



# The Westminster School

*Safe, Happy and Learning Together*

## School Newsletter Spring 1 2017

DECEMBER 2016

THIS TERM'S HIGHLIGHTS

## Head Teacher's Notes

by Mrs C Hill



We were very lucky to be visited by Paralympic Gold Medal Swimmer Ellie Simmonds earlier this term. Ellie came and gave a talk and our pupils also got a chance to put their own questions to her. She spent the afternoon chatting to pupils and letting them hold her Paralympic medals. We really enjoyed her visit.

We have been joined by a new member of staff - Mai the Collie dog! Mai is a fully trained Pets as Therapy dog, who is owned by Ms Green, our Maths Intervention Teacher. Mai will be helping pupils with their work within School on a regular basis.

Please can I ask all parents and carers to ensure that all items of pupil's property are marked clearly with their name. Our staff are able to return any items that are lost very quickly if they can identify who it belongs to. However, it is very difficult to return things which aren't marked, and this often causes concern for both pupils and parents. I greatly appreciate your help with this.

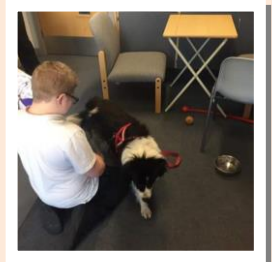
Have a safe and happy half term and we look forward to seeing pupils back in School on Monday 27 February 2017.



### Ellie Simmonds Visits Westminster



### Mai the Collie Dog



### Project Esme Hits the Headlines



## Ellie Simmonds Visits The Westminster

by Mrs Clarke, School Business Manager

On Tuesday 17 January, The Westminster School welcomed Paralympic Gold medallist Ellie Simmonds in to chat to the children. Ellie gave pupils an overview of her career to date and we got to see her in action on the big screen. After firing a range of questions at Ellie, the children learnt that she trains for 18 hours each week when she is preparing for a competition and has been swimming since the age of 4.

She has met a range of other Olympians and even a couple of pop stars, and shared with the children that she cries whenever she is really happy and proud. She also told us that she has 3 sisters and 1 brother (of which she is the youngest) and that her favourite food is cake!

Ellie brought in 3 of her 5 medals, hidden cleverly in socks, for the pupils to hold and feel. They explored the Braille writing on the medals and shook them to hear the sounds they make. It was a shock how heavy the medals were! Ellie took the time to speak to all pupils, gaining lots of hugs, handshakes and smiles, and posing for photographs.

Thank you Ellie, our children thoroughly enjoyed your visit and you have truly inspired the students at Westminster to be all that they can be.



## Project Esme Update

by Mr Taylor, Assistant Head Teacher 14-19

Post 16 students have been involved in a project to supply parents of seriously ill children with refreshments in hospital. They have been donating refreshments for parents on the Children's ward to support them through their difficult time. Items have included coffee, tea, biscuits and fresh fruit. Students travel on public transport and go shopping at Tesco before delivering the items to the Parents' Kitchen on the Children's Ward at Sandwell Hospital. 'Project Esme' will run all year and we are hoping many parents and family members will benefit. Special thanks to Mrs Cleaton who is running the project.



The project was featured in the Sandwell Chronicle on 2 February 2017.

## Online Home Learning

by Miss C Stubbs, Deputy Head Teacher



We are always striving to provide our pupils with the best opportunities to extend and embed their learning. As part of this we have renewed the School access to the following online learning tools that will support your child in their basic skills through technology.

**Bug Club** - Bug Club is the only whole-school reading programme that brilliantly combines an online reading world with fantastic print books, and assessment tools.

**Purple Mash** - an award-winning website for pupils at the early stages of learning. It enables children to explore and enhance their knowledge in a fun and creative way.

**EducationCity** - an award-winning on-line resource, used in over 15,500 schools and in many thousands of homes. Research in schools has shown that students' exam results improve as a result of its use.

These products are available to all pupils in the School for use at home. If you would like a reminder of your password and logon details, or further information on how to use the products, please contact Steph Withington (Assistant Head Teacher for KS2&3).

## Design and Technology

by Miss Rogers, DT/FT Teacher

Our theme in Design and Technology this term has been Alice in Wonderland. Pupils have been busy making models, using tools and machinery, and developing their skills in CAD/CAM in our workshop.



