

# Newsletter

September 2011



Whitecross  
Hereford

## Welcome New Students

We welcome our new Year 7 students and all those who have chosen Whitecross as their new school. The school year has begun in a whirl and already it feels like we have been back months. Open evening is just around the corner, our Indian visitors arrive in a little over a week and rehearsals for the Christmas pantomime have already started. After school clubs are up and running, Year 11 are staying behind for extra support and so the life of the school continues. Whilst most new students take all this in their stride, we understand that it can take a little while to get the hang of everything. We asked some staff and students for advice to give new students and their parents and these are their top tips:-

Be organised – helping your child to stay on track by being organised will make life less stressful. Once homework has been completed make sure they pack their bag ready for the next day.



Read lots – having access to books, magazines and the library will all help broaden their knowledge and support their learning.

Check the planner regularly – teachers may jot a line or two down if there is something they think home needs to know about. It's also a good way to get to know your child's weekly schedule and when extras, like P.E. kit, might be required.

Talk to your child about their day – this way any concerns they may have can be smoothed over and dealt with straight away.

If there's a problem get in touch – of course your child may wish to sort things out for themselves, but there may be times when they need that extra support. If you have any concern, please call, email or make an appointment to see us. The best person to start with is your child's form tutor.

We wish all our new students great success at Whitecross and hope that together with their families, they will enjoy being part of the Whitecross community.

Value Of The Month For October

# Love

## Moyle Takes The Cup

Last year ended in jubilation for Moyle as they swept the board by winning the Academy Cup with the staggering total of 18231 house points. Academy Head, Mr E said "It's a team effort and is always about just how much Moyle's students put in to everything they do, every single day. I couldn't be more proud of my Academy as they have proved to be very worthy winners of the 2010 – 2011 cup. Congratulations to all – and remember, Stay Loyal to Moyle!"

## Language Day

Monday 26 September was European Day of Languages, celebrated with enthusiasm by students and staff alike. The Modern Foreign Languages Department laid on a break-time feast of assorted biscuits, cheeses and sausages from around Europe and did "show and tell" sessions with their Year 7 classes. All staff were issued with a multi-lingual sheet, and attempted to use different languages throughout the day, much to the hilarity of their classes! The canteen put on an impressive European menu throughout the week, with dishes such as Spanish Tortilla, Italian meatballs, German Würst and French steak hâché. A successful and enjoyable time was had by all.



## Indian Exchange

Namaste!

Many of you will recall that in January, 23 Whitecross students and staff visited our exchange school in Kolkata. The reports of our visit have been read and shared on the school website and in previous editions of the newsletter.

In October we are hosting the students and staff from Heritage school when they travel to England for the reciprocal exchange. Whitecross students have offered to have Heritage students stay in their homes to give them a true representation of family life in Britain. Some of our students are hosting friends they made in India or stayed with, proving that saying goodbye at the airport was not the end of the friendships we made.

Students have been emailing one another and making plans for the week visit to Hereford. In school we have been arranging lessons and trips so that the Heritage school experience our beautiful countryside, towns and city as well as having a taste of our culture and history.

Whitecross staff and students are looking forward to welcoming old friends and new and reciprocating the generosity and warmth we received in January.

Mrs R

# Greecross Council

The Greecross Council is a gathering of students and staff who believe in promoting a 'GREEN' attitude. The council already has both the Bronze and Silver eco schools awards under its belt and is working towards the highly acclaimed Green Flag status.

Students and staff will be working hard in the coming months to promote a more sustainable Whitecross by taking part in numerous activities to reduce energy consumption, promote local produce, and recycling to name a few. To take part or join the student council look out for posters around the school, or see Mrs G if you would like to attend the meetings that are held every Monday 2.35pm till 3.35pm.

## Can you help us?

The Greecross Council are in need of vegetable seeds for our allotment. We are open to any variety of vegetable that will suit a small allotment patch or greenhouse. If you can help please clearly label all seeds with the variety name and as much sowing and growing information as possible. We are also collecting Morrisons "Let's Grow" vouchers which can be exchanged for gardening materials and would help the development of the allotment.

