



The Westminster School

School Newsletter Winter 2014-2015

JULY 2014

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Head Teacher's Address

by Mrs C Hill



I think we can all agree that this half-term has gone very quickly! Lots has been going on in School, including a visit from the Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Derek Rowley, on 10 February. He got the chance to see a School Council meeting in progress, visit classrooms, see our Forest School and new Eco Classroom and meet lots of pupils during his tour of the School, all of whom were taking part in our very successful Safer Internet Day.

On page 2 of this newsletter are important dates for your diary. Can I ask please that you keep a note of these as there have been some additions including 2 new INSET days.

I know that pupils and staff have been working very hard throughout this half-term and we hope that everyone comes back refreshed on 23 February, looking forward to what we have planned for the rest of the Spring term.

I wish you a safe and happy half-term break.



Have a safe and happy break from all of the Senior Management Team.

The NEW Eco-Classroom

We have exciting news about the Schools recent developments with the Eco-Classroom. This further bolsters the Schools agenda for Learning Outside the classroom.



e-Safety Day at the School.

We have an update about the work and fun of the e-Safety Day which was held on Tuesday 10th February 2015. For more information about the event go to the News section of the website or turn to page 7.



School Calendar Dates 2014 / 2015

by O Flowers, Executive Manager

Important dates on the School calendar can be found on the website at www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk.

The School will update the website and inform parents of any changes via the Teacher2Parents text message service.

Please note that we have added two additional INSET Days.

- Half Term Holiday: Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February 2015
- 14-19 Parents Evening: Thursday 26th March 2015 (starts at 5.45pm)
- Term Time: Monday 23rd February 2015 - Thursday 26th March 2015
- **ADDITIONAL INSET DAY: Friday 27th March 2015**
- Main Holiday: Monday 30th March - Friday 10th April 2015
- Year 9 Parents Evening: Thursday 16th April 2015 (starts at 5.45pm)
- **ADDITIONAL INSET DAY Friday 1st May 2015**
- Bank Holiday: Monday 4th May 2015.



Term Dates Website Page

Go to

www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk/term_dates for more information



NEW BEGINNINGS

For pupils the School will reopen again on Monday 23rd February 2015 for all year groups.

WEBSITE

www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk

Click on the important information tab.



Exam Dates for 2015

by E Louch, Exams Officer

In order to prepare pupils for success in the summer examinations, we have put together a list of the important exam dates. The School will be conducting focused revision and intervention to ensure pupils are fully prepared and can achieve their best.

As parents and carers you may be able to assist in preparing for the exams by helping revise or just simply managing their expectations.

We hope all who are taking exams will do their best and achieve great things.

The Dates for the 2015 GCSE Examinations are as follows:

- Science Biology (Paper B - P1) on Wednesday 20th May 2015 @ 1.30pm
- Maths (Unit A) on Thursday 21st May 2015 @ 9.15am
- Maths (Unit B) on Thursday 21st May 2015 @ 9.15am
- English (Unit 1) on Tuesday 2nd June 2015 @ 9.15
- English (Unit 2) on Tuesday 2nd June 2015 @ 9.15
- Maths (Unit C) on Thursday 4th June 2015 @ 9.15am
- Urdu (Listening) on Wednesday 10th June 2015 @ 1.30pm.
- Science Biology (Paper B - P2) on Friday 12th June @ 1.00pm

IT PAYS TO WRITE A LETTER!



Mayoral visit!

One of our P16 pupils (KH) wrote a letter to the Mayor inviting him to come in and see our wonderful school and the work we do. He was impressed with all the activities he saw and the way the School are improving the facilities.



Theatre Trip - Coventry

Many of the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 classes were lucky enough to attend the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry on Thursday 12th February. They went to see *Only a Day*, Martin Baltscheit's extremely funny new children's play, deals philosophically with issues of life and death. It was children's theatre at its best - *Only a Day* is not only very funny but incredibly moving with lovely performances.



New to TWS

by Naomi Walton, Key Stage 2 and 3 Assistant Head Teacher

Hello and thank you to all the staff and pupils at The Westminster School for making me feel so welcome in my first half term here. This will be the third school I have worked in and the biggest so far. I have previously worked as a Geography Teacher in a Mainstream Secondary School in Wolverhampton and a Transition Teacher at a Generic Special School in Cannock. I'm really looking forward to getting to know all the pupils here at Westminster. I hope to make sure that the curriculum we deliver in the Primary department and at Key Stage 3 in the Secondary department will ensure pupils have the skills and knowledge to prepare them for options and accredited courses the School provides in Key Stages 4 and 5.



