



ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2023 – NO. 192

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THE END OF AN ERA

We are sad to say that Rose Burley, Governor, has stepped down from her role as a co-opted governor at the end of September. Rose has been involved with Elmwood School from back in 2007 when she was part of the temporary governing body ahead of the school officially opening in January 2008.

Over the past 15 years Rose has been a great asset to the team and supported the school through many Ofsted inspections as well as attending functions/events whenever possible.



During her time as a Governor, Rose has held the post of both Chair and Deputy Chair of Governors alongside being an elected Walsall Counsellor and serving as both Deputy Mayor and then Mayor of Walsall. Despite being a very busy lady, Rose has always tried to support the school whenever possible.



A special farewell event has been organised for Rose in November but the door will always be open for her to pop by and visit - we send her our very best wishes for the future.

Thank you Rose, you will be sadly missed.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING EVENT



On Thursday 28th September Elmwood held it's annual MacMillan coffee morning. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 busily made a variety of delicious cakes for us to sell. Oscar in 7a made a very lush red velvet cake that went down well with our parents and carers. Izzy in Year 11a's mum bought in a lovely selection of home made cakes alongside other cake donations from pupils and staff.



Malachi in Year 8, with some guidance, made a show stopper cake as you can see from the photo. Junior in Year 8 also made a "guess the weight of the cake" and Year 9 pupils decorated MacMillan themed mugs.

Shelli George, teaching assistant, made a chocoholics dream of a chocolate bouquet and her daughter, Abbi, very kindly crocheted a variety of items for the raffle. A massive thank you to all who supported our school with their kind donations of money breaking Elmwood's record with a grand total of £158.64!



The aim of MacMillan coffee morning is about friends, family, colleagues, parents and carers coming together, whilst raising money for people living with cancer. MacMillan nurses support patients and their families in hospitals, answering calls on support lines and giving financial support. Since it started in 1990, it has raised over £290 million pounds and supports to fund a nurses post for 3 years. 98% of Macmillan nurses are funded from voluntary donations.

Thank you again to everyone who came along on the day and to our two parent governors, Sarah Thornton and Lisa Jones, for their support.

Report by Ms Shaw, Food Technology Teacher



UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month our featured member of staff under the spotlight is Dan Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning

How long have you worked at Elmwood? *Since February 2013, so 10 years. I was only going to stay for a year!*

What do you love about your job? *The opportunity to guide pupils with their personal growth to re-imagine their potential. For some of our pupils, this involves creating opportunities for positive childhood memories.*

What films have you watched recently? *Having the time to watch a film is a real treat, so it's a while since I last saw a film at the cinema. I did stream a film recently that was thought provoking. 'Leave No Trace'. A father and daughter living off the grid in the US forest, but the authorities don't approve. The film follows what happens next...*

Favourite Holiday? *That's tricky to nail down as I've been fortunate to travel a lot, as well as lead various expeditions. Each trip had it's own appeal from the Arctic, Sahara to the Amazon, but I think it's still hard to beat the British seaside. I like the quote 'if you're lucky enough to be at the seaside- then you're lucky enough!'*

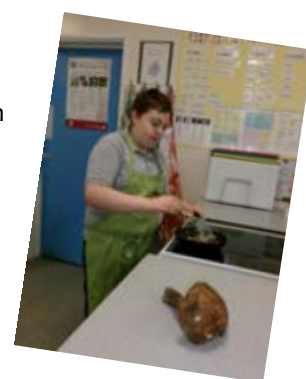
Tell us something that people would be surprised to hear? *I was once sworn in and signed the Official Secrets Act, met Royalty and fell from a galloping horse, but not all in the same afternoon!*



FORAGING FUN



I am excited to share a new enrichment activity that has been keeping our pupils engaged with the wonders of the natural world – mushroom hunting! From late July through to October, our pupils have embarked on expeditions into the enchanting world of fungi, discovering over 50 species of mushrooms, including some elusive varieties like the cauliflower fungus. Mushroom hunting is more than just a recreational activity, it's an opportunity for our pupils to connect with nature and foster a deeper appreciation for the biodiversity that thrives right under our feet.



