

Brymore

experience to last a lifetime



Newsletter December 2012

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Message from Mark Thomas - Headteacher

Over the past few weeks I have been trying to get out and watch as many rugby matches as I can. I have always believed that rugby, and the way it is run at Brymore, *is* Brymore in the same way the farm, gardens and workshops, and the way they are organised, symbolise everything that *is* Brymore also. At a recent Year 11 away game, thanks to my anonymity I was able to overhear a conversation between two staff that went something like...

“ My god, who the hell are this lot?”

“Brymore”

“Hell, they are big lads”

“Yeah, really strong and hard as nails, they will be our biggest test this season.....great bunch of lads though!”

If I overheard someone talking about my son in those terms I would be a proud Dad, just as I was a proud Headteacher even though we lost the game. For many boys the journey to their full colours is a tough one, and even some staff question the importance of rugby when they are trying to get boys to complete coursework, and fitness, training or Chads are used as reasons for not being available. For me, achieving your full colours means much more than just rugby. It means sticking at things in Year 9 when you are the wrong end of a big score, commitment to keeping up to date with Chads, fitness etc relentlessly even through the dark and cold winter months. It is about accepting when you make mistakes, and making up with extra sessions where necessary, teamwork and not letting others down, but most of all it is not losing sight of what it is all about. Full commitment during the game making sure there is nothing left to give on the pitch, but being a gentleman and sportsman immediately afterwards, no matter what the score.

For many boys it is the farm or gardens that form the focus of their time at Brymore. My father in law, who was a dairy farmer for over fifty years, certainly describes farming as relentless. No matter what the weather, and it has been pretty wet and cold at 6.30 am recently, the boys will be out making sure their duty is complete. In many cases, even though the jobs can have immediate effects, it is often the long term benefits that drive the tasks in hand. Teenage boys are not often good at waiting for anything, yet both the farm and gardens teach that immediate gratification is not always possible and a consistent commitment is needed to see results. When the boys show their cattle on open day, sell their own vegetables or plants, all the visitors and parents see is the last few minutes of a very long process.

Another real pleasure is looking at all of the Design and Technology Year 11 GCSE coursework in May, not only because of the sheer size of the projects, but also the quality and innovation of many of them. Again long term projects, that may have taken ‘only’ twenty hours to make, but are often the result of many hours of planning and design, and the honing of the skills necessary in Years 9 and 10. The work often mirrors what is going on in the gardens and on the farm, industrial standard practices being delivered in a school by fifteen and sixteen year old boys.

Mr Spridgens once said to me he thought learning support should be the fourth cornerstone of Brymore, rather than sport. I am not sure what shape has five corners but the work of the students who arrive with learning needs epitomises everything that the other cornerstones represent. Only yesterday Mrs Anstice reported to me two Year 9 students have improved between one and a half and two years in their reading ages, in their first term at Brymore. It is an area where boys are not made to feel ‘different’ and massive success is achieved. Through sheer hard work, determination and the support of parents and staff, boys who arrive at Brymore with special educational needs make significantly more progress than in most other schools nationally, according to recently released Ofsted data.

Academic success is rapidly becoming a key feature of the school also. There are two data sets that schools use to compare themselves in order to measure progress in particular. In one data set the school has risen from the bottom 15% of schools nationally for value added scores in 2010 to the top 31% this year. When comparing with boys only, the results are even higher. In another data set we have gone from the bottom 9% of schools nationally for progress towards 5A*-C grades in 2010, to the top 3% of schools in the country this year. As with rugby, the farm, gardens, workshops and learning support, this is all achieved through hard work.

Finally, I would like to mention boarding. Unfortunately, the Ofsted report is yet to be published, so the gradings have not been finalised, however early indications are that we will be rated good in three out of the four categories, and satisfactory in the other. The commitment of the boys to the activities on offer was highlighted which is yet another indication that hard work over time pays off.

