



# ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2017— NO. 127

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## REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE—THURSDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2017



On the lead up to the service the whole School were busy making and decorating cakes and biscuits to give to our special guests the Staffordshire Regiment plus the Royal British Legion's Riders Branch. Monies raised of £27.50 for cake/biscuits sales were donated to the Royal British Legion.



Parents and Carers were also invited for the morning and to join in with the Remembrance Service. Spud, our bugler, drummed in the parade and once again the School did everyone very proud by showing respect to our VIPs during the exhortation and two minutes silence. Well done Elmwood.



Mr Francis, DT Teacher, made some fabulous leather key rings featuring the Staffordshire Knot to give to our guests as a thank you for attending.



Tia Phillips in Year 9 made a lovely poppy cake with help from Ethan McKenzie in Year 11 and Jamie Ashford produced a single large poppy cake. Pupils made beautiful clay poppies with the help of our Art Teacher, Mr Collins, which were used in a display. All these gifts were very gratefully received by our guests who thanked everyone at Elmwood for the morning.



The Royal British Riders Branch gave pupils the opportunity to sit on their bikes at the end of the service, which proved very popular. More photographs (kindly taken by Paul Middleton), are available on our website. Report by Ms Shaw, Food Technology Teacher

### POPPY SELLERS

A big thank you to our poppy sellers this year who were Habib Ahmed in Year 10 and Kacey Sawyers in Year 8 who did a fantastic job of selling Poppy memorabilia around School. By the weight of the pot and lightness of the box, they did brilliantly which was confirmed when we had confirmation that we had raised £129.23 — well done both.



### VISITS TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

During their Out & About lessons all year groups have recently visited the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire. Here pupils learnt about the sacrifices made by millions of people from the UK/Allied forces, emergency services and civilian organisations in defence of our freedom and way of life.

Pupils visited various memorials within the site including Heroes Square and the Remembrance Wall where some 16,600+ names of people who have died in conflicts since the Second World War are engraved on huge curved walls. Well behaved, respectful and courteous, all classes were a credit to the school especially when, at this poignant time of year, many placed their wooden Poppy crosses around the site. This good behaviour was rewarded with some classes visiting the small play park before heading back to school. Thanks to Mr Whittaker for organising the visits, Mr Francis for assisting in the making of the Poppy crosses in D&T lessons and all Teaching Assistants who helped in both lessons and on the trips. Report by Mr A Holmes, Skills Development Coordinator



## STAFFING NEWS

Paddy Hinsley, Teaching Assistant, in Nurture has started his SCITT training with Barr Beacon School as part of his teacher training. Paddy will be splitting his time between both sites and we wish him every success with his course.

Jenna Wilkins, supply cover supervisor, was very brave on 16th October when she had her hair cut for charity. Jenna is a pack leader and gave the opportunity to one of her 5 year olds who made an excellent job of it!

Leon Donaldson, Teaching Assistant in Nurture, celebrated a very special birthday on 13th November. He was presented with a number of gifts including a giant badge and balloon so that everyone knew exactly how old he was.



Staff received first aid and team teach training on 18-20th November which included Richard Tranter, Caretaker and Lynn Maritza, School Business Manager. They are now keen to put what they have learnt into practice— volunteers needed!



We warmly welcomed back to work on Monday 20th November, Teressa Lalley, Assistant Cook, following her absence due to ill health. Teressa will initially be returning 3 days per week until she is well enough to return full time. Nice to have you back Teressa, Lynne (the Cook) has missed having you to talk to!

## SUPPORTING THE VARIETY CLUB

The Variety Club organise events during the year which our pupils benefit from including family tickets to West Midlands Safari Park and Christmas Parties. We were approached by the Club to help support them in trying to win funding of up to £10,000 from the Aviva Community Fund. All staff and governors were asked to help support their application by voting for this good cause and we wish them every success with their application.

