



A Day In The Life...

My school day usually begins at eight, when I open my email box at work. I attend Leadership briefing with the rest of the Senior Team to discuss any events from the day before and to plan out what we can expect from the day ahead. It often feels like watching the weather on television: we can guess at what the day will hold, but carry umbrellas anyway. We have learned to expect the unexpected.

At eight-thirty, the team is on the gate to greet the students and check that their uniform is in order before shepherding them off to lessons. It is lovely to see them smiling as they come in and remind them to 'Learn lots!', though they frequently look at me strangely for doing so. The last seven years at Whitecross have involved many strange looks from children, often in response to things like sneakily nicking crisps, pulling the odd pony-tail and saying

Assistant Headteacher

'Hello, Smelly!' to students who clearly are not smelly at all. Whitecross students are great fun, and know that I do it all with deep affection.

The rest of the school day is divided up with lessons, meetings, duties, producing letters and policies and articles for newsletters, delivering assemblies and planning events such as Cross-Curricular Dimensions Days and Induction. There are, as any teacher will say, not enough hours in the day to do as thorough a job as I would like to do. It is one of the reasons why my office is so untidy - clearing up is always last on my priority list. Once again, I apologise to the many parents who have had to wait for me to clear a space for them to sit when we have had appointments.

After school, there are inevitably more meetings, either the regularly scheduled ones with Strategy Group or Leadership, or spontaneous discussions with staff about situations that have arisen during the day or concerns we have about students. I don't think anyone outside of a school can know just how much of our time is spent focused on gaining the best outcomes for the children. They do not always like the messages they hear, but all are delivered in their best interests.

This being my last newsletter at Whitecross, I have the chance not just to tell you about the way my typical day pans out - as if there is such thing as a typical day - but also to pick up on the highlights of my time here. From the final days in the old school, through the transition to the new site and the change to vertical tutoring, up to the plans for the Academy in September, Whitecross has been the longest lasting feature of my life in Britain. The school has taken me across the UK and Europe: to Wales and London on Classics trips, to Belgium, Italy, and Russia, (and very briefly, Spain, but that wasn't intentional) and has kept me in school with students all night - twice! It has made me laugh - frequently - and made me cry more than once. It has provided the hardest work and the greatest rewards of my career, and for that I have your extraordinary children and the magnificent staff to thank.

This is, of course, not just my farewell to Whitecross, but to the UK itself. At the end of the month, Annie and I will be flying to Seoul, South Korea, where I will be starting a new job and she will begin a new school. We are excited and a little nervous, and deeply appreciate the kind messages we have received from so many members of the Whitecross community. Twenty years after leaving my Canadian family to come here, it feels like we're leaving another family now. Our warmest wishes to you.

Diary Dates

Friday 22 July 12.30pm

Summer Holidays Begin

Wednesday 7 September 8.45am

Autumn Term Begins

Free School Meals

We are aware that the current economic climate has hit many of our families hard. It therefore seems timely to remind you of the availability of free school meals.

■ *Will my child stand out if they receive free school meals?*

NO!

At Whitecross High School we use a biometric system to pay for school meals. This means that students queue up in their own time and put money into a machine to credit their account. They then pay for their meal by scanning their finger at the till. Children receiving free school meals automatically have the funds credited to their account. They simply have their finger scanned and pay like everyone else.

■ *Is my child entitled to any other benefits in school if they are receiving free school meals?*

YES!

If your child wishes to learn a musical instrument at school through the music service we will pay for it. If your child takes part in a school (curriculum based) day trip, we will pay for it. If your child wants to take part in a residential school trip we will help you to find funding.

You can collect an application form for free school meals from the main school office.



That's why, in consultation with the Local Authority, West Mercia Police is launching a new e-safety bulletin service helping to make it easy for busy parents and carers to keep up-to-date with the latest e-safety information from a trusted source; information that's made easy to understand, easy to receive and easy to action.

The initiative will provide timely safety updates via email, all parents / carers have to do is subscribe to West Mercia Police's data protected email service. It only takes a minute, and it's free.

Safeguarding is EVERYONE'S responsibility.

Please go to www.westmerciabulletin.org.uk to sign up now.

Not only will you benefit from the very latest local safety information, you'll be able to access other useful safety tips to help your friends and families stay safe. And, on sign up, you can download a handy free e-safety guide to print and share with your children.

With the help of Herefordshire parents, West Mercia Police are hoping to achieve 7,000 parent sign-ups over the next four weeks, so please pass this message on. We are deliberately timing this appeal to coincide with start of the school summer holidays when children will be away from school and looking for things to do.

Thank you for helping us to make this important appeal a success. Together, we aim to make Herefordshire the safest region for child internet safety in the UK.



Martin Lakeman
Detective Superintendent
West Mercia Police

Jo Davidson
Director Of
Childrens' Services

Appeal By West Mercia Police

We know that you would not expose your child to violence, bullying and strangers. However, your child is increasingly at risk from these threats when spending time on the internet, particularly social networking sites such as Facebook.

