 120 Christmas lunches to older members of the community; visiting a local care home on a weekly basis to play board games with residents and reduce social isolation; sending story book packs to children living in conflict zones; completing dementia awareness training and raising £250 for the Alzheimer's Society; creating 10 cancer care bags and delivering them to a local hospital's cancer ward; baking and decorating 192 cupcakes and gifting them to Darlington's emergency services and spending a night sleeping outdoors, raising £450 for a local homeless charity.

Interact Club President, Jessica Elmore, spoke passionately about the group's wonderful activities when she was interviewed by Simon McCoy as part of Afternoon Live on the BBC News Channel. She comments, "We are delighted to be named Rotary National Young Citizens of the Year, an award that recognises the work we have done this year. It has involved a lot of hard work by a great many people but at the same time has been both fun and rewarding from a personal point of view". The group has also received several mentions from Chris Evans on Virgin Radio.

Nancy Wall, Interact Club Co-ordinator, adds, "This award is well deserved recognition for some of the outstanding work done by our Interact students over the course of this year. They have demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment to a range of different projects that have had a positive influence upon the lives of a number of people within the local area."



A piece of cake



Hard working home-school pupils have found some lessons to be a piece of cake – literally.

Pupils at Haughton Academy have been combining their numeracy and literacy lessons into a bake-off to remember as they learnt to live with life under lockdown.

Pupils were set the task of baking a tangy lemon drizzle cake, cupcakes and cornflake tarts, while others opted for savoury.

The tasks involved using maths skills, including weighing, measuring, ratios and timing; literacy, including reading and understanding written instructions such as a recipe; and science, understanding and investigating that combining different ingredients and adding heat will result in chemical changes to texture and colour of the final product. They were also able to express their artistic leanings by making the cakes look good enough to eat.

Teacher of food and nutrition and hospitality and catering Lesley Watts said, “How better to make the most of home-schooling than combining all these important subjects into one very tasty product. You really can have your cake and eat it.”

Haughton Academy pupils made the most of the Education Village Academy Trust’s sophisticated virtual learning environment to continue their studies during the Covid-19 pandemic. Other pupils have been honing their culinary skills on the barbecue by making and cooking their own burgers, lasagne and spaghetti bolognese with focaccia bread.

Two pupils have made the most of their isolation and technology to complete industry standard allergen training provided free by the Food Standards Agency, which will strengthen their CVs.

Principal Johnathan Lumb said, “I’ve been very impressed with the levels of engagement of our pupils during the lockdown. They have adapted well to isolation and remote learning and I think will come through this period with a host of new digital, academic and vocational skills and a stronger sense of resilience.”



Darlington College national training



College lecturers in the North-East have been given the go-ahead to train colleagues in schools as the Government ramps up the home-schooling programme which relies on technology.

Darlington College is one of only two further education establishments in the country to secure funding as part of a ground-breaking partnership between schools and tech giants. Renowned for being in the top five percent of education establishments using technology in the delivery of learning, Darlington College has been awarded £150,000 to become a 'demonstrator of technology'.

Lockdown, forced by the current Covid-19 pandemic, is forcing thousands of schools to develop a host of remote learning platforms to help children continue their school work.

As part of the EdTech Demonstrators programme, Darlington College lecturers will be at the forefront of moves to train teachers how to access and use efficiently Google and Microsoft's education platforms so students can be taught effectively in their own homes. They will be part of a network of schools and colleges sharing best practice on remote education ensuring a generation doesn't miss out on the latest online resources, support, webinars and peer to peer help.

The Government has committed over £100m to boost remote education by providing devices, internet access for those most in need and free, expert technical advice on Google for Education or Microsoft's Office 365 Education.

Schools Minister Nick Gibb said, "As schools, parents and children adapt to the changing environment we are all faced with, it is vital that we provide them with the right support so young people are able to continue their education.

Through close partnership with the education sector and two of the world's biggest tech companies, we are working to ensure that children can continue their studies while they are at home."



Darlington College national training continued

Darlington College's Deputy Principal Carole Todd said, "We are absolutely thrilled to be selected to be in the vanguard of this revolution in education. We decided some year ago to invest in the latest technology and this is now paying dividends with the successful delivery of our own remote learning practices and in helping schools and businesses across the country. Our staff are completely comfortable using the latest technology, which is proving to be exceptionally engaging with students, with many lecturers reporting 100 per cent attendances for online sessions. I believe the pandemic has pushed us beyond the watershed and that learning in this country will never be the same, it will involve the latest technology and the ability to teach remotely. So we are delighted to be chosen to lead this sea-change in learning and offer our expertise to help get remote learning up to full speed."