Without wishing to break a tradition, I think it is best to say that Brymore still has four cornerstones that play a vital role in the development of the boys. However, a well rounded education is certainly provided and it is clear to me that academic success, is massively supported by the life skills instilled in the boys through the work of the farm, gardens, workshops, rugby and the other sports on offer. I think it is also fair to say that much of this would not be possible without the commitment of the staff at the school. So, I would like to wish all boys, parents and those associated with the school a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Obviously I extend these best wishes to staff as well, but I also hope all staff have a well deserved break over the festive period, because I really believe the success of the boys is largely down to the commitment of the staff. I hope parents do not mind, that for once, I use my introductory message to you as a way of publicly thanking the staff. It is well deserved. Merry Christmas!



Horticulture (Mr Willcocks)

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who sent in Morrison's garden vouchers - we had a great response with over 1,000 tokens being collected and this will go some way to getting new things for the gardens. We have our own homemade (and home-grown) apple juice, spiced apple juice and cider vinegar available to purchase at only £2 per bottle.

A big thank you to the garden HoD's for all their hard work - they form an essential part of the gardens and are working well at encouraging the younger students to perform their duties to a high level. The boys plots generally are looking good however they will need to be marked again before the Christmas holidays. All of the boys need to be equipped for the winter and must have steel toe capped boots, plenty of warm clothes plus wet weather gear as the work continues despite the weather at Brymore. Mrs Nash has been working hard with boys on the flower beds and borders to ensure that come spring time they are looking their best and we have also started the pruning of soft fruit and top fruit. Finally, I would like to say a very big thank you to all of the Horticulture team for all they do over and above lesson time.

School Council (Mr Oliver)

The school council has met twice this half term and made several decisions on behalf of the students of the school. The purpose of the council is for students to have their say in all aspects of the school, from organising events to discussing the future of the school. They meet over a working breakfast and canvas the opinion of their fellow student's in house meetings before the council sits. The council voted for a reward 'Sausage and Chip' with DVD supper to end the last half-term. Other decisions were to introduce badges to go with certificates gained for House Points and next year's rugby training tops for the whole school. From the School Council other student groups have been formed and are making decisions on behalf of the students. These groups include the 'House Improvement Team', the 'Activities Group' and the 'Food Group'. The Boarding Houses have recently been re-decorated and some student's suggestions were adopted for this. The 'House Improvement Team' is currently looking at re-painting the dormitories and will be taking suggestions from the students in the future. All in all the involvement of the students in the running of the school is increasing.



Workshops

Taunton Academy

We are now welcoming our second cohort of students from Taunton Academy who join the DT department every Thursday afternoon to experience the extensive facilities that Brymore can offer. Each week 20 girls and boys from years 7&8 come over for a lesson where they use our woodwork tools to create a table tidy stand, this involves full use of the planes and chisels as well as cutting shapes with the Mortising machine. The stand is designed to accommodate a Brymore plaque showing our spur, each student works in the foundry to pack a mould which they then cast from molten aluminium, the final casting is polished before being joined to the stand. Both Mr Allibone and Mr Austin have been very impressed but the skills developed and the enthusiastic attitude that all the Taunton Academy students have shown despite the steep learning curve they have had to endure. We are looking forward to sending more students home with a quality product and an experience that they would not otherwise have been able to have.

Year 11 GCSE

It has been a tough start in Design and Technology this year for most of the students. Due to a change in government policy nearly half the year group have had to change their DT course and quickly get back up to speed. Add to this the changes that naturally occur with a changeover in staffing and it would be fair to say that we are proud of what Year 11 have achieved so far. By the time you receive this letter all boys should be clear with what they wish to make and the design pages should be complete, from January the workshops will fill with the sound of industry as everybody goes all out to complete the widely varied and exciting projects - this year we are expecting a range of tables, tool boxes, trailers, animal boxes and many more. The nature of the new GCSE does mean that we are reducing the size of some of the more traditional projects and are having to focus on the paperwork to ensure that the boys get the best results, but as long as they get their materials and come back in January ready to start then we should be able to put on a great show in the summer.

Evening activities

The DT area has continued to be a great draw in the evenings with students signing up for all of our activities. Bradley, our Blacksmith has maintained his high levels of commitment to both his old school and our current students, his classes are turning out young blacksmiths who have had the chance to learn an ancient but still very important and necessary skill. The pokers, scrapers and candlestick holders, etc. are all unique to the craftsman (student) who made them and show a high level of care and attention to detail. It is always a joy to go in and listen to the students as they fight to make the metal do exactly as they want.