I also plan to make sure that pupils learning experiences within school can be enriched by 'out of classroom' opportunities and cross-curricular activities. Finally I hope to continue to make sure that, as a School, we can provide the highest quality of teaching and learning that is suited to the needs of the pupils at Westminster School.

Super-here-o!

The School is continuing to run its supplementary weekly awards system for pupils who have achieved 100% attendance have the opportunity to be a Super-here-o for the week.



As Super-here-os, the pupils receive special powers such as free tuck, extra VIVOS, dinner served to their table and much more. Pupils who consistently get 100% will receive more tickets in the end-of-term raffle, where the prize is £150 Toys R Us vouchers.

PARENTS WEBSITE

We are currently redeveloping the parents section of our website. In the coming months we hope to provide information and videos to support Makaton and Phonics at home.

Go to www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk/parents

For more information.

AUSTISM WEST MIDLANDS

The School continues to collaborate with Autism West Midlands by publicizing and hosting events to support parents and young people throughout the West Midlands.



WEBSITE
<http://autismwestmidlands.org.uk/>



Vivo Miles

by Ben Taylor, Assistant Head Teacher

The School has had an excellent year so far building on the success of the Vivo Miles reward system. There was a noticeable increase in pupil enthusiasm and work ethic in lessons. I am pleased to announce that the School is continuing to use the reward system and is encouraging parents, carers and guardians to be involved in tracking the achievements of their child(ren) through the newly revamped VIVO website. Look out for a video on the School website showing how to use the VIVO system with your child.



FAST FACTS

115 Pupils

HAVE AT LEAST 90% ATTENDANCE SINCE THE START OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR.

14 Pupils

HAVE 100% ATTENDANCE TO DATE

89.2%

OVERALL ATTENDANCE FIGURE FOR THE SCHOOL SO FAR THIS ACADEMIC YEAR

A new look for the Library.

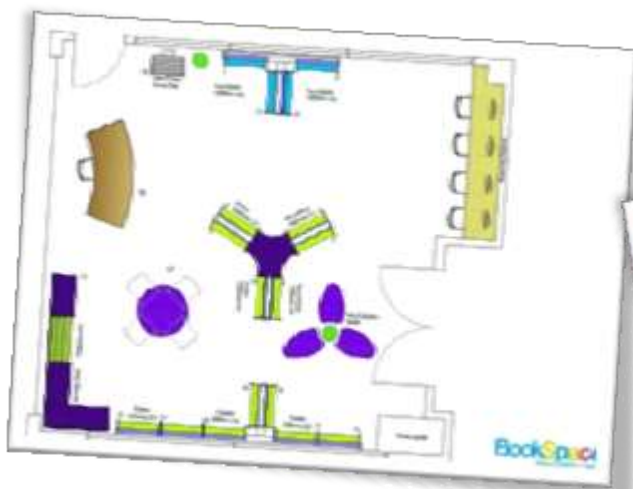
by O Flowers, Executive Manager

Literacy is always high on the agenda for the School and this year is no exception. The School Development Plan details how we aspire to create a literacy-rich environment for all our pupils.

As a consequence we have invested money in redeveloping the library to create a Learning and Resource Centre (LRC) that creates an excellent environment to reading, learning and researching.



There is a little more work left to do before the launch which will involve cataloging books onto the new system, providing training for staff and pupil librarians as well as some decoration. When we launch the new facility in late March 2015 we will be inviting the Mayor, authors and parents to come and marvel at this excellent space.



The Eco-House at TWS

by O Flowers, Executive Manager

We are pleased to announce that the work on the school's Eco-House has been completed. The rationale for the investment further bolsters the School's agenda for Learning Outside the Classroom.

“All children have a natural enthusiasm for learning about the world around them. But we also know they can become disengaged if their School day is rigid, routine and boring. If we listen to what children and young people say inspires them most, we can be left in little doubt that good quality learning outside the classroom should be part of our educational mainstream.” (Sir Al Aynsley-Green, Children's Commissioner for England)



At The Westminster School we are committed to ensuring that every pupil experiences high quality teaching inside and outside of the classroom and so the new Eco-Classroom is a fantastic new resource for our pupils. It is a well-designed, tranquil and inspirational space which will be available for all



subjects to use. It has been designed to have a minimal impact on the environment and to help our pupils to encourage others to think about their environment and help develop their passion for the natural world.

Our Eco Classroom is located next to our Forest School area. It has a wind turbine which will heat the classroom, a sedum (grass) roof which reduces rainwater run-off, lowers energy consumption and provides a habitat for a rich and wide variety of wildlife to enjoy.



