



# ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

## April 2023 – NO. 187

www.elmwood.walsall.sch.uk

### FUNDAY FRIDAYS

Funday Fridays are a curriculum enhancement that looks to support your child’s personal development – in addition 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.

This half terms activities include: Historic immersive trips to Warwick Castle, The Black Country Museum and RAF Cosford, travel experiences, community work, creating a class assembly, and enterprising ideas for fund raising.

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

Nurture	Transition	Pathways
<p>7a worked as a team demonstrating trust, independence, and co-operation as they filmed activities to create an assembly – we can’t wait to see it!</p> <p>7b were enterprising extraordinaires raising money for their defibrillator by organising a raffle and prizes.</p> <p>7c all checked in excitedly about working in the community to make it a cleaner and tidier place – great job guys.</p> <p>8a created a Bullock Production fantastic assembly on raising funds and showing what fun it can be. The whole school have already enjoyed watching the film which showed humour, team work, and great communication skills by all.</p> <p>8b got themselves from school to Birmingham Airport using a variety of public transport experiences and conducted themselves brilliantly throughout the day.</p> 	<p>Year 9 went to The Black Country Museum using public transport and loved their time experiencing the coal mine. Pupils showed genuine interest and curiosity in our local history and enjoyed conversing with the volunteers to find out more about what life was like 300 years ago.</p>  <p>Year 10 took a trip to the cinema and enjoyed an entertaining day all-round. The group were able to work through prior challenges and tensions in school and were able to come together as a group and enjoy each other’s company in a more informal setting.</p>	<p>Year 11 joined together to venture on a magical day to Warwick Castle. Pupils who have previously highlighted anxiety and worry about being offsite, all overcame their fears and attended on what was one of our favourite days out yet. Pupils took a walk through the dungeons experiencing scary scenes then contrasted their day with elegance and luxury witnessing the historical beauty of the castle itself. All pupils took great delight in watching Mrs F face her fears of birds while they enjoyed a Birds of Prey display in the glorious sunshine of the castle grounds. A day year 11 will undoubtedly remember for its entertainment, laughter, and for all pupils living into our Elmwood Values.</p> 

## UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month our featured member of staff under the spotlight is Mark Trahearn, Teaching Assistant.

How long have you worked at Elmwood? *6 years, I think!*

What do you love about your job? *Working with people and building positive relationships.*

What films have you watched recently? *The series: The Last of Us*

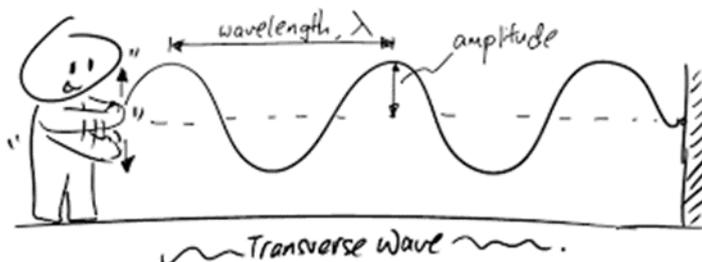
Favourite Holiday? *A very long holiday in Australia! Would love to go back.*

Tell us something that people would be surprised to hear? *I make a great cup of tea! (Maybe I shouldn't have said that!)*



## Science in the woods – surely not!

A group of key stage 3 pupils recently spent a day in the woods of Leicestershire to enhance their science learning. The first part of the day the pupils explored sound and sound waves. A rope allowed them to produce a transverse wave, the faster the rope was moved the greater the wavelength. The greater the force, the larger the amplitude. Pupils were also able to feel an echo through the rope – an echo occurs when sound waves are reflected towards the hearer.



Ellis mastered the Aboriginal Bullroarer, which is a wing shaped piece of dense wood attached to a cord, it produces a low-pitched hum when sung correctly.



Pupils also learnt about the current in electrical circuits, and resistance, before they lit fires using wire wool and a 9v battery and a friction drill.

A fun day was had by all and we learnt that that if you stand too close to a rope making waves, you could get Hertz.

Report by Dr Alan Price, Lead Teacher of Science



## FREE TREES

We have once again been successful with our application to receive 420 wild harvest sapling trees courtesy of the Woodland Trust. We will be taking delivery of these in the autumn term when pupils will be busy planting them in outdoor education lessons with Mr Whittaker. The trees will help enhance our open spaces and attract local wildlife. We are very grateful to the Trust for their continued support in helping to develop our school site.



## THEATRE VISIT

On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March pupils in Years 10 & 11 who are studying BTEC Performing Arts went to see John Godber's classic play 'Teachers' which is a breath-taking, breakneck comedy about education for the 'haves' and 'have nots' and a generation left behind.