Microsoft UK CEO Cindy Rose said, "Schools across the UK are facing unprecedented challenges as their staff demonstrate incredible resilience, imagination and passion to ensure children are safe and able to keep learning while at home. We are proudly working to support the roll out of remote learning technology to those who need it and to support the education community with the latest technology during this difficult time."

Art competition success



Congratulations go to Lucy Ward in Year 10 at Hurworth School who has won the Lucy Pittaway summer Art competition (category 14 - 16 years). Lots of students from different schools entered this competition, so Lucy has done really well to win in what is a tough category!



Road to Amarillo



School staff have been lifting lockdown spirits with an upbeat video watched around the world.

Staff at Houghton Academy re-enacted the popular 'Is this the way to Amarillo' video made famous by Peter Kay for Comic Relief in 2005, and their efforts cheered colleagues as far away as Singapore.

Sung by Tony Christie, staff, some in fancy dress, marched and danced their way through school, their homes and on exercise routes in a three minute tribute to frontline workers. As well as brightening the day of colleagues, parents and pupils, the video was watched on social media by colleagues in the Far East.

Houghton Academy principal Jonathan Lumb said, "We are really missing seeing all of our fantastic pupils and their families and wanted to show their support to key workers on the frontline of the coronavirus pandemic. "Our rendition of the Tony Christie classic is dedicated to them and to show our united support for front line staff. We were absolutely delighted when we received such lovely feedback from our colleagues in Singapore."

Mr Lumb is part of the British Council's Creating Opportunity Worldwide - Building Educational Bridges 2019/20 programme, a joint venture with the Department for Education.

The project involves English-Singaporean exchange visits as primary and secondary headteachers share best practice and address means to secure consistently good teaching. Outcomes and recommendations are reported back to the Minister for Education.

The week-long English session was completed in November last year in London but the return leg in Singapore was due to be held in February and had to be postponed because of Covid-19. It is hopefully being rearranged for January 2021.

Mr Lumb said, "I was thrilled to be invited to be one of the 10 English headteachers by the Department for Education. It's very prestigious and I am delighted to be linked with the principal of Junyuan Secondary School, Singapore, Mohamed Razali B Abdul Hamed. It was such a surprise when he watched the video and responded on Facebook and the WhatsApp page. It was great to hear from him during these troubled times and I am really looking forward to visiting his school in January."



Illegal tobacco awareness launch

Darlington College art and design students were invited to create a series of posters for a campaign, which were used in bus shelters at key sites in the town. It is estimated were seen by almost 755,000 people - a mix of passing traffic and pedestrians.



The campaign aimed to raise awareness of the problems caused by the sale of illegal tobacco and cigarettes, particularly to under-age children, and encourages the public to report any issues to Trading Standards.

Cllr Dulston, Darlington Borough Council's cabinet member for stronger communities, said, "The eye-catching posters created by the students really helped us raise awareness of the problems that sales of illegal tobacco can cause and we were very pleased with the results. The impact of the campaign was magnified further as we were able to use the bus shelter adverts elsewhere too, including the One Darlington magazine and social media. We're very pleased with the results, as the campaign successfully shone the spotlight on the sale and supply of illegal tobacco in Darlington and highlighted the harm that can be caused, particularly to children.

During the period of the campaign we saw an increase in 'hits' on the Trading Standards' pages of our website and there were several anonymous reports about sales of illegal tobacco. This intelligence will be used as part of our enforcement strategy in the months ahead."

Sarah Norman, drug intervention coordinator/controlled drug liaison officer at Durham Police's Harm Reduction Unit, said, "We were so impressed with the quality of artwork produced by the students. There are already plans to use the posters in other settings showing the diversity of the designs. Their efforts on this campaign have reduced the harm caused in our communities by illegal tobacco and will continue to do so in the future, we want to thank them again for their hard work."



In Memory



All at Wyvern Academy were saddened by the tragedy involving year 10 pupil Anas El-Rafai at Broken Scar over the summer holidays.

He was remembered, his heroic actions recognised, and his life celebrated at the start of term. Tributes from staff and friends have been paid through a virtual book of condolences and a lasting tribute to the talented photographer will be on display within the school. Anas and his family had fled civil war in Syria in 2011 and moved to the UK in 2018.

"Dear Anas, you will always be part of our story and we are deeply sorry that your chapter was too short. With love and respect, staff and pupils of Wyvern Academy"

The next issue of the 11-19 Practitioner Newsletter will be published in March 2021. If you have an article to include in the newsletter, please send text and photos to donna.smith@darlington.gov.uk by Friday, 26th February 2021.