The metal workshop has been buzzing with the sound of precision engineering, the boys are involved with the creation of high quality components and the focus is how to be 'exact' and not to accept 'near enough'. They are allowed to develop their confidence to use the heavy machinery and to learn first hand what industry would expect from them. Designs they have worked on recently include a working pneumatic piston engine, talking to the boys quickly reveals that they relish the responsibility that they are given.

Over in the wood workshop the activities are a little more creative and students are encouraged to come along with an idea of what they might like to try to design and make. The time is spent working with the tools and materials trying to learn about the best ways to harness the natural properties of the wood. Currently there are a series of storage boxes being completed, whenever you ask a woodworker it always seems that they can think of at least one more way to improve the 'look' of their work.

Welding is taught by our very experienced metalworker and the boys have to be disciplined and follow the instructions, primarily to keep them safe but also to get them to produce the sort of results that future employers might expect. A lot of time is spent ensuring that quality is placed clearly before quantity. It is interesting to notice the visible improvement in the style of the welds as the boys progress through their course. There has always been an opportunity to 'catch-up' DT work and often there are additional students around in DT during the evenings who are completing missing class work or just improving their work and it is good to see the boys making the effort to be the best that they can be.



The Learning Resource Centre (Miss Bradford)

This is a little dabble about what goes on in the Learning Resource Centre or the LRC as we know and love it.

Why LRC and not Library I hear you ask; well the word library and teenage boys does not go together that well. However not only that but as well as the books and the five PCs you get me - the Librarian - making it a resource centre!

The LRC is open each day Monday to Friday from 8.15 am until 4.15 pm or later if requested and Saturday from 8.15 am to 1.00 pm.

Let's talk books - Brymore boasts the biggest small school library in Somerset with over 18,000 items on the shelves; these include 1,210 reading books from picture books, through easy reads to full blown novels, including many of the classics. The reference section contains approximately 16,000 books covering all subjects even ones that are not actually taught in the school curriculum. Therefore there is a large section of dictionaries including foreign languages, encyclopaedia standard as well as Horticulture, Agriculture, thesaurus and many other types of reference books including The Guinness Book of World Records. Carrying on through the shelves there are history books, geography books, science, literature, art and of course the four cornerstones of the school; design & technology, sports, horticulture and agriculture, with many many books on tractors and farm machinery.

As well as the books there are 23 periodicals as we library people like to call magazines, again all relevant to the school and the boys in particular; Bee Craft (Did you know that the school is host to the Quantock Beekeepers Association?), Rugby World, Practical Poultry, Classic Tractors to name but four, with Farmers Guardian and Farmers Weekly as well.

There are roughly 250 videos again featuring lots of tractors and farming, with the two most popular being Wallace and Gromit and the Two Thousand Mile Harvest. I hope to be able to transfer them to DVD... eventually!

There are also the five PCs which can be used during break and lunch times for catching up with prep, classwork or playing games but if a boy needs the PC for work the games are logged off. The LRC is also used for lessons, this year there are 11 booked in, to this end the LRC has a portable whiteboard and a fixed digital projector and screen. On a Wednesday evening the Brymore Young Farmers Club meets at 8.00 pm until 9pm where we have guest speakers most weeks and visits to various places such as the Burnham on Sea RNLI and Team Growers during the summer term.

So as you can see a lot goes on in your boys LRC - if I could have one wish it would be that they occasionally read a novel.



Work Experience (Mr Willcocks)

All boys in Year 10 should have now organised their placements. Some have not and are therefore in danger of spending the week in an establishment of Miss Bradford's choosing. Please contact Miss Bradford or Mr Willcocks with details as soon as possible.

Staying for Year 12

Staying on for Year 12 at Brymore offers a wealth of opportunities for the boys whilst being in a supportive, caring and familiar environment. With more freedom than when they were in Years 9-11 but with a range of activities at their fingertips we find that the boys continue to thrive in Year 12. Should any boy or parent be interested in finding out more information then please contact Mr Willcocks or Mr Thomas for more information.

All O.K. at the Brymore Corral

Brymore School, with the help of the Boots and Saddles Western Re-enactment Group, recreated the famous Wild West on the grounds of the school.