Every day, criminals in West Mercia are finding new ways to expose our children to real dangers.

[Sign up now for the new child e-safety bulletin service from West Mercia Police](http://www.westmerciabulletin.org.uk)

When 90% Isn't So Good.

Most of us would be delighted to score 90% in an exam. It would put us head and shoulders above our peers, but what about 90% attendance?

90% attendance means that the student has missed 10% of lessons. That's one day per fortnight, or 19 days per school year, and a massive 95 days during their five years at Whitecross.

As an employer, would you be happy to employ and pay someone who did not turn up for work one day each fortnight?

At the top of every college application form is a box asking for school attendance. In a competitive market, attendance can make you stand out which ever way you look at it.

Attendance is shown at the top of your child's interim report. This figure shows their attendance for the period since the last interim report. Please have a look. The school target is 95%, something that over half of our students achieve. If your child is on anything less than that, they are missing out.

Inter– Academy Ready Steady Cook



Five students from each year group recently took part in the annual competition to see which academy contains the top chefs.

Year 7 students made fresh fruit muffins. This was a closely fought contest despite one or two samples having extra baking powder and bicarbonate of soda, making the judges think they were soap flavoured! Most of the samples were excellent and E H (Moyle) won the top prize by a whisker.

Year 8 students made mini bakewells or mini quiches. L M (Hagloe) won the title with a delicious plate of mini quiches. He was particularly delighted as he came second last year with scones.



In Year 9 the students had to make a birthday cake for a member of staff. There were many interesting entries including a Newcastle United cake for Mrs S, a dog cake for Mrs T and a guitar cake for Mr T. M J (Hagloe) won with a fantastic paint palette cake for Mr H.

The Year 10 students were required to make a dish of their choice using any type of pastry and fruit. Despite stiff competition, J B (Moyle) was declared the winner with a fantastic fruit pie.

The four winners each won a personalised apron that they can wear at school and when cooking the family BBQ until they retire!

The final scores were:-

1 st Hagloe	1773 points
2 nd Moyle	1654 points
3 rd Bromley	964 points
4 th Styre	673 points

Congratulations to all who took part in this very competitive and exciting annual event.

Miss W, Mrs S and Mrs M

Sports Day

Sports Day 2011 survived the weather and took place on Friday 15 July and was a wonderful event. The students' behaviour was excellent throughout and this helped to set a fantastic atmosphere. The number of students taking part was a record high within all events ranging from the 100 -1500m. Students competed within the traditional events, as well as some alternative activities such as sports hall athletics and the mini Olympics competitions, in which Moyle Academy was victorious. Some Year 9 students produced a media project based on the day with support from Miss F, Mr R and Mr G. Year 10 students did a fantastic job as Sports Leaders in assisting staff where necessary on relevant events. The standard of performance was very high throughout the day, typified by the fact that four students broke some of the all-time school records. The day was capped by some excellent relay races, which included a shock win for Leadership Group within the staff relay.

Within each year group a male and female 'athlete of the day' was awarded with the boys' award for W G (Year 7) , J C (Year 8), L H (Year Nine) and for H R (Year Ten).

For the girls, B P (Year 7), E C (Year 8), F B (Year 9) and J P (Year 10) received the awards.

For the final results it was Bromley again who were crowned champions, so a special well done to Bromley!

Mr G, PE

The Stonemason's Tale

The foundation stone for the Stonemason's Tale was laid back in 2006, when Hereford Cathedral was putting together a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support the renovation of the Cathedral Close. A 'learning plan' of community educational activities for everyone was included in the bid and a programme of workshops for Key stage 3 has been taking place throughout the year. Whitecross has been one of thirteen high schools participating in these, and students have been involved in a variety of workshops including story-telling, trebuchet building, dance, music and constructing Gargoyles out of willow and papier-mâché!

The main event was held on Wednesday 29 June. It consisted of two performances in the Cathedral, in which Whitecross Dancers were the finale, and rightly so. They were fantastic. Their interpretation of the music and their performances were of students beyond their years.

There was also a parade through High Town at 1pm. We had over 50 students participating and they set High Town alight. A Samba band, in which we featured prominently, led the parade and was followed by Gargoyles, Sedan chairs, Picnic items, Shoes, Gravestones, Historical Characters, a Hereford Bull and many more, made throughout the year at the various schools.

It has been a real privilege participating in this event, and students are still talking about it and admiring the pictures in the main school corridor. There was a souvenir programme, which featured Whitecross extensively; in fact we were on the front and back cover, as well as in numerous smaller photos inside! Our students behaved impeccably and one of the Cathedral volunteers asked a member of our staff which public school we came from! We all felt proud to be apart of such an historic event, and proud to represent Whitecross.

Mr T, Music