



# ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024 – NO. 205

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**WISHING YOU A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR — A REMINDER THAT THE  
SPRING TERM STARTS ON MONDAY 6TH JANUARY 2025**

## Work Experience

On Thursday 21st November, we were pleased to welcome back Adam Knibb, Year 11 leaver in June 2024. Adam is currently attending College but as part of his studies has returned to carry out work experience; he already has aspirations to become a teacher.

Adam has begun by supporting in Year 7 and we look forward to seeing his development over the coming weeks.

## GREAT FIND



Thanks to Mr Price, science teacher's, eagle eyes, Ryan in Year 9, was soon out with Mr Hawkes, Assistant Head, to harvest a branch that had come down in the recent storm as oyster mushrooms had been spotted growing on it.

Oyster mushrooms are a real delicacy and it is hoped that more will be popping up over the coming months. Ryan will be keeping a watchful eye on developments.



## GOLDEN TICKET WINNERS



Following successfully securing the most golden tickets in 2023-24 Jack, Bradley and Ryan all accompanied me to the White House in Aldridge for lunch. The golden tickets are awarded to pupils by any visitor who attends Elmwood School for actively demonstrating the observable behaviours aligned to our school values (care for self, others and the environment), as well as demonstrating positive communication to unfamiliar adults to them. This is becoming a real highlight for me and a brilliant opportunity for pupils of different backgrounds to communicate effectively in a "natural" manner. I look forward to celebrating this with the 2024-25 winners.

Report by Mr Cross, Headteacher

## CHRISTMAS FAYRE



Thank you to everyone who supported the above mini fayre which took place during our progress and achievement event. We were able to raise a total of £237.90 towards our school fund account, which helps to support our pupils with those little extras.

The raffle winners were Xmas hamper - Shelli George, TA, Gin - Si Wood, Teacher, Amaretto - Cole Owen, Year 11, bottle of white wine - Riley Shorthouse, Year 8, Pinata dragon - Alex Clarke, Year 7, bottle of mulled wine - Harry Gunter, Year 8, bottle of mulled wine - Hollie Lockley, Year 7, chocolate bundle (Matchmakers) - Logan Gosling, Year 11, chocolate bar bundle - Caitlin Walker, Year 8 and finally a smellies bundle - Dylan Paddock, Year 8. Very well done to all and enjoy your prizes.



A big thank you to Sara Beaman, nan to Alfie in Year 9, who kindly donated a lovely hamper as a raffle prize. Sara's hampers always go down well and we are very grateful for her support. Another big thank you to Cole's mom in Year 11, who kindly donated a quantity of soft toys which were also gratefully received. Shelli George, teaching assistant and the pupils in craft club once again came up trumps with an array of goodies to sell.



Finally a very big shout out to Cleo Dudley, Skills Development Coordinator, who organised the whole event and did a fantastic job, ably assisted by Sunita Lalli, teaching assistant. Plans are already underway for a bigger and better event next year!

## OUT AND ABOUT HAVE BEEN VERY BUSY!

As always, indoor caving at Wolf Mountain has proved a great hit with pupils this year, with our new Year 7s striving to get good points throughout the weeks to get themselves booked onto the caving option. You could say 'it's gone down well'. Virtues practiced have been patience, joy and courage. Kayden Newell also earned a 'Conquering Dragons' certificate.



As you will recall, Elmwood previously achieved gold as part of the Woodland Trusts 'Green School Award'. This is the culmination of a variety of achievements that the school has accomplished, but in the main the planting of 450 sapling trees each year by pupils. Pupils have learnt about sustainable planting and, after collecting their class Christmas tree from the farm (taking a tree from the earth then give back 5 new trees each to the planet.) They discussed why we need trees for carbon capture and oxygen. We also discussed the wind breaking potential of this hedge for PE on the school field, as well as future foraging potential and wildlife benefits. It's been tree-mendous! Virtues practiced have been altruism, gentleness/awareness and nature connectedness.



### Fröhliche Weihnachten!

Once again the German Christmas Market has come back to Birmingham City Centre and Elmwood pupils have had the opportunity to go and experience this cultural festival during their 'Out & About' lessons, contributing to their cultural capital. Due to timetable restrictions, morning groups visited the winter wonderland at the Hollybush Garden Centre; all pupils however had an opportunity to visit the German market as part of our Friday enrichment activities.

The variety of stalls has given the pupils and staff the opportunity to try traditional German festive foods such as filled pretzels, crepes and Bratwurst hot dogs. Staff and pupils also got to look at the stalls selling traditional wooden toys, Christmas candles and decorations, hats and jewellery.