The recent flooding had put paid to one visit but with a frosty morning firming the ground the re-enactment group set up the O.K. Corral and set to work dressing up as characters from the Wild West, including Wyatt Earp himself. They then began going through scenarios with all year groups of Brymore Boys ending with an exciting gun fight between the Earps and the Cowboys.



The Group give their time for free but in doing so raise money for Help for Heroes, with both staff and students giving generously the group raised a good amount for the charity.

Beth Webb pays a visit (Miss Bradford/Mrs Mudge)

Published local author, Beth Webb, came into the school to meet with the members of Brymore Book Club. With it being close to Halloween and with Beth a writer of some gruesome and scary tales the LRC was dressed up to resemble a witches coven in time for some spooky storytelling. Beth has had 14 books published to date aimed at children whether younger (Junkyard Dragon) or older (The Dragons of Kilve) and enlightened the boys with tales of vampires and ghouls.



Karate (Mrs Mudge)

Over the past term a group of committed boys have undertaken Karate training from Sensei Meek. They have all now been graded successfully and will continue next term in order to be graded again at Easter.



Brymore Common Rooms get a makeover (Mrs Warren)

Over the recent half term break Mr Coll and Mr Watts, along with local artist Becca Fox, have updated all three of the boarding house common rooms.

A huge amount of preparation and design went in to the graphics of each house and with the colour schemes being allocated to the individual common rooms, the result is a thought-provoking, inspiring and welcoming environment. With School House coloured a deep red, Kemp as a light airy blue and Reid as a lovely sage green along with quotes and maps on the walls the overall result is one that we are very proud of.



The Farm

The longest term of the school year has proven busy and eventful on the farm. The new Year 9's have all been practising their tractor driving skills and some have had their first week long feeding duty. Stockyard duties have given some boys the chance to help out on the farm for an hour after school one evening a week. The Year 10's have had an introduction to their BTEC Level 2 course starting with having to learn the controls of a tractor and all the relevant parts of a tractor engine. Practically they have visited a local farm which has installed a robotic milking parlour. Year 11 have had an on-going practical assessment in all aspects of animal production and tractor driving skills.

Dairy

This term seven cows have calved and two new dairy cows were added to the herd, both were bought at Sedgemoor Auction Centre and have settled well into life at Brymore. One is a dairy shorthorn named Avril who calved in October and the other is a Swedish Red called Ulrika who was in calf to a Saler bull, the addition of these breeds has expanded the educational experience for the boys. Despite the poor weather this summer our silage quality is good and we have no shortage of feed for the winter. Fodder Beet is being harvested by Year 9 and fed to the dairy cows and the sows. We had our annual TB test in October and much to everyone's relief we got the all clear!

Pigs

All the pigs are now indoors back at the farm as their field paddocks are waterlogged, following the bucketful's of rain we have had recently. Our Doppler ultrasound scanner has shown us that 5 out of the 6 sows are in pig, which means that our Pedigree British Lop Boar 'Mr Pilton' is proving his worth beyond reasonable doubt!



Sheep

Ron - our new '2 tooth' Texel Ram spent a couple of months in with the ewes and so lambing for 2013 should begin at the end of February. The lambs are finishing well and being sold through the Sedgemoor Auction Centre although we did lose a couple to Pasteurella but a vaccination and treatment with antibiotics seems to have kept it under control. Groups of Year 11 students have been visiting the market on a Tuesday where they have discussed how to grade lambs with the grader following selecting and grading the lambs in the field.



Poultry

We have bought in 50 nine week old poults in an attempt to meet an increasing demand for eggs and we are hopeful that they should start laying in March.

Blackmore by Candlelight (Mrs Warren)

Some of the Year 9 boys helped out at an event recently for Blackmore Farm, which is run by one of our Governors and her family. The boys did themselves proud and everyone who was at the event commented on how polite and helpful the boys were.



Rain doesn't stop Brymore

On Wednesday 21 November, after much overnight rain, the village of Cannington and the surrounding area was completely flooded with many roads closed. Brymore resolutely remained open and despite the bottom of the drive being covered with water and our tree-lined driveway in an almost river like state, boys made it up in a tractor - true Brymore Resourcefulness, Responsibility and Resilience at its very best!

