

## Excellence in Personal Development Award!



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# HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE

Wonderful things happen in our school every day!



**We are heading with speed towards the end of an extremely busy and successful autumn term at The Barlow. Once again, our half-termly newsletter highlights some of the wonderful things that happen in our school every day. Our pupils have demonstrated their diligence and hard work, their passion and their commitment to our community through their learning inside and outside the classroom. I am proud of all of them.**

I am delighted this term that the personal development offer for our pupils has been

externally recognised, as The Barlow has been successful in securing the Excellence in Personal Development Award. We have been working towards achieving this over the last 12-months; it was a rigorous process culminating in an assessment day in early December in which the assessor spoke to pupils, staff, parents and governors, as well as scrutinising a portfolio of evidence. My congratulations and thanks to Mr Pickerill and Mrs Wilcox who have been instrumental in this piece of work.

Other highlights of the term include the annual Shakespeare Festival and Carol Concert as well as a visit to 'Sick to Death' for Year 10, a brand-new history of medicine museum in Chester.

As we move through the season of Advent we have taken the opportunity for prayer and reflection, as well as showing kindness and compassion to those in need. Without doubt, the cost of living crisis is impacting upon our community. Pupils and staff have worked together to prepare huge numbers of food hampers for families that need support. My thanks to you for this. I wish you all peace and joy this Christmas time and I look forward to welcoming pupils back to school on 9th January ready for the spring term.

## A Christmas Carol Performance

**'God bless us everyone!'**

Last week saw our annual performance of 'A Christmas Carol' arriving at The Barlow. All Year 11 pupils were treated to an imaginative retelling of Dickens' classic work, in good time for their revision over Christmas. The question and answer session is always so beneficial for the pupils, and we were delighted to have the performers back with us once more. Theatre trips for other year groups will be arranged for the new year – so watch this space!



# EXCELLENCE IN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

## External award in recognition of the outstanding work at The Barlow

**We are thrilled to announce that the school has achieved the Excellence in Personal Development Award.**

The process to achieve the award has taken place over the last year and involved two visits by an external assessor and close scrutiny of our personal development offer across the school. On the assessment day, the assessor was given a tour of the school by two of our pupils, Andrea and Evan, who did a brilliant job of showcasing our school. This is a prestigious award and recognises the outstanding personal development offer that our pupils receive in and outside of the classroom.

Quotes from the report include:

- *There is an extensive range of co-curricular opportunities offered.*

- *Personal development clearly weaves through the curriculum.*
- *Analysis of data is extensive and clearly communicated to inform action planning.*
- *Pupils have a varied selection of activities to meet individual need and interests. This allows accessibility of opportunity to all.*
- *By all Faculty areas weaving personal development opportunities throughout the curriculum, pupils are consistently reinforcing skills for life.*
- *The school provide an extensive personal development offer for all pupils.*

Well-done to all those involved; a fantastic achievement and truly deserved!

## Pupil Mentoring Programme

### Working together to grow into confident young adults

The Barlow's pupil 1:1 mentoring programme involves Year 7 and Year 8 pupils who have been selected by their Head of Year to receive some targeted support with their transition to secondary school life, whether it be linked to behaviour, well-being or confidence. The sessions take place on a weekly basis. Year 11 prefects set targets for their mentees to complete each week: these could be related to confidence, for example, putting their hand up in class and answering questions, or to behaviour, for example, staying on task in lessons. Treats are given as rewards for completed target sheets.

The programme is a brilliant opportunity for pupils to discuss any issues they have in their school lives and has given them a chance to get advice from prefects who have been through the school and may well have experienced similar difficulties. Data and pupil voice has shown that the mentoring programme has been extremely effective in improving attendance, behaviour and confidence. Prefects have found it to

be a valuable and rewarding experience. Head Boy, Joseph, explained how the programme is mutually beneficial and how it is a 'great opportunity to become better together'.

Feedback includes: *'I personally have really enjoyed mentoring and I feel like I am giving back to my school community.'* – LT (Year 11)

*'Mentoring younger pupils may be a great thing to tell colleges but that isn't really what it means to me. It has shown me that I can make a difference to others. It has helped me understand and help improve their well-being. I am glad I have been able to make a positive impact and really help someone in need'* – JW (Year 11)

*'Mentoring has helped me connect with my feelings and me realise there are always people I can talk to.'* – JM (Year 8)

*'I love this time of the week because I feel heard.'* – KD (Year 7)

Given its success, the Pupil Mentoring Programme will continue into the spring term.

