

# Parent Bulletin

Week commencing Monday 20 November 2023 – Week 1

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to share with you some very good news about an award we have recently received. Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy has been given a Young Carers in Schools Bronze award for our work to make sure students do not miss out on an education because they are young carers. The difficulties faced by these students are not often highlighted, which is why I want to devote this letter to this single issue. The information in this letter has been put together with help from the Young Carers in Schools organisation.

The Young Carers in Schools programme helps schools improve outcomes for young carers and celebrates good practice through the Young Carers in Schools Award. To me, this award is highly significant, because it recognises the work led by Mrs Glass, and backed up by our year leaders and deputy leaders, in supporting students who have responsibilities at home for the care of parents and other children.

Young carers can often go ‘under the radar’, their contribution to family life unrecognised by others. Young carers are responsible for emotional, practical, or physical care for a parent, sibling or other family member who has a physical disability, mental health issue or substance misuse issue. The 2011 Census statistics revealed that there are just over 166,000 young carers in England, but research reveals that this is just the tip of the iceberg. Some estimates suggest that the true figure could be closer to 800,000 young carers in England, equivalent to one in five secondary aged school children, many of whom are unrecognised and unsupported.

Research carried out by the Carers Trust and The Children's Society shows that, on average, young carers miss or cut short 48 school days a year and often have lower levels of self-confidence, mental wellbeing and significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, because of their caring role. While some schools are doing this really well, others struggle, and this causes real problems for young carers.

To help schools support young carers, the Young Carers in School programme offers step-by-step guidance for leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff, with practical tools designed to make it as easy as possible. Staff can also receive training through webinars and events, and the programme also features a newsletter each term highlighting relevant policy developments, spotlighting good practice and giving updates on the programme's successes.

To achieve our Bronze Award, our school has demonstrated that it supports young carers in many ways, including homework clubs and drop-in sessions with Mrs Glass, the member of staff who is responsible for this vulnerable group of pupils. Vital information about how to identify young carers is made available to all school staff, and the school lets students and their families know where to go for help.

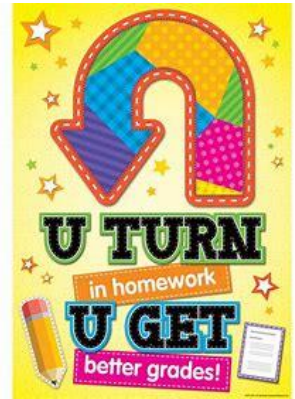
Luella Goold, Service Manager at The Children's Society, is delighted that the Young Carers in Schools Programme is bringing about national change. “Hundreds of schools across England are participating in the Young Carers in Schools programme, using the tools and resources to improve their support systems, and ensuring that no child need miss out on educational opportunities because they are a carer. 74% of schools who have achieved a Young Carers in Schools Award have noticed improved attendance among their young carers, and 94% have noticed improvements in their wellbeing and confidence.”

My congratulations and thanks to Mrs Glass and to all our young carers, who make such a difference to the lives of their families whilst also keeping up their own education at school. They deserve our support and recognition. If you know someone who is a young carer and who is not currently being supported by the school, please let us know.

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully

**Mr A T Fowler**  
**Principal**



### **Year 7 Homework Support**

Week commencing Monday 20 November, regular homework support sessions will be available for our year 7 students. The club will take place on a Tuesday, 3:20 to 4pm, and Thursday lunchtime, 12:30 to 1:10pm and will be based in the computer suite next to the LRC. Activity passes are available from the year 7 base for the lunchtime group but are not needed for the after school session. Please collect an activity pass at the start or the end of the school day.

All year 7 students are welcome and Praise Points will be awarded to those who attend and complete their homework, or it can be used as a quiet space to get work done so that it doesn't need to be taken home to complete. Mrs Kemp will be there to help and support students

Please encourage your child to attend homework support sessions to ensure all homework is completed.

Thank you for your support.

***Mrs J Kemp***  
***Cover Supervisor***

## **Performing Arts Updates**

There is a range of new Performing Arts extra-curricular activities this term which run during lunchtime, Monday to Friday, 12.45 to 1.15pm.

### **Timetable of activities:**

Monday: Year 7 and 8 Dance Club with Miss Brown (PA13)  
Tuesday: Vocalise with Mrs Hall (PA10)  
Thursday: Year 9 Dance Club with Miss Brown (PA13)  
Thursday: Year 7 and 8 Drama Club with Miss Race (PA11)  
Friday: Year 9 Drama Club with Miss Race (PA11)  
Friday: Music Production Club with Mr McCubbin (PA12)

Any student wishing to participate in any of the above clubs, must obtain an activity pass from the teacher running the session. Passes can be collected at the start and end of the school day.

On Wednesday evenings we continue our Performers rehearsals, 3.20pm to 5pm. We are currently rehearsing for our first ever original Lord Lawson Christmas Pantomime, A Shrektacular Christmas. With only three rehearsals left, Wednesday 22 November is the last opportunity for new Performers to join the project. Any student wishing to join Performers is welcome but must speak to Miss Brown directly before they attend rehearsals. Any student wishing to join Performers after Wednesday 22 November will have to wait until January 2024 when a new project will be launched.

A Shrektacular Christmas will be performed on one night only, Tuesday 12 December at 7pm.

If you have any queries about any of the extra-curricular activities in Performing Arts please contact me via email at [sbrown@lordlawson.academy](mailto:sbrown@lordlawson.academy) and I will be happy to help.

