

# Newsletter

December 2011



Whitecross  
Hereford

## Headteacher Meets Year 7

During October I met with Year 7 students in their tutor groups and they were, without exception, delightful. We discussed the level of challenge of their work and how it compared to Primary School. The balance seems right with the work being set at a level; which enables them to learn effectively. Most were managing their homework effectively, although there was some concern that it is not evenly spread throughout the week. I was pleased they all felt safe in school and could identify an adult they trusted to talk to if they had concerns. They were all aware of the need to be safe when using the internet and I was particularly impressed with the range of measures which parents are using to ensure safety. These include:

- Parents are on Facebook as friends and check settings.
- Students are only allowed access to the internet downstairs where it can be supervised.
- Parents checked the history after every use.
- Passwords are known and checked.

- Parental controls restricting access to some sites.
- A disc, which is loaded after every use and records use.
- Keystroke monitoring software, which is reported to their parent's computer.

Their favourite bits so far include: the variety of extra curricular activities; variety of teachers and subjects, variety of sporting activity; excellent facilities and resources; being independent; being given more responsibility; practical and active lessons; making new friends; support from other and mixing with older students and prefects.

And here are my favourite quotes from students in year 7 stating what they like about Whitecross:

- Knowing that I'm being supported.
- Teaching you how to live your life.
- Older students looking out for you.
- Always having someone to look out for you like the prefects.
- Very supportive teachers.
- It's good having breaks between subjects because it allows you to take a breath.
- Being pushed a bit harder than primary school.
- Glad I've discovered talents I didn't know I had.
- Extra curricular activities allows you to improve what you're not good at and do stuff you enjoy.

**D S, Headteacher**

Value Of The Month For December

# Empathy

**Merry Christmas to all our students and their families. Have a great time and we look forward to seeing you again in the New Year on Tuesday 3 January.**

## Visiting India In 2012

In January, the next stage of our partnership with The Heritage School in Kolkata, India, will get underway. After a very successful visit here by 24 of their students and staff last month, 17 of us will be travelling to India to stay with our friends and colleagues. For ten days between 11-21 January, our students will again be living with Indian families and experiencing their way of life as a true Indian student, complete with Indian food, schooling, dress and customs! We are all very much looking forward to the trip: you will be able to read about our activities and look at pictures on our blog via the Whitecross website.

Namaste!

**Mrs L**



## Change Of Term Dates

Next year will see us all enjoying an extra Bank Holiday due to the Queen's Jubilee. We will fall in line with other Herefordshire schools and return after Easter on Wednesday 18 April instead of Tuesday 17 April.

## Panto - Sold Out!

Our production of Cinderella will take place on Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 December. The panto will play to capacity crowds as all the tickets have now been sold.

"Oh no they haven't", "Oh yes they have!"

## Children In Need



Whitecross pulled out all the stops to raise an amazing £277.69 for Children In Need. Together with scrumptious cakes, students and staff belted out some favourites during a Karaoke, painted faces appeared around the school and the event of the day was definitely the male PE staff cheerily volunteering to have their legs waxed – ouch!!! Thank you to everyone for making it such a successful fundraising day.

**Mrs Barker**

## Operation Christmas Child



Samaritan's Purse work tirelessly to make Christmas special for children around the world by delivering shoeboxes filled with gifts to children in orphanages, hospitals and poor neighbourhoods in 13 countries. Whitecross students and staff took up the challenge again this year and handed over a fantastic 106 boxes! Thank you to all involved for helping to make a child's Christmas a happy one.

**Dr P**

## Woodchester Mansion



On Thursday 24 November the Year 10 Creative and Media Diploma students took a trip with Mr H and Miss W to Woodchester Mansion, hidden in a secluded Cotswold valley, near Stroud. The pupils explored this Grade 1 listed Victorian Gothic masterpiece freely before setting about taking photographs for their Unit 3 project brief. Each student was interested in capturing a different aspect of the building, ranging from the stunning architecture to the tales of paranormal activity experienced there. Although a bit chilly, we managed to have a picnic lunch in the grounds and all enjoyed the day out.

**M B , Year 11**

## Careers

The Careers Department has been busy this term supporting Year 11 students as they prepare for the next stage in their lives.

Work experience has been another huge success for Year 11 students. During the week of Monday 21 November, 178 students experienced the world of work at a variety of places from game keeping to the magistrates court. The feedback from students and organisations has been fantastic and several students have been offered part time jobs and apprenticeships for next year as a result. Our thanks go to all of the companies and organisations who continue to support our students each year. Just as the newsletter is going to print, Year 11 students will be taking part in mock interviews to support them in their applications.