The Greecross Council with the help and support of students, staff and the local community will make Whitecross a greener place to be!



## iMacs For Music

The music department is now the proud owner of 15 brand new, top of the range iMacs. Installed there is 'Garageband', which is part of the iLife suite and an extremely popular and easy to use program. Students are able to listen to thousands of samples and choose which ones they want to use in their own composition. It is then just a matter of dragging the sample into the template. We also have 'Logic' which is used in many professional studios. Students have already produced stunning results and this program is used extensively at Key Stage 4 and we will be gradually introducing it at Key Stage 3. Sibelius is a notation software package that allows students to compose for any type of ensemble, an orchestra if they wish, or a brass band. The program is used extensively at 'A' level, degree level and beyond. Students at Whitecross have the very best facilities in music IT and having these resources will enable them to fulfil their musical dreams.

**Mr T**



## Year 11 Maths

Just a reminder for all Year 11 that revision will be on Mondays or Tuesdays in preparation of your November GCSE. Please see your Maths teacher for the appropriate day. Remember also that the Maths Department operates an open door policy, so if you do need help – just ask!

Parents and guardians, please contact your child's Maths teacher if you require any information on the forthcoming GCSE.

There will be more information on revision so make sure you check out the daily notices and the digital signage at school.

**Mr. R**



$$A = \frac{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}{\sin(\psi + \theta)}$$

## Connexions

A Connexions advisor will be in school every Monday and Tuesday. They will be in Meeting Room 2 in the Student Services Hub.

The opportunity will be given to students to take up offered appointment times to come and have an informal discussion about what options are open to them in the future. Whether it is about further training or education, or if they are unsure about what to do, we're here to help.

**PW**

## It's Behind You!

Hello boys and girls!

Yes, it's that time of year and we're pleased to announce that this year Whitecross will be entering into the spirit of Panto season with our very own production of Cinderella!

Many students have been taking part in auditions and signing up for backstage roles. Rehearsals are now underway and we are already seeing some highly entertaining performances from our cast members.

The show definitely looks set to be full of crazy characters, brilliant dancers, wacky costumes, bad jokes and great music... there will also be a number of surprise staff cameo appearances too!

Tickets will go on sale at the beginning of December, so if you fancy an evening of fun and laughter please come along and be a member of our audience!

Lots of boo's and hisses from,

**Britney and Witney (the Ugly Sisters)**



## Achievement Evening

Whitecross was buzzing with excitement on Thursday 21 July as we held our annual Achievement Evening. Chair of UK Sport Baroness Sue Campbell CBE was the guest of honour and was joined by Olympic skeet shooting hopeful Nicki Brocklesby. Together they handed out trophies, cups and awards and praised the school and students for their determination to achieve and surpass personal goals.

# Uniform Standards

## In pursuit of excellence

Our expectations of students have changed this year. Students and parents will know we are taking a much stricter attitude towards our school uniform and towards being properly equipped for lessons. Each school day now begins with a 5 minute check of both these things.

I want to take a few moments to explain why we are doing this and to help clear up any confusion about what is acceptable.

Last year we started work on improving the appearance of students at Whitecross. We know from extensive research that getting the little things right creates an environment where learning is easier and students are more focussed. A school with high expectations is more likely to be a place where students do well. By removing as many barriers as possible we believe we can focus on learning more easily. Our priority is to improve the learning of your son or daughter so that they get the best possible grades when they leave. That is why we have also started checking that every student has the right equipment they need for each lesson.

We hope we have made our expectations clear, but I know there are some points where we need to be clearer. A full copy of our uniform rules can be found at:

[www.whitecross.hereford.sch.uk/parents/school-uniform](http://www.whitecross.hereford.sch.uk/parents/school-uniform)

## Not acceptable now

- Non school cardigans or jumpers
- Jewellery other than single stud earrings
- Charity bands other than Help for Heroes
- Hooded tops and other sports type jackets

## Acceptable now but not after Christmas

- Canvas shoes or pumps
- Red or unnaturally coloured hair
- Any non-black markings on shoes

We are committed to doing the right thing. High standards instil discipline and self-respect. They create a calm and orderly environment where we can concentrate our attention on learning. These first few weeks have been a challenge for many of us. It can be uncomfortable changing habits and doing things differently. Talking to students on the gate, checking classrooms and working with colleagues have reminded me though how lucky we are at Whitecross to have such positive relationships built on respect and courtesy. The school feels purposeful, lessons are starting quickly with no distractions and students are undoubtedly working harder. Behaviour around the school is outstanding and the number of students arriving after the gate closes at 8.40am has reduced massively.

