

*The Folkestone School for Girls*

# NEWSLETTER

July 20, 2020

## End of Year



### **Dear Parent/Carer**

There can be no doubt that these past few months have seen challenging times for all of us. Around the world families and friends have lost loved ones, hospitals and health workers have struggled to meet demand and businesses, schools, normal life itself has been put on hold.

As a school I am incredibly proud of how our staff and our students have risen to the challenges. We have maintained a full timetable throughout – even down to an online enrichment programme to finish the year – and teachers and student development leaders have done their utmost to check in with girls, respond to emails, deliver lessons and to support and encourage the girls who each had to operate in very different conditions. Some girls will have struggled with access to computer facilities, some will have had greater levels of support at home – I know I have spent many hours supporting my own children with Maths. They are lucky to have me – though they of course would disagree! For other parents Pythagoras Theorem is just a dim, distant, and often unpleasant memory! We also owe all parents our gratitude for your work with your daughters over these past months. We know home learning has been a whole family affair. We know it has been tough as this mock-up ofsted report from the BBC News website illustrates!

School report



# Jeffrey Home School

Kitchen Table, Nr. Brighton.

Number on Roll: 2

**Inspection dates** April 2020

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires Improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Shocking	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Early years provision		Not Applicable	-

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an atrocious school.

- School leaders have ensured that the school's overall effectiveness has tanked since the last inspection.
  - ✓ Pupils enjoy learning. They just don't enjoy lessons. Except making a game where they throw a ball into various cardboard boxes. That one seems to have caught on, at least.
  - ✓ The headteacher is eminently qualified but is regularly seen wearing nothing but dressing gowns and underpants. This sets a very poor example to the pupils. Also, in the evening, both members of staff are often observed drinking alcohol in front of the pupils.
  - The school development plan lacks rigour. Our team did not feel 'get everyone showered and dressed by lunchtime' was sufficiently aspirational.
- ✓ Pupils are regularly late to lessons, and often leave the class without permission. Absenteeism is a daily occurrence, despite the school only having two pupils on roll. One child was found watching a Netflix boxset without adult supervision.
- ✓ The school consistently fails to provide lesson objectives, nor does it signal clearly enough in pupils written work that aural feedback has been given. So that's something.
- ✓ The Key Stage 2 pupil was recently caught playing Fortnite and claimed it was a Geography project. He was excluded for two weeks.
- ✓ One pupil in Key Stage 4 does not arrive at school until around 1pm, but when inspectors questioned him he could give no clear reason why he was not at school.

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School infrastructure has at times buckled under the weight of demand – as have national software packages that many schools subscribe to – Hegarty Maths for example!! It has undoubtedly been a challenge for all – for the girls, their parents, their teachers and for the school.

We have also had to provide estimated exam grades for every child, for every subject and to then rank the girls across classes, tiers of entry, year groups even as to who we are most certain would, say, get a grade 8 in Maths, second most likely, third etc etc. Trips that were cancelled and the process of insurance claims and re-imburement, free school meals and a hastily arranged and troublesome national voucher scheme, a new building just 7 days away from hand over when work came to a halt; all additional challenges. Furthermore, all the usual matters of business at this time of the year have also had to happen – just in a completely different way. So virtual rather than live open evenings, all the transition work for our new year 7 students, uniform shop and the challenge of supplying uniform that can't be tried on, appeals for Year 7 places, Shepway Test Planning for September – indeed all planning for next year yet with no clear steer until last week regarding what school would look like. It has then been a tumultuous year for us all.

However, at home there have been some positives with a chance to enjoy simpler pleasures, greater family time; more 'time' in general and a less frantic pace of life; time to reflect on what is really important. Similarly, in school we have had the opportunity to be proactive rather than just focus on crisis management. Our new build, Sherlock, is now fully complete bar some lampshades! Originally intended for the English Department and with their original classrooms all now freed up, we have also redecorated and re-carpeted all of those rooms too. We are installing a new science laboratory into room 602 and room 304 will become a new bookable ICT suite for all subjects to utilise. Prospect, which is adjacent to our new building, Sherlock, looked tired and shabby compared to its shiny new neighbour and so it too is having a full refurbishment. Our old library (now moved across to the new Learning Resource Centre in Sherlock) is also being reconfigured and redecorated as a new History classroom. Our bid to retain mobiles 905/906 as a standalone base for our Combined Cadet Force contingent has been successful and so these rooms too have been redecorated and refurbished in preparation for a new chapter in their life. A shipping container will be delivered over the summer break and installed with heating and lighting to complement this new CCF base with storage for tents and kit. So, a very significant investment in the school site and classrooms that will be lighter, brighter and a more pleasant environment in which to learn. Outdoors we have extended our cycle track and added extra bumps and jumps to negotiate and enjoy and added a surrounding hedge to the MUGA (games area) which in time will act as an eco-friendly wind break.