It's 2022 at Whitewall, a struggling academy that's failed its Ofsted. The bell's gone and they can't afford a new one. The first fifteen games have lost sixty-seven nil and the playing field needs levelling up. Sadly, Whitewall's led by donkeys. So's Whitehall, come to that. Enter Miss Nixon, a new drama teacher with fire in her belly, a lesson for the elite and a well 'sick' Tik Tok!

I have seen Teachers many times but this was by far the best production as it had been revitalised and completely updated from the 1980s to present day.

The pupils loved it and were impressed by the fact that the whole show was performed by just three actors who showed their amazing acting skills by multi-rolling over 20 different characters! Rianna and Jake (Yr 11); Jordan, Izzy and Cody (Yr 10) accompanied by Kerry Bowen and me had a blast and all pupils were a credit to the school.

Report by Mr Webb, Drama Teacher



## EASTER TREATS

Pupils had a nice surprise when they broke up for the Easter break on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March when they received an Easter egg. The eggs were funded by our private school fund account and were gratefully received by pupils. A big thank you to Hilary Shaw, Food Technology Teacher, for her help with purchasing the eggs.



Pupils also enjoyed making Easter goodies in craft club during Friday afternoon activities with Shelli George, teaching assistant. Cole in Year 9 proudly came to show off his work of art, which he was going to share with his younger brother. Well done Cole and hope you both enjoyed the contents.

## READING RAFFLE PRIZE DRAW

On Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March the spring term reading raffle prize draw took place.

Pupils are issued with a reading slip every time they complete 10 independent reading sessions, which is then exchanged for a raffle ticket.

The two lucky winners of a £10 Amazon gift card this term were Ryan Keenan in Year 7 and Ellis Bird in Year 9.

Well done to everyone who was in the prize draw (45 entries) and good luck for next time.

## Mixed Group Go Underground!



Pupils in the mixed Year 10 and Year 11 class had a subterranean experience on their English KS4 narrative writing trip on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Travelling back in time, whilst journeying into the limestone caverns in Dudley, pupils had a taste of miners' lives from years past. The tunnels were handmade by thousands of Black Country folk from years gone by and now leave us with a rich local history.



Pupils were amazed by the awe-inspiring caverns left behind by the industrial revolution as well as the fossils deposited within the 428 million year old limestone! We all certainly had a boat trip like no other!

Pupils were a credit to the school throughout as role models of Elmwood values. I look forward to celebrating their writing success.

Pupils in Year 10 also had the opportunity to visit the caverns on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

Report by Mr Bowen, Curriculum Lead for English



PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT EVENT  
ON 22ND MARCH 2023

Thank you to all parents and carers who attended their child's progress and achievement appointment on Wednesday 22nd March and were able to enjoy refreshments kindly provided by Ms Shaw, Food Technology Teacher, ahead of these appointments. Also to those parents and carers who were able to review their child's progress and look at targets via a telephone consult.

As a result of the above the total attendance rate was 97%, which is excellent. For information our summer event will be taking place on Wednesday 12th July.

Thank you also to everyone who completed the Parents Ofsted Questionnaire. Some of the comments received included:

*Thank you to all teachers for their continuing support*

*Excellent school, always happy with how my child is getting on*

*Good communication between school and home. Thank you.*

*Really good school, shame my child is leaving.*

*Due to the nature of the school it is difficult to say lessons are not disrupted. Despite this, school have helped my child to cope in those situations.*

*I feel my child's school is an excellent school. He really enjoys coming to school and enjoys all his lessons. He has come on so much since his time here. I've recommended this school to friends.*

FOSSIL HUNTING IN OUT AND ABOUT LESSONS

In out and about lessons, we have enjoyed trips to the world famous Wrens Nest, home of the 'Dudley Bug'.



Known for its trilobites, crinoids and coral fossils, we have used paint brushes to gently collect these. Pupils have been very excited to see the 400 million year old seabed from the tropical Silurian sea.



These visits have been planned to link with the work in science, where we have been studying the earth and rock formations. Pupils have informed me of the sedimentary process and how limestone is formed.

Report by Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning

STAFFING NEWS

Unfortunately Grant Hunt, teaching assistant was unable to return after the Easter break due to ill health. Grant has now had an operation which will hopefully help with his health issue and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Bev Bailey, Family Welfare Officer, is also currently absent from work due to ill health and again we send Bev our best wishes and look forward to seeing her back at work when she is fit to return.