On behalf of everyone here at school I would like to thank you for your help and support. None of this is possible without parents, families and carers who share our vision of an outstanding school getting the very highest results.

Mr K



# Examination Results

It would be fair to say that we were disappointed by the examination results this year. After all the hard work put in by staff, students and the fantastic support of parents we were shocked to discover our key result (the percentage of students gaining 5 or more GCSE grades at A\* to C including English and Maths) was only 39%. Our prediction was over 55% of students would achieve this result putting us on course for yet another record year.

As you would expect we have carried out a prompt and detailed review to find out why and to ensure this cannot happen again. In fact it was our Maths results that were disappointing. A group of borderline C/D grade students fell a few marks below the C grade boundary in their final module test. This had not been predicted and earlier module tests had seen some excellent results. This pattern of performance was also reflected in the national results for the examination syllabus. Had this key group of students each achieved a few more marks (in 5 cases the students were 2 marks below a C grade), our headline figure would have been 58% - our highest ever.

I know the Maths department were deeply shocked and have worked very hard to secure rapid changes. Year 11 will sit a different Maths examination this year and most will be taking the examination this November, leaving space for other subjects and/or a re-sit if necessary.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment is the fact that this one figure masks some outstanding results across the school. English results were the best in recent memory. In PE, Technology and Geography students achieved record breaking grades, far outstripping national averages. The percentage of A and A\* grades in History was double the national average this year. Individual performances are worth a mention too. HA, AB, JB, GB, SN and JR all achieved 9 or more A and A\* grades.

Another 10 students achieved 5 or more A\* and A grades. These are fantastic results. We wish them well at college and look forward to further great performances next summer.

Nobody could be more worried than the staff of this school by the dip in examination results this year and whilst it is true that there is more to school life than just examinations, it is something we are giving everything to put right and get us back on our recent trend of massive improvement.

**Mr K**

# Money In School

Just a reminder please to all parents and guardians that when you need to send cash or cheques in to school, please ensure that it is in a sealed envelope clearly marked with your child's name, year, form and the purpose of the payment e.g. trip, revision guide etc.



# Cashless Catering

Rather than sending cash in with your child, you may wish to send in a cheque payable to "Alliance in Partnership". Please put this in a sealed envelope marked clearly 'lunch money' with your child's name, year and form on. Should you wish to, you can ask AIP to put a daily limit on your child's lunchtime spend. The limit is currently set at £5 per day.

# PFI

As a PFI school (private finance initiative) Whitecross works closely with service providers who ensure the smooth running of the school on a day to day basis. The Bursar, Ms H, oversees the financial aspects of these contracts and secures best value for the school. Miss M is the Facilities Manager for Integral; a company based on site that has a team of caretakers and cleaners but also provides an array of maintenance people, gardeners and security services. Our ICT support is provided by the Tribune Group who are represented at school by Mr M. These three people meet regularly to discuss and monitor any issues that may arise and work towards the common goal of having Whitecross running at its best at all times.

## Key Dates

Event	Date
Open Day and Evening	Thursday 13 October 2011
Year 7 Parents Evening	Thursday 10 November 2011
Year 10 Parents Evening	Thursday 17 November 2011
Year 11 Work Experience	21 - 25 November 2011
Year 11 Parents Evening	Thursday 19 January 2012
Options Evening and Careers Convention	Thursday 23 February 2012
Year 9 Parents Evening	Thursday 15 March 2012
Year 8 Parents Evening	Thursday 17 May 2012
Induction Day and Evening	Thursday 28 June 2012
Year 7 Parents Evening	Thursday 5 July 2012
Year 10 Parents Evening	Thursday 12 July 2012
Achievement Evening	Thursday 19 July 2012