



# ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER May 2021 – NO. 166

www.elmwood.walsall.sch.uk



## SUPER HERO'S DAY—23.4.21

On Friday 23rd April Elmwood School celebrated a year of pupils and staff being Superheroes and surviving a challenging year throughout the Covid pandemic. The day consisted

of many activities including lots of creative challenges and practical tasks. During the afternoon sessions pupils gave new life to old snoods and created 'snood monsters' whilst learning sewing skills and upcycling exercises.

It was fabulous to see so many people join in with the celebrations and dress up for the day! We had a range of superhero outfits but also people dressing up as nurses and frontline workers who played an important part in being heroic throughout the last 12 months.

Here at Elmwood we appreciate that everyone's journey has been different and that the last year, despite being challenging, has bought about some of the greatest displays in community spirit and unity that continues to make Elmwood school a very special place to be.

More photographs are available on the school website, photo gallery page.  
Report by Mrs Francis, Assistant Headteacher



## GOVERNOR NEWS



Dave Watton, who has been a part of the governing body since the school opened in 2008, has reluctantly had to call it a day.

Dave attended his first meeting with the Local Authority as part of the temporary governing body of our new secondary EBD special back in August 2007; so has been a part of the School since its infancy. He has previously taken on the roles of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors before stepping down to become an associate member of the governing body back in 2018.

During his time at the School, Dave (and his wife Kate) have attended various functions and celebration events as well as Dave being involved in the interviews of a number of staff. He has also used his skills gained as an engineer to support his role as a link governor for both science and health and safety.

Dave is taking away lots of memories and will be keeping an eye on what is going on in school through our school newsletters as well as hoping to come along to future events.

We wish Dave all the best and would like to say a very big thank you for everything that he has done for Elmwood School.

## What clever pupils

Way back in September (before lockdown 2 AND lockdown 3) all Year 7 pupils were encouraged to channel their inner poet and produce a piece of writing to be entered into a national Young Writers competition.

With the help of Mr Bullock and Mr Webb in their English lessons, pupils looked at different forms of poetry and had a go at writing their own on the theme of a peculiar pet.

All pupils that produced a piece of poetry had their work entered into the national competition and received a bookmark and a sticker. I also took a copy of everyone's work away and had them judged independently. While the judge was incredibly impressed at the high standard of work produced by everybody, they felt that certain students in particular required extra recognition. In a nurture base celebration assembly Jack Poxon, Logan Hawley, Carson Price and Sennen Gregory received commendation certificates and a special treat on behalf of the English department.

Fast forward a few months and I received some very exciting news in the post! Out of all the entries, which included poems with titles such as Snarrot, Snek, Snaion, Freddy the Cat and Terror Tortoise, 8 of our Year 7 students were selected to have their writing published in an anthology of poetry from schools across the country who had also entered the competition. Congratulations must go to Jack Poxon, Carson Price, Cody Love-Knight, Francis Gosling, Logan Hawley, Tyler-Reece Jones, Sennen Gregory and Dilan Smith for being selected for publication. It makes me particularly proud that these pupils were up against competition from not only schools across the country but also all different types of school as well.

Thanks must go to Mr Bullock, Mr Webb, Kerry, Marcia, Hardeep and Sarah F for supporting the pupils through the writing process and encouraging them to take risks. Writing poetry is no easy task. Report by Mr P Damms, Teacher

## UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month, Hardeep Garcha, teaching assistant, is the feature of our staff under the spot light section.



### How long have you worked at Elmwood?

9 years, can't believe almost a decade. Time flies at Elmwood eh!

**What do you love about your job?** The unpredictability of the day, being able to interact and enjoy humour with Elmwood pupils 'the Elmwood way' - full of banter sarcasm and wit! This makes it so much fun and pleasant (couldn't get away with it in other schools!) and lastly yet most importantly... being able to have such a direct impact on the emotional well being of Elmwood school pupils. My passion at Elmwood since day one has always been about behaviour more than academic learning (that's why I'm still here!). Witnessing the journey and progress is always a proud feeling!

### What film have you watched recently?

I'm more of a Netflix binger of seasons but most recent films on Netflix would be Ava, Sightless, Run and The Paramedic (just a few?)

### What was your favourite holiday?

Italy, specifically Rome was THE BEST. Loved the food (Italian cuisine is my most fave-carbs overload!) but the culture and amazing history during the Roman Empire. Taking a walk at night and standing next to one of the wonders of the world, the Colosseum (the place where the gladiator battles took place) was amazing! Pictures just don't do it justice and as a natural observer I noted a lot of passion and love in the city and in the people.