Photos can be seen on our Facebook page

Hatching chicks (Mrs Warren)

As part of a new initiative to get the Brymore name further into the community we have begun a programme to go out into primary schools with an incubator and eggs. The idea is that the primary schools can hatch their own baby chicks, having incubated them first, and aids the children's learning of the life cycle and can also be embedded into all areas of the curriculum whilst hearing about our school. This half-term North Town Primary School in Taunton successfully incubated and hatched 5 baby chicks and the school was enthralled with the end product!



Smiles for Christmas (Mr Fewtrell)

'Smiles for Christmas' was chosen as an opportunity to allow Brymore a chance to give something back to the local community of Cannington. There are 48 elderly people who live in supported housing in Cannington and most of these will spend Christmas on their own. The boys and staff of Brymore really hoped to make this one to remember for them

Each Boarding House competed against each other to create a Christmas hamper. All boys were expected to input into their house hamper whether that be some gifts or simply spending time on the design and making of it. As a staff team we, and the team from Homes in Sedgemoor, were bowled over by the generosity and effort put into this scheme and we ended up creating something very special for the local community. Once the items were distributed to the 48 elderly residents there was enough left over for the Homes in Sedgemoor team to help out some families in the village that had been affected by the awful flooding we had in November. Colleen Hayes from Homes in Sedgemoor would like us to pass on her thanks to all the boys, parents and staff who donated and says that the school 'is a credit to the community'. School House proved to be the eventual winner with their tractor themed hamper.



Sports Report (Mr Spridgens)

Rugby

The Year 11 team have qualified for the final of the Sedgemoor league. This will be played in early February against a very strong Haygrove team. Further details will be advised once confirmed. It is worth noting that the present Year 11 rugby team lost all their matches in Year 9 and didn't win a game until half way through Year 10. The present Year 10 team are making good progress and numbers for practice are on the rise. Richard Warwick recently received his senior rugby tie for representing the Year 11 senior rugby team on five occasions, only the second time that this has occurred since the awarding of 'playing ties'.

The Year 9 team have yet to win a game but are soldiering on in the usual Brymore way. Numbers for practice are disappointing but those who attend are fully committed.

Hockey

During games lessons the hockey group are taken by Mr Oliver and Mr Ashton. On Saturday afternoons Mr Winter takes hockey activity. They have played in one hockey tournament and hopefully more fixtures will follow in addition we have some new hockey goals and the team train twice a half term at another school's Astroturf.



Fitness

In Years 9 and 11 the fitness sessions are still very well attended. However, in Year 10 several students are still behind having failed to make up fitness sessions they have missed due to attending other activities. Therefore, the attendance figure is not so high.

Chads Hill

The Chad Hill run still remains immensely popular with staff and students. A great many starter certificates of ten runs have already been awarded. At least six students have been awarded their bronze certificate for 25 attempts. Further awards are issued at 50, 75 and 100 runs. This year a special award has also been announced for 60 runs in recognition of Brymore's 60th Anniversary. During the winter months the students run wearing fluorescent bibs for safety reasons.

Mathematics (Mr Ashton and Mr Edmunds)

2012, the first year with the new maths team in post - Mr Ashton and Mr Edmunds, and a very successful one. Year 11 results exceeded school targets and put us in the top ten schools in Somerset for progress.

Teaching maths to deepen understanding is our key aims and to this end boys have undertaken practical investigations into pig's bellies, silage bails, the Head's head, right angled triangles and polygons - leading to the discovery of pi and circle formulae, Pythagoras' Theorem and trigonometric ratios, to name but a few.

MyMaths was introduced this year; a web based programme that allows students to complete their prep on-line, to access on-line lessons and revision, and that promotes independent and individualised learning. A major benefit to parents and carers is that you are able to login to the site and monitor exactly how your son is progressing. A letter, giving guidance for parents, is being sent home with Year 11 reports. Parents of year 9 and 10 students will receive these in the new year. Plans for 2013 include: using the electronic lambing data from the farm for a Year 9 statistics project, a visit for Year 10s to Hinkley B Power Station and a maths conference to London for Year 11. Following last year's success there will be another 'Raising Achievement in maths' day for parents before Year 11 depart for their February break, where we will equip students and parents with all the revision materials that they will need, in order to support their sons' revision over the holiday. Year 11 intervention and revision classes begin in earnest in the new year, for an hour a week from 4.00 pm - 5.00 pm on Monday or Wednesday afternoons. 'Set Zero' will grow and continue its success; tutoring students in Years 10 and 11 who are going for an A or A*.