All classes have been well behaved, polite to the stall holders and a credit to Elmwood. We would like to also add a special well done to those pupils who don't like being in unfamiliar environments with lots of other people, as they all coped so well.

Last but never least, a big thank you to all of the teaching assistants who have accompanied the pupils, making these trips possible and run so smoothly. Virtues practiced included, patience, courage, cooperation, joy, awareness.



### And they're off!

Whilst on a training course for O&A, in Yorkshire, I was approached by someone on the course during the break, who was impressed by the range of activities we offer within the O&A curriculum at Elmwood. They explained that they were involved with a charitable trust that gives opportunities for pupils to experience careers in the horse racing industry and asked if I would be interested?



After many emails we set up our second day at Uttoxeter races for our pupils on Tuesday 10th December. After a health and safety briefing, we were lucky enough to have access to all areas and places the public do not get to see. We visited the jockeys' weigh in area where we were able to guess and test our weight. It was a bitterly cold day and pupils did well to tolerate the temperature but running down the race course to the jumps helped warm them up. We measured the parade ring with trundles to see how many horses could safely be in there and then witnessed the horses' parade and enter the course. We were able to hold the jockeys' kit and this time we were able to watch three races (there were none last time hence why I chose to go later in the year). The races were very exciting for the pupils and having taken our birdwatching binoculars, pupils were able to follow the action. Pupils chose which horse they thought might win and we discussed what odds meant. A special mention goes to Athena, TA, who kept the pupils focussed during the day.

Pupils were made aware of the huge variety of careers at a race course, catering, security, IT, event planners, management, administration, trainers, officials, etc.

A great experience for Elmwood pupils, in the 'mane' and which was also a very educational and mathematical day.

## UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month our featured member of staff under the spotlight is Ben Micklewright, Teaching Assistant.

**How long have you worked at Elmwood?** *I have worked at Elmwood for 7 months.*

**What do you love about your job?** *I love providing the pupils with a great outdoor experience and seeing how much they learn and grow as people whilst they are with us.*

**What films have you watched recently?** *The Polar Express, great Christmas movie, the train is cool.*

**Favourite Holiday?** *The summer holidays are great due to all the time I can spend exploring new bike trails around Cannock Chase and other parts of the country.*

**Tell us something that people would be surprised to hear?** *To de stress, I like riding my longboard down the country lanes whilst listening to music for a few hours.*



## PUPIL UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Our pupil under the spotlight this month is Cole Owen in Year 11 so a big thank you to him for his responses.

**What do you like most about coming to Elmwood School?** *I like science.*

**Have you any thoughts about what you might like to do after leaving Elmwood?** *To work on the fair with mom and dad.*

**In your spare time, what do you most like to do?** *Play computer games.*

**Have you done anything that we might be surprised to learn about?** *I went to visit Santa at Lapland UK.*

**If you could go anywhere or do anything, what would you choose?** *Visit an indoor Christmas fair.*

## GOVERNOR NEWS

We are pleased to say that Di Cadman, associate governor and former teaching assistant at the school, is continuing to do well after her recent operation. We look forward to hopefully catching up with Di in the new year.

A big thank you to all our governors for giving their time to support the school and for all the work that they do behind the scenes, it is very much appreciated.

## DRAMA CLUB

Thanks to Mr Webb a regular drama club takes place every Monday. A number of pupils join Mr Webb at lunch time and there is also the option to do a bit more on a Friday afternoon during enrichment activities.

Supported by Mr O'Callaghan, Year 10b English teacher, auditions took place on Friday 13th December for a future pantomime production of Aladdin. Watch this space for further news on this event.

## ELMWOOD BAKE OFF—FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2024

This term Elmwood created the first ever Elmwood Bake Off challenge! Only seven pupils were selected across the whole of KS3, so anyone selected to enter the competition already showed great achievement throughout their cooking lessons this year. The candidates were Harry Lee Cox, Harry Pickford, Archie Rist, Phoebe Till, Dylan Paddock, Harley Giles and Alex Clarke. They all tried immensely hard, and they all created some lovely biscuits. They had an hour to complete the recipe which they hadn't seen before, and they had to do this independently (apart from the washing up - sorry staff!). They all then presented their bakes on a plate and added them to a number, so the judges did not know whose was whose. Our lovely BTEC food technology pupils in Year 11 judged the bakes which included Carson Price, Jack Poxon, Logan Hawley and Francis Gosling. They were given a score out of twenty for 5 different categories including presentation, texture, consistency, cooking time and most importantly taste! The winner was announced in assembly and was awarded a star baker apron and some chocolate. All of the pupils did so well that they all got some chocolate! The winner was Harry Lee Cox!! Very well done and well done to all the pupils that took on this challenge. Report by Ms Dudley, Skills Development Coordinator