### Tell us something that people would be surprised to hear?

Clowns really freak me out so please don't dress up as one on a non uniform day (staff or pupils-thanking you in advance!)

## VIRTUAL REALITY VISIT

This month Elmwood hosted local professional T.I.E (Theatre in Education) group 'Round Midnight' where they came and gave a VR workshop on teenage criminal exploitation to a select number of pupils.

'Virtual Decisions' is a one-of-a-kind, innovative, exciting VR in Education program that is helping to support thousands of young people who are at risk of criminal exploitation.

As part of the workshop pupils had to wear a VR headset where pupils are placed in a real world scenario and they are faced with multiple dilemmas in which they must make a choice. Each choice results in various outcomes, showing that every action has a consequence.

After watching the immersive 8 minute VR film, a creative arts workshop then explored the issues raised in more depth where pupils were able to discuss the video and the decisions that they made. Pupils were not only educated but entertained by the workshop and enjoying taking part:

"I liked the realistic aspect of it; there was some good choices that you could make and it was fun"

"It was alright! I learnt how you can choose the right thing to do when you're in certain situation"

"I liked how it showed how people can change and make the right choice."

Staff were also invited to participate in a staff workshop after school which proved to be worthwhile and again entertaining!

"I thought it was really good and should be filtered out to the whole of the school" – Gail Smith

"I loved it. Round Midnight made it fun and educational at the same time. They were professional and clearly knew their stuff!" Mr Webb

Report by Mr Webb, Drama Teacher

## Sad News



We were sorry to hear of the sad news that a former Maths/Music Teacher at the School, Mr Ashley Lewis, had passed away. Ashley worked at the school from when it opened in 2008 (having moved over from Daw End School when it closed in 2007) before finally moving on in 2014. Mr Lewis was a well loved member of the team who forged good relationships with pupils as well as staff. With this in mind we would like to pay our own tribute to Ashley with a tribute page on our school website where we can share our thoughts/memories of times spent with Ashley. Please email Dawn in the office at [dcanham@elmwood.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:dcanham@elmwood.walsall.sch.uk) if you would like to contribute to this article. Our sincere condolences go to his family during this difficult time.

## Fun in out and about lessons



May 10th was the start of mental health awareness week with a focus this year on the restorative effects of nature, which many have realised during lockdowns. With this in mind one of the projects this term (with a focus upon a key virtue of altruism and serving others), was the continued planting of young trees around the edge of the sports field. Pupils have retrieved the knowledge that this is to help screen that area from the winter winds, to provide foraging for our cook ups, to provide fruits

for wildlife but also to absorb excess carbon from the atmosphere. Pupils have felt a great deal of pride and satisfaction at the end of this task.

Combined with this has been a litter pick with 'grabbers' and gloves. It always surprises me how popular this activity is, indeed some pupils did this during lockdown in their own local parks. This ties in with the Keep Britain Tidy and this year's Great British Spring Clean. One pupil even said that he "enjoys this so much that he'd like to do this as part of his future employment", which prompted a discussion about what sort of jobs might include that.

The School looks a lot fresher now and pupils are seeing the impact of eight years of planting with the establishment of some substantial trees now. Well done to all classes involved.

Report by Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning



## FREE CIRCUS TICKETS

Circus Starr are proud to present a brand new show that will make you feel like 'You're A Starr'!

Created for children who are new to the spectacle of live performance or struggle to sit and concentrate, this friendly and relaxed circus show is funded by generous donations from local businesses.

Each performance will delight with a fantastic array of circus talent from balancing skills to contortion. And of course, let's not forget their hilarious clown...Chico Rico!

Shows are available in Wolverhampton on 17.6.21, 18.6.21 in Walsall and 19.6.21 in Dudley.

Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis, from <https://www.circus-starr.org.uk/apply-for-tickets/>

Staff who have previously accompanied some of our pupils to these shows have had a lovely experience and if you are lucky enough to get tickets, we would love to hear all about it so we can share with Circus Starr and their supporters.

## TRAINING DAY REMINDER

Pupils will return after the half term break on Tuesday 8th June due to a staff training day taking place on Monday 7th June 2021.

## BIKEABILITY COURSE



This past term pupils from transition and nurture had an amazing opportunity to experience the out and about activity Bikeability.

The course was a chance for some of our Elmwood pupils to learn vital and valuable road safety skills that they will benefit from when riding their bike on roads within the local community. Also it was a chance for some pupils to gain more confidence and develop biking skills. All sessions were a full day in which the students had a chance to ride around the local area by school.