Exam dates: Edexcel GCSE Paper 1 Foundation & Higher Tiers - 28 February 2013 (PM)

Edexcel GCSE Paper 2 Foundation & Higher Tiers - 4 March 2013 (AM)

House Competitions (Mr Oliver)

For the last five years, Taylor House has dominated the House competitions, winning everything and leaving a wake for Galsworthy and Walker to follow. Over the last two years Taylor's grip on the house competition is beginning to weaken, as Galsworthy's Cross Country Team improves year after year. Walker has also been making in-roads with the Cross County and gaining House points across the curriculum.

However, with the first full term rapidly approaching the House point totals never lie and clearly Taylor are in pole position, with Walker next and Galsworthy chasing up the rear. Yet, only 400 points separates the three houses with another two terms to go! Will Taylor's dominance in the Senior rugby be broken this Year? Will Walker continue its rise in rugby dominance over all competitions? Can Galsworthy break Walker's dominance of the House Hockey? We look forward to competitive House rugby and Hockey competitions next term. I would like to congratulate the following students in gaining several of our more difficult House Point certificates:

Gold Certificate from the Headteacher, requiring 450 House Points:

Nigel O'Dea and Charlie Rowsell

Silver Certificate from the Deputy Headteacher, requiring 350 House points:

Cyrus Dorrington and Oliver Herrington

Bronze Certificate from the Assistant Headteacher, requiring 275 House Points:

James Newton-Browne and Zac Welsh

It takes a long time and a great effort to gain these certificates over the years. Well done to all of you!

Senior Student Leadership Team (Oliver Herrington - Head Boy)

This term the Senior Student Leadership Team has been focused on student mentoring and fund raising. Harry Orr, Corey Simms and Tim Stevenson have led training for the prefect team on student mentoring and many are now mentoring younger years with good success. At the start of the year, members of the Senior Student Leadership Team took part in the school promotional DVD representing Brymore. Some of the Senior Student Leadership Team have been to middle schools in the area to promote the school to younger year groups and James Kerry, Harry Orr, Seamus O'Kelly and Gareth Stockton have been to Sidcot School, a Somerset boarding school, to see how they operate. James Newton-Browne, Harry Orr, Zac Welsh and I took part in a non-smoking assembly where we read poems and gave facts about smoking. Interviews of many Old Brymore Boys took place when the Old Brymorsians came for a look around the school. Tim Stevenson has lately been leading a team of students in clearing Mrs Davis' garden, which has been a big challenge. There is a fundraising triathlon set up so that money can be raised for the four cornerstones and we are thinking of other ideas for fundraising. In the past few months the SSLT have worked incredibly hard and deserved to be rewarded. The Senior Student Leadership Team went to McDonald's for a meal. We thoroughly enjoyed the meal, (however those that travelled with Mrs Davis less enjoyed the car journeys!). In the last week before the Christmas break the whole of the Senior Student Leadership Team and prefects were taken to Blackmore Farm for a three course meal. The Dyers put out a great spread, including a roast with all of the trimmings, a beautiful desert and cheese and biscuits to finish. The meal was utterly relished by everyone that came. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the school and the Dyers for giving us such a great time and wish all students a great Christmas and good luck in the new year.



Blood Brothers trip (Mrs Anstice)

On Thursday 8 November, Mr Ashton, Mr Ball, Mr Simmons and I had the pleasure of taking Year 10 to the Phoenix Theatre in London to watch one of the last West End productions of Russell's 'Blood Brothers'. This was a thoroughly enjoyable day that really brought the play to life for the boys and undoubtedly supported their preparation for the Controlled Assessment task. Let's hope it tours so that we can take a group next year!

Elite Fitness at Norton Manor Camp (Mr Fewtrell)

On a cold Sunday morning in December, 11 of our brave souls sought to climb the highest heights in terms of physical endurance and strength. Things that Brymore boys have in abundance due to the magnificence of their dedication to activities such as Chads, fitness and circuits but to name a few.

