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## **October Newsletter - A Bright Start to the Term!**

Dear Belper Families,

I am delighted to be writing to you as we work our way through a busy October here at Belper School and Sixth Form Centre. It's been a fantastic start to the academic year, and we are thrilled to share some of the wonderful developments and upcoming events with you.

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### **Merits & Behaviour: A Fantastic Improvement**

We are extremely proud of our students for the positive strides they have made in both behaviour and achievement. Compared to this time last year, we have seen a marked increase in the number of merits awarded across all year groups, with 38283 merits having been awarded at the time of writing. This is a direct reflection of the how well the young people in our school are living the Be Belper values in lessons and the school community. A special mention must go to Year 7, who have set a high standard with an impressive start to secondary school life.

Behaviour across the school has also improved significantly, with fewer incidents being recorded and a stronger sense of respect and cooperation in classrooms and around the school. Let's keep up this fantastic effort as we move through the rest of the term!

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### **Exciting Cultural Exchanges: A Global Experience**

We are fortunate to have welcomed visitors from around the globe this half term, enriching our school's cultural life.

#### **Japanese Exchange Program:**

Earlier this month, we hosted a group of students from Japan as part of our exchange programme with Toyota City. Our students learned a great deal about Japanese culture, language, and traditions, and we are excited for the opportunity to revisit Japan next year as part of the return leg. The friendships formed during the exchange have already made a positive impact on our school community, and we look forward to more collaborative projects with our Japanese friends. You can read more about this in the MFL newsletter which is attached.

#### **Chinese Dancers:**

We were also treated to a captivating performance by a visiting Chinese dance school, who brought their vibrant energy, stunning costumes, and traditional choreography to the school. Students from Year 7 enjoyed the opportunity to watch their performances, deepening their appreciation of the beauty and diversity of dance and performance from around the world.

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## Young Heroes Awards

The Belper and Duffield Rotary Club recently held their annual celebration, recognising the achievements of inspirational and courageous young people within our community. We are incredibly proud to announce that six of our students were honoured this year: Stanley, April, and Oliver from Year 8, Bethany and Bella from Year 10, and Dalaa from Year 11.

These remarkable students attended a special ceremony at Morley Hayes, accompanied by their parents and representatives from the school. Congratulations to all involved—your achievements are a true credit to our school, and we couldn't be prouder!

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## Belper Leisure Centre

Following a difficult year in 2023, we are pleased to share this Derbyshire Times news story, confirming that the Leisure Centre is now in a stable financial condition and is making plans for the future. As you will be aware, we work closely with the Leisure Centre and are looking forward to the exciting developments ahead!

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## Reminders for the New Term: Stay Prepared

As we move towards the half term break, it has been noticeable that some students no longer have the full set of equipment that they started the year with. Please could I remind everyone to replenish pencil cases over half term. Please ensure that students have all the necessary tools for learning, including pens, pencils, a ruler, an eraser, a pencil sharpener and a Scientific calculator, as well as any specific subject requirements. Being fully prepared helps students make the most of their lessons and avoids unnecessary disruption at the start of lessons. All essential items of equipment can be bought in the school library at lunchtimes for a very reasonable price.

## PE and Piercings: A Reminder

With contact sports featuring heavily in PE next half term, we kindly ask that students do not get any new piercings over the half term break. Health and safety remain our top priority, and all students must be able to participate safely in PE lessons. Any piercings must be removed for these activities, in line with school policy. Any new piercings should be made at the start of the summer holidays to allow time to heal before the start of the school year.

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## Upcoming Key Dates:

- **Sixth Form Open Evening:**

Thursday, 7 November, 5:30pm – 7:30pm

This half term, the Senior Leadership team and the Head of Year 11 have had the pleasure of speaking to each of our Year 11 students in one-to-one interviews. These were to discuss their preparations for the future and guide them towards their next steps. As part of this journey, the upcoming Sixth Form Open Evening is a key event. It offers a fantastic opportunity for students and their families to explore the wide range of subjects and courses available in our Sixth Form, and to meet staff and current students who can provide insights and answer any questions.

- **Year 7 Tutor Evening:**

Thursday, 14 November, 3:45pm – 6:45pm

A chance for Year 7 parents and carers to meet with their child's tutor, discuss progress, and share any concerns or questions about settling into secondary school.

- **Year 11 Mock Exams:**

Starting Monday, 18 November

Year 11 students will be sitting their mock exams very soon after the half-term break. They should have started their revision already. Their mocks are an important opportunity for them to prepare themselves fully as they prepare for their GCSEs.

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### **Looking Ahead with Optimism**


The first few weeks of the term have flown by, and we are delighted with how well our students have embraced the new school year. You will hopefully be able to see this reflected in the Attitude to Learning grades that you will receive next week. With exciting opportunities, events, and achievements already underway, we are optimistic about what lies ahead. Let's continue to build on this positive start and make this academic year one to remember!

Wishing you all a restful half-term break when it arrives on 25 October.