All pupils who took part were able to secure and achieve their Level 1 or Level 2 Bikeability certificate. The students loved it and really put their effort into the course. At various points throughout you could see how the pupils were able to grasp what they were taught earlier on in the sessions and actually put it to good use.

Well done to all the pupils that took part. I would also like to thank the Bikeability practitioners who were able to teach and run this course, it was a big success.

A big thank you also to Kerry and Jade, Teaching Assistants, for helping and supporting some of the pupils with this course which was much appreciated. Finally a big thank you to Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning, for organising and making this experience possible for the pupils.



Overall it was a fun, positive and enjoyable experience for the young people who took part.

Report by Leon Donaldson, Teaching Assistant

## MarvellousMe Badge Design Competition

Parents and Carers who use MarvellousMe (88% currently) are aware of its benefits and enjoy receiving updates on their child's progress in School.

We are currently running a competition where every child has the opportunity to design a new badge that fits in with our school values.

The winner will be announced in the next newsletter and you will then be able to look out to seeing the winning entry.

Good luck to all pupils and we look forward to seeing the designs.

Any parent or carer who has not yet signed up to this free app/website, are encouraged to contact the school office to obtain their personal log in details.

## UPDATE TO RISK ASSESSMENT

To support the video update (on the school website) please be aware of the amendments to the COVID-19 risk assessment from w/c 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021:

- Medical snoods are optional for staff and pupils within the school building.
- LFD testing twice weekly is to continue on site (Monday and Wednesday) for pupils.
- LFD testing twice weekly is to continue at home (Sunday and Wednesday) for staff.
- Social distancing of 1m to be maintained (where appropriate).
- Maintain ventilation within classes.
- Maintain separate entrance points and minimum of 6 periods of hand washing.
- Reduced interaction across Nurture, Transition and Pathways bases.
- Coats, external jackets to be removed when inside the building.

We are encouraging appropriate school uniform for the summer term 2, but are also sympathetic and aware that purchasing new uniform prior to breaking up for summer holidays is also not appropriate. If you have any issues regarding school uniform please contact the school so we can agree a compromise. Report by Mr Lee Cross,

## MORE SAD NEWS

We were very saddened to discover on Monday 24th May 2021 that our remaining two chickens had sadly died. Pupils and staff have cared for our ex battery hens for over three years where they have thrived and produced an abundance of eggs. We know that our chickens will be much missed and it is hoped that we will be able to give a loving home to some more chickens in need of a happy life in the future. A big thank you to everyone who has helped to take care of our girls and especially to Mr Cross, Headteacher, who made sure they always enjoyed the school holidays when he took them home to stay.

## STAFFING NEWS

On 26th May Charlotte Clarke, Teaching Assistant (but soon to be English Teacher at the School), celebrated a special birthday. Charlotte was presented with cards and gifts from staff and enjoyed her special day.

Many congratulations to Mr Hinsley, Teacher in Nurture, on the news that his wife is expecting their first baby in September. As you can imagine Mr Hinsley is very excited and we look forward to following his journey.

We said goodbye to our Caretaker, Richard Tranter, at the end of term. Richard has worked at the school for ten years and during this time has forged good relationships with staff, pupils and governors. Richard is having a change of occupation with his new job and we wish him every success for the future.

## Regulation Station

During the summer term regulation station workshops were launched across the school. The workshops are designed to support the emotional intelligence and self regulation of pupils within the school. The workshops will run for 10 weeks and impact will be assessed at the end of the programme to see whether pupils are being 1% better in terms of managing their emotions and behaviours. The workshop focuses on 4 key areas:

- Regulation
- Labelling emotions
- Understanding of body sensations
- Recognising emotions in others

**Regulate:** Pupils are taught how to regulate and learn tools to help them to do this. Regulation is taught as a tool to use in the moment. In addition to this through co-regulation we allow them to experience how they feel and pupils are taught how to label that feeling. Pupils are taught rhythmic and repetitive activities which help them to regulate and calm such as tactical breathing.

**Label:** If pupils can accurately label their emotions they can tame it and as such can decrease the intensity.

**Understanding of body sensations:** pupils learn to recognise how an emotion feels in the body and link a body sensations to an emotion they are feeling; this then supports them to recognise emotions and then self regulate.

**Recognising emotions in others :** This supports pupils understanding of emotions by looking at how someone's body language can determine how they may be feeling.

Report by Mr Hawkes , Assistant Headteacher