Thank you.

***Miss S Brown***  
***Subject Leader – Performing Arts***



## Remembrance Round-up

Following our hugely successful Remembrance Ceremony on Friday 10 November, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work of so many of our students who participated, not only in the ceremony on the day, but in a variety of trips and events.

## Remembrance Ceremony

Twenty-six students, representing not only the school but the Army and Air Cadets, Scouts and the Boys Brigade, marched on parade for our Remembrance Ceremony on Friday 10 November, led by Cadet Corporal Zac Thompson in year 11. Year 7 students William Davison and Dean Walker played the Last Post and Reveille, with guest trumpet player Glen Hogg; the whole school observed a minute's silence at 11am.

The ceremony also included some time of reflection while students planted crosses at the foot of the soldier in the garden, remembering those within our own school and local community. Wreaths were laid, representing the Lord Lieutenant, The Mayor of Gateshead, the Cadet Forces, Scouts, Boys Brigade, Staff and Governors of the school and the students themselves. The ceremony was attended by twelve classes, parents and invited guests, including His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, Dr Norman Taylor MBE. Dr Taylor was very complimentary of the students on parade and those who watched the ceremony, who all showed respect throughout, even commenting that he would report our event to Buckingham Palace!

After the ceremony, the students involved were able to speak with the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, and our guests were able to look at the artwork created by our students on display in the atrium.



## **Elisabethville and the 'Birtley Belgians'**

In October, a group of year 7 and 8 students visited Birtley Library, where the Birtley Heritage Group spoke to the students about Elisabethville. In World War One the Elisabethville colony in Birtley was, for a time, home to over 6000 Belgian refugees.

The men, most of them soldiers too badly wounded at the Front to return to the fighting, volunteered to come here to work in the National Projectile Factory to make artillery shells for the Allied troops. By the end of the war, they had produced two and three quarter million shells – far more than the target of just over one million set by the British Government, and achieved with 85% of the labour force suffering some form of disability due to wounds sustained at the Front.

They lived next door to the village of Birtley in a purpose-built enclosed 'colony', “not quite a Belgian enclave, yet not totally part of Britain,” as one writer put it. This comprised several hundred sturdy prefabricated houses, a hospital, a school, a post office, a church and cemetery, a football pitch and a 'co-operative store', not to mention quite a large number of other 'private enterprises' set up in the houses themselves.

Their new homes were fitted with running water and electric light, much to the envy of many of the residents of Birtley. The streets all had Belgian names, though these were later replaced by British names. Almost all returned to Belgium at the end of the war, though some thirty men married local girls and remained in Birtley.

Some of the places the students visited included the last remaining piece of fencing that originally encircled the whole of Elisabethville, on Durham Road near the Fire Station, the garages on Devon Crescent, which are the last remaining buildings from Elisabethville and were originally the shop and the food stores, and the Catholic graveyard on Mary Avenue, where there are Commonwealth war graves for some of those who lost their lives whilst in Birtley.

The students were a credit to themselves and to the academy, asking relevant, interesting questions, and showing a real interest in their own local history. This trip was facilitated by the Birtley Heritage Group and Birtley Library, with thanks.



## **Remembrance Assembly**

Due to year 11 and 13 assessments taking place, an online assembly was shared with all tutor groups, which asked our students to think about how they could identify clues from the past in their environment and asked them to think about what they could learn from it. Photographs were shared of Birtley now and Birtley during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War when the Belgians lived in Elisabethville, and students were asked to consider the lessons our past can teach us; welcome people into our communities, be careful not to be jealous of what people may have and to consider what they have left behind and to be aware of the perils and the horror that many refugees in our communities have left behind.

## **Birtley Remembrance Parade**

On Sunday 12 November, Head Girl Elena Mugnai and year 7 School Council Representative Layla Small attended the Birtley Remembrance Parade and laid a wreath on behalf of the school. This is the second year that the school has taken part in the parade and is particularly poignant, as ex-student Fusilier Paul Atkinson is named on the town's war memorial, who was killed by friendly fire in 1991 during the Gulf War.



We are so proud of all of our students who participated in so many ways to our Remembrance activities. Remembering the past and who we are is so important, as it helps us all to see how much we have grown and changed over time.

Thank you all.

***Mrs J Kemp***  
***Remembrance Coordinator***

## Upcoming School Events

At the beginning of every term, we will publish a list of upcoming school events in this bulletin. Communication of some events, such as Parents' Evenings, will also be communicated separately via email, so please ensure you look out for these.

The events for this term are:

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| Friday 24 November:   | Occasional Day – School closed for staff and students. School will reopen for staff and students Monday 27 November.                                 |
| Tuesday 28 November:  | Careers Fair (all year groups) throughout the school day.  |
| Tuesday 5 December:   | Flu Vaccinations for years 7 to 11.  |
| Thursday 7 December:  | Sixth Form Open Evening, 5.00 to 7.00pm – for students considering their post-16 options and future academic pathways.                               |
| Thursday 14 December: | Year 7 – Pantomime at Theatre Royal Newcastle: Pinocchio.<br><br>Year 13 Parents' Evening, 3.45 – 6.15pm – Appointments will be online.              |
| Friday 22 December:   | Last day of school for staff and students – Christmas holidays begin Saturday 23 December. School reopens for all students on Monday 8 January 2024. |