**By Jimmy B, Deputy Head Boy.**

# ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

## 'Reach Out'

**The theme for this year's national Anti-Bullying Week was 'Reach Out'. This is a message that is close to our heart at The Barlow and one which we reiterate as a school community week in week out as we encourage our pupils to live out our core Catholic values of being kind to one another and treating others as they want to be treated.**

Anti-Bullying Week was another opportunity for our amazing, award winning Anti-Bullying Ambassador team to underline our zero tolerance to bullying and discrimination in any form in school as they led, alongside Mrs Staniforth and Miss Seggie, a very powerful assembly to all year groups. During the assembly the ABAs challenged their peers to be the change they want to see in the world; to reach out to someone they trust if they are aware of

any unkind behaviour towards others, either in person or online. Anti-Bullying Week was a great time to celebrate and remind everyone of the wealth of support on offer at school and to encourage pupils to 'reach out' and tap into this at any time.

This half term has also seen the ABA team grow! Our Senior ABA team, led by our Deputy Head Boy, Sufiyaan, and Senior Prefect, Jacey, ran an extremely rigorous recruitment process, and the response was incredible. Over 50 pupils applied for the prestigious post and went through two challenging rounds of interviews culminating in a workshop where the senior ABA team further assessed their skillset. 16 pupils were successful and have completed their training this term ready to start their new role in earnest in the new year. We wish them every success in their new position and feel confident that they will each be an asset to the ABA team.

## Year 8 Drop Down Day

### Staying happy and healthy online

As part of our ongoing commitment to offer pupils an outstanding personal development curriculum, Year 8 pupils took recently took part in a 'Drop Down Day' exploring how to be happy and healthy online.

Pupils took part in a series of workshops to explore the online world and how they can navigate their way safely online. They reflected on the amount of screen time they have and the ways in which they can manage this sensibly and maturely. As well as this, pupils discussed other important issues such as fake news and the consequences of misinformation and body image in a digital world. Pupils had an excellent day and fed back that they felt inspired and more confident about their place in the digital world.





# ATTENDANCE INITIATIVE

## '12 Days of Christmas'

**'On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true-love gave to me...'**

In an attempt to ensure all our pupils attend school every day in the run up to the Christmas holidays The Barlow has been running the '12 Days of Christmas' attendance initiative. Each day there has been a substantial prize on offer for one lucky pupil whose name is drawn out of a hat. Winning pupils had to be in school on the day of the draw. The range of prizes has been excellent including England football replica shirts (in time for the big quarter final match), a day at the Manchester City academy, and vouchers for a plethora of attractions including Cineworld, Nando's, JD and Love to Shop. Our thanks to Football Beyond Borders and Manchester City Football Club for the generous donation of prizes for pupils.



# ANNUAL CAROL CONCERT

## 'A Candlelit Christmas'

**The Barlow Christmas Carol Concert took place on Thursday 15th December. This is the first time the concert has been able to take place in person since 2019. 'A Candlelit Christmas' saw pupils share the important message that 'it is not what is under the Christmas tree that matters, but who is around it'.**

This is a particularly poignant message this Christmas, with many people experiencing financial challenges due to the cost-of-living crisis. The wonderful musicians and GIFT team members delivered this message in a way that was both heart-warming and thoroughly entertaining.

Despite this being their first live performance

for some time, the pupils were both confident and enthusiastic in equal measure; and seeing the sheer number of pupils involved and the joy they experienced in taking part was an absolute pleasure.

We are extremely proud of all those involved and would like to express our warmest thanks to all who came along on a very cold evening to support.





# ADVENT CHARITY MISSION 2022

Showing kindness and compassion to those in need

***"At this Christmas when Christ comes will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others, with God's own love and concern". Saint Teresa of Calcutta***

The Barlow is proud to be a Catholic, UNICEF Rights Respecting school, which teaches that we all have a duty to work together to alleviate the suffering of others in any way we can. Knowing that everyone has the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live, we work hard each year to do our part to try to ensure that more people have access to these things. Our first Charity Mission of the academic year always takes place during Advent, and this year, as always, our community has worked together to help those members of our community who are most in need.

