



The Westminster School

Safe, Happy and Learning Together

School Newsletter Autumn 2 2016

DECEMBER 2016

THIS TERM'S HIGHLIGHTS

Head Teacher's Notes

by Mrs C Hill



It was lovely to see so many parents, carers and families at our recent Pride of Westminster Awards. The evening was a huge celebration of our pupils' achievements and gave us an opportunity to showcase a wide range of our pupils' talents. Thank you for supporting us on such a special occasion.

We welcome Mrs Susan Harvey and Mrs Nur Jahan Khatun as our newly elected Parent Governors.

Mrs Harvey is new to the role and Mrs Khatun has been re-elected after serving on the School's Governing Board for a number of years. We look forward to working with Mrs Harvey and Mrs Khatun over their four-year term of office.

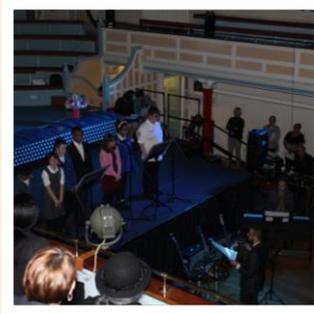
We are also very proud to say that we received an award from Legacy 110, an initiative to encourage pupils who have been on the First World War Centenary Battlefields Tour programme to deliver a community-based First World War Project. We were one of only six schools in the country to receive an award for a project our pupils put together.

Our pupils and staff have worked incredibly hard this term and should be very proud of themselves for everything that has been achieved.

We hope you all have a safe and happy break and look forward to seeing pupils back in School on Wednesday 4 January 2017.



Pride of Westminster Awards



Careers Award



Legacy 110 Award



10.3 - Living Independently

by Miss Edmonds, 10.3 Class Teacher

10.3 have been working on a number of different units for their Living Independently course.

We began our term looking at and recapping our knowledge of money, this included identifying coins, sorting them and making different amounts using a range of coins too.

We have thoroughly enjoyed cooking a range of different meals, learning everything from hygiene in the kitchen to using the cooker and utensils safely.

We have also been looking at personal care and hygiene, where we've looked at how germs are spread and how often we should carry out personal hygiene tasks such as brushing our teeth and washing our clothes, all of which we've had great fun completing these tasks in and out of School too.



We are Fundraisers!

by Mrs Gibson, PA to Mrs Hill

Pupils and staff have been very busy raising money for different charities this term. We started with Jeans for Genes Day, which was organized by Mrs Thomas, our Senior Science Technician. Everyone was able to come into School for a day wearing their jeans for a donation of £1. Over £100 was raised and this money goes towards funding a range of initiatives that improve the lives of children affected by a genetic disorder.

Our MacMillan Coffee Morning organised by Mrs Taylor, our Family Support Worker, was very well attended and raised over £80. There were lots of cakes and treats on offer which were enjoyed by all the parents and carers who came to the event.

We had lots of activities going on during Children in Need Day on 18 November. Mrs Turner and Mrs Allen were had to make their way back to School and complete a series of challenges during their journey. They were blindfolded and dropped off in the centre of Birmingham - you'll be pleased to know that they made it safely back to us! Mr Taylor and Mr Bhogal had their legs waxed and pupils were involved in a whole host of fun activities. We managed to raise an amazing total of £508.91.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the School in our fundraising endeavours. We are looking forward to taking part in more charity activities in 2017!



Message from the Chair of Governors

by Mr Ken Ellis, Chair of Governors

Thank you to everyone who took part in the recent Parent Governor elections. We are especially grateful to those parents and carers who put themselves forward as candidates for these roles.

The pupils, staff and Governors would like to welcome Mrs Harvey and welcome back Mrs Khatun as the School's elected Parent Governors. The Governing Board looks forward to working with them to ensure the very best for all our pupils and staff and are sure that they will enjoy their time with us as Governors.

School Receives an Award for Careers Education

By Mrs Hill, Head Teacher

The School has received a Gold Quality Award in Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) by Prospects. We are the only Special School in the country to achieve this award at Gold level.



The Award recognises the high standard of the School's careers provision. This is a significant achievement and we are very proud to have received it.

Coffee Cart

by Miss Gardener, Learning Support Practitioner

Our Post 16 students are continuing to enjoy their placements at the Coffee Cart in Jack Judge House, Oldbury. Our student 'baristas' are learning to make different types of coffee for customers coming into the building, and also undertaking other tasks such as cleaning and tidying the café area. They are learning lots of different skills and gaining experience in the workplace. They also enjoy meeting new people and learning to work as part of a team.