We are very fortunate to have such good working relationships with so many organisations within our community and 11 different organisations will be interviewing our students on Thursday 8 December. In preparation for this day all Year 11 students have produced a CV and were able to include information for their work experience placements.

**Mrs M**

## Overdue Library Books

We decided a while ago not to operate a fines system for overdue books as we did not want anything to discourage students from reading, particularly the reluctant ones. One result of this is that I do a lot of detective work in chasing up books that do not come back. There are particular series of books which tend to disappear, being loaned from one student to another; and these are always the popular ones which other students are clamouring to borrow. Please could you keep an eye out for library books which might be lurking in old school bags; under beds; hiding amongst your own books etc.; and return them to school so that they can be enjoyed by others. I am particularly looking for the 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid', 'Twilight', 'Harry Potter', 'Superman' and 'Cherub' series as they are Accelerated Reader books which are rarely available for loan and constantly being asked for.

Also, thank you to families who have donated their unwanted teen books to the library; they have really made a difference to the variety on the shelves. We can also make use of used magazines, and can give them another lease of life before they need to be recycled; for example we have recently been given a set of 'Top Gear' magazines which have attracted some new faces to the library at lunch times.

Thank you for your support in keeping Whitecross students reading.

**Mrs T, Library Manager**



# Sports Roundup

## Year 8 Rugby - Season 2011/2012

The rugby season at Whitecross and across the County is a reasonably short one (with the exception of Bishops). The decision was taken by me last year not to enter the Year 8's in to a league this year as I felt it would be detrimental to their development as a team and individuals. Instead I entered them in to 2 festivals where they would develop skills learnt previously, against similar schools in a challenging and competitive format. This was supplemented with 4 friendly games. I was disappointed by the cancellation of one of the fixtures and one of the festivals. However, teams that entered the league only had 5 games, if they didn't go through to the final. In terms of the planning for next year I will look in to the prospect of the league with additional friendlies. I hope that this explains the short season to all parents and guardians. Thank you as always for your continued support.

Mr W

## Year 9 Boys Review

Thank you to the Year 9 boys who have been excellent again so far this year. The boys who play in the school teams have been to more extra-curricular practices and fixtures than any other year group. Thank you to parents and guardians for their support with this too; I know it is not easy on these cold winter mornings! Well done to S L, R S, L P and L E who are new additions to the sports teams. We are fortunate to have such athletes join us.

## Year 9 Rugby

Unfortunately, as far as results go, this season ended with disappointment and a heavy defeat to Hereford Cathedral in the Plate Final. However, overall the season has been a real success. The Year 9 team have improved superbly in the time they have spent playing rugby. Even though we lost in the final, we matched Cathedral in the forwards and recycled the ball really well. There are three outstanding teams in the County who play rugby every week for the entire school year. We are the next best team in the County and only two of our players play for the entire traditional rugby season for club teams.

## Year 9 Football

The Herefordshire Schools County season starts at the end of January and I am really excited by our prospects. The football squad have trained relentlessly all season and are more skilful and fitter than ever. Football training has now replaced rugby training on Monday nights so the players' progress will be accelerated further from now until May.

**Philosophy:** The focus for the Year 9 players is on performance and development. We expect players to want the ball in any position on the pitch, marked or not, and to never be afraid to play. We have put a lot of emphasis on the technical side of the game and are beginning to work more on the tactical aspects now the boys are maturing. All of the players are now comfortable on the ball. Their physical condition improves each week so the targets going in to the season are 1) to be solid and difficult to break down and 2) to have a cutting edge in the final third of the pitch.

**Results:** We did really well in reaching round 4 of the English Schools Cup but were disappointed to go out. Our first three rounds were convincing wins but we lost 4 – 1 to Highworth Warneford School in Round 4. However, when we got the ball on the floor and played football, we showed that we were more than a match for Highworth. I am confident that the frailties highlighted in this game can be corrected very easily. A mention must go to three players; T H and A F, who have been outstanding over the four games and, W L, for his brilliantly taken goals in rounds 3 and 4.

**Looking Forward:** We now have many additions to the squad so there will be A and B team matches to look forward to in the New Year. Parents, guardians and friends, please do come to support the teams!

Thank you. Mr B

**HOMEBASE**  
Make a house a home

A big thank you to Homebase in Hereford who have once again donated a fantastic Christmas tree to the school. It is now decked out with lights and baubles and takes pride of place in our reception area.