Even a broken down minibus was not to deter us. A big thank you to Mr Kingston for his jump leads which saved our event as well as Miss Bradford's Carol Singing outing later on.

2.2 miles and 8 gruelling exercise stations was what our boys had to master. Each station was split into three levels of difficulty. Our boys were fantastic and it was such a pleasure to see them do so well. We all worked as a team and the encouragement was excellent, one to a man.

Well done to A Warren, W Chubb, J Coaker, C Coleman, W Foale, C Herbert, J Kerry, F Perry, H MacGregor, G Stockton and B Williams! All will receive a certificate for their achievements.



Student Leadership (Mrs Anstice)

This half-term has continued to see our Prefect and Senior Student Leaders working hard every day in the completion of their duties. They play an important role in supervising students around the site and reporting to members of the Leadership Team. As a group, their presence and impact has been truly noticed. They have also worked hard to establish peer mentoring which Harry has written about below. All of this responsibility deserves reward and I had the pleasure of accompanying the entire Prefect team, along with the rest of the Senior Leadership team, Mr Ashton and Mrs Warren, to Blackmore Farm for their Christmas Meal on Monday evening. This was a first for Brymore but something that we intend to in future years. It was a pleasure to spend an evening with them.

Peer Mentoring (Harry Orr - Deputy Head Boy)

Over the past few weeks, we've run an assembly and a Prefect meeting to introduce the concept of Peer Mentoring. Overall 15 senior students took on the responsibility of being a mentor and we've recently assigned them all to a younger student that we felt could do with a friendly hand! Not only do we have one to one mentoring, but we also run a weekly drop in session on Tuesday lunchtimes, so that any boy can come in and have a cup of tea and a biscuit, giving them a chance to chat. So far this has run for two weeks and it has been keenly attended by a few boys (probably for the biscuits!) and we feel it is running successfully. Just to note, the drop-in is manned by peer mentors themselves.

Learning Support (Mrs Anstice)

The work in Learning Support is continuing at a rapid pace. Our focus this term is on creating a Literate environment for the boys. Our Literacy interventions have continued and we are pleased with the progress many of the boys are making in their accuracy and fluency. Please do encourage your son to read in the holidays - Miss Bradford has a wealth of books that they are welcome to borrow. Another development for the Learning Support Team is in the establishment of Brymore's Forest School. Mr Ball is being trained as a Forest School Leader and is in the process of planning and delivering sessions to Year 9 boys during the week. He will also be offering this to other years in some Saturday afternoon sessions later this year.

FOBSA (Jackie White - FOBSA Chair)

Last year FOBSA collected £6,000 which was used to enhance the Brymore experience. Without the funds that FOBSA raise boys would miss out on the little extras that are perhaps taken for granted such as Activities Week, trips to see shows and items for the common rooms. The issue we are now faced with is that FOBSA is only a very small group of parents and ex-parents who, although dedicated, could do with some extra help and members. We run a number of events throughout the year including Christmas Bingo, Leavers Service, Harvest Festival and the welcoming of new parents in September.

If you think that you could spare some time (we only meet six times a year and this is usually accompanied by cake and coffee!) then joining FOBSA is a great way of making new friends and contributing to the school. Please contact me on 01823 672817 or email topside@tiscali.co.uk - it would be lovely to hear from you!

Academic Success - Update (Mr Thomas)

In the last few days all schools have received data that allows them to compare themselves with others across the country. Although this in itself is not the point, it allows us to check, that the boys at Brymore really are receiving a first class education. Some key comparisons, and the progress over the past two years can be seen below:

*National percentile rank relates to national position out of 100. So 90 means the top 90% of schools (ie the bottom 10%), and 10 means the top 10% of schools nationally. The lower the number the better the ranking.

Measure	2010	2012
5A*-C progress	91*	3*
5A*-C including English and Maths (progress)	86*	33*
Capped point score (best 8 subjects)	39*	2*
5A*-C figure (attainment)	55%	86%

Results in both English and maths also rose to the highest results the school has ever achieved and this was with the year group who were the lowest ability on intake we have ever had. Brymore is also ranked in the top 31% of schools nationally for value added scores according to Ofsted data.