## STAFFING NEWS

Leesha Holland-Mansell is currently working on supply as a PE teacher ahead of us filling this recent staff vacancy. Leesha has previously worked at the school as part of her professional studies and therefore knows the school well. A big thank also to Leesha for the kind donations she has recently passed onto the school including a craft box of goodies (which Shelli George, teaching assistant, loved) and also Warburton bread items, which went down well with pupils. Welcome aboard Leisha.

## ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Dependent on points, pupils have the opportunity to select an enrichment activity on Friday afternoons.

Thanks to Mr Hawkes, Assistant Head, a variety of options are on offer which this term include a Judo coach passing on some of his skills to interested pupils. Feedback has been very positive and those taking part are really enjoying learning this martial art.

## PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT EVENT

Thank you to the parents and carers who either came along on Wednesday 4th December for their progress and achievement appointments or had a phone consultation. These sessions enable parents and carers to meet with their child's form staff to review their progress and look at targets, discuss their school autumn term report and look at some of the amazing work that pupils have achieved. The turnout was 92.5%, which is a positive result. Comments made by parents and carers during these appointments include:

My child has settled in well within 7B, mom is happy as her son is enjoying school and is excited to come in the morning. He never used to talk about his emotions but since starting at Elmwood he is doing much better.

Mum and Dad had no concerns or questions regarding school and left the meeting happy as they can see their child's progress within Elmwood in comparison to his primary school.

Mum left happy with child's progress as she explained how he was running out of his class and crying within his previous school and was having phone calls quite often about him having to be physically supported within previous school. She also highlights how she feels that he seems much more settled and happier in Elmwood. Mum explained how she was really pleased and thanked staff for all work completed with her son.

Carer is happy with the progress he has made and has come on leaps and bounds since junior school.

Dad is so proud of how she has changed since primary, breaking tables etc, in coming to Elmwood her attitude has changed a lot. Overall, very happy with the work she is doing.

The spring term event will take place on Wednesday 26th March 2025.

## ON THE LURE



On the 22<sup>nd</sup> November, I started a lure painting project for some of our

more avid young anglers. The boys designed and painted their blank lures, and the following week sealed them with epoxy resin. The

following Friday we visited a local canal and tested the lures out in hope of catching a



sneaky predator. Unfortunately, due to



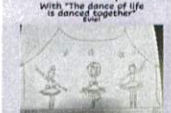
unsettled weather—that's my excuse anyway the boys didn't manage a fish between them. This being said,

they enjoyed the whole experience of making something and fishing with it. We will continue to go again during Friday activities in the hope that one of us will eventually hook up. Report by Mr Wood, Teacher

## DOODLE COMPETITION UPDATE

This half-term pupils took part in 'Doodle Day'. Doodle Day is a worldwide event to raise awareness and funds for epilepsy research and support. The tagline 'Drawing a line through epilepsy' heads the campaign, and participants take part by submitting their doodles. Once pupils (and staff) had given in all their wonderful submissions Miss Askins, Athena Nicholaou and Mr Webb carefully looked at all the entries to establish a first, second, third and fourth place. We had to add a fourth because we just couldn't decide, they were all too good! They even decided on a first, second and third place for staff too. There were so many brilliant entries it was hard to pick their favourites, but after some very careful consideration and a few disagreements they finally settled on

And in first place...



their winners. Each winner got themselves an art related prize and was announced in assembly and the winning pupils were:  
1st place – Evie Leonard with 'the dance of life is danced together',  
2nd place – Hollie Lockley with 'flower field' and 3rd place – Breanne Whitehouse with 'what to do', 4th place - Riley Shorthouse with 'care'.



In Third... With "ZAP" Adam!

In second... With "Doodles" Mrs Francis!

In first... With "Somewhere soft to lay my head" Kerry!



Staff winners were:

1st place – Kerry Bowen, TA, with 'somewhere soft to lay my head', 2nd place - Mrs Francis, Deputy Head, with 'doodles' and 3rd place - Adam Mitchell, TA, with 'ZAP!' Report by Miss Askins, Art Teacher