If you are able to, please do pop in and let us make you a cappuccino!



7to97

by Mr Taylor, Assistant Head Teacher 14-19

The School are working hard to give our pupils the skills and experience to find paid employment once they leave education. The CEIAG Gold Award recognises the work we are going with our pupils in this sphere. Only 7% of pupils with learning difficulties will go on to find a job after school, and we would like to increase that to 97%, hence the name 7to97.

As part of our 7to97 initiative, pupils have been involved in enterprise activities including making and selling popcorn, and making items in the Design and Technology workshop. Both popcorn and our craft items were on sale at the Pride of Westminster Awards and were very popular with everyone who attended.

The Deputy Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Susan Downing, one of our special guest at the Pride of Westminster Awards, was very impressed with the hard work and enthusiasm of our pupils involved in the 7to97 initiative, and took the opportunity to look at the craft items they had made and also talk to the pupils about how they were enjoying their enterprise activities.



Job Awareness Week

by Mr Taylor, Assistant Head Teacher 14-19

Students took part again this year in Job Awareness Week during October.

Post 16 students took part in the process of applying for job roles available in School. This involved filling in application forms and having an interview. There were also exercises in teamwork. Each student was successful in getting part-time job in School, such as Librarian, Classroom Assistant and Welfare Officer.

Our students are also continuing to enjoy their work experience placements. They are gaining vital skills such as timekeeping and working as part of a team, which will equip them for life in the working world after they finish their education.



e-Safety

by Mr Flowers, Deputy Head Teacher

It's important that we all work together to ensure that pupils are aware of e-Safety. Here are some tips to help keep your child safe online:

- If pupils are receiving mobile phones, tablets or laptops for Christmas, it's important set up the Parental Controls before they get this - this will help to ensure that your child cannot access inappropriate material online; <http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/parental-controls> provides information to help you set these up.
- Taking selfies is very popular—this comes with concern that your children may be sending **inappropriate selfies**. Focus on encouraging less sharing of photos and explain that it is **illegal** to share naked images of themselves.
- **Cyber-bullying can be devastating**—help by being actively involved in your child's use of the internet.
- **Online grooming is also a very real concern** - look out for changes in behaviour which may suggest your child is at risk:
 - wanting to spend more and more time on the internet
 - being secretive about who they are talking to online and what sites they visit
 - switching screens when you come near the computer
 - possessing items - electronic devices or phones - you haven't given them
 - using sexual language you wouldn't expect them to know
 - becoming emotionally volatile.
- **Sexting**—The term 'sexting' is used to describe the sending and receiving of sexually explicit photos, messages and video clips, by text, email or posting them on social networking sites.
- **Online reputation**—the internet has a good memory; it keeps a record of everything we do online. Encouraging your children to keep a positive online reputation is essential.
- **Self-harm** can be physical and emotional and something that young people can research online, parental controls are a very sensible approach to keeping your family safe online.
- **Accessing materials of an inappropriate nature**, that can be found online is a constant worry to parents. Keeping communication channels open and being very clear that online behaviour should reflect behaviour in the offline world is extremely important.

For further details follow this link: <https://www.internetmatters.org/>

Pupils Perform at Rowley Regis Hospital

by Mr Taylor, Assistant Head Teacher

Our pupils were invited to perform a carol concert for patients at Rowley Regis Hospital on 12 December. This was an excellent opportunity for us to give something back to our local community and showcase our musical talents!

The Chair of the Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust, Richard Samuda, also came to see our concert. The patients really enjoyed our performance and we were delighted to have been able to spread a little seasonal cheer in our community.



'Model' Pupils!

by Miss Home, English Teacher

Within the 'Reading for Pleasure' unit, pupils in KS4 are currently looking at extracts from 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.' One of their tasks was to create a character profile. Most pupils chose Willy Wonka, on which to base their profile. Rather than simply cut out a picture of him or draw him, pupils were asked to make a model of him using either plasticine or Lego. These models could then be used, further into the unit, for animation purposes.

Pupils in Clee are working towards an OCN accreditation in Living Independently. One of their tasks was to 'listen to and respond appropriately to others.' They have been experiencing a sensory story, based on 'The Wizard of Oz,' in which they met 'Scarecrow.' We decided that pupils could make their own scarecrow, using the given key props. Pupils were put into pairs and each given a task, in order to contribute to the overall creation of Scarecrow, himself. Pupils listened well to staff and their peers, alike; they responded appropriately, in the best way they could and Scarecrow, as a result, was very successfully made. Well done Clee!