Staffing News (Mr Thomas)

Mrs Close formally leaves Brymore over the Christmas period having worked here for a number of years as a cleaner and the founding houseparent of Kemp House. She has remained living on site this term and the boys have had a chance to say good bye and I know she will be missed by both boys and staff alike. We wish her every success in the future. Mr Lawrence also leaves the Science department, Mr Reid finishes his time as a duty member of staff and Mr Keily comes to the end of his contract as a gap tutor. Again, we wish them all well. Mrs Gemal begins her period of maternity leave in January and I am well aware she has a busy and exciting time ahead and our best wishes go to her and her husband. She will be replaced by Ms Jennings, who comes as an experienced Head of ICT and we have been lucky to secure her services. We will also be joined by four new gap tutors in January, who fly over from Australia and South Africa on the day the boys arrive back after Christmas.

Hillwalking (Mr Ashton)

At the beginning of term our regular Year 10 and 11 Hillwalkers returned to Rugby and Hockey activities and we now have a crew of regular Year 9s. This has changed the dynamic of the group and shortened the distances we travel. However, we now engage in new activities while en route: hill rolling, stick throwing, tree climbing and gorge walking (streams have an amazingly magnetic effect on our team); needless to say a great, muddy and wet time is had by all! See some of our pictures on the schools' Facebook page.

If you would like to sign up for Hillwalking, you will need a waterproof pair of boots, warm clothing and a waterproof however, places are limited to 15 due to transport.

Walks this year have included Kilve coastal walks, Steart and Steart Point including the bird sanctuary, many local and Quantock walks; generally topped off by a tea room or local shop. Thanks to Mr Austin for his historical guidance and navigation en route, not to mention his patience!

Looking forward to some snow on the Quantocks in January...Happy Christmas!



Brymore Lottery

1st	Mrs Mountford	£40.00
2nd	BJ Bennett	£25.00
3rd	Mrs Whitfield	£15.00

REMINDER TO ALL

Please ensure your son returns with all the required stationery, an appropriate haircut and the correct footwear (as detailed in the handbook on our website).

Saturday activities (Mr Thomas)

Over the past two years we have increased the curriculum time given to agriculture and horticulture during the week, which means that it was not possible to timetable Mr Willcocks and Mrs Garrod on a Saturday afternoon, reducing the range of activities on offer. In order to rectify this, it is now planned to introduce a regular garden activity after Christmas, along with the chance to take part in forest school activities run by Mr Ball. Details are still being finalised but it is hoped to have them on offer in the first week back.

Activities Programme

Over the past term we have been working to create a wide range of activities that the boys can take part in from karate to engineering, including football, volleyball, indoor tennis, rowing and boxing just to mention a few. As we look towards next term we have already planned a weekend rock climbing course available to all students, along with a caving expedition. After our successful Sports England Funding bid we have purchased £10,000 worth of bikes and equipment allowing us to develop mountain biking both in school on our track and up on the Quantocks, alongside the introduction of triathlon club. We hope to continue to improve our range so that every boy's hobbies and interests can be satisfied during their time here at Brymore.

The John Turner Cup

Pupils and staff competed in the inaugural John Turner Cup competition with a friendly 6-a-side football match played on a cold Wednesday night. This was a typical Brymore event that was supported and enjoyed by the whole school creating a loud atmosphere with supporters (mainly for the pupils!) surround all four sides of the hard court. The game started and continued at a fast pace with high levels of skill exhibited by both teams, with the pupils dominating the first half taking a 6-2 lead for their efforts. In true Brymore spirit the staff did not drop their heads and came back to score 8 unanswered goals to eventually win 10-6, but credit must be given to the pupils team who never gave up and continued battling to the final whistle. Some memorable moments of the match included some individual brilliance from Harry Barnes, Harry Orr and Luke Phillips dazzling the crowd at times, whilst Mr Kingston had his Teflon goal-keeping gloves on, Mr Baker showing commitment in defence blocking a shot with his face and Mr Coll attempting to hit the pavilion with one of his shots! The pupils will have another chance to get their hands on the cup next term when it will be up for grabs during a hockey match.

