



ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

April 2021 – NO. 165

www.elmwood.walsall.sch.uk

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT EVENT—31.3.21

Our termly progress and achievement event once again had to take place via telephone consultations with parents and carers due to the national lockdown situation.

Staff ensured that appointments were made with parents and carers at the end of the spring term where they were able to discuss pupils progress along with their termly report. The reports were amended this term to reflect the challenge tasks that pupils had been undertaking.

As a result of the above, contact was made with 63 parents and carers equating to 88.7 % which was slightly down on the autumn term result but still a pleasing outcome.

The summer term event will take place on Wednesday 14th July 2021.

BLACK COUNTRY WORLD OF WORK WEEK

During week commencing 22nd March 2021, pupils in Year 11 had a taster of working in the construction industry.

Pupils had a choice of presentations to select from on line and feedback from the pupils who attended was that it was very informative and has given them food for thought as a future career option.

Week commencing 26th April pupils will have a taster of working in health and social care.

EASTER TREATS



A very big thank to Help to Make Tummies Full who have once again provided six parents with an Easter food hamper, in addition to providing some Easter eggs. Kate from the organisation kindly delivered the parcels to school on Monday 29th March which were then distributed to those in need. The hampers were filled with an array of goodies which were much appreciated by the

recipients. A big thank you to Richard Tranter, Caretaker, who kindly organised delivery of the hampers over the Easter break.

Pupils also received an additional gift of an Easter egg when they returned following the Easter break thanks to 4 Steps to a Smile who also donated these chocolate treats. These were shared with pupils on our Superhero celebration day on 23.4.21. A very big thank you to Linda Sandhar-Jones from 4 Steps to a Smile who kindly dropped the eggs off at School.

What lucky pupils we have and once again a big thank you for these kind donations.



KEY STAGE 3 READING CHALLENGE

With reading standards in Key Stage 3 already being highlighted as an area we could make further progress before the first Covid-19 pandemic 'lock-down' last March, it was decided to put a once-a-week intervention into place to help support all of our KS3 pupils as soon as practicably possible.

Launched last half-term, this consists of reading a short piece of text, which is at the correct level for each individual pupil and then answering four comprehension questions based on what has just been read. This is completed during the timetabled 'social reading' lesson.

The initiative seems to have been well received by all learners and staff – with all of the KS3 pupils who attended last half-term taking part weekly. Although formal reading assessments are still taking place, initial improvements based on marking and feedback to pupils are promising.

Parents and carers, if you can read at all with your child at home this will also help them to steadily improve at school – if you are stuck for suitable level texts or how to progress your child's reading, please contact the school English department. Finally, a big thank you to all staff, especially the English department for making the roll-out of this programme as smooth as it has been so far! Report by Mr Holmes, English Teacher



NEU GIFTS

The NEU have donated a million pounds nationally to give additional funding to Schools to support home learning for pupils. Walsall NEU has also raised an additional £5,000 to support local projects in schools with their Small Grants Scheme. I was asked to sit on the virtual committee to instigate the design of this package.

As a result of Elmwood's successful bid to the scheme, we received the maximum amount for one of these grants, that being £200 per School.



This money has been generated from the local levy from membership fees and so it seemed only fair for Elmwood's NEU members to have first choice on where this money might be best spent. Staff have been innovative and have gone above and beyond to purchase items individually for targeted pupils in order to facilitate better home learning or well-being eg. a pair of wellies for one pupil to enable them to get outdoors more, another received fishing equipment, another art materials, personal care products, etc.

The spending limit was £10 per pupil and staff have made every penny count, meaning 20 pupils could benefit.

Thanks for all staff who have gone out of their way to purchase items for their chosen student and show such Care for Others. Photos are available on the photo gallery of the school website.
Report by Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning



BIKEABILITY COURSE

Prior to the school Easter break, the students of year 8 had an amazing opportunity to experience the out and about activity Bikeability.

The course enabled the students to learn techniques, valuable skills, gain confidence, encouragement and develop practical skills, along with understanding of how to cycle on roads, road awareness and keeping safe whilst out on a bike.