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

We were approached by two students from the University of Wolverhampton requesting a two week block placement. We warmly welcomed Simran Johal and Pardeep Kaur to the School on Monday 9th October where they spent time working in the nurture base. Both students, who are in the second year of a BEd Primary Education Course, found the experience both interesting and rewarding. We are always happy to help support students and wish them both well with their future studies. A big thank you also for the thank you card and chocolates.

## DIARY DATES

With Christmas fast approaching below are details of upcoming events for your information:

Wednesday 30th November at 11.00 am coffee morning with Nichola from Home to School Transport and new transport Company for January 2018.

Thursday 14th December—Progress and Achievement Event, **pupils will finish at 12.30 pm** and appointments will be allocated for parents and carers to attend.

Wednesday 20th December—Christmas meal for all pupils and staff. Christmas jumpers can be worn and any donations received will be given to a local Homeless charity.

Thursday 21st December—Christmas performance by drama pupils, as well as enjoying coffee and mince pies, a raffle and chocolate tombola stall from 10 am to 12 noon.

Friday 22nd December—**pupils finish at 12.30 pm** for the Christmas break and return on Monday 8th January 2018.

## SCHOOL FUND ACCOUNT

The School's private school fund account has recently been audited which had a balance of just over £7k. This money is raised through fundraising and donations with the sole purpose of the fund to help benefit our young people. A big thank you to Norma Stamps, Auditor, for her work on the account. As a result of School photograph sales by Tempest Photographers, our funds have been boosted by £62.19 through commission so a big thank you to everyone who helped to contribute to this amount.

### GOVERNOR NEWS

At the autumn termly meeting held on 8th November, Chrissie Grainger stepped down from the role of Chair having carried out this role for a number of years. Chrissie was thanked by Governors for the excellent job she has done during this time and was presented with flowers and biscuits as a sign of our appreciation.

As a result of the above a new Chair was elected and Tracy Brandwood has now taken on this position ably supported by Rose Burley as Vice Chair. A big thank you to both for their continued support.



### PLAIN SAILING

Thanks to Aldridge Sailing Club for making it possible for us to sail with them. Pupil's have enjoyed the buzz of feeling the dinghy keel to each edge and touch the water as the boat picks up speed. The experience has taken several pupils out of their comfort zone, but they have come back for more each week despite the 'chills with thrills'. Particular thanks goes to John at the Club who rigs and de rigs the boat for us so that we can maximise our time on the water. Report by Mr D Whittaker, Outdoor Learning Teacher

### STORAGE SPACE GALORE!



Thanks once again to Pentalver Container Plant at Cannock, Nick Matthews, Manager of the huge depot and his team have come to our aid by sourcing an old 40 foot container at an affordable price.

Pentalver also arranged for the container to be painted and delivered to School and will be used to store basic resources and materials, wood, spare parts, etc. Report by Mr D Whittaker, Outdoor Learning Teacher



### The Participation People

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November Isaiah, Aisha, Thomas, Rhys and Ashley took part in a focus group to help shape mental health services in the West Midlands. The Participation People were asked to get involved in re-designing everything Mental Health Services related. Murwarid Laly came up from London to speak with the group and lead the activities. Questions to pupils involved their experiences within the NHS, what they would like their local CAMHS to look like? What they need in order to attend appointments? What works? What does not work? Experiences during hospital visits was an interesting discussion. The lack of trained staff to manage pupils with Autism, ADHD was apparent. All pupils were engaged throughout. Following this meeting there will be an opportunity in February to share all information and to speak with professionals and health care workers. Murwarid will share all of this information with the Heads of Authorities to hopefully bring about change. Pupils will be kept informed throughout the process.

If any other pupils are interested in sharing their views we do have cards available with all details in School (they will be left in reception for the next 2 weeks).

A huge thank you to Murwarid, Isaiah, Aisha, Thomas, Rhys and Ashley as without your voice there would be no change. Report by Beverley Bailey and James Hawkins (Family Welfare Officers).



