



# ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

## APRIL 2024 – NO. 198

www.elmwood.walsall.sch.uk

### FUNDAY FRIDAYS





Funday Fridays are a curriculum enhancement that look to support your child's personal development – and the breadth of the school's curriculum. Pupils progress through a carousel of activities. These activities act as vehicles to develop your child's **communication, leadership and preparation for adulthood** as well as them demonstrating the school's observable behaviours aligned to our values of Care for Self, Others and the Environment.

Staff will utilise the group's success within communication, leadership and preparation for adulthood to plan for opportunities to address in their next activity.

These experiences are a core component of your child's education and are not a reward trip. They are an essential experience that supports the school's curriculum. Report by Mrs Francis, Deputy Head

This half terms activities include: Plan a day, creating a class assembly, geocaching, 'Food for thought' – a culinary celebration, a STEM day, travel training and a day of work experience!

Here are a selection of IMPACT measures following this half terms experience:

Nurture	Transition	Pathways
<p>8a showed incredible maturity and bravery when they went to a neighbouring primary school and delivered sessions to younger pupils. The Headteacher of the visited school congratulated our pupils on their engagement and levels of maturity showing fantastic communication skills and leadership qualities. Great work guys!</p> <p>8b took a bus to Lichfield to experience the sights of this Victorian city (and of course a quick trip to Beacon park). Pupils were independent and communicated well, purchasing their own bus tickets and showing genuine gratitude for a fun-filled day.</p> <p>8c learned all about geocaching and then wrote clues for one another to hunt for and solve a mystery! Working together and overcoming problems as a team made sure this group had a fab day.</p> 	<p>On Funday Friday - Josh, Julian and George have helped Transition by planting daffodil bulbs and covering the plot with grass seed. They are looking forward to seeing it all grow during the spring season.</p>   <p>9a researched foods from other countries and cultures, and then created their own dishes for a day that really did provide 'Food for thought'.</p> 	<p>10a pupils for their STEM day enjoyed working with the new Lego robots competing in a number of tasks to win a selection of Easter eggs. The day started with pupils learning how to program prebuilt robots to rescue a number of Lego mini figures from danger. Francis and Sennen won this event rescuing all the mini figures! Following this, and working in teams, they built their own robots, calculating the energy transfer from potential to kinetic energy along with the speed of the robot. To finish up they all built a robot bike to climb ramps investigating the amount of energy required by the motors depending on how steep the ramp was. Great skills shown all day were concentration and perseverance were key.</p> <p>11a tried a variety of different activities throughout the day that replicated real-life work scenarios. Once the group gathered momentum they settled to their tasks and communicated well with one another. Each pupil completed quite different tasks but achieved success in their own areas which is testament to them and their perseverance. The drama room certainly looks tidier thanks to this group and I know many of them enjoyed the feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction in helping our school community from a work based perspective. Well done and thank you guys.</p> <p>11b completed a unit of work they have studied on transport and went to visit the Transport Museum within the ThinkTank in Birmingham. There were lots of real life examples of transport through the ages which brought to life the learning that had happened in class.</p>



### STAFFING NEWS

We are pleased to confirm that Ben Micklewright and Sarah Lock will be joined our team of teaching assistants following successful interview on Thursday 11th April 2024. Sarah has been working on supply at the school and has already forged good relationships with both pupils and staff. A big thank you to our school council ambassadors for their input during the interview process and also to Lisa Jones, parent governor, who supported Mr Cross, Headteacher, on the day. We look forward to Ben joining us in the summer term.

Unfortunately Ms Shaw, food technology teacher, has not yet been able to return to work and we wish her well.

Michael O'Callaghan, who was recently successful at teacher interview and joining us in September, returned to Elmwood on 15th April for the term as part of his final SCITT placement.

Congratulations to Dr A Price for completing his Fellowship in Higher Education. This marks a culmination of work within higher education and reflective writing pieces of evidence. A Fellow demonstrates a personal and institutional commitment to professionals in learning and teaching at higher education. This additional acknowledgement can only strengthen the experiences Elmwood pupils receive in science and also raise aspirations for those interested in higher education in the future.