It was a full day in which the students had a chance to ride about the local area including on some minor roads. Everybody that attended the Bikeability achieved either level 1 or level 2 by the end of the day. Well done!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Donna and her team for their guidance, encouragement, patience, expertise and experience in this matter making the days totally enjoyable.

Report by Sarah Hawkins, Teaching Assistant



MORE FREE DONATIONS

A big thank you to the DfE who have kindly supported pupils in providing a total of 32 Chromebooks/laptops to the School.

These IT resources will assist pupils with both learning in school and at home.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

As part of random acts of kindness day, on 17th February, I noticed on the website that they suggested the painting of stones and hiding them in nature for others to find.

When our pupils have found these on walks with school in the past they have got excited as if it's a gift left for them, which it is!

Soooo, we had a 'walk with purpose', in term 4 to enable each pupil to find their stone. We then sealed and dried these to enable the paints to adhere better. After Easter we started to paint the stones and, put initials, as well as the school's postbox email address on the base so that pupils could be informed if their stone had been discovered by someone.

In term 6 we will venture out again to place the stones in nature in the hope that the finder will email School and tell us where they found it and that they received our random act of kindness.

Hopefully, they will 'hide' it again and the cycle of kindness continues.

Report by Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month Dawn Canham, Secretary and Clerk to the Governors, is the feature of our staff under the spot light section.



How long have you worked at Elmwood?

13 years at Elmwood School (from when it opened in January 2008) and 9 years previously at the neighbouring Daw End School (staff transferred over to Elmwood School when Daw End closed in 2007). This makes me currently the longest serving member of staff at the school (there are still a few members of staff from Daw End working at Elmwood School).

What do you love about your job?

The staff and pupils I work with and that no two days are the same.

What film have you watched recently?

I am not a film lover and very rarely watch a film; the last one I watched was the Life of Pi, which I did enjoy – I thought the special effects were excellent. I remember watching a film as a child called the Inn of the Sixth Happiness which leads to the answer to the next question.

What was your favourite holiday?

China which I visited in 2010. An amazing country with so many highlights including walking on the Great Wall, visiting the terracotta warriors and the forbidden city. The traffic was really bad in Beijing and it took an hour to drive somewhere that literally took 5 minutes to walk to.

Tell us something that people would be surprised to hear?

I ran away on my first day at School at the age of 5 and hid by some local shops. I was soon found by a teacher and then made to sit on the front row of class.

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

The first meeting of the school ambassadors since October 2020 was held on 25th March 2021.

The meeting discussed actions from the previous meeting which covered feedback on assemblies and the COVID-19 risk assessment, reset and recovery.

Agenda items at the latest meeting, which were led by the ambassadors, covered the following.

Ambassadors questioned why some pupils were only in school for one day whilst others were in for 4-5 days; the wearing of visors and snoods was also discussed.

The end of day reflection time was raised and comments made were referred to Mr Hawkes, Assistant Head, for his attention.

Mentoring was requested to be reintroduced as well as activities on a Friday.

The emotion check in system in comparison to the behaviour reward system was spoken about and Rianna would visit nurture to understand how this works.

Mrs Bailey stated she was very proud of the ambassadors who were essential to the development of Elmwood School.

KIND DONATION

Di Cadman, former teaching assistant at the school, has kindly donated £50 to the school for a bird camera to be purchased so that pupils can enjoy watching any activity in bird boxes around school.

Di received one of these as a Christmas gift and has enjoyed not only seeing birds taking shelter but is currently watching a clutch of eggs to hatch out. Di remembers how much pupils previously have enjoyed watching butterflies emerge from caterpillars when she worked at the school.

A big thank you to Di for continuing to care for our pupils and we look forward to installing our camera and hopefully having some birds to spy on.

STAFFING NEWS

We were pleased to welcome both Julie Burnell, cleaner, and Grant Hunt, teaching assistant, back to school at the end of the spring term.

Julie has been absent since the end of November following a fall at home which has taken a time to heal.

Grant has been absent as a result of isolating for most of this academic year so it was nice to see him back in School.

MAY CLOSURE DAYS

A reminder that school will be closed on Monday 3rd May 2021 due to the May Day bank holiday and that pupils will break up on Friday 28th May for the summer half term break. Monday 7th June is a training day so pupils will return to School on Tuesday 8th June 2021.