The world of mushrooms is often hidden beneath the forest canopy, waiting to be explored. Our pupils have embraced this unique opportunity to venture onto Cannock Chase, an enchanting woodland, known for its diverse mushroom species. One of the highlights of our mushroom hunting expeditions was the discovery of the elusive cauliflower fungus (*Sparassis crispa*). This rare and beautiful mushroom resembles a delicate white coral and is considered a gourmet delicacy.

Our budding mycologists also encountered two noteworthy mushroom species during their forays into Cannock Chase – the porcini (*boletus edulis*) and the amanita muscaria. Porcini are known for its rich flavour and is a highly sought-after edible mushroom. Meanwhile, the amanita muscaria, with its vibrant red cap adorned with white specks, is a captivating yet toxic species.

Participating in mushroom hunting has had numerous educational benefits for our pupils. They have learned about the crucial role fungi play in the ecosystem both as decomposers and symbiotic partners with trees and plants. Additionally, pupils have honed their skills and scientific curiosity by identifying various mushroom species.

As we approach the end of the mushroom hunting season, our pupils are already looking forward to future adventures in exploring the fungi kingdom. We are excited to continue this enrichment activity in the coming years and hope to inspire even more of our pupils to join in the wonders of mushroom hunting. A worthy mention to the two pupils on the photo to the right who have shown a great aptitude to learning within mycology this half term. In addition to this mushroom hunting, regulars of Ty Allen, Francis Gosling, Paul Robinson and George Wynn have been honing their skills outside the classroom through use of their own research and commitment to learning.



Report by Mr Hawkes , Assistant Head

STAFFING NEWS



We were pleased to see Mr Cross back in school on Tuesday 3rd October. Mr Cross is still recovering from his leg injury but will spend some days in school and others working from home.

Well done to Rhys Humphries, former pupil, who was successful in his application for a casual play worker post and comes into school to support in the nurture base.

Apologies to Rubina Mumtaz who was omitted from the list of staff who had achieved 100% attendance during the summer term in the previous newsletter—well done Rubina.

Mr Hinsley is currently on paternity leave as he and his wife, Kelly, celebrate the birth of their second child, Grace, a little sister for Archie. Wishing them every happiness on their new addition to the family.

We sadly said goodbye to Jade Lunt, teaching assistant, on Friday 20th October, who has worked at the school since it opened in January 2008. Jade has worked across all bases and has recently been supporting Mr Price, in the science department. Jade will be moving onto a HLTA post where her skills will be put to good use. We wish Jade every success in her new role.

GOLDEN TICKETS



Our new Year 7 pupils have settled well into their new environment and this is showing with

the number of golden tickets that they are receiving. So far 10 out of 25 golden tickets have been given to Year 7 pupils.

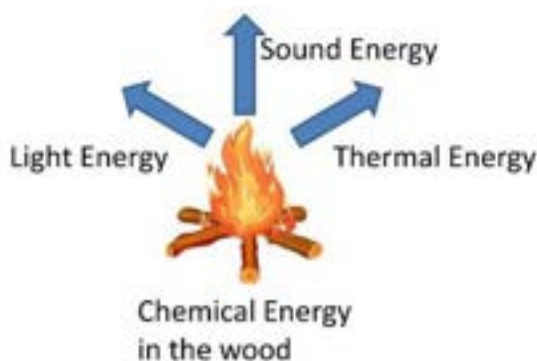
This achievement was evident at our recent MacMillan coffee morning when Kaiden, Dylan and Chloe all received a golden ticket for clearly showing our Elmwood Values of Care for Self, Care for Others and Care for the Environment.

Very well done and keep up the good work.

Science in the woods – surely not!



Year 10 pupils recently spent a day in the woods in Leicestershire to enhance their science learning about energy transfers. This involved investigating how much energy could be transferred from wood into water. The wood is a store of chemical energy, when ignited the energy is released as heat (thermal energy) light and sound energy. The learners had to work out the change in temperature of the water by measuring the before and after temperatures.