## Conquering Dragons



From not being able to balance and ride a bike Jack Henworth in Year 7 has ridden short sections independently thanks to the patience and coaching efforts of teaching assistants Mark Trahearn and Leon Donaldson. Mark Reddington, also in Year 7, has learnt to ride short distances this week from being unable and unwilling to attempt riding. His delight is clear in the photo.

Kacey Sawyers in Year 8 will receive a 'Conquering Dragons Award' in assembly for her bravery in riding down the ramp. Other pupils have ridden up and over the ramps this week but this required less courage on their part. Kacey was clearly fearful of the prospect of the descent and took a lot of convincing and encouragement but did ride down (with support) in the end. This demonstrated great resilience on her part.



Courage is not the absence of fear but feeling that fear and doing it anyway! Maybe our visits to the National Memorial Arboretum to War heroes, this term, gave Kacey some examples of true bravery.

Report by Mr D Whittaker, Outdoor Learning Teacher

## CHILDREN IN NEED



On Friday 17th November the School helped to raise funds in aid of Children in Need. Pupils and staff were able to come in non uniform, which included many in nurture coming in their nightwear, and paying a £1. Leon Donaldson, teaching assistant in nurture, was also game for a laugh when he was sponsored to wear a mini mouse outfit and raised £27.50 by doing so. Mr Damms looked great in his Pudsey onesie which he wore whilst travelling into work on Friday. A raffle was organised which was won by Mr Wood raising a further £18.50 as well as a silent auction adding a further £82.14. Well done to everyone who took part and helped to raise a grand total of £214.45, which is fantastic.



## THANK YOU REWARD



The Senior Leadership Team wanted to show their appreciation to all pupils for their behaviour recently. Not only have they acted brilliantly following EDS using the vocational side of the

building but also the respect shown during our recent remembrance service. Pupils were treated to a delicious thank you cupcake following assembly on Friday, which went down nicely. A big thank you to all pupils—you make us proud.

## ANTI BULLYING DRAMA WORKSHOP

On Monday 20th November our School was visited by two ladies who taught us about bullying and anti-bullying. We were encouraged to get involved in games and also talk about when you bully someone it can scar them forever. We learnt how to avoid bullying and that we need to support people who are involved in verbal bullying. Also we need to try and help these bullies or meet face to face to ask them why they are doing this. We also learnt plenty more and we had a laugh and all the students could back me up on this. We did loads of different tasks involved with bullying and we learnt the true meaning of friendship and that just because you might be having trouble at home, it doesn't mean you turn to bullying. If you are having trouble you can always turn to Childline. We played a game called modelling where we had to get into partners and express a scene and do different facial expressions. Written by Kacey Sawyers, Year 8 pupil

## TAKE OVER DAY QUESTION TIME



The School was invited to participate in the above on Thursday 23rd November which took place in the Council Chamber at Walsall Town Hall. Beverley Bailey, Family Welfare Officer, accompanied two representatives namely Thomas Carter in Year 11 and Sophie Clewley in Year 9. In addition to Elmwood School, Ormiston Shelfield Academy together with Youth of Walsall representatives, Respect Group (Children in Care Council) and the Young Carers Group. Refreshments of pizza and drinks were provided for the young people ahead of the question and answer session from 5.30 pm

to 7.00 pm. Both pupils have submitted a question to the Panel which is made up of representatives from Health, Police, Childrens Services and Education which they are welcome to read aloud. The question Thomas wanted to ask was 'what support will be in place in Post 16 education? There are no specialist settings which manage behaviour. I have autism and PDA which can display with behaviour difficulties' and Sophie asked 'lots of primary pupils are still being excluded from School. This has been my route due to my diagnosis of Aspergers and ADHD. How are Primary children being assessed and diagnosed and what are staff doing to support before exclusion?' The Chair for the event was Walsall's member of Youth Parliament. Thomas and Sophie were amazing and will be writing up their own report following the event which will feature in our next newsletter. A big thank you to Bev Bailey, Family Welfare Officer, for giving up her time to accompany the pupils together with their moms.



