



# ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER MARCH 2024 – NO. 197

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**WISHING YOU A VERY HAPPY EASTER**

## TESCO BLUE COUNTER CAMPAIGN

Thank you to everyone who helped to contribute towards the above scheme, which was being run at the Walsall Extra store. We have been informed that we came 3rd in the competition which means that the school will benefit from £500 to use towards improving our outdoor environment. A big thank you to Ms Shaw, Food Technology Teacher, who patiently fed all of our blue counters into the collection pot when she visited the store to do the school's weekly shopping.

## WORLD BOOK DAY—6.3.24



It was fantastic to see so many pupils and staff dressed up to celebrate World Book Day. We had a wide range of characters roaming the corridors - Oompa Loompas, Billionaire Boy and Pingu to name just a few! The cast of 101 Dalmatians descended on pathways, transition was full of Roger Hargreaves creations and The Midnight Gang turned up in nurture.



During Friday's assembly, we played a game of 'Masked Reader' where pupils were tasked with deciphering which member of staff was hiding behind a disguise (whether real or virtual) whilst reading an extract of their favourite book. Well done to Kerry Bowen, teaching assistant, whose horse head kept us guessing!



Don't forget to spend your World Book Day tokens and claim that free book before Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March! Remember, if you think you don't like reading, you just haven't found the right book yet.



There are more photographs available on the school website, photo gallery page. Report by Ms Clarke, English Teacher

## SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

A meeting of the school ambassadors took place on 12th March. As always members behaved impeccably and items discussed included discussions around ICT, attendance, staffing, the timetable and mixed group teaching, health and safety and the views of pupils around 'making school belonging a reality in Walsall' which was posed by Mr Cross, Headteacher.

Another idea discussed was to feature a pupil under the spotlight in our school newsletters. This will be trialled with names in a box and the selected pupil having the option to decline if not comfortable with taking part.

A full set of the minutes are available on our school website, pupil ambassadors page.

## UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month our featured member of staff under the spotlight is Adam Mitchell, teaching assistant.



**How long have you worked at Elmwood?** Coming up to 5 years. I can't believe it's gone so fast.

**What do you love about your job?** I love how diverse my days can be. One day I'm taking a group boxing, the next I'm at construction, then I'm at animal care looking after exotic animals. The range of opportunities that the pupils and staff get to experience at Elmwood is amazing!

**What films have you watched recently?** Lots of Disney films but mostly Frozen ...on repeat. The joys of having a 3 year old daughter.

**Favourite Holiday?** I went on a road trip with friends to drive on the Nürburgring race track in Germany. We bought a track car specifically for the trip, raced it around the circuit, drove home and sold it on.

**Tell us something that people would be surprised to hear?** Most people already know that I'm an adrenaline junkie when it comes to my hobbies. I snowboard regularly, rollerblade and have competed at race tracks all around the UK in drifting championships. I was also a driver for a company that used to do passenger laps on drift car experience days.

### SWIMMING



This spring term, Year 7 pupils dived into the world of swimming exploring different strokes, floats to



support their technique, treading water and lifeguarding. Every Tuesday afternoon pupils have travelled to the local swimming baths and taken part in a 6-week swimming experience in which they have learnt basic swimming techniques, ways to float, water safety skills and the importance of keeping active.

Whether you're dipping your toes in the water for the first time or honing your skills, these lessons have provided a valuable opportunity to enhance our pupils' swimming abilities whilst displaying bravery and resilience within the water. All pupils have gained a love for both being active and swimming and have shared with staff they hope to carry on with swimming lessons and further their development by transferring their new and improved skills outside of Elmwood in either a club or time spent with family and friends. Well done to all pupils. Report by Ms Diponio, Teacher



### Easter creations



Craft club proved popular on Friday 15th March when 10 pupils chose to make some 'eggstraspecial' Easter themed

items. Lily-Mae in Year 9 proudly came to show off her basket of goodies before leaving school; the contents were no doubt enjoyed later.



A big thank you to Shelli George, teaching assistant, who led the class and comes up with such creative ideas. The previous week pupils made some lovely paper flowers ahead of mothering Sunday.

Well done to all who took part and we look forward to seeing some future projects.



#### STAFFING NEWS

On Friday 15th March, Olivia Appleyard and Paulina Kisiecka, SCITT students ended their time at the school. Both students, who are specialising in PE and Maths, have been based at the school since January 2024 and have helped to support in these departments. We wish both every success with their continued studies and a big thank you for your input into the community during your placement.

We will be saying goodbye to Tracy Jackson, teaching assistant, at the end of term when she moves onto pastures new. Tracy has been a joy to work with and her bubblyness will be greatly missed. We wish Tracy every success in her new role.

Unfortunately, Hilary Shaw, Food Technology Teacher, is still poorly and we send Hilary our very best wishes for a speedy recovery.

#### POSITIVE FEEDBACK

On 12th March, Simon Titchener, from the SEND Team at the Local Authority, visited the school. Following his meeting with Mr Cross, Headteacher, and a tour of the school, the following feedback was received.