The day helped the young people to think about energy transfers in real life situations—they used friction and then the sun to start fire. Later they explored elastic energy firing a catapult.

A fun day was had by all and it was great to see pupils engage who find lab work a little more of a challenge.

Report by Dr A Price, Curriculum Lead for Science

DOODLE DAY

At the end of last half-term pupils took part in 'Doodle Day'. Doodle Day is a worldwide event to raise awareness and funds for epilepsy research and support. The tagline **'Drawing a line through epilepsy'** heads the campaign, and participants take part by submitting their doodles. Once pupils (and staff) had given in all their wonderful submissions, Miss Askins, Mr Hinsley and Mr Webb carefully looked at all the entries to establish a first, second and third place. They even decided on a first and second place for staff too. There were so many brilliant entries it was hard to pick their favourites, but after some very careful consideration, and a few disagreements, they finally settled on their winners. Each winner got themselves an art related prize which was announced in assembly.

For pupils the rundown was as follows;

1st place – Charlie-Anne Barfield with 'Absent Minded'

2nd Place – Joe Jenkins with 'Help for Epilepsy'

3rd Place – Ty Allen with 'Oh..'

And for staff:

1st place – Kerry with 'Happy Place'

2nd Place Mr Wood with 'Self Care'



Report by Ms Askins, Art Teacher

And they're off!



Whilst on a training course for out and about in Yorkshire, I was approached by someone on the course during the break who was impressed by the range of activities we offer in out and about at Elmwood.



They explained that they were involved with a charitable trust that gives opportunities for pupils to experience careers in the horse racing industry and would I be interested. After many emails we set up a day at Uttoxeter races for our pupils.

After a health and safety briefing, we were lucky enough to have access to all areas including places the public do not get to see. We visited the jockeys weigh in area, steward's office, jockeys' dressing room, medical room, winners' enclosure and the parade ring. We witnessed the horses being checked in on arrival by swiping their necks with a sensor that picks up their microchip. The monitor then gives all their details to security.

We were allowed to walk on the course itself and inspected the finishing line's camera, the hurdles and the impressive steeplechase hurdles. Harry wore the helmet, safety vest and silk britches and boots of a jockey. All pupils wore different silks tops during the day. The group were fortunate to have a photograph with a famous jockey, the national hunt jump champion for the past two years, Brian Hughes.



A special mention goes to Ty who was an exemplary pupil and really engaged with questions throughout the day. Also to Shelli, Teaching Assistant, who kept the pupils focused during the day.

Pupils were made aware of the huge variety of careers at a race course such as catering, security, IT, event planners, management, administration, trainers, officials, etc. A great experience for Elmwood pupils, in the mane!

Report by Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK



On Tuesday 10th October 2023, our pupils and staff came together to participate in the "Mellow Yellow Mile," a special event designed to raise awareness and promote mental health in children. The Charity "Young Minds" promotes mental health for children and dedicate a day to wear it yellow to spread awareness.

Our staff and pupils wore something bright yellow on the day. Yellow, symbolizing hope, positivity, and happiness, was chosen to show our commitment to spreading awareness about children's mental health.

The centrepiece of our Children's Mental Health Day celebration was the "Mellow Yellow Mile." There was a sea of yellow during the event and pupils' spirits were high throughout. Every single pupil in our school participated by either walking, jogging, or running the mile.

But it didn't stop with the pupils! Several dedicated staff joined in, setting an inspiring example for our pupils. Even Mr Francis tried to keep up with the front runners. Their participation showcased the importance of support between all of our Elmwood Community emphasizing that mental health is a concern for everyone.

While the 'Mellow Yellow Mile' was an enjoyable physical activity, its true purpose was to raise awareness about the importance of mental health. It provided an opportunity for pupils to talk about their feelings, emotions, through the 'Stress Bucket' activity.

The 'Mellow Yellow Mile' was a testament to our school's commitment to building a supportive and compassionate community. It demonstrated that we stand together in solidarity with those who may be facing mental health challenges, reminding everyone that they are not alone.

Sam Ashbery in Year 9 recorded this year's quickest time over the distance in 5 minutes 30 seconds with Malachi Grainger, in Year 8, running the most laps managing 8. Very well done to both.

Thank you to all of our Elmwood community for completing the mile.

Pupils in Year 9 also spent the morning at Wolverhampton Art Gallery where they participated in mental health day activities. Pupils were once again a credit to the school.

Report by Mr Hawkes, Assistant Headteacher



SCHOOL FUND ACCOUNT

Our private school fund account has once again been audited by Norma Stamps.

School fund is money that has been raised either through fundraising or donations and is used solely to assist pupils.

During the past year it has been used to purchase Christmas and Easter gifts, reward vouchers, fishing equipment, sports day medals and school trips.

A big thank you to everyone who has helped to contribute towards our private funds account.

HANDWRITING

After a successful trial of our handwriting scheme last academic year, it is now completed by the whole school. It will boost confidence and legibility, as well as incorporating key spellings required across the curriculum.



In each form, weekly, there will be a celebration of the pupil who has made most effort and progress.

This is an example of Francis Gosling's amazing work and the pens that will be awarded.

Report by Shelli George, Teaching Assistant



OUT AND ABOUT FUN



A plan is hatched

Thanks to Mr Price, Curriculum Lead of Science, who has donated two incubators from the science department to Sheepwash Farm Nursery near Lichfield. Bradley Hopkins in Year 9 was able to present these to the nursery staff on the Friday that he climbed the wind turbine as his reward for being the best pupil in out and about lessons for the last academic year.



Pumpkin Picking



Once again we returned to Sheepwash Farm in Whittington to choose pumpkins which we then went onto carve the following week during out and about lessons. Pupils showed great skill and artistic flair at pumpkin carving, demonstrating the virtues of creativity and determination. This year we moved away from choosing just the classic orange pumpkins to white, blue and green pumpkins, however, some pumpkins were easier to carve than others. On the theme of carving, there was a chainsaw carver at the farm this year, so we met him and saw his work, a huge deer head and a chameleon (the size of a cow!). We also met the pigs and chickens too.

Bradley's work of art

The best pumpkin carvings were:



Nurture Group—1st prize to Ethan Cope, 2nd—Phoebe Till and 3rd - Malachi Grainger.

Upper School—1st prize Bradley Hopkins, 2nd—John Southall and 3rd - Izzy Hough

Report by Mr D Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning

Ethan's winning design



CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING SALE

On Wednesday 13th December 2023, during our progress and achievement event, we will be hosting a mini Christmas fundraising event. On sale will be a variety of craft items that have been made by pupils during their craft club lessons with Shelli George, Teaching Assistant. In addition there will be a guess the weight of the cake, mini raffle etc. If you are able to donate any items such as food, bottles, toiletries, cakes etc, these would be very gratefully received. Further details to follow and thank you in advance for your support.

SUPPORTING ITT STUDENTS

Elmwood School welcomed eleven ITTs from Wolverhampton University, Walsall Campus, on Friday 13th October, as part of their studies and to increase awareness around specialist SEMH provision. ITT's had received some inside knowledge of the school from Carl Longmore, Senior Lecturer in Primary Education with responsibility for SEND, who completed an experience very similar to these ITTs some time ago.

ITTs were extremely complementary of the school and how we focus so much on the education of pupils as well as their mental health and wellbeing. Some stand out "what stuck with you" comments were:

"Teachers know and understand the child's needs"

"Relationships are consistently building and developing with the pupils"

"The points system is clear and supports appropriate learning throughout"

"School staff are passionate about the pupils future"

"The pupils were extremely well mannered and wanted to achieve The Golden Ticket"

"The timings of the lessons were perfect in maintaining pace and engagement"

Report by Mr Lee Cross, Headteacher