## YEAR 11A VISIT TO BIRMINGHAM DOGS HOME



Year 11 have been developing their theme project for this term. Hitchhiker's Guide to the UK. Looking at local and features they visited Birmingham Dogs Home. Based in Solihull area, it

can receive over three thousand neglected and often abused dogs in one year! The home is a Charity and works on the donations given by people and organisations. It costs surprising two million pounds to function! The dog lovingly looked after in this new spacious environment until they are found a new home and caring owners. Report by Mr Collins, Art Teacher

## Health and Safety Audit

The School was inspected by the Local Authority Health and Safety Department on 14th November 2017.

We were pleased to learn in the subsequent report that the school overall demonstrated a good commitment to health and safety. The message emerging from the audit was that health and safety was well managed with good record keeping.

Well done to all staff involved with the above especially Lynn Maritza, School Business Manager.

## SEN HUBS

As part of Walsall's initiative to increase and improve the impact of parental engagement for parents of SEND pupils, SEND family Hubs are being developed around Walsall where SEND parents from mainstream and special schools can meet, talk, have training and become a positive group that can help in the co-production many of the services we are looking to improve.

Old Hall School in Bentley Lane, Walsall, will be hosting the first one and it is hoped that the first meeting will take place shortly. A copy of the flyer and questionnaire for the above are on our website, parents/carers area, courses and events page.

## CHRISTMAS DINNER

The cost of this year's Christmas dinner for pupils not on the free school meal register is £1.95. This will be a traditional turkey lunch with pudding or the vegetarian option of fish. Can parents/carers please complete and return the Catering Service booking form by 11.12.17. The cost to any staff who wish to purchase a meal will be £4.25.

## SKILLS SHOW VISIT

This year's Skills Show took place at the Birmingham NEC on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November and was attended by both Year 10 classes and their staff.

Being one of the largest careers/vocational education shows in the UK there was lots to see and do from various sectors of industry including civil services, construction, hair & beauty, technology and catering.



Despite there being a large number of people and queues for some of the more practical stands pupils coped extremely well, got involved with many of the activities and asked questions which helped to give them ideas about where their future careers may lie. All pupils were well behaved throughout the visit.

As can be seen from the photos, some of the highlights were staff and pupils arresting each other(!), looking at various vehicles including performance cars, trucks and an armoured personnel carrier as well as taking part in various competitions such as a timed wheel change. Many thanks to Bev Bailey for booking us on to the event!



Report by Mr A Holmes, Skills Development Coordinator

## MARVELLOUS ME UPDATE

63% of our parents have now signed up to MarvellousMe and are keen to be sent positive and valuable news about their child's life at school.

Feed back from parents and carers who use the system is very positive and v strongly recommend any parents and carers who have yet to sign up to do so.

Please contact Dawn in the School Office if you would like a joining code letter our Family Welfare Officers, Bev and James, if you need any help in using the system.

## PUPIL VOICE FEEDBACK

Members of our School Council have raised and discussed at recent meetings how they can inform other Schools about their medical diagnoses. In particular they want to share their own experiences and hopefully help others to recognise behaviours that may show through medical conditions such as ADHD and Autism. By getting their voices heard and explaining the reasons behind certain behaviours, this may help prevent pupils from being excluded, singled out or made to feel they are at fault. Two of our young people Thomas Carter in Year 11 and Sophie Clewley in Year 9 spoke with Bev Bailey, Family Welfare Officer, about their experiences and the video produced is available on our school website, please try and watch it.

Feedback from Elizabeth Wassall, Principal Speech and Language Therapist at Walsall Manor Hospital having watched the video was how absolutely brilliant it was to hear them speak so eloquently about their own experiences. It was also an excellent reflective example and a great resource to signpost on the pathway. Congratulations to all involved with the above.

## OUR NEW CREATION IS NOW PROUDLY ON SHOW

This new panel on the front of the school building was produced by our pupils during Grand Designs last summer.

All students had the opportunity to work with Mr Hubbard in making this happen (a few mistakes were made along the way but the end result says it all).

Report by Simon Hubbard

