



The Westminster School

Safe, Happy and Learning Together

School Newsletter Autumn 1 2016

OCTOBER 2016

THIS TERM'S HIGHLIGHTS

Head Teacher's Notes

by Mrs C Hill



We have had a fantastic start to our year, and all of our pupils have been working hard and enjoying their theme of Thrills and Spills over the last half term.

On behalf of the pupils and staff, I would like to thank Mrs Sue Gough, who has served as our Chair of Governors over the last five years for her time, commitment and dedication to the School. Mrs Gough stood down as Chair in September, although I am very pleased to say that she will remain on our Governing Board as a Co-opted Governor. Mr Ken Ellis has been elected to replace Mrs Gough as our new Chair.

Thank you to all of the parents and carers who have expressed an interest in the role of Parent Governor. We will be in touch soon with more details of the next stage of the election process.

I look forward to seeing many parents and carers at our Pride of Westminster Awards on the evening of Thursday 24 November at West Bromwich Town Hall. I do hope you will be able to join us to celebrate our pupils' achievements

Coffee Mornings



Crafts by Westminster



Travel Training



Parent & Carer Coffee Mornings

by Mrs Taylor, Family Support Worker

It has been lovely to see so many parents and carers at our Coffee Mornings this half term. These sessions offer the opportunity for parents to meet and chat with each other and School staff in a relaxed and friendly environment.

This year, we are inviting a range of guest speakers to come in and talk to parents and carers during some of our sessions, and answer any questions that they may have. The Children's Dental Team came in to give a short presentation about their services and also gave a few helpful hints on how to help your child look after their teeth.

We also held a fundraising MacMillan Coffee Morning on 6 October and this raised a grand total of £80.43. Thank you to everyone who came and also to those who donated cakes.

Thank you for your support with these sessions. We hope to see as many parents/carers as possible over the coming year.



Message from the Chair of Governors

by Mr Ken Ellis, Chair of Governors

The pupils, staff and Governors would like to thank Mrs Sue Gough for her loyal service, commitment and dedication to the School throughout her time as Chair of Governors over the last 5 years. We are very pleased that Mrs Gough will remain on the Board of Governors as a Co-opted Governor.

Ceramic Garden

By Miss Parkes

Last academic year, a number of our students contributed to a project to create a Ceramic Garden for the Black Country as part of their work experience. Students designed and created their own ceramic flowers to be 'planted' in the garden, which has been displayed in various locations across Sandwell. The garden has received coverage on local TV and in the press over the past few months. A video has been put together by Creative Black Country, which showcases the whole garden. This is available to watch at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCQBmMR1PvI>.

Planes Class Learn About the Vikings

by Mr Bhogal, Planes Class Teacher

Planes have spent the first half term of the year learning all about the Vikings. They have learnt about transport and food amongst lots of other things. They have explored the topic through natural materials like mud and leaves which has been a good excuse to get messy!



Getting to Know 9.2

by Miss Hamilton, 9.2 Class Teacher

In our class we have been taking the time to get to know each other through having fun social time. We have been working in teams to build and create roller coaster rides and theme parks, using playdoh, zoobs and gears. We have also been learning how to turn-take whilst completing puzzles.



Crafts by Westminster

by *Miss Rogers, DT/FT Teacher*

Post 16 students taking part in our social enterprise business 'Crafts by Westminster' are celebrating their early successes!

They have been busy designing, making, taking personalised orders and selling craft items. There are plans to take part in local craft fairs and will be at the School's Christmas Fayre this year, we look forward to seeing you there!!



Supported Internships

by *Mrs Cleaton, Job Coach*

Although nervous about starting their supported internship at The Portway Lifestyle Centre, our students are settling in well. Despite having to make the difficult transition from the school to work environment and adjusting to the fact that others are depending upon them, the students are now part of the team working for the Service Users of the Sandwell Leisure Trust! All the staff at the Portway are very welcoming and supportive of our students. I feel very privileged to be involved in this exciting initiative. It is a brilliant opportunity for our students to be supported as they gain essential skills in order to succeed in the work environment. '

One student had the following to say about their experiences of supported internship so far:

'Before I started here I felt very anxious, but everyone is friendly at Portway. I still sometimes feel anxious in the morning, but once I get started I am OK. It is different from school here; I am more like an adult, I use first names for staff and I have got a swipe card to get in through the doors. I have done lots of cleaning. I like helping in sports best. I have helped with football, cricket and archery. After my internship I would like a job here at Portway, but with no cleaning! I might stay at school and get some more qualifications, I am not sure. I am at school 2 days a week. I am working on travel training, BTEC Vocational Studies, and English and maths.'