Pride of Westminster Awards Evening

by Mrs Hill, Head Teacher

Thank you to everyone that was able to join us at this year's Awards.

Once again, we were treated to a wide range of performances, including musical performances, drama scenes, dance sequences and poetry readings, which showcased the wide range of talents of our pupils.

We were delighted to be joined by our special guests this year; the Deputy Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Susan Downing, who presented attendance awards and gave us an inspiring speech on dreams and aspirations, and Paralympic Silver Medallist, Rebecca Redfern, who presented a number of awards to pupils.



Legacy 110 National Award Ceremony

by Mrs Turner, Assistant Head Teacher & SENCo

Over 1500 schools have had the opportunity to visit the battlefields of France and Belgium as part of the Government's Legacy 110 project over the past two years. As part of the programme, schools that take part in the trip have to complete a project on their return to highlight the importance of remembrance to at least 110 people. Last November, the School embarked on a huge 'Trees of Remembrance' project. We planted a large Tree of Remembrance as well as 109 saplings to honour the 109 soldiers from Rowley Regis that lost their lives during World War One.

We were delighted and amazed to find out that Westminster had been chosen to receive a National Award for the project. Only 6 schools from the 1500 that took part were selected to receive this Award. On Thursday 8 December Michael Smith and Hayden Franks represented the School at the House of Lords where we presented our project to dignitaries and the other five schools. We felt very honoured to have been chosen as having one of the best projects in the country. We had a wonderful day in London and got to visit the Dungeons, Oxford Street and Leicester Square. We even did some advanced travel training on the London underground!

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the project and the Service of Remembrance events which contributed to us receiving this prestigious Award. We look forward to taking a group of students to the battlefields in 2018 so that they too can experience the enormity of the sacrifice made by those soldiers more than 100 years ago.



Notes and Notices

Dates for Your Diary



School Closes for Christmas Break: Friday 16 December 2016 3.05pm

School Re-opens to Pupils: Wednesday 4 January 2017

Go to the online School Calendar at http://www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk/terms_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.

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

New Sense Youth Club

Get Out There! Sandwell

sense
connecting sight, sound and life

Do you have a disability and receive DLA – or know someone who does?
Would you like to try something new and adventurous in a fun and safe environment?
Are you aged between 8 – 18 years old and live in the Sandwell area?

Come along to our friendly disability youth club where you can try all sorts of exciting things: sports, swimming, cooking skills, table tennis, playstation, sensory activities, music projects, dance workshops, film projects and our Christmas party! You can make friends, have fun and learn new skills – while being fully supported by members of Sense staff.

When? 5-7pm on Thursday evenings
Where? Summit Point, Smethwick, B66 1BT

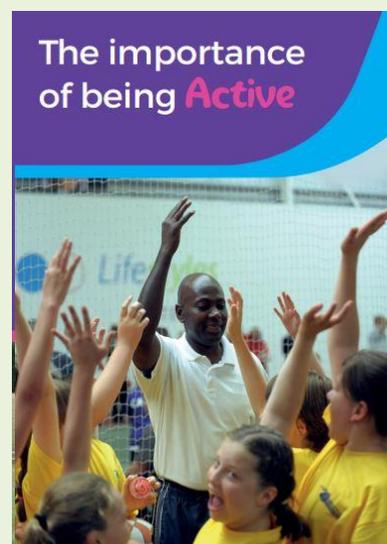
Sense is national charity that works with people of all ages with sight and hearing impairments. It offers information, services and support to help individuals to live, learn and thrive.
Phone: 0800 The Princess Royal

To find out more
Please contact: Lucy Howard, Social Group Coordinator for Sense,
Lucy.howard@sense.org.uk 07971 799792

The charity Sense have got in touch with the School to let us know that they are running a brand new youth club for young people (aged 8-18) in receipt of DLA who live in the Sandwell area. The club runs on a Thursday evening (5pm-7pm) in Smethwick and there are lots of activities on offer such as bake-offs, arts and crafts, playing on the Wii, going into the sensory room and going bowling.

Get in touch with Lucy Howard at Sense for more information lucy.howard@sense.org.uk/ 07971 799792.

The Importance of Being Active



The Association for Physical Education (afPE) has produced an information leaflet for parents/carers outlining the importance of children and young people being active. afPE recognises how important children and young people's physical health and emotional well-being are and the relationship between these and academic achievement.

A copy of the leaflet will be sent home shortly and the leaflet is also available to download from the School's website.