### LEON'S FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE

Leon Donaldson, teaching assistant at Elmwood School, has set himself a challenge to complete 100 press ups daily during the month of April. Leon is raising money to support Macmillan Cancer Support and would be very appreciative of any sponsorship to help this worthwhile cause. Please click on the link below if you would like to donate or alternatively there is a sponsor form in the school office.

<https://socialsync.app/fundraiser/cr-1495dywo7rl50?currentTab=fundraising>

Many thanks in advance and good luck Leon, we hope you help to raise lots of vital funds for the charity.

### SPRING TERM SUPERSTARS

Well done to the following pupils who achieved 100% attendance during the spring term—what an amazing achievement. All pupils received a certificate and £5 gift voucher during an assembly held on Friday 19th April.

- Daniel Christie
- Daniel Coney
- Ethan Cope
- Mkenzie Gonderton
- Francis Gosling
- Logan Gosling
- Malachi Grainger
- George Hancox
- Harlow Jones
- Izzy Hough
- Kyle Hously-Hardiman
- Dylan Paddock
- Rebecca Spendlove
- Joshua Till
- Phoebe Till

Well done also to the following staff who also achieved 100% attendance and received certificates.

- Lee Cross, Gemma Francis, Martin Hawkes, Dan Whittaker, Chris Bowen, James Francis, Olivia Diponio, Lynn Maritza, Marcia Allen, Deb Causer, Grant Hunt, Adam Mitchell, Sunita Lalli, Athena Nicholaou, Stacey Urmson, Bev Bailey and Caroline Bratt.

## George Discovers the St. George's Mushroom



We often hear about the wonders of nature from afar, but sometimes the most intriguing discoveries can be made right in our own backyard. This time, it was George, one of our keen-eyed pupils, who stumbled upon a fascinating find. The St. George's mushroom named after the patron Saint of England. The mushroom is a springtime one that can be found in grassy areas, woodlands and even school grounds by the looks of it. As spring rolls into summer, mushroom hunting will begin once again as pupils will go on the hunt for the species of Agaricus. Report by Mr Hawkes, Assistant Headteacher

## Progress and achievement event

Thank you to the many parents and carers who came along to the above event on Wednesday 20th March when 70 appointments were made with 65 able to attend enjoying refreshments in food technology room (thank you to Leon Donaldson, Chris Bowen and Alan Price for being the perfect hosts) before meeting with staff to discuss pupil reports.

Thank you to everyone who also completed the parental questionnaire; a copy of the survey results is on our school website. Some of the comments made by parents and carers include:

*Fantastic, couldn't fault the school*

*Perfect as usual*

*The staff have worked hard to make my child happier and in attendance*

*School are great at helping my child reach her potential, she has done amazing with her time here*

## NEWS FROM OUT AND ABOUT



### Archery Recognition.

As an approved provider for Archery GB, we have received our plaque, which is proudly displayed in our foyer, along with £800 of Action archery equipment that pupils have enjoyed using around the woodland area of our school grounds, as this photo illustrates.

### Easter Eggstatic

In readiness for Easter, pupils made a gift for their gardens at home, perfect as a mobile hung from a tree these were 3D chicken wire eggs. Constructed around a wire frame, pupils have intricately attached the chicken wire on top to produce these works of art. Pupils have demonstrated the virtues of creativity, respect and altruism, patience and gentleness. The photos show pupils working and the display afterwards.