It also gives me tremendous pleasure to announce some new awards and accolades that we have worked hard this past year to achieve. We are now a fully fledged International School



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Alongside a focus on personal development and character education, our international outlook is equally vital to our ethos; we want our girls to know that as human beings there is much more that unites us than divides us. Alongside a comprehensive array of international trips and visits - Iceland, Germany, France, Spain, Cuba, USA, Nepal (Italy and Namibia planned but had to be cancelled) this year alone - we are also committed to working with schools from around the world *inside* the classroom. We already have partner schools in France, Spain, Cuba, Morocco, Nepal, Tanzania, Lebanon and Bangladesh. Our work in this area this past year, in particular, and our success, has only made us hungry to do even more. We have reflected upon and refocused our views that our curriculum should not just interest and inspire the girls, not just reflect and respond and be relevant to the world we live in, but that we need to be much more ambitious; that the curriculum we teach should give our girls the knowledge, the skills, the drive, the courage, the optimism, the wisdom and the values to change the world for the better.

For a comprehensive overview of our activity in this area see our International Outlook Brochure

<https://www.folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk/index.php/curriculum/international-outlook>

In recognition of our work to support mental health we have also this past year been awarded the Kent School Award for Resilience and Emotional Well-being



For information on the systems we have to support girls and indeed how our ethos and curriculum is set up to support emotional well-being from the outset, see

<https://www.folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk/index.php/information/mental-health-emotional-wellbeing>

We have also been awarded Teentech Gold Award as a centre of innovation & creativity in recognition of our STEM work ( - STEM being science, technology engineering & mathematics)



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This past year we have

- provided girls with access to TeenTech and other external, established, project based learning programmes which give students the opportunity to **make and create using science, technology and engineering.**
- actively encouraged and supported diversity of uptake – across gender, ability, ethnicity and social background.
- provided a supportive environment for creative project- based learning
- supported students who wished to become TeenTech Ambassadors to inspire others
- encouraged other schools who are not already engaged with our TeenTech Award or TeenTech City of Tomorrow programmes to register and participate.
- provided an opportunity for our TeenTech Award/TeenTech Ambassador students to do a short presentation to one or more schools, companies or organisations

In fact, four of our girls reached the national final for the TeenTech awards. They had to design something to make life easier, simpler, better or just more fun and had the opportunity to work with captains of industry and leading academics to do just that.

- University of Cambridge
- Kings College London
- Google AI team
- Lego - Marketing and Sales
- University of Kent
- University of Southampton
- Waitrose Head Office
- Sainsbury's Head Office
- ITAB - European Shop Fitting Specialist
- QinetiQ
- MS Trust
- Engie

The girls had worked on their projects prior to lockdown but had to submit the final projects in the weeks after lockdown began. We entered four teams of pupils into the competition. These teams went on to achieve one silver award and 3 gold awards (the highest level award given to any project). Of these 3 gold awards 2 were judged to be exceptional and placed into the national final.

Both teams of finalists which comprised of Isabel Macdonald and Lucy Davies from year 10 and Emily and Georgia Nickson from year 9 had to present their designs and market research in an online meeting to a panel of judges. Both teams won in their respective categories!

Emily and Georgia - National Award Winners (Best Research and Information Literacy)

Lucy and Isabel were joint winners of their category - National Winners (Business and Retail)

Seven of our students are now international STEM ambassadors & four are national award winners.

# Schools History Project

Our History students had some excellent news at the end of last week. During lockdown, some of them took part in an essay-writing competition organised by the Schools History Project in partnership with the Historical Association. The theme of the competition was, 'If 1066 was a pivotal moment in English history, what would be the equivalent elsewhere in the world?'

We submitted entries from KS4 to KS5 and I am delighted to say that Year 13 student, Laura Ellison came runner up, with a brilliant essay on the Herero and Nama genocide of 1904 and its impact on Namibia. The judge, Peter Frankopan, Professor of Global History at Oxford University, described the work as of undergraduate level and said he could imagine it being published one day.

Over 160 schools took part, so to come runner up is a really significant achievement for Laura and will be the perfect boost for her as she approaches the next stage of her academic career.

