



ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023 – NO. 186

www.elmwood.walsall.sch.uk

SCHOOL CLOSURE REMINDER



Pupils break up on Thursday 30th March 2023 (Friday 31st March is a staff training day) and return after the Easter break on Monday 17th April 2023.

Have a lovely Easter. The Easter bunny arrived in school having been made using straw collected from Aldridge Airport and the ears were made courtesy of Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning.

FUNDAY FRIDAYS


Funday Fridays are a curriculum enhancement that looks to support your child's personal development – in addition to 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 groups' 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: Enterprising, communicating effectively with others, community work, fundraising, a history immersion day and pupils planning their own offsite activities demonstrating teamwork, resilience and leadership.

Here are a selection of IMPACT measures following this half term's experience:

Years 7 & 8	Years 9 & 10	Year 11
<p>7a were enterprising extraordinaries and grew a tenner by selling delicious cakes.</p> <p>7b raised in excess of £150 by making staff cars sparkle and shine, really showing their care for others and our environment.</p> <p>7c planned their own exciting day to West Midlands Safari Park sharing positive experiences and communicating effectively with one another.</p>  <p>8a ventured into the local community by bus and conducted a litter pick to tidy up surrounding areas.</p> <p>8b chose their planned excursion to a trampoline park. Employees there commented on the group being a "breath of fresh air" showing leadership skills by helping younger</p>	<p>9a communicated effectively and worked as a team creating an assembly for the school to enjoy on Friday 24th March 2023.</p> <p>9b planned a day at RAF Cosford which saw pupils experience awe and wonder at the beautiful planes and memorabilia.</p> <p>10s maturely led a games session at a local primary school showing great leadership skills and impeccable communication strengths - well done on representing Elmwood so positively.</p> <p>Mixed group travelled to the Black Country Living Museum for a historic immersive experience asking pertinent questions and being positive in the community.</p>	<p>Year 11 showed their dedication to looking after the Elmwood community by clearing a large area of shrubbery and overgrown waste area to make the transition quad look clear and tidy again - great team work and dedication team!</p>

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

This month our featured member of staff under the spotlight is Hilary Shaw, Food Technology Teacher.

How long have you worked at Elmwood? *I have worked at Elmwood for 14 years.*

What do you love about your job? *Seeing our young people flourishing into budding chefs, having resilience and experimenting with food that is outside their comfort zone, helping and caring for each other if anyone is struggling and being prepared to contribute to whole school events engaging with parents, carers and outside visitors.*

What films have you watched recently? *Amsterdam.*

Favourite Holiday? *Definitely Costa Rica it's one of the most biodiverse countries in the world.*

Tell us something that people would be surprised to hear? *I have river snorkelled in Brazil which is home to anaconda snakes, piranha fish and caymen which is a member of the alligator family.*



STAFFING NEWS

Anna Cahira, Teaching Assistant in nurture base, celebrated a very special birthday on 28th March. Anna was presented with cards and gifts to mark the occasion.

We are pleased to confirm that Marvarick Perry, caretaker, will be officially starting his contract at school with effect from 3rd April. Marvarick has been working on supply at the school since the autumn term and has been doing a great job. Well done Marvarick and welcome to the team.

WHAT A SUPERSTAR

A big thank you once again to Lynne the cook who made sure that our pupils, who are in receipt of a free school meal, had a takeaway lunch when they departed on 28th February and 14th March 2023 due to school closure as a result of industrial action.

We appreciate what a big task this was for Lynne with preparing not just one but two meals on the same day, so thank you Lynne for the excellent service.

NEWS FROM FOOD TECHNOLOGY

Year 7 and 8 pupils have been learning about British Saints this term, St David from Wales and St Patrick from Ireland. They have made cheese and leek muffins and leek and potato soup for Welsh food and Kerry apple cake and colcannon for Irish food, discovering that you can use avocado (courtesy of Laura Askins, Art Teacher) to replace the cream so it is suitable for vegans.

Year 9 pupils enjoyed making home made Welsh faggots using pork liver. Those who were brave enough to prepare, cook and eat them actually were pleasantly surprised and likened them to a spicy sausage or meatball. Feedback from Mrs Pow was that they were incredible. Liver is a nutrient packed food full of vitamins, which is a good source of protein - a cheap meal that can be enjoyed by the family. Recipes are available on request.

Report by Ms Shaw, Food Technology Teacher

LOOKING GOOD

Year 7c were looking cool when they excitedly came to the office to share what they had made in DT lessons with Mr Francis, Curriculum Lead Teacher for Technology.

The glasses had been made using a 3D printer and some pupils had modified the basic design with some additional features. As you can see from the photo, pupils looked amazing. Well done to all.