### Spreading the word!

The weekend prior to the Easter break I attended the Lindley Outdoor Learning Conference, in the Peak District. Other speakers included Professor Colin Beard (International speaker) who delivered material around his new book on Experiential Learning. Other workshops focused upon psychodrama therapy in the outdoors, designing learning programs, enhanced bushcraft, leadership workshop, reflective treks and designing personal development through the outdoors. I delivered a 2.5 hour workshop on the 10 year journey that I have taken developing the out and about curriculum with it's 100 different risk and skill based activities and how pupils learn the virtues through these activities which they utilise back in class, the Theory of Change (the research) supporting the benefits to our pupils, Ofsted recognition and future developments. I also spoke about the work I did to create Elmwood's whole school Intent, including mapping our character education, cultural capital and the school values. In order to illustrate how the virtues are utilised, I led a session of scything in the grounds of Hollowford Training Centre, following this up with a plenary of which virtues the participants felt they had practiced and why. The weather held and all enjoyed a very stimulating and thought provoking conference. Report by Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning

## READING RAFFLE

At the end of the spring term, the reading raffle was drawn by Mr Cross, Headteacher.

There were 48 reading raffle tickets in the prize draw and the two lucky winners were Aidan Garbett in Year 9 and Ryan Keenan in Year 8. Very well done to both boys who were presented with a £10 Amazon gift voucher.

## CIRCUS VISIT

Circus Cortex will be returning to Walsall, Pelsall Common for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year running. They will be performing shows twice daily from Thu 25<sup>th</sup> April to Mon 6<sup>th</sup> May, with their brand new and outstanding reviewed Cirque show 'Masquerade'.

Circus Cortex have kindly given the school the opportunity to receive a discount off any tickets purchased by using the code **SCHOOL7** at checkout to get £7 OFF VIP and Grandstand individual tickets and will also take £7 off family tickets (not valid with any other offer or RED seats). Further information is available on their website - [www.circuscortex.com](http://www.circuscortex.com)

In addition to the above, the school received a free family ticket for use on Wednesday 1st May with Ellis Bird in Year 10 being the lucky pupil winning this prize—well done Ellis and we hope you and your family enjoy the show.

## ELMWOOD WELCOMED MORE SCITT STUDENTS

As part of our continued involvement with Barr Beacon SCITT, we welcomed 6 Primary ITT's to Elmwood as part of their studies. The pupils and staff were extremely welcoming and ensured that the delegates had a great experience and have left with a greater knowledge and understanding about a specialist setting. Below are two comments received from the Primary ITT's following their experience:

"I have learnt about how having a positive environment is essential to schools. This was especially evident at Elmwood school as the staff at this school have such a calm approach with the children. It was also evident that there is a clear mutual respect and relationship between students and staff which is something I will look at creating in my classroom in the future."

"It was a very insightful day that resembled nothing of my initial expectations. The school and staff had a very calm and relaxed vibe. The children were encouraged to participate, and supported if they were struggling. The points system is well received and promotes active engagement. The staff allowed the children time to reflect on their behaviour and provided suggestions on how they could rectify their mistakes. I thought that the school valued pupil voice and there was a sense of mutual respect. I also felt extremely welcomed and part of the team right from the off." Report by Mr Cross, Headteacher

## DIDN'T SHE DO WELL

Elmwood has embarked on its first ever Trainee Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship commencing September 2024 following a successful interview on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024, Charlie-Anne Barfield (Yr 11 pupil), will be securing this position. Charlie-Anne managed to overcome her nerves where she was able to demonstrate her skills within the classroom and support the class teacher well in getting the appropriate resources and support pupils with their drawing skills. She also faced school council providing clear answers on how she could add value to their experiences. Her formal interview was also a glowing success where she demonstrated a real reflective understanding of her strengths and areas for development. A true example of the Elmwood Way and we look forward to her joining the TA Team in September. She can now focus on her exams and coursework. Report by Mr Cross, Headteacher

## 8b BIG SLEEP OUT



As you many know, some pupils from 8b recently participated in a camp out to help raise money for the homeless. Harry-Lee Cox, Harry Pickford, Riley Cabrera and Harlow Jones participated and had an absolute blast. They spent the evening making their own dinner and pudding—stir fry and apple crumble, which was delicious according to staff! Then they went for a nice walk in the dark

and finally back to the tents for a campfire and some hot chocolate. Pupils had to put up their own tents in the rain and the cold. There were no complaints throughout the whole night and behaviour was impeccable. Even though it was a cold and scary night for some, all pupils were appreciative of the experience and they appreciated how hard it would be to live out on the street and how important it was that we raised money. Overall, we currently have a little over £535 for donation. With a special thanks to Miss Askins' brother Josh (and the Will Hire Company) who helped raise £110 and Harry-Lee Cox's mum, Jodie, who also helped raise a whopping £100.