*I wanted to email to say thank you for your time today and for allowing me to have a good look at Elmwood.*

*I was very impressed with everything that I saw. Very engaged students, proud of what they are accomplishing, and incredibly positive staff. The environment was very stimulating and of high quality, for all areas of the school. Obvious transition existed, from area to area, and yet each area followed and replicated the previous one to reduce the affect of change on the students. The bespoke nature of some of the student groups demonstrated the extent you go to in order to meet student's needs and the student outcomes you described come as no surprise given the provision on offer.*

*I feel the young people with you are privileged to attend Elmwood, and I offer you my congratulations on achieving such an outstanding, student focussed school.*

A very positive report and well done to all staff/pupils for demonstrating our school values and for showcasing Elmwood in such a good light.

#### FORMER PUPILS SUCCESS

We have recently received glowing reports for two of our 2023 Year 11 leavers, Riley Higgs and Callum Wilkinson from their tutors. It is always lovely to hear that both boys have settled into their post 16 provision and continuing the good work that they showcased during their time at Elmwood.

Comments include:

*Callum is a polite, friendly student who has a positive attitude towards college. He appears to have settled into Level 3 well, particularly after a group move. He arrives to lessons on time and ready to learn, making constructive notes throughout. He will volunteer some answers in discussion and will happily discuss his work 1 to 1 with teachers. In practical he has worked with a range of animals and is hardworking and conscientious of the animal's welfare throughout. His attendance currently sits at 100% which is fantastic and shows commitment to his studies*

*Riley has adapted to the workshop's standard; he understands this is a mirror of the working environment he wants to join as a vehicle mechanic with challenges imposed, he has taken them in his stride.*

These commendations are testament to the work carried out by staff and we hope both boys continue to be successful at their placements.



## SEND Science Day @ Phoenix Academy

on 8.3.24

Pupils from Year 7 attended a science day, hosted jointly by Phoenix Academy and Elmwood science department. The day coincided with National Science Week. The learners had many experiences, including



learning about life on the International Space Station, in a space dome and holding many different types of animals. Outside in the forest school area they learnt about energy transfers and the day ended with them making and launching air powdered rockets. Many thanks to Phoenix Academy for hosting and to Elmwood school fund for its generous financial support and finally to the Year 7 staff for supporting the day. More photos are available on the school website, photo gallery page. Report by Dr A Price, Curriculum lead for Science

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY—8.3.24

The above event was marked by a very special assembly organised by Leon Donaldson, Teaching Assistant when the 'ladies of Elmwood' were posed three questions which was filmed and shared with staff and pupils.

Mr Cross, Headteacher, stated '*thank you for compiling such a powerful piece of work that was extremely moving as well as offering an insight into the fantastic ladies that we are blessed to have at Elmwood. I am extremely proud to call you my colleagues and you offer so much more than just the schools core values, aims and vision. You have demonstrated what it takes to be great!!!*'.

The contributions and acknowledgements from male staff and a number of pupils was heartwarming and lovely to hear—a very powerful piece of work and thank you to everyone who took part. Elmwood School and its staff are indeed very special.

### 8B CHARITY SLEEP OUT

8b are going to be participating in a camp out to help raise money and awareness for the homeless. They will be putting up a tent, cooking their own food and sleeping out in the elements. Pupils will be facing their fears by being away from home, being around bugs, being out in the cold or the dark and some pupils have never been camping before. 8b will be living into some of the core Elmwood values, such as care for others, as well as some out and about virtues - altruism, kindness, nature connection, trust, resilience, respect and so many more. They will be remaining on school site on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April and camp out ahead of coming into school on Friday for a normal school day. We are asking if you would kindly sponsor us to help raise a good amount of money. Pupils will start visiting bases to ask people if they would like to sponsor them, we just ask that all money pledged is in by Tuesday 30th April. We also have the sponsorship forms in 8b if anyone gets missed. Any donations and sponsors will be welcome.

Please help us save the lives of the homeless by donating money. Report written by the pupils of 8b supported by Ms Askins, Class Teacher

### Archery award logo

Following Mr Whittaker's recent involvement with Archery Active we have now received our plaque, which is proudly on display.



We will also be celebrating this award on our school letterhead and website.

Thanks to Mr Whittaker promoting this activity it is hoped that more young people will take up this sport.

Mr Whittaker was aptly presented with a Mr Adventure character and book title as part of our World Book Day event. A big thank you to Shelli George, TA, who organised these brilliant Mr Men characters, they were amazing.

### WHAT A WHOPPER



Ryan in Year 8a enjoys foraging and in particular for mushrooms (thanks to Mr Hawkes) and proudly came in to show what he found in the school grounds.

Ryan's knowledge on the world of fungi is really coming on and he was able to inform the office staff that it was a horseshoe mushroom he had discovered.

What a find and well done Ryan, it is always lovely to see what you have found.