## Painting and Decorating

by Mr Hill, Creative Arts TLR

A group of Post 16 students have chosen to study for the OCN Level 1 qualification "Applying Paint Systems by Brush and Roller". Each Thursday, they group are learning the techniques to apply emulsion and gloss paint with rollers and brushes using our painting and decorating practice wall, which was provided by Bell Group. Students are visiting a local hardware store in Blackheath to select and buy the appropriate materials for their decorating sessions. The group also took part in a workshop with a professional from Bell Group to learn the basics, and each week the pupils will be applying the skills they have learnt becoming more confident, independent for the world of work when they leave school.



## School Book Fair

by Mrs Brewin, Librarian

Thank you for supporting our School Book Fair, which took place before the Christmas break. We raised a total of £359.98. We hope the pupils are enjoying reading their books!



## Terrific Text Friday

by Mr Taylor, Assistant Head Teacher

Teachers will be identifying a pupil in their class each week to receive a "Well Done" text at home. As part of Terrific Text Friday, pupils who have been amazing during the week will have a text sent to their parents/carers and receive a special certificate to keep. Parents and carers should look out for texts on Friday afternoons!

**Terrific Text  
Friday**



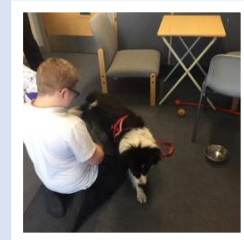
## Welcoming Mai the Collie Dog

by Mrs Gibson, PA to the Head Teacher

Pupils were very pleased to welcome Mai the Collie dog to their lessons at Westminster. Mai is a fully trained Pets as Therapy dog, owned by Ms Green, our Maths Interventions teacher.

Mai will be helping small groups of pupils during their intervention sessions, and we believe that working with Mai will allow pupils to develop and enhance their social interaction skills.

Permission will be obtained from parents/carers before any children work with Mai.



# Crafty Coffee Morning

by Mrs Taylor, Family Support Worker

Thank you to all the parents and carers that were able to join us for our Valentine's Craft Coffee Morning on 14 February. We all enjoyed a relaxing time creating Valentine cards whilst chatting and enjoying coffee and biscuits.

We hope you are able to join us for one of our forthcoming coffee mornings, which we run regularly within School. They offer an opportunity for parents and carers to chat to staff and each other in a friendly, relaxed environment. We also have guest speakers giving talks and advice on a wide range of topics. Previous speakers have included staff from the Children's Dental Health Team and staff from the National Citizen Service (NCS).

Family members and siblings are also welcome to attend coffee mornings.

If you would like more information, please contact me at the School.



## Notes and Notices

### Dates for Your Diary



School Closes for Half Term: Friday 17 February 2017 3.05pm

School Re-opens to Pupils: Monday 27 February 2017

School Closes for Easter: Friday 7 April 2017

School Re-opens to Pupils: Monday 24 April 2017

Go to the online School Calendar at [http://www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk/term\\_dates](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.

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

## LOST PROPERTY

How to get it back

### NAME EVERYTHING

You can use:

Permanent/Laundry Marker  
Name Tapes

Don't forget to mark:

Outdoor coats, glasses cases, swimming kit and towels, trainers, wellingtons, all other clothing and sports equipment

## School Uniform Bank/Books for the Library

by Mrs Brewin, Librarian

Thank you to everyone who responded to our previous school uniform bank donation request. We received many good quality donations of items. However, our bank of clothes is now running low and we are looking for donations of good quality used or new school uniform, especially boys' trousers for age 12 upwards. If you are able to help, please contact Mrs Taylor, our Family Support Worker.

We are also looking for donations of good quality children's books for our Library. Although our library is very well stocked, our pupils are very avid readers and we would be very grateful for any donations.

# Forthcoming Trips and Visits

by Mr Taylor, Assistant Head Teacher

Over the next term and a half, we are planning a varied programme of educational visits and trips for our pupils. A number of these are listed below. These activities will support and enrich our curriculum, help to develop pupils' understanding and skills in a range of subject areas, develop pupils' confidence and personal growth and give them wide range of exciting experiences.

**Frank Chapman Centre**



**Digbeth Arts Market**



**SEA Life Centre**



**Plas Gwynant**



**Warwick Castle**



**Library of Birmingham**



**RAF Cosford**



**Lickey Hills**



**Hole Farm Trekking**



**Tamworth Snowdome**



**Drayton Manor**