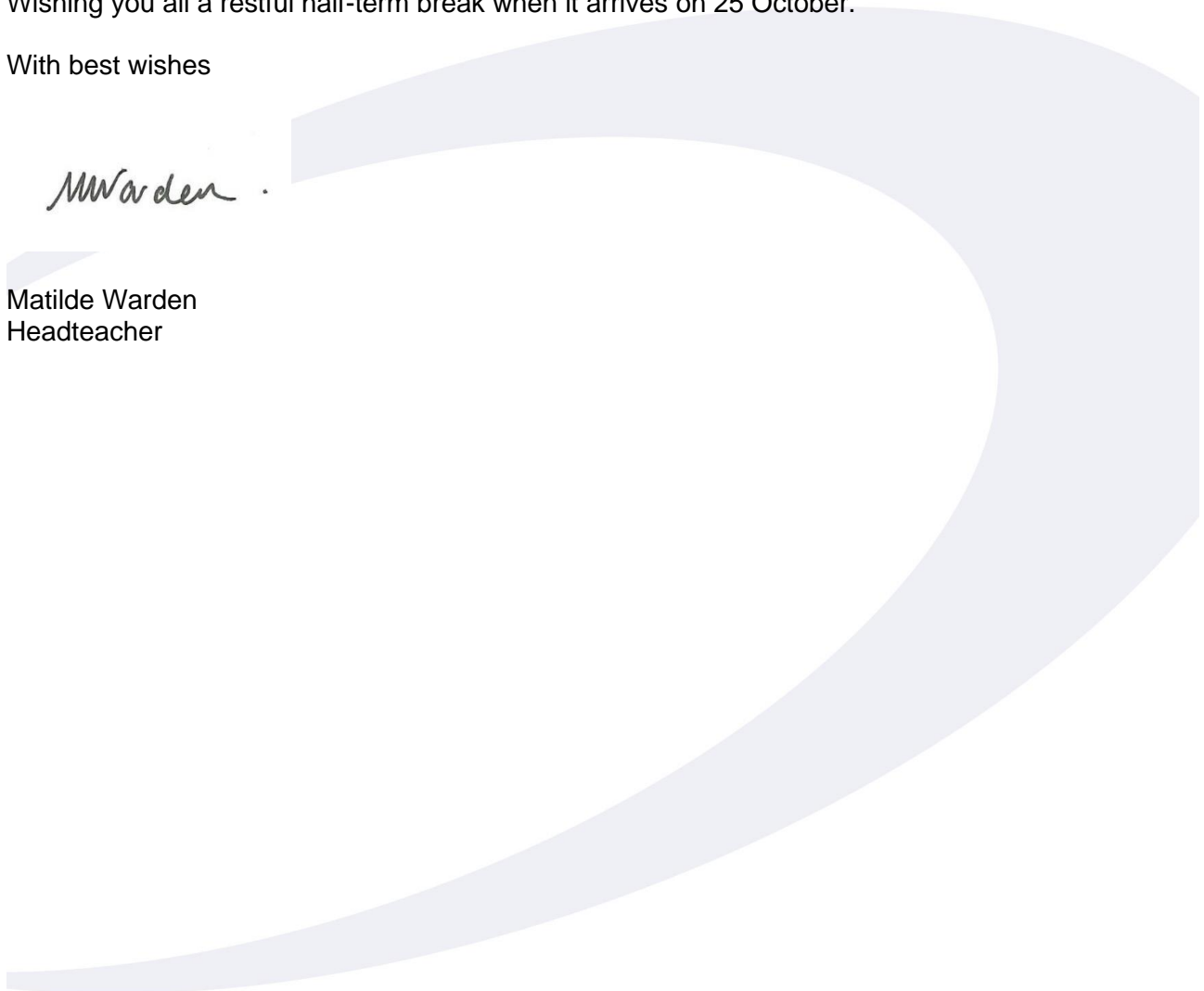
With best wishes



*Matilde Warden*



Matilde Warden  
Headteacher



# MFL Faculty

Here at Belper School we want our language learners to become confident communicators not only in a new language but also in their own language. We want students to be open to the idea of communicating with people from across the globe, celebrating differences and finding out what we have in common.

## Foreign Language Spelling and Translation Bees

The Regional Final at the University of Nottingham



The National Final at the University of Cambridge



Each year, our Year 7 classes enter the Foreign Language Spelling Bee and our Year 8&9 classes enter the Translation Bee. The top competitors from each class take part in the School competition. The top 3 school competitors take part in the Regional Final and the winners from the Regional Final take part in the National Final at Cambridge University. Belper School is always a strong competitor and we have students in the National Final every year. It is a great opportunity to see other language learners from all types of schools from across England.

# Languages Competitions

At Belper our students have the opportunity to take part in several competitions throughout the year. Years 7-13 can enter the Anthea Bell Translation Competition, run by the University of Cambridge. Students can really combine a love of literature and languages when translating a poem or an extract from a novel. Belper School has had several regional winners over the last few years!

