

The Northern Echo

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

EDUCATION MATTERS

Healthy bodies and enquiring minds

The advantages of a balanced and broad curriculum at a boarding prep school

by Rob Morse

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SOMUCH of today's focus in schools, especially in the current climate, is upon assessment. Academics are, of course, paramount as this is how we measure success as children move on to public schools, GCSEs and A-Levels, IBs and degrees. But why do we send our children to school?

Surely our main objective should be to instil a love of learning and to cultivate values that will stay with them throughout their lives.

All too often one finds that the drive for literacy, numeracy, SATs, et cetera results in less time being afforded to the less 'academic' aspects of school life. It is, however, these activities that balance the school day. We spend our adult lives talking about work life balance yet it is equally, if not more, important when our children are young.

If we are to instil a love of learning and to equip children with healthy bodies and enquiring minds, we must provide them with the opportunities to develop these skills and attributes.

A broad mix of sport, drama, art, music, public speaking and similar activities mean the boys at Aysgarth are genuinely excited about school.

Yes, the days are longer than one would find in a day school, but this allows us to make the most of what

we have: dedicated staff who provide all manner of challenges for the children.

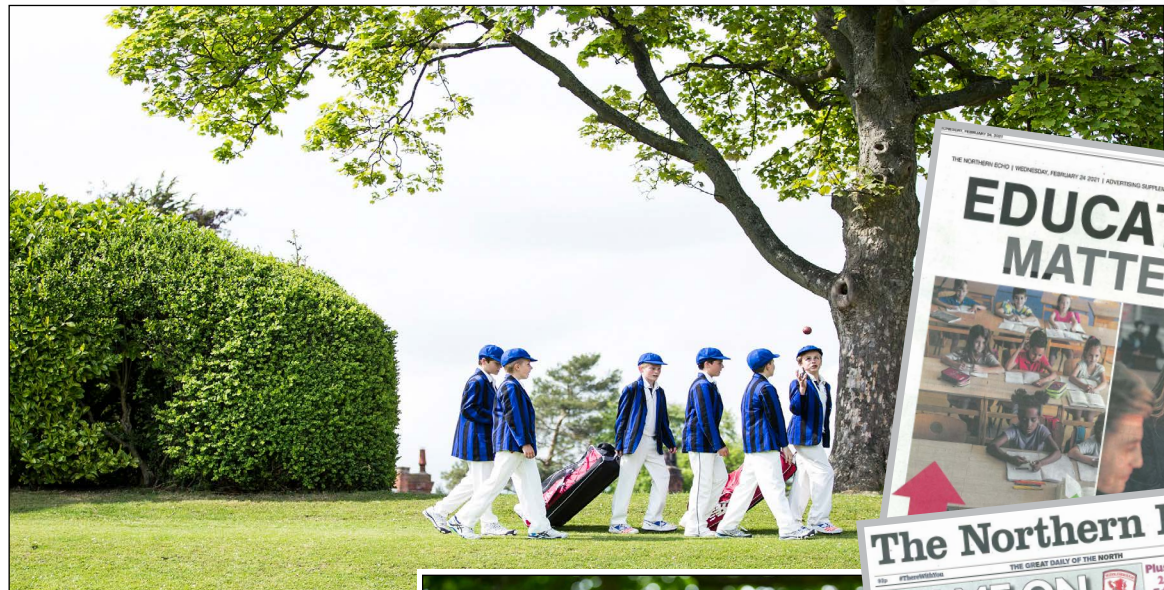
The type of staff you have to tell to go home in the evening and who will happily go the extra mile to make sure children are being challenged. Staff who know and see the children in the many different facets of school life. Not just in the classroom, but in the boarding house, on the games field, at the dining table or at break times.

There is much to be said in the old teaching adage that one 'wins one's battles outside of the classroom'. We are lucky in that we have few battles to fight, but it always pays to be well prepared!

We strive to find something each child can achieve and excel at (be it of an academic, physical or creative nature). As a result of the success each individual achieves they feel good about themselves, they 'walk tall' and, unsurprisingly, they perform better in each and every aspect of school life.

We have the time to invest in manners and common courtesies that are so often overlooked in the rush of modern-day life.

We spend time learning about eye contact, greetings, opening doors, respecting adults – and how important such skills will be as our children inherit the world in which we live.



Our pupils are confident, kind and well mannered. They are keen to learn and have a sunny outlook on life.

I may well be biased, but I truly believe the broad and balanced curriculum offered by a boarding preparatory school is the ideal start to life.

We are very much looking forward to the children returning to school soon!