Open College Network: Skills for Life

by *Mrs Basterfield, Drama and OCN Teacher*

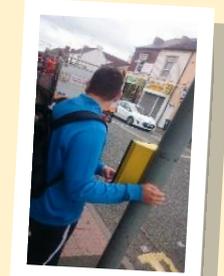
Bredon students have been working hard during this term preparing food for cold presentation which includes preparing sandwiches, cheese and pineapple sticks, cocktail sausages and sausage rolls. At the end of the term Bredon will be inviting their parents/carers to Westminster to sample the food which the pupils will prepare themselves independently.



Travel Training

by *Mrs Cleaton, Job Coach/LSP*

Students have been undertaking travel training. They have learnt about road safety and how to catch the bus, and have also been to the shops to buy groceries. Students have also been learning to plan their bus routes on the internet and how to use timetables at bus stops.



Learning about Diwali

by Mr Flowers, Deputy Head Teacher

Pupils have been learning about how Diwali is celebrated in the Hindu faith. It is also known as the festival of lights. Diwali is celebrated every year in Autumn in the northern hemisphere (in the southern hemisphere it is celebrated in Spring), and it is also a festival in the Jain and Sikh faiths. One of the major festivals of Hinduism, it spiritually signifies the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and hope over despair.

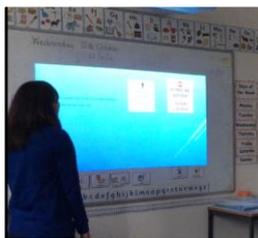
Pupils looked at the traditional dress worn by Hindus during the festival, and also got to create their own Rangoli art in the School grounds. Hindus decorate their homes and temples by drawing Rangoli art on the ground outside.



Year 10 and 11 Enrichment

by Miss Stewart

As part of their work for Enrichment, Year 10 and 11 have been working hard to think about ways to improve the environment both at school and in the local community. They have met with wardens at Saltwells Nature Reserve, interviewed cleaning staff here at school, interviewed and asked other students for their thoughts about how we can improve our School and also created presentations which the presented to Mr Flowers.



Walton Class Activities

by Miss Stewart, Walton Class Teacher

Walton have been very busy this half term!!

Vikings Attack

As part of their work in History, the students of Walton re-created a Viking raid in England. The students loved dressing and acting as Vikings on the rampage or frightened monks being attacked. All students had the chance to be Vikings and then Monks for the re-enactment.

Roald Dahl Day

As part of Roald Dahl Day, Walton students studied James and the Giant Peach and made models of the insects that travelled on the peach in the story. They were very creative and everyone enjoyed themselves.

The Westminster Guinea Pigs

by Mrs Thomas, Senior Science Technician

We now have two male guinea pigs at Westminster! Post 16 pupils will be looking after them as part of their Caring for Small Animals unit, and pupils will also have the chance to read stories and books to the guinea pigs in the School library. Pupils will be choosing names for them shortly.



Thrills and Spills

by Mr Lynch, ICT & Business Teacher

This term's theme for our studies is Thrills and Spills. In the first few days back after the holidays some of our pupils worked collaboratively to make their own rollercoaster cars. There were lots of colourful designs and we had the opportunity to have our photographs taken on a green screen background. This made it look like we were on a real rollercoaster track!



CLOWN PRANKS - A MESSAGE FROM WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

In recent days West Midlands Police has received reports of 'pranks' involving people dressed as clowns jumping out of bushes to scare passing school children.

We do not believe there is any physical risk to members of the public but we are taking these incidents seriously because they are causing considerable upset to families and children.

We remind all young people and their parents that it is a criminal offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour or disorderly behaviour to intentionally cause a person harassment, alarm or distress. It is an offence punishable by up to six months imprisonment and/or a fine.

We encourage both parents and schools to discuss with their children and students the impact such 'pranks' have on other people and the serious consequences of a criminal conviction on their future careers.

Anyone with any information about the 'clown pranks', should contact police on 101.

Notes and Notices

Dates for Your Diary



School Closes for Half Term: Friday 21 October 3.05pm

School Re-opens to Pupils: Monday 31 October 2016

INSET Day School Closed to Pupils: Friday 25 November

School Closes for Christmas Holiday: Friday 16 December 2016

School Re-opens to Pupils: Wednesday 4 January 2017

Go to the online School Calendar at http://www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk/term_dates for more information.

Updating Your Child's Personal Details

Please ensure that the School has the most up-to-date personal contact information on our system. In the event of an accident or a School closure we need to be able to contact you quickly.

If there have been changes to addresses or telephone numbers throughout the year please contact us 0121 561 6884 to let us know.