This Advent the GIFT Team were keen to focus on tackling food poverty in the local area and, given the current cost of living crisis affecting us all, this became the sole focus for our fund-raising efforts this year. Each year group in school was given a different 'category' of food or household goods to collect. Family Groups worked hard to create beautiful parcels that could be used to store and gift the items collected. These generous donations will be used to support more than 120 families in the local area this Christmas. On behalf of the GIFT Team and our whole school community we would like to thank all those families who were able to contribute towards this appeal; as always, it is greatly appreciated.





# ENGLISH MATTERS

## An ambitious curriculum for all

**We have had an exciting term in English. Key Stage 3 pupils have been working through a brand-new scheme of work, exploring new novels and experiencing Shakespeare's classic works.**

Year 7 began by studying myths and legends, creating terrifying monsters and valiant heroes. Year 8 have been diving into the world of dystopian fiction, conjuring terrifying visions of

the future with their creative writing. Year 9 have been exploring conflict in literature – looking at the parallels between Malorie Blackman's contemporary Noughts and Crosses and William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet – exploring issues of race, love, violence and tragedy. Feedback from pupils shows they are enjoying the challenges of the new curriculum and their teachers are pleased with their engagement and progress.

## Chester Visit

**On Monday 12th December, Mrs Hardy, Mr Woolhouse and Mr Hardy accompanied Year 10 pupils on a visit to Chester to learn more about disease and the history of medicine.**

Pupils enjoyed a walking tour of the city, during which they heard tales of Chester's Roman bathhouses and how they were used to great effect to ensure good health, how the Black Death ravaged the city and why cholera spread rapidly throughout the community in the 19th century. Pupils also visited the Sick to Death museum, where they were able to inspect urine like a medieval physician, mix their own herbal remedies and perform surgery 17th century-style, as well as getting a whiff of the Great Stink!

We are grateful to Miss Woodward for her support in organising the visit.



# HIVE 3 GRADUATION DAY

## Hive Intervention Sees Success!

**On Monday 12th December, our Year 8 and Year 9 Hive 3 pupils had their Graduation Day from the intervention.**

This was an opportunity for our Hive 3 cohort to show off some of their amazing work to their parents/carers, so that they could see the fabulous efforts our Hive 3 pupils have put into their intervention work. The Hive 3 pupils also, as part of this celebration, prepared a variety of party food to share with their families, including sandwiches, sausage rolls and cake! It was lovely to see the pupils so proud of the work that they have completed in Hive 3 and the progress that they have made over the last 12 weeks.

In their Hive 3 intervention, pupils have completed a range of exciting tasks such as making samosas and chicken pot pies, making a castle from lollipop sticks, drawing self-portraits and completing some spray paint graffiti. The focus of these activities is allowing pupils the time to talk about their feelings and emotions and to consider ways that they can, and do, make a positive contribution to our school and the wider community. The photographs shown here give just a snapshot of some of the amazing work these pupils have completed.

Mrs Gilbert said of the Hive 3 cohort, 'I am really impressed with how hard all of the Hive 3 pupils have

worked over this last 12 weeks and the way they have fully engaged with all aspects of the intervention. The pupils should be very proud of themselves as I am proud of them.'

Well done our Hive 3 cohort – our school community are proud of you too! Enjoy your Nando's treat next Monday!



## Fibonacci Day

**On Wednesday 23rd November, pupils from Key Stage 3 celebrated Fibonacci Day. The pupils experienced the famous mathematical sequence 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13... not only as part of their mathematics curriculum but in their English lessons too!**

The pupils learnt about Fibonacci's sequence of adding the previous two terms together to make the next term. In English, pupils enjoyed using their imagination to create a poem where the syllables correlated with the number sequence whilst in mathematics they created some excellent examples of the Fibonacci curve and learnt about how this links to patterns in nature.

Pupils enjoyed the cross curricular approach and we are proud of the excellent work they have produced. Some pupils even presented their excellent efforts to their peers.

Fibonacci Day was a huge success. Next, Tuesday 14th March, we look forward to celebrating Pi Day across the school.