A massive thanks to the staff that facilitated the experience namely Mr Whittaker, Kerry Bowen and Leon Donaldson; also to Lynne the cook, who made us a cake and a big thanks to everyone that donated. We will be donating the money to Shelter, who will be in school soon to thank the pupils for their hard work and to collect the outstanding amount of money raised. Report by Miss Askins, Teacher



## REWARD TRIPS



### Gold Reward Trip—Flip Out Adventure Park

In a world where hard work and dedication are often celebrated, it's essential to recognise the efforts of those who go above and beyond. Recently, a group of exceptional pupils had the opportunity to embark on an unforgettable adventure as a reward for their outstanding achievements. Their destination? The exhilarating Flip Out Adventure Park in Telford, a haven for thrill-seekers and adrenaline enthusiasts alike. Flip Out Adventure Park is renowned for its wide array of heart-pounding activities, promising a day filled with excitement and memorable experiences. From go-karting and roller skating, to navigating through a ninja obstacle course, engaging in laser tag battles, and conquering the challenges of Battle Cannon, the park offers something for every adventure seeker. For these pupils, the trip was not just a chance to have fun, but a well-deserved reward for their dedication and commitment throughout the term. Whether it was excelling in academics, demonstrating exceptional behaviour, or contributing positively to the school community and values, each pupil had earned their place on this thrilling excursion through their hard work and perseverance. To all the pupils who participated in this unforgettable experience, congratulations on a job well done. Your dedication has truly paid off. Report by Ms O Diponio, Teacher/Trip Lead



### Silver Reward Trip—Aireas 51

Pupils on the silver reward trip enjoyed another fun successful day and, yet again, jumped for joy at Aireas 51! It was an Elmwood first as we had not visited this trampolining venue before and there was certainly a lot more to do! As well as trampolining pupils and staff were able to enjoy and experience drop slide, basketball, dodgeball, clip n climb, inflatable assault course, gladiator beam, jump tower, football area and even more! Pupils were spoilt for choice at what to go on; not only could you just jump up and down on the wall to wall trampolines, you could also take part in the ninja assault and get lost in the foam pit! Another brilliant reward trip and once again all pupils (and staff) were a credit to the school displaying all the Elmwood values of care for self, care for others and care for the environment. Thank you to all the staff that made it a memorable day! Report by Mr M Webb, Teacher/Trip Lead



### Bronze Reward Trip —Fishing

Fortunately, we were once again allowed to book a pool at Pipehill Fishery and the weather was very kind to us. The pupils had a lovely time and they all caught. Through the course of the day, many sizeable carp were caught, which was a fantastic treat for those who had not experienced fishing before. All pupils behaved respectfully and the whole group thoroughly enjoyed the day. I would especially like to thank Andy from Pipehill, who allowed us to occupy one pool. In addition, I would also like to thank Ade McBrine from Fatty's Baits and Fishing Tackle, Wednesfield, who supplied the bait for this trip, free of charge. Thank you for your support. More photos are on the school website. Report by Mr Wood, Teacher/Trip Lead



### Bronze Reward Trip —Gaming day

Classrooms in transition base were transformed into gaming rooms populated with Xbox's, PlayStations, Switch consoles and an Oculus Quest 2. Pupils were happy and in their element slaying monsters, emptying clips, racing sports cars and solving puzzles on the games bought in from home. If only we could harness some of this focus on their academic tasks they would surely be geniuses. Report by Mr Middleton, Teacher/Trip Lead