



# ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2020 – NO. 160

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## HARVEST CHARITY APPEAL



Thank you to everyone who contributed to the appeal from Walsall Outreach for harvest donations. The response we received from parents/carers, staff and governors was amazing and this was recognised when it was collected on 4.11.20.

Feedback from Maz Surti, Project Lead stated the following:

*On behalf of the team at Walsall Outreach we would like to thank the staff, the children, the families and every single person who has donated to our cause. As we go into a second lockdown we are dealing with so many individuals and families who need and rely on our support. Your collection means so much to us. So many families with children, the elderly and vulnerable will benefit from the wonderful items you have given to us so Thank You!*

*Its amazing to have had you reach out to us so quickly after we had emailed you and just knowing you were there to support us meant so much to us. I will most definitely be keeping in touch with you to let you know how we have distributed your items. The children and families who've helped us can see how their kindness and generosity has reached out to the wider community. We thank you all for everything you have done in supporting us.*

## WE WILL REMEMBER

Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions, we were not able to carry out our normal act of remembrance on Wednesday 11th November 2020 due to the risk of mixing pods. Ms Shaw, Food Technology Teacher, organises our annual service with members of the Staffordshire Regiment in attendance but in light of COVID this was



not possible. However, Graham Morris from the Regiment made sure that Elmwood School was represented when he visited the peace tree in Blakenall taking a poppy cross from the pupils. A big thank you to Graham for kindly thinking of the School.

Even though the School could not get together on the day, groups carried out their own acts of remembrance and displays were arranged in the transition quad area.



Even though Ms Lloyd, former Assistant Head, at the school is now living in Spain, she made sure her old group of pupils were able to purchase an item from the goods on sale by transferring the necessary funds across. Alice, Chris, Joe and Adam were most appreciative of this kind gesture by Ms Lloyd.



This year Elmwood pupils have been making 'nail art' poppies to commemorate Remembrance. They have presented these at the NMA and have been a credit to the School. At the monument on the hill, they have searched the fallen service personnel's names to find family names. There are 16,200 names, which have been recorded after (but not including) the end of WW2.



Due to the lockdown from the 5/11/20, some pupils couldn't visit the NMA so we ventured to the Katyn memorial on Cannock Chase and visited the Commonwealth Forces Graves, where pupils laid their poppies. One lady there mentioned how touched she was to see the young people doing this and learning about the war. Report by Mr Whittaker Head of Outdoor Learning.



## FINANCIAL AUDIT

The school had a financial audit that began on 23rd October, which was organised by the Local Authority. The audit had to be carried out by Mazars virtually due to COVID restrictions and covered governance, policies and procedures, financial planning, procurement as well as looking at any bank accounts.

The audit was spread over a number of days and involved many documents being scanned and emailed to the audit team. We were pleased to receive the final report which gave a green substantial assurance grading and with the following stated as areas of strength:

- Regular governors' meetings are held and minutes produced.
- There is a Raising Achievement Plan in place which includes links to the budget and costs.
- Bank accounts are reconciled and checked by appropriate officers.

Well done to all those involved in achieving this excellent result.

## CHANGES TO ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING PAPERWORK

Walsall Local Authority SEND department have amended the paperwork that is completed during the annual review process.

Following your child's review meeting an EHC Plan Annual Review proforma will be completed with contributions from school, parents/carers and other professionals included within it.

Can you please ensure that the school office is informed of any changes with regards to contact information so that the information included is up-to-date.

Parents and carers are encouraged to attend their child's meeting despite the COVID situation as every care is taken to conduct these safely; 57% of parents and carers attended their child's meeting for the Autumn Term 1 period. Your input and contribution is important so please try and attend.

## GOVERNOR NEWS

The governing body met for their termly meeting on Thursday 12th November 2020 when Jo Hall, new parent governor was welcomed on board.

We are pleased to confirm that Tracy Brandwood has agreed to continue as Chair of Governors for this academic year supported once again by Sallyann Tuckwell-Allen as Vice Chair. Both have done a brilliant job over the last year during very difficult circumstances and their support is much appreciated.

## LUCKY WINNERS

At a celebration assembly held on 23.10.20 the prize draw for the reading raffle prize was drawn.

Pupils who had been busy reading during the summer term and, received a raffle ticket, had the opportunity to win a £10 Amazon gift voucher.

Very well done to Connor Berry in Year 10 and Jordan Walters in Year 8 who were the lucky winners.

Remember you have to be in it to win it, so keep on reading!

## TOP MARKS

Despite the global pandemic Elmwood's attendance levels have increased compared to the same term last year with our overall attendance for the first half term at 89.52%.

Attendance among pupils with SEND has lagged behind that of the general pupil population. The latest attendance data from the Department of Education shows that just 84.1% of pupils with education, health and care plans attended school on 15<sup>th</sup> October, compared with 89.2% of all pupils. Our attendance data for the 15<sup>th</sup> equated to 89.73% which is testament that pupils want to attend School.

## STAFFING NEWS

Lynn Maritza, School Business Manager, has a new title with effect from September 2020. She is now the School Business, Finance and Operations Manager. Many congratulations Lynn.

With effect from 2.11.20 Michelle George, teaching assistant now works full time at the School which is great news for the pupils in her base.

Unfortunately Grant Hunt, Teaching Assistant in pathways base, has been absent from School since 2nd November due to illness. We wish Grant a speedy recovery and look forward to hopefully seeing him back in School in the near future.

## CONSULTATION ON HIGH NEEDS FUNDING

Parents and Carers views on the proposed changes to High Needs Funding arrangements for children with special educational needs and EHCP's are being sought by Walsall Children's Services.

Before the banding document is finalised the views of parents and carers are being sought by completing an online questionnaire. A copy of the consultation letter is available on the parents and carers courses/information page and an opportunity to discuss this further will take place during progress and achievement consultations on Wednesday 9th December 2020. The closing date for responses is midnight on 20th December 2020.