# Website development

As I mentioned in the last newsletter we have also updated and added to our school website and I would direct parents to revisit our home page – values and ethos;

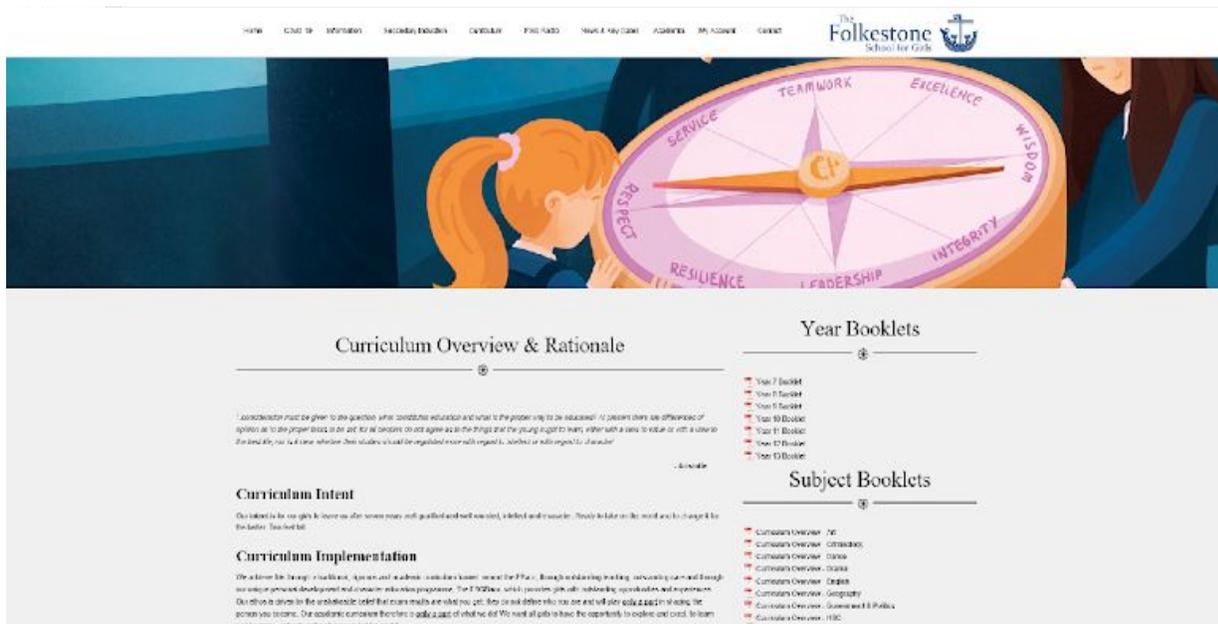
<http://www.folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk/index.php>

and our curriculum section which now has booklets for each subject offered and each year group.

Subject booklets offer an overview of the curriculum rationale for the subject and details as to what is covered over the course of a school career.

Year group booklets provide information unique to each year group, - subject content for that year, yes – but also general information on who's who, dates for the diary etc.

<http://www.folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk/index.php/curriculum/curriculum-overview>



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## Staffing Update

Congratulations to Mr Allingham who joins the senior leadership team from September as our new Assistant Principal. He has worked at the school for a number of years, most recently as Director of Learning for English, overseeing one of the highest performing English Departments in the entire country. We wish him well all success for his new role.

## End of Year

I am sure that, like us, parent's thoughts will now be focussed on **September** and what school will look like for the foreseeable future. There will be a full information booklet on this posted onto the school website shortly. An intouch message will alert all parents when this becomes available. In the meantime it would be remiss of me not to recognise all that has been achieved **this year** – despite the circumstances.

**This year**, despite Covid 19, our girls have had....

the opportunity to start their own business, to illustrate (and publish) their own children's book, to be international ambassadors for STEM, to join the Combined Cadet Force, to complete Duke of Edinburgh, to debate at the highest levels nationally, to work with industry and academics to design products to make the world a better place, to teach languages to primary students, to audition and be selected for the National Youth Theatre, to form their own publishing company, to compete in sports competitions, to learn new skills, to meet and make new friends from all over the world – Tanzania, Nepal, Cuba, Morocco, Spain, France, Bangladesh, Lebanon, to present their own radio shows, write, record and perform their own music, build and sell their own websites; visit Cuba, Iceland, Washington DC, (Namibia, Italy had to be cancelled but over 140 school trips and visits happened as planned), to have fun, make memories that will last a lifetime, gain 'cultural capital' in Ofsted terms – but fundamentally to just try new things, develop themselves personally, GROW as people, learn about and learn to value themselves, each other, the world around them – and to end up with the knowledge, the skills, the drive, the courage, the optimism, the wisdom and the values to change the world for the better!

A world leading, world changing school.

School finishes for girls with an online enrichment programme on 20/21/22 July – the 22<sup>nd</sup> being the last day of term. There is no possibility of any big end of year celebration events obviously and so I take the opportunity to thank all the staff, all parents and all the girls for their hard work and their support over this past year and to wish you all a safe and peaceful summer break – it might not feel that different this year but at least there'll be no home learning!

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## Examination Results

Due to the ongoing situation with COVID 19 examination results days this year will sadly be a virtual affair. It is saddening to not be there for the girls as they open their results and to share in their celebrations. We will however be available for girls for post results services and to discuss next steps. Details of this will be sent out shortly.