MORE STUDENT FEEDBACK

Following a placement by Cameron Millard, Wolverhampton University student, the following feedback was received:

*My experience at Elmwood has been amazing and I have loved every second of it. I feel as though I have learned so much about how to help young people with those additional needs as well as experience different ways in which help can be provided. Having worked mainly with the 7s and 8s it is great to see and learn how they are being helped to better themselves and push themselves onto the next stage. Everyone within the school has helped and assisted me to understand the techniques used so I can improve my own understanding and take this into my future teaching. The experience I have gained in my 2 weeks at Elmwood have been invaluable in shaping me to be a more effective teacher and I would love to come back and gain further experience from the school to develop even further the ability to assist young people's emotional intelligence.*

## ATTENDANCE SUPERSTARS

Well done to the following pupils who achieved 100% attendance for the whole of the spring term (snow day closures are not taken into account) — what superstars you are:

Samuel Ashbery  
Sophie Byrne  
Joshua Evans  
Josie-Leigh Evans  
Francis Gosling  
Izzy Hough  
Harlow Jones  
Jack Poxon  
Paul Robinson  
Nathan Scott  
Charlie Smythe  
Rebecca Spendlove  
Junior Stansbie  
Joshua Till  
Julian Wilkins-McCallum  
Re'Shae Williams

All pupils will receive a £5 gift voucher and certificate in recognition of this achievement during an assembly on Friday 28th April 2023.

The following staff are also to be commended for also achieving 100% for the spring term and will also be presented with certificates:

Lee Cross  
Gemma Francis  
Lynn Maritza  
Dawn Canham  
Kerry Bowen  
Debbie Causer  
Jo Hughes  
Leon Donaldson  
Adam Mitchell  
Anna Cahira  
Rubina Mumtaz  
Nicole Rose  
Sonya Woollery  
Julie Burnell

## WORKS OF ART

Looking around school at some of the display boards, it is apparent what talented pupils we have judging by the work that is on display. As you will see from some of the photographs these are well worth seeing and would encourage parents and carers to check them out when next in school. A big thank you to Laura Askins, Art Teacher, for her input and also to our creative teaching assistants for their part in showcasing these masterpieces.



### All went swimmingly!

Last half-term, Year 7 pupils took part in school swimming lessons at Gala Baths, Walsall. The aim was to teach this important life skill, which some may have missed out on at primary school.

All swimmers behaved well and gave 100% effort in the lessons resulting in all of them achieving a swimming award of a certificate and badge – well done! Of the pupils, a special mention must go to Rebecca and Ryan who partly overcame their fear of the water to enter the pool and take part in some of the lessons.

For the staff, a special mention goes to Chris Young, for getting into the water and assisting the pupils (twice in one day on Tuesdays) and Kerry Bowen for helping supervise and assist in the changing rooms and viewing gallery as well overseeing goggles and pound coins for lockers!

Report by Mr Holmes, Swimming Instructor

### TEACHING ASSISTANT APPOINTMENTS

Following interviews on Thursday 20th April 2023, we will be welcoming two new members to the team in September. Congratulations to Sunita Lalli and Athena Nicholaou who were the successful candidates.

A big thank you to Jon Matthews, Parent Governor, who kindly assisted Mr Cross, Headteacher, during the formal interviews and also to Gemma Francis, Deputy Head, who supported our School Council members and Martin Hawkes, Assistant Head who observed candidates in the classroom ably supported by Year 9a pupils.

### INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY TEACHERS

Unfortunately, due to industrial action by teachers in the NEU union, school will be closed to pupils in Years 7-10 on Thursday 27th April and Tuesday 2nd May 2023.

Once again Lynne the cook will be providing a packed lunch for all pupils who are in receipt of a free school meal, which will be given to pupils on Wednesday 26th April and delivered by staff to pupils home addresses on Tuesday 2nd May.

### OLYMPIC SUCCESS

The article below celebrates the achievements of an Elmwood Leaver, Craig Williamson. He is the first pupil we have had that has gone on to represent his country. This is testament to the wider work that we do with our pupils to enable them to re-imagine their potential, and become active citizens that are fully equipped for life as an adult.

This is fantastic news and such an inspiring story that will be shared with our pupils to show that great things can happen if you work in collaboration with the staff at Elmwood and demonstrate "The Elmwood Way"

<https://www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk/news/3119754/special-olympics-gb-and-england-hockey-to-send-first-field-hockey-team-to-world-games>



The photographs were taken at a recent WM radio interview Craig did for hockey at the Special Olympics with a team mate and his coach as well as one from a training session at the GB base at Bisham Abbey.



A very proud moment for the School and good luck to Craig when he competes in Berlin in June, we look forward to hearing all about it and wish him every success.