The University of Nottingham organises a creative competition and this is one of our favourite events of the year. Students have produced stop-motion videos or short films, sung songs, composed songs and much more - all in a foreign language! We are amazed by the creativity and talent shown year after year!



Libby's performance of When I'm Gone in Irish Gaelic wowed the judges and Poppy's self-penned poem in French impressed the panel

We also love using our languages in combination with our love for other subjects!



2 teams of Year 10 students took part in an International Space Challenge. They had to design a space hotel, build a prototype and give 2 presentations: one about the science behind their design; and a marketing presentation in French or German. They had to work as a team and play to each person's strength so that deadlines could be met.



## Year 9 Trip



47 students from year 9 spent 5 days in Germany exploring sights along the beautiful Rhine river. We visited Cologne with its magnificent cathedral, had some free samples at the Lindt chocolate museum, enjoyed a traditional Schnitzel and had a super tour of the Bayer Leverkusen stadium. Other highlights included a trip on the Rhine river, a visit to Koblenz and a day at the Phantasialand theme park. There was lots of talk of planning return trips to Germany!

## A-Levels

Each of our languages A-Level students undertakes an independent research project as preparation for their speaking exam. They prepare a 2 minute presentation on their project and then have a discussion for 10 minutes where they are questioned by the visiting examiner. Students become experts in their chosen area of study and interests vary wildly. Over the past few years, independent research projects have been carried out on a wide-range of topics, including the following: Should Fritz Haber be celebrated as a hero?; The evolving use of non-binary language in French; The pros and cons of reintroducing wolves to Germany; Secularism in France; To what extent should German billionaires declare historical links to the Third Reich?; Haitian children given away to work as domestic servants.

## Confidence!

Whether it's taking part in a Spelling or Translation Bee competition in front of 100 students and parents in a packed lecture hall, delivering assemblies to whole year groups, being a Languages Ambassador and helping with a wide variety of requests within the department, or delivering a presentation to a full governors' meeting, we are proud of the confidence that Belper students develop and display due to their involvement in our languages projects. They are prepared to step outside of their comfort zone and take on new challenges.

Join our Duolingo club on Tuesday lunchtimes. Open to all staff and students

Come along to our FLSB/FLTB practice session on Thursday lunchtimes. Years 7-9

# Belper School and Toyota City

We have been so lucky to have been involved in a project to link educational establishments in Derbyshire and Toyota City in Japan. The 2 areas celebrated the 25th anniversary of their twinning last year. At Belper School, we have been involved in several projects with students from Toyota City.



We were privileged in September to host 17 students from schools in Toyota City. On arrival, families were treated to a magnificent performance of a song in English and Japanese by our guests. They were warmly hosted by the families of Belper School students and spent 5 days in school with us, experiencing normal lessons, as well as some bespoke Drama, Maths and PE lessons. During the week, they also has a tour of Belper Mill and visited to Kedleston Hall. The week was a wonderful opportunity for both Belper School and Toyota City students to share information about their lives and to discover what interests they had in common. There were many tears on saying goodbye, but we hope that this week was just the beginning of some lasting international friendships.

For the third year in a row, Year 10 students have taken part in conversations online with students from our partner school in Japan, Ryūjin Junior High School. Students shared presentations about their families, schools, interests and their towns and then spent the remainder of the time chatting. By the time the students had to say goodbye, there was lots of laughter and conversation was flowing naturally. These annual meetings are such a nice way to feel closer to our peers who are 5,860 miles away!



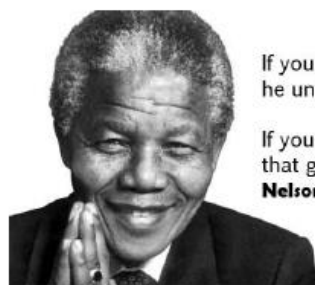
College students from Nagoya, near Toyota City, visited our 6th formers for a day of sports, presentations by the Japanese students and informal chatting (and snacking!) between students.

# Trip to Toyota City 2024



15 students from Year 10 travelled to Toyota City in Japan in February. The visit was supported by Derbyshire County Council and Toyota City's Board of Education. Students spent 4 days at Ryūjin Junior High School, each with a different class. Alongside their new classmates, they did lessons, had lunch and joined in with the daily cleaning duties. Students also got the chance to spend a day at Kita High School where they learnt how a traditional tea ceremony is performed. Whilst in Japan, the students visited the beautiful Korankei Gorge and made washi paper, as well as visiting a Kabuki theatre, the art museum and the Toyota car museum. The most challenging part of the week was attending a very formal meeting with Toyota City's mayor and delivering a presentation in Japanese.

This visit really showed students that having a common language to communicate really widens the connections that you can make in life. Many students have continued to learn Japanese since the trip.



If you talk to a man in a language  
he understands, that goes to his head.

If you talk to him in his language,  
that goes to his heart.

**Nelson Mandela**