TEACHING ALLIANCE

The Westminster School is collaborating with local universities and colleges to support the development of teachers in training. Last term we provided an opportunity for 27 trainee teachers to visit the School to learn about the important role that SEN Schools play in education. The feedback from all who attended was overwhelming and many of them approached the School expressing an interest in coming back to complete part of their placement. We provided them with an insight into literacy, phonics and the recent changes to the Statement to EHCs.

All who attended the course left with a formal qualification in Autism Level 1, accredited by the Autism Education Trust. The success of the event was significant as the National College have taken an interest in our work.

SPECIAL SCHOOL COLLABORATION

At The Westminster School we have been influential in bringing together an array of Special Schools within the Sandwell borough. The aim of this is to work collaboratively across a range of subjects to share experiences and work in order to improve professional practice and school process. At the moment the collaboration is focused on the changes to the assessment and curriculum.

The schools we are working closely with are: The Meadows, Two Rivers, Regency, Penn Hall, Longwill School for the Deaf, The Orchard School, Regency High School

With the continually changing landscape of education, it is increasingly important that schools work together to untangle the complex web of legislation and decipher how we can best implement these changes for the good of our pupils.

Notes and Notices

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.

Forest Schools

We have had a very exciting start to the year at Forest School! We moved sites in order to rest our previous site and a mini beast mansion has been built by many of our learners which is going to become a home to lots of different species over the next few months. We have also been lucky enough to have some snow on a few of our sessions! Now Spring is around the corner we are looking forward to new adventures and discoveries!



Pictured: Holiday Inn for Bugs and insects



UPDATING PERSONAL DETAILS

Please can all parents/carers/guardians 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 address/ telephone numbers throughout the year please contact us 0121 561 6884 to let us know or send details of the new contact details into School.

DATA AND INFORMATION SECURITY

As a School, we appreciate that mobile phones are an integral part of everyday life. Being able to contact your son or daughter is crucial in keeping them safe whilst they are not in your care.

However, the School also has a duty to ensure that the information in School about pupils (including pictures on display boards, images of them walking around the premises etc) is kept safe and secure at all times. Taking a photograph on a smart phone and sending it to someone else via an app or posting it on a social networking site is very easily done.



To ensure the safety and security of our pupils, **no mobile phones are no longer allowed in School**. If your child needs to carry one whilst travelling to School, they will be able to leave it the Pastoral Centre at the start of the day and then collect it at home time.

Safer Internet Day 2015

by O Flowers, Executive Manager

The School is promoting and developing the competencies for pupils as part of the Safer Internet Day 2015 held on the 10th February. The theme for the event was "Let's create a better internet together". As part of this, pupils took part in an Enterprise project where they created a company and a product promoting Safer internet use.

Teams created designs for clothing, computer games, drama pieces, videos, songs and raps - all of which highlighted practical ways in which pupils can keep safe online.

Our IT savvy pupils gave Sandwell's Mayor a lesson in e-safety when he toured the School.

Councillor Derek Rowley timed his visit



to The Westminster School to coincide with Safer Internet Day, which was marked with activities to promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology amongst pupils and parents.

The feedback from the event was excellent and all pupils left knowing ways in which they can keep safe whilst online whilst also having fun.

Events for parents

Look out for our forthcoming events on internet safety, which will include technical advice on ensuring the devices and internet service your child uses at home are as safe as they can be.

In the meantime if you need advice and support go to the e-Safety section of the School's website at

<http://www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk/esafety4parents>

We've got straightforward, no-nonsense advice that will untangle the web, and show you how you can be just as great a parent online as you are the rest of the time. The internet is a great place for children to be. Let's create a better internet together.



The Mayor left the school with his own e-Safety certificate, having learnt lots about the work the School is doing to keep our young people safe online.



The Halesowen News also came into School to document the event and have since published the story on their website and latest issues of the newspaper. For more information go to the Halesowen News website at <http://www.halesowennews.co.uk>

E-SAFETY AT HOME

The internet is constantly developing and evolving to become more innovating and creative. Websites and web-based programs can support children's learning and development by empowering creativity, facilitating research projects, interaction with peers and allow children to access information from around the world. Increasing internet provision in and out of school highlights the importance of protecting our children to ensure they are safe online at School and at home. To help you keep pupils safe at home or in other settings the School has put together some useful weblinks.

Useful Links



www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

Think U Know is aimed at children aged 8 upwards and covers texting and online activities. It has been designed by the police Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre.



www.kidsmart.org.uk/

Kidsmart has sections for young people, parents/carers and teachers on internet safety. The young people's section includes games and a quiz.



www.getsafeonline.org

Get Safe Online is a Government-backed internet security campaign. The website covers issues such as online fraud and viruses and there is also a good section for parents containing lots of information on staying safe online.

For more information support and advice

<http://www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk/esafety4parents>