# English Schools Football Cup

This year we have entered the ESFA cup for Year 8 (girls and boys) and Year 9 (boys). So far we have had a very successful start to the cup. Results are as follows:

	U13 Boys	U13 Girls	U14 Boys
Round 1	Bye	Bye	Beat Aylestone 5-1
Round 2	Beat Aylestone 6-1	Beat Beaufort 11-2	Beat Hereford Academy 5-1
Round 3	Beat Stourport 6-1	Beat Bradon Forest 9-0	Beat Haybridge 2-0
Round 4	Beat Tewkesbury 5-4	Beat John Cabot Academy 6-1	Lost Highworth Warneford 1-4
Round 5	Beat Sheldon School 4 - 0	Lost Nailsea 2-1	
Round 6 (The last 32 in the country)	Due to be playing after Christmas at home		

Below is a link for the Whitecross page on the ESFA website for parents and students to view progress and see goal scorers.

<http://www.esfa.co.uk/competitions/?page=31B070BA31EE218B8D>

## Important Dates

### GCSE Timetable

English/English Language Unit 1	<b>Tuesday 10 January</b>	9.00am
Food Technology	<b>Friday 13 January</b>	9.00am
ICT	<b>Friday 13 January</b>	9.00am
English Literature Unit 2	<b>Tuesday 17 January</b>	9.00am
Maths Unit B	<b>Thursday 19 January</b>	1.30pm
Textiles Technology	<b>Wednesday 1 February</b>	9.00am

### Herefordshire College Open Events

Hartpury College	<b>14 January</b>	Register online to attend
Hartpury College 'A' level Open Evening	<b>26 January</b>	6.30pm
Hereford College of Technology (Main Campus)	<b>2 February</b>	4.30pm - 7.30pm
Hereford College of Technology (Holme Lacy)	<b>4 February</b>	10.00am - 12.00pm
Hereford College of Arts	<b>8 February</b>	6.30pm - 8.30pm
Hereford Sixth Form College	<b>9 February</b>	5.30pm - 8.30pm
Hereford Group Training Association	<b>7 &amp; 13 February</b>	4.00pm-7.00pm

## Shakespeare At Whitecross

Year 9 students were fortunate enough to experience a performance of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* by members of the Young Shakespeare Theatre Group. Below are two reviews of the performance which capture the effective way this group introduced the students to the play that they will study after Christmas.

### Review by: H B

I thought that the workshop was really good. The actors started it off with an explosive opening showing us that they were going to make Shakespeare fun and exciting. As soon as they came on and started, everyone was engaged in it and laughing and smiling.

When all of the main characters were together at the beginning, the actors gave us the choice as to what we wanted them to be like in the way that they spoke and moved around. After this they showed us how it was properly played using the right language. Their costumes worked really well as they related to what they would wear in those days, although there were a couple which were out of place. However that made it more interesting and engaging for an audience of our age to watch. During the play they did not use any scenery but they used a few chairs to help with the scenes. The actual play took place in the centre with seats surrounding it so this made it easier for the audience to view and interact with the play.

The play was well adapted to a Year 9 audience as it was not boring and not lengthy. It was the type of thing that would suit our age but not for adults. This performance was brilliant. If I had to rate them out of 10, I would give them 11. I would recommend this to any high school in Britain because it was amazing.



### Review by: M B

The Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* performance was outstanding! I was exhilarated by the way the actors structured it. The group engaged the audience by using small modern day hints but in a tasteful and professional way. It was amazing how, although they only had a small amount of space and a few chairs, they used their imagination and describing skills to put an image of what the scene would look like into our heads.

A big thumbs up for capturing the audience's attention for the whole of a 13 – 14 year old group. Everyone was mesmerised from the moment they introduced themselves to the moment they declared it finished! In my opinion it was a stunning performance!

Despite the fact that there were only 4 actors, they put together a mind blowing performance, stating all the key information whilst making it humorous and interesting to watch. More importantly, I now know plus understand the main plot line to one of Shakespeare's (complicated and confusing) most well-known story.

On the whole it was a spectacular show. Two hours well spent and I would positively, most certainly recommend it to any age group. A killing performance, literally, as Mercutio died!

## K D, Year 8

In April K attended the British Open Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Championships in Birmingham. He successfully defeated 3 tough opponents to win the gold medal and took the British title. The medal was presented by the triple world champion Braulio Estima.

Throughout the year K attended 3 different National Jiu Jitsu Kumite Council Competitions and finish in the top 3 to qualify for the European Martial Arts Games. This K achieved and was invited to attend the games; for the first time they were held in the UK. Competing in two categories over 2 days he won bronze in Sport Jiu Jitsu and gold, becoming European Champion, in GI Grappling.

K and his club, The Combat Academy, entered the English Open Championship where he secured gold and is now the English Open Champion. He is hoping to continue his success when he attends the Midlands Open BJJ Championships in Birmingham. We wish K every success in his future as a Jiu Jitsu champion.



## High Energy Drinks

Do you know what high energy drinks can do to your body? Yes, they do give you an increased spurt of energy but the side effects can be most unpleasant. Excess consumption of energy drinks may induce agitation, anxiety, irritability and insomnia all caused by the high levels of caffeine present.