FEEDBACK FROM INITIAL TEACHER TRAINEES

Elmwood School is always happy to support students as part of their training and recently have had a number of delegates on site. Below are some of the comments received following these placements:

- One pupil expressed that they wanted a recipe to complete at home with parents showing real pride in their work.
- One pupil specifically asked to work with me and another one wanted to show their work – this was even when others were dysregulated.
- I spoke to one pupil about History and he was so knowledgeable – he spoke at the end of the day stating he struggles speaking to new people but I had made them comfortable.
- Relationships with pupils enables them to be themselves and to let their personality shine through.
- Decisions are justified by staff and pupils are part of that conversation.
- Everyone is just one big family. This means that low level behaviours are actually similar to sibling tension (which is normal).
- Peers help encourage and celebrate achievements with peers.
- It is reassuring that there is a pace that they can attend and achieve success.

Cheryl Heaton, SCITT Assessor, stated that it was an absolute honour and pleasure to see your wonderful school, team and children in action. I'm so pleased with our trainees reflective comments and I know how much they have got from this experience. All round trainees had a positive experience at Elmwood. The day was well planned and the timetable of the day well conveyed to trainees. Staff demonstrated great rapport and relationships with the pupils and used this to engage pupils into learning. Staff were knowledgeable and experienced and this was clear to see throughout the day as they moved through inputs and engaged with pupils.

Key take homes for trainees were the importance of gaining pupils' trust and developing mutual respect along with ensuring learning is adapted to meet the individual needs of the learners. Staff didn't seem to 'sweat the small stuff' and picked their battles in terms of any masking behaviour shown by pupils (such as showing off, poor language etc) although this was challenged appropriately.

Moving forward trainees felt it would be useful to potentially sit with subject leads to discuss interventions and scaffolding put into place with regards to reading and writing to attempt to bridge any gaps/interventions trainees could take back into placements and utilise.

As a group, we would like to thank Lee and the staff at Elmwood for a warm welcome and very informative visit.

PRICE INCREASE

Following discussions at school council when school meal portion sizes was raised, we have consulted with Walsall Catering Services and, from 17th April, portion sizes will rise from 2 oz protein/4 oz vegetables to 4 oz protein/4 oz vegetables. As a result of this the cost of a paid school meal will increase to **£2.99** per day. This increase also takes in to account the ongoing cost of living crisis and its impact on food prices and wage increases. We appreciate that this is a big increase in cost for any parent or carer who purchase school meals but this increase in portion size will mean pupils are fuller which in turn will help with their learning.

If any parent or carer would like to check if their child is eligible for a free school meal, this can be done by either calling 01922 650443 or applying on line at https://go.walsall.gov.uk/free_school_meals

WELL DONE RILEY

FACE Walsall was invited by the Local Authority to judge entries in a competition to design cover art for EHCPs. There were two different EHCP formats, one for under 14s and one for over 14s.

We were thrilled to hear that Riley Cabrera, in Year 7, was the overall winner for the under 14 category. Riley had the privilege of being invited to the Mayor's parlour at the council house on 17th February, when the Mayor, Rose Martin, presented him with an Amazon voucher and other goodies. Winners then had tea and biscuits with the Mayor. Riley's drawing will now be used on ECHP 's in Walsall.

What a fantastic experience and very well done Riley on such a great achievement.



WHAT FUN WE HAD IN THE SNOW



Pupils in nurture took advantage of the inclement weather on Thursday 9th March and went outside to play in the snow at break time.

It looks as if a great time was had by all, including staff, although it looks as if it was all too much for Sam in Year 8b, who needed to have a rest after all that exertion.



WORK EXPERIENCE

We were pleased to welcome on Monday 13th March, Rhys Humphries, Year 11 leaver in summer 2022, on work experience as part of his Walsall College Level 3 BTEC Sport qualification

Rhys thoroughly enjoyed his time at Elmwood and ultimately would like to teach PE and return as a teacher.

With Rhys' drive and ambition we are sure Rhys will achieve his goal and we look forward to welcoming Rhys back in June 2023.

WORLD BOOK DAY—2.3.23



Elmwood celebrated World Book Day 2023 in style, with pupils and staff dressing up as their favourite fictional characters.

Spending just 10 minutes a day reading and sharing stories with pupils can make a crucial difference to their future success and it's fun for all involved. This is why the school has invested in quality fiction for the social reading programme where pupils take 15 minutes per day to read and share stories.



Research has shown that reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success – more than their family circumstances, their parents' educational background or their income.

By celebrating reading as a whole school community will hopefully ensure that our pupils value reading for pleasure and share this with family and friends.



Report by Mr C Bowen, Curriculum Lead for English

PAPER MAKING

Pupils have been making a unique gift for moms and carers ahead of Mother's Day this year. The craft utilised our virtues of creativity, patience and concentration.

First we collected a few wild grass heads and flowers. Once we had made our recycled paper from shredded paper, we incorporated the flowers as decoration. The paper involved mashing the shredding with water to create a mâché, then using the deckle mesh to lift the paper from water. This is then pressed hard to bond the paper and dried for a week. We also incorporated flower seeds so that once the card was no longer displayed it could be planted in a pot for the seeds to germinate and grow. What a great way to practice altruism and gratitude and to give two gifts in one.



Thanks to Tracy Jackson, teaching assistant, for the idea of adding seeds to our existing paper making lesson, a session that Elmwood staff have practiced in the past.

Pupils also had a rare opportunity to fly kites this half term.

Report by Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning