



The Westminster School

School Newsletter Spring Term 2015

MARCH 2015

THIS TERM'S HIGHLIGHTS

Head Teacher's Notes

by Mrs C Hill

We have had a very busy Spring half-term with a trip to Warwick Castle, activities for Red Nose Day and on 20 March pupils gathered eagerly in the School gardens to safely watch and learn about the solar eclipse.



Key Stage 3 pupils were involved in a Spanish day on 18 March - lessons included topics on Spanish cuisine and the Tomatina festival, Spanish dance and exploring Spanish music and musical instruments. Pupils really enjoyed the day.

Please make sure you keep the back page of this newsletter to hand as it contains details of important dates coming up next half term. There is also a note about lost property - please read it and help us to ensure we can return all lost items to their rightful owner.

Many pupils are looking forward to going on trips to Plas Gwynant and Disneyland Paris next term, and we have lots of other exciting learning opportunities planned for all of our pupils.

We are also looking forward to Year 9 Parents' Evening on 16 April.

Have a happy and safe Easter break and we look forward to seeing pupils back in School on Monday 13 April 2015.

Westminster gets the Bug!

We have more information about our online reading programme you can access at home.



Drama Lessons at Westminster

Find out more about Drama at the Westminster School this Spring Term



e-Safety for Parents

We have an update about how you can support your children keeping safe at home.



Drama at Westminster

by Mrs Basterfield, Drama Teacher

Westminster pupils study Drama every week on a carousel basis. The pupils really enjoy the social and practical aspects of Drama. I have seen some fantastic performances in the Drama lessons and pupils put a great deal of effort into their lessons.



The pupils in Key Stage 3 have been exploring the issues of the disappearance of Laura Williams. This unit looks at the effect such a tragedy can have on family and friends. Pupils become aware of how an audience can be affected by real life, challenging them to find ways of sensitively exploring issues through the medium of Drama.

Focus Group and Primary pupils have been using language and short stories to imagine and recreate roles and experiences investigating themes, issues, mood and characterisation through improvisation and role-play.

It is a pleasure and an honour to teach Drama at The Westminster.



Parent and Carer Surveys

Thank you to everyone who has returned the Parent and Carer School Survey and the e-Safety Survey. We are still analysing your responses and will be letting you know the results in the near future. However, it's clear that the overwhelming majority of responses are extremely positive.

The e-Safety survey will allow us to provide the right level of support for you and your child to help keep them safe when using the internet.

Westminster gets the Bug!



The Westminster School has recently acquired an online reading programme called Bug Club that we'd like to share with parents.

If you have access to an internet connection, your child can enjoy reading Bug Club books at home. Each child has a unique homepage that they can log in to, and your child will be given their log in details to bring home.

We allocate books to your child according to their reading levels. These books will appear on your child's personal homepages. Throughout the books there are quiz questions for your child to complete. When your child has finished all the quiz questions in a book, he or she will earn 'Bug Points'. By reading more books, your child will earn enough points for a reward. The answers to the quiz questions will be sent back to our teacher site so that we can see how your child is progressing. We will also be able to assign more books for your child to read if the virtual book bag is running low. When your child has finished a book, it will move to 'Books I have read' or 'Look again'. Children can read these books again if they want to, or they can choose new books from 'My Books'.

Look out for more details next term!

e-Safety @ Westminster

Helping you to keep your child safe online

There are many news items about e-safety that could concern you about your child's use of technology. We want to support you in helping your child to make the most of technology and use the internet safely.

There are some very helpful resources; the NSPCC have created "A parents' guide to being Share Aware - Helping you to keep your child safe online" outlining sensible advice on the following:



- **Talking** to your children
- **Setting ground rules** - be clear about acceptable online behaviour
- **Installing parental controls**
- **Setting your child a good example** online
- **Oversharing (sharing too much information about themselves)** - if your child has 'overshared' how can you help

We tell children it's good to share, but online it's different. That's why we're asking parents to be **Share Aware**.

The Share Aware guide can be found at:

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>

When you are talking to your child, take advice from **Parenting in the Digital Age** (<http://www.pitda.co.uk/>) keep the **3 Ws** in mind:

- **Who** - In the offline world, you want to know who your children are talking to and who they might be contacted by. It's even more important online where people may not always be who they seem, and advice received online can seem persuasive even when it's bad advice.
- **What** - Parents know children push the boundaries in the real world. Online is just the same. They can be led into doing things 'for a laugh' or because of peer pressure - so you'll want to keep yourself informed.
- **Where** - There are places you wouldn't want your children to go in the offline world, like a betting shop or an 'adult' cinema or nightclub. There are similar risks online.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your child's safety online, please contact Oliver Flowers, Executive Manager.

Useful links

Parental Control Links Childnet

<http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/parental-controls>



UK Safer Internet Centre

<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls>



Microsoft

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-gb/windows/set-parental-controls#1TC=windows-7>

Think U Know

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Primary/Tools/Parental-controls/>



Vodafone - Digital Parenting

<http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents.html>

CEOP (Child Exploitation on line Protection Agency)

<http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>



Notes and Notices

Dates for Your Diary



School Closes for Easter Break: Thursday 26 March 2015, 3.05pm

INSET Day (School CLOSED to Pupils): Friday 27 March 2015

School Re-opens to Pupils: Monday 13 April 2015

Year 9 Parents Evening: 16 April 2015

INSET Day (School CLOSED to Pupils): Friday 1 May 2015

May Day Holiday: Monday 4 May 2015

School Closes for Half Term: Friday 22 May 2015, 3.05pm

Lost Property

We currently have a lot of items of clothing being handed in as lost property, the vast majority of which is not labeled with pupil names. This means we are unable to return it to its rightful owners. We will be displaying all items of lost property at our forthcoming Parents' Evening for parents to check for any of their child's missing items.



We are only able to keep items of lost property until the end of each half-term, due to the sheer numbers of items being handed in. If items are not claimed, they will be donated to charity.

To minimise the possibility of property being lost, parents, carers and guardians are asked to make sure that all:

- items of clothing - coats, jumpers, cardigans, shirts, skirts, trousers and shoes
- items of PE kit
- Bags, water bottles, lunch boxes, pencil cases etc

are clearly labelled with pupil names. This will ensure that lost property can be returned to its owner promptly. Please also occasionally check that labels remain clear and visible due to the possibility of fading through washing and general wear and tear.

Many thanks for your help with this.

School Uniform

All pupils are expected to wear School uniform as listed below in Key Stages 2-4. Note that new entrants to Primary and Year 7 are requested to have a royal blue jumper/cardigan as part of a phased roll out of the new uniform.

Girls:	Skirt or Trousers	Plain black or grey
	Blouse (shirt type)	White blouse/polo shirt
	Jumper or cardigan	Plain black or grey
Boys:	Trousers	Plain black or grey
	Shirt	White blouse/polo shirt
	Jumper or cardigan	Plain black or grey

Post 16 pupils should now be wearing their uniform which consists of a Black Polo T-Shirt with the New School logo with smart casual trousers. Jeans, trainers, jogging bottoms or logos on clothing are not acceptable and should not be worn to School.

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.