Please note that all high energy drinks are banned at Whitecross and we also request that students do not bring fizzy drinks in to school.

**Mr L**

## Uniform Update

You will have received a letter home recently and this is just a brief reminder of the changes taking place from January.

- Black pumps will no longer be acceptable. Shoe Zone will assist you in selecting the correct school shoes. Non-black markings are not acceptable. Our website now has photographs of suitable and unsuitable shoes.
- Skirts must be of a non-clingy material, must hang below the finger-tips and must have definite 'corners' showing the shape of a skirt, rather than the shape of a leg.
- Hair which is dyed an unnatural red will not be acceptable.
- Coats should be a plain colour and of an 'outdoor' nature, suitable for keeping the wind and cold out. Sweat-shirt material and 'hoodies' are not suitable, even as an inner layer, and should not be brought to school.

Once again, we are grateful to all families for the efforts they put in to make this aspect of our school community successful. We are prouder than ever of our students.

**Mrs L**

## Miss K G

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself once again. I am an English as an Additional Language Teaching Assistant at Whitecross and my main role is to support Polish students. You can find me in Learning Support.

This year we have had a great number of Polish students join our school. They have created strong friendship links with fellow Polish students and this gives them the opportunity to improve their social skills using their mother tongue. Nevertheless, I would like to highlight the importance of mixing as much as possible with our English students in order to maximise their learning English language from good role models. It would be great if parents would encourage their children as much as we do in school to be more open to friendships with English speaking students, as it would give them more opportunities to speak English and to be part of the wider community.

As an EAL TA, I am trying to do my best to help our students integrate in to our school community. I am trying to encourage them to use English as much as possible. We want them all to achieve success and to reach their potential. It will take time, but hard work and patience is the key to accomplishing it. I would also like to encourage parents to share their views with me. If you wish to speak to me about anything concerning your child, please e-mail me at [kgiermaniuk@whitecross.hereford.sch.uk](mailto:kgiermaniuk@whitecross.hereford.sch.uk).

Chcialabym wykorzystac te okazje, by przedstawic sie po raz kolejny. Pracuje jako EAL TA (dwujezyczny asystent nauczyciela) w szkole Whitecross, a moim glownym zadaniem jest pomaganie Polskim uczniom 1:1, w malych grupach oraz w klasie, podczas zwyczajnych zajec. Mozna mnie znalezc w Learning Support.

Tego roku dolaczyla do nas duza grupa polskiej mlodziezy. Stworzyli miedzy soba dosc silne przyjaznie, co daje im swietna mozliwosc, by rozwijac umiejetnosci komunikowania sie z rowiesnikami w jezyku ojczystym. Pomimo tego, chcialabym zaznaczyc jak wazne jest, by duzo przebywali z mlodzieza angielska, co umozliwiloby im zmaksymalizowanie nauki jezyka angielskiego od dobrych przykladow. Byloby to fantastyczne, gdyby rodzice, rownie silnie jak my - w szkole - zachecali swoje dzieci do nawiazywania znajomosci oraz przyjazni z ich anglojezycznymi rowniesnikami, co zwiekszaloby ich szanse na rozmawianie czesciej po angielsku oraz stanie sie czescia wiekszej spolecznosci.

Jako EAL TA w swojej roli, staram sie zachecac naszych uczniow, by integrowali sie ze spolecznoscia szkolna oraz jak najczesciej uzywali jezyka nagielskiego. Chcielibysmy, aby wszyscy osiagneli sukces i wykorzystali swoj potencjal. Zajmie to jakis czas i wymagac bedzie ciezkiej pracy oraz cierpliwosci, ale jest to kluczem do osiagniecia celu. Chcialabym zachecic wszystkich rodzicow o podzielenie sie swoimi opiniami. Rowniez, jezeli maja panstwo jakiegokolwiek pytania lub watpliwosci dotyczace Waszych dzieci, prosze o kontakt [kgiermaniuk@whitecross.hereford.sch.uk](mailto:kgiermaniuk@whitecross.hereford.sch.uk).

## Carol Concert

Our annual Christmas Carol Concert will take place on Thursday 15 December. This is an opportunity for parents and students to join in the Christmas celebrations. This year, for the first time, several teaching groups will be performing giving parents the opportunity to hear what happens in music lessons. The school band, folk group, pop choir and individuals will also be performing, and as usual, everyone will be invited to sing Christmas Carols. This is one of the highlights for me, as there is such a lovely, enthusiastic, festive atmosphere. Come and join us from 5.00pm for refreshments and Festive Fayre. The concert starts at 6.30pm. Everyone is invited.

**Mr T**