



ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2024 – NO. 196

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Internship opportunities

Elmwood School community welcomed Marie Davies to introduce the possibilities around Supported Internships and Apprenticeships on offer within Walsall (this work supports Walsall's Apprenticeship Programme led by Helena Baxter). Marie brought with her planning documents to support pupils aspirations and thinking and a wealth of personal experience on what was on offer (including potential placements within a mortuary). This will help pupils when completing their "Getting Ready" sheets in Year 9 and reviewing their Careers Action Plan in Year 10 and 11 with Rachael Maybank. The visit enabled Year 9 – Year 11 pupils to further share their career aspirations, and what was extremely positive was pupils were able to communicate about the excellent support they receive regarding their careers education at Elmwood (reinforcing that the work we do is embedded). The experience supported $31/36=86\%$ of the population. The pupils were polite and extremely welcoming (supported by Marie's views).

Thank you for today Lee really useful and may I say that the students are so well behaved and really have a view on their future, which is very positive to see.

Report by Mr Cross, Headteacher

CIRCUS TRIP

On Wednesday 24th January 2024, the majority of Year 7 pupils and some Year 8 pupils had the opportunity after school to visit the circus. Pupils remained on site at the end of the school day when they enjoyed pizza and chips before accompanying Ms Pow, Mr Webb, Kerry Bowen and Sunita Lalli to the circus at Walsall Arena in Bloxwich.



A very big thank you to the staff involved for giving up their free time to enable pupils this fantastic experience—definitely great representatives of our school values.

A very big thank you to the companies who paid for the tickets via Circus Starr, their generosity has resulted in lots of young people having some very happy memories of a great trip out.

This was reiterated in the following report:

Our recent visit to a local circus was a thrilling adventure. As we approached the brightly lit venue, the air was filled with excitement and anticipation. The vivid bright colours, the lively music, and the hustle and bustle of the crowd all contributed to the atmosphere and excitement. The show began with a parade of performers, each showcasing their unique talents. Acrobats, jugglers, clowns, and magicians took turns to mesmerize the audience with their performances. The spotlight moved from one act to another, keeping the audience on the edge of their seats. Pupils all engaged and enjoyed the show and would recommend for future trips. Pupils were excellent ambassadors for the school and demonstrated our school values beautifully. Written by Stacey Urmson (Teaching Assistant) and Dylan Paddock (pupil)

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month our featured member of staff under the spotlight is James Francis, DT Teacher and Curriculum Lead of Technologies



How long have you worked at Elmwood? *8 years (I think)*

What do you love about your job? *Working with the pupils to make weird and wonderful things.*

What films have you watched recently? *The Running Man and Total Recall (I needed an Arnie fix)*

Favourite Holiday? *Texas*

Tell us something that people would be surprised to hear? *When I was younger I used to ride horses and play the saxophone, not at the same time of course, although that would have been pretty awesome!*

Introducing the Elmwood School Champion: Celebrating Values in Action!

We are thrilled to announce an exciting new initiative here at Elmwood School – the Elmwood School Champion! As part of our ongoing commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals, the Elmwood School Champion programme aims to recognise and celebrate students who exemplify our core values of care for self, others and the environment.

Each week, one outstanding pupil from each base will be awarded the prestigious Elmwood School Champion trophy. This trophy serves as a symbol of honour and recognition for pupils who consistently demonstrate exceptional behaviour and embody the values that we hold dear as a school community. The pupils who have been awarded in our upper school attended an activity centre with high ropes and climbing in the autumn term. We have something special planned for our Elmwood Champions in the summer term.

The Elmwood School Champion initiative is more than just an award – it is a testament to the dedication and commitment of our pupils to make a positive impact in their own lives, the lives of others and the world around them. Whether it's showing kindness to a peer, taking initiative to help out in the community or taking responsibility for environmental stewardship, our Elmwood School Champions are shining examples of what it means to live our values every day.

Report by Mr Hawkes, Assistant Head

YEAR 8 LEGO TRIPS



Over the course of three weeks, Year 8 pupils had the opportunity to visit the Legoland discovery centre in Birmingham as part of their maths lessons on a whole day experience. To start with pupils took a ride on Kingdom Quest where they had to shoot a range of Lego characters to try and get the highest score with Alfie Perry in 8c winning in the final standing. Pupils then took part in a catapult workshop where they had to build a basketball hoop and catapult to investigate how gravity and length of the throwing arm affects distance travelled or trajectory of different items.

Following lunch pupils then went on the Merlin ride followed by a look around Miniland where Birmingham's famous landmarks had been recreated out of more than 1.5 million Lego bricks. Pupils then went to the 4D cinema experience to watch a Lego City film with rain, wind and even snow with some getting wetter than others. We then rounded off the day with a visit to the soft play area and headed back to school. This is a trip I know the current year 7 pupils are looking forward to attending next year. Thank you to all the staff that came along and made the trip such a success.

Report by Mr Hinsley, Teacher

STAFFING NEWS

We were pleased to welcome Courtney Martin, teaching assistant, to the team on Monday 19th February. We hope Courtney soon settles into her new post.

We are also pleased to announce that Nicole Rose, who was initially employed as a teaching assistant but has been taking part in the SCITT programme with Barr Beacon School (teacher training), was successful on interview on Thursday 1st February and will be rejoining the school in July as a teacher. Nicole will be a great asset to the school and will help deliver our humanities programme. Many congratulations Nicole and it will be great to have you back in July.

English teacher interviews took place on Tuesday 6th February. We are pleased to confirm that Michael O'Callaghan was the successful candidate and we look forward to Michael joining the team from September 2024. A big thank you to Lisa Jones, Parent Governor, for supporting Mr Cross, Headteacher, with the interview process.

We were pleased to see Leon Donaldson, Teaching Assistant, back in school following his absence at the start of term. Unfortunately, Ms Shaw, Food Technology teacher, is currently not in work and we send her our very best wishes.



Dawn Canham, Secretary and Clerk to the Governors, celebrated working for Walsall Education for 25 years on 22.2.24. Starting initially at Daw End School in 1999, then transferring to Elmwood when it opened in 2008. As well as a banner, card, flowers and lots of lovely messages, Dawn was also presented with a bouquet of flowers from the governing body at their termly meeting on the 22nd.

STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT MUSEUM VISITS



This term Year 8 pupils have been studying world war 1 in their English lessons and writing a speech against war. To obtain a perspective of what it would have been like to be a soldier in the war we travelled to the Staffordshire regiment museum where pupils were able to experience some of the conditions that soldiers had to live by.

Our two guides on our morning visit were knowledgeable, friendly and kitted-out in convincing costumes. They had a lovely manner with the pupils and had an excellent balance of questioning and teaching. We toured the trenches, tried-on uniforms and held weapons. We shuffled down tunnels, experienced an air-raid and climbed ladders. All pupils were enthralled by what was on offer and were talking about the trip on the way home.

Thank you to all staff on the day and Mr Bowen and Mr Whittaker for arranging the visits.
Report by Mr Webb, Teacher

HAF PROGRAMME

As everyone of our pupils have a HAF entitlement they qualify for the short breaks entitlement (the next one is the Easter break). If a pupil is from out of borough, they can receive a HAF code from their local authority. There are endless amounts of activities including whole family ones, there are also bus passes for the whole family which can be collected from the town hall alongside transport which can be provided. If you would like further information about the scheme, please get in touch with Beverley Bailey, Family Support Officer.

NEWS FROM OUT AND ABOUT

Last half term pupils had the option on Fridays to choose to climb at Wolf Mountain indoor wall. This proved a popular option. Pupils also have the



opportunity to practice on site in our adventure barn. Report by Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning

Year 10 Ear Wig on Space



Year 10 pupils recently visited Jodrell Bank to see the Lovell radio telescope as part of their learning about space exploration in their Level 2 Gateway science course.

For over 50 years the giant Lovell Telescope has been a familiar feature of the Cheshire landscape and an internationally renowned landmark in the world of astronomy.

Since the summer of 1957 it has been quietly probing the depths of space, a symbol of our wish to understand the universe in which we live. Even now, it remains one of the biggest and most powerful radio telescopes in the world, spending most of its time investigating cosmic phenomena which were undreamed of when it was conceived. Report by Dr Price, Curriculum Lead of Science



Golden ticket meal 8.2.24



Julian Wilkins-McCallum was finally able to go and enjoy his slap up reward meal with Mr Cross, Headteacher, on Thursday 8th February 2024.

Julian was the pupil who had received the most golden tickets during the academic year 2022-23 but was unfortunately unable to go during the autumn term due to Mr Cross being unable to drive.

It was well worth the wait though as Julian and Mr Cross both had a lovely time—who will it be next time? Keep up the good work on impressing our visitors and living up to our Elmwood values.

ELMWOOD EXPERIENCE DAYS

This term has been an opportunity for the Elmwood Community to come together and thank Specialist Schools from across the West Midlands and Secondary Schools from across the Matrix Trust for hosting "Learning From" visits during 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 for our Teachers and Teaching Assistants. These experiences have enabled staff to support our whole school development of the school. Therefore, during w/c 22nd January 2024 we welcomed 16 teachers across all subjects and Key Stages. Here is a selection of comments made by the teachers following their Elmwood experience:

*Behaviour for learning was outstanding (in comparison).
Opportunity to regulate pupils before they transition to the next lesson is supportive.
Positive relationships between staff and peers. Your staff are ace!
Pupils are seen and heard. They feel valued.*

Finally, during w/c 19th February 2024 we welcomed 14 teaching assistants again across a variety of key stages. Here is a selection of comments by them following their Elmwood experience:

*Expectations are high – no upper or lower sets within subjects/years.
Pupils and staff accepting of visitors, opportunity for them to show the schools values.
TA's work extremely hard, but are valued by teachers.
Pupils are honest in their reflection.*

I would like to thank all staff and pupils for making our visitors feel extra special and welcome at our school. I know there were examples of demonstrating the Elmwood values and good communication skills by the sheer number of golden tickets awarded. This experience will also support future recruitment and retention events at Elmwood, with many colleagues asking if there were any jobs available as they would love to come and work at Elmwood. A copy of all the feedback received is on our school website. Report by Mr Cross, Headteacher