For now;

A- Level & Post 16 Results Day is Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August

GCSE Results Day is Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August

## Arrangements for the start of the New Academic Year 2020-21

The first major challenge of the year will be in welcoming all the girls back to school in an orderly fashion and being able to have time with them to disseminate key information about the new Post Lockdown regime whilst maintaining the bubbles that we must adhere to. Naturally, the girls will be keen to chat and mix, human nature really, and indeed they may not have seen each other for some 6 months. Bubbles however will need to be maintained. To facilitate this we need to take longer over our re-integration than in normal years. Girls should only report to school for the allocated time. Students turning up earlier than their allocated time risk mixing between bubbles.

The first day of term for girls in years **7 & 12** is **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020**. Students to start school as follows. Students report to the main school hall;

**Year 7** at 8.40am

**Year 12** at 10.30am

A free school dinner will be provided on this first day for our new Year 7 students.

The first day of term for girls in years **11 & 13** is **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020**.

Students to arrive in school as follows:-

**Year 11.** 9.00

**Year 13.** 11.25

The first day of term for girls in years **8, 9 & 10** is **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020**.

**Year 8.** 9.00

**Year 9.** 11.25

**Year 10.** 1.15

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## September

You can access a full information booklet on the logistical arrangements for school life in September via our school website – under the Covid 19 tab. This will be posted online shortly and an email alert sent to parents. We may need to update this over the summer break and so will resend an alert nearer to September. Please can all parents and students read this guidance thoroughly when it is available. Your support and compliance will be essential in keeping all in our school community safe.

The logistics are challenging and we will need girls and parents to work with us throughout this period. From school drop off and pick up – to ensuring that girls follow the measures and precautions that we have put in place around the school throughout the school day, we will need parental support in keeping **all** of us here at our school, and in our community of families, safe.

For me the biggest challenge though is not in all the logistics – they are complex but we can and will do them! We have a robust response to what is required. However, there is no doubt that sadly the school will be a different place for a while, limited in what we can offer in terms of hands on activities, sports, experiments, art, performances, shows, visitors in, trips out etc and it could be very easy to fall into a sterile and joyless environment. Clearly we want sterile! - but will need to find a way of adding our FSG flourishes - and doing some of the things that make our school unique and such a buzzing, vibrant, exciting and happy place to be. So, establishing the right balance between the things we need to do to maintain our physical health in light of this pandemic and the things that we need to do to support positive mental health. I'm sure that if any school can navigate this next phase and maintain a sense of joy and wonder, it is us. Much will be different but at the heart we are the same school, the same family with the same ethos and values and aims. The same desire to do our utmost to engage and inspire and to focus on more than just results. Next year we just need to focus on more than *just* 'safe' too. After all we want the girls to live again, not just survive. So as much as need to make sure that the corridors and classrooms sparkle and shine (for hygiene reasons) our broader focus will remain on making sure that our girls are able to sparkle and shine!

## ONE FINAL BUT IMPORTANT NOTE

Every year I write to parents with polite requests about school drop off and pick up. Sadly, these usually have little impact and Coolinge Lane remains a treacherous place for road safety.

The road is an exceptionally busy one. Compounding the volume of traffic, our main entrance also lies on a sharp bend and on a hill. We are increasingly concerned that students are able to cross the road safely and remind parents to **not drop off or pick up students from Coolinge Lane**. I ask for caution please around our school, our girls and Coolinge Lane in general. Cars parking/stopping here pose a serious threat to other road users and there are double yellow lines all around the area for this very reason. Yet parents continue to stop here. Despite our concerns, our appeals and staff presence we are extremely concerned that young lives are being put at risk.

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This year with Covid 19 and many parents preferring daughters to avoid using public transport the situation is likely to be even more acute.

This year we will also need to utilise all 4 of the school entrances for social distancing and so there will be 4 crossing points in operation. So, this year **an urgent notice regarding road safety**. We have around 1200 girls and around 150 members of staff arriving on site every morning from 7.00 to 8.30 with the vast majority of girls arriving in the latter half of this period. There is a similar exodus, for girls at least, every afternoon at 3.30. We also have Sandgate Primary School following a fairly similar pattern, 2 nurseries nearby and of course our other neighbours on Coolinge Lane departing for work etc.

Despite staggered starts, this year traffic is likely to be much worse!

I appreciate that parents of new Year 7 students are anxious to smooth the transition to 'big school' and are therefore perhaps picking up/dropping off for the first few weeks but please can I ask us all to be mindful of other road users at these crunch times. Can I also ask parents to remind girls to be similarly cautious when navigating the roads. Too often we see girls talking to each other in groups, on mobiles and/or with headphones, simply stride out into the road without due care and attention. We remind girls of this in tutor time/assemblies regularly but your co-operation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

## DO NOT drop off/pick up in Coolinge Lane.