

Newsletter

March 2012



**Whitecross
Hereford**

Award Winning Artists' Visit

On Thursday 8 March, a selection of talented GCSE art students had a chance to work with British award-winning artist Nathan Ford. The workshop lasted the whole day and pupils worked in a range of materials including charcoal and oil paint, focusing on drawing what was really there and capturing the character of their sitter. They also had the chance to see some of Ford's work in person, watch him paint and ask him any questions. The day was an overall success and not only did the students gain valuable knowledge for the future and produce work of their own, but one girl even had a portrait of herself painted by Ford!



Amazing Memory Man



Friday 9 March was indeed a memorable day for all at Whitecross! We were visited by the amazing "Memory Man" David Thomas who broke the Guinness Book of World Records in 1998 when he recited the maths formula Pi to 22,500 digits from memory, without error. An ex-firefighter from Halifax, David is now an International Grandmaster of Memory.

During his day here, he gave an inspirational talk to Year 10 students about his life, overcoming a difficult childhood to becoming a world wide motivational speaker and author. He gave very sound advice and offered a variety of techniques for improving memory. In no time at all David had students memorising a list of 20 completely random objects.

David also worked with smaller groups of students later in the day helping them to develop further techniques in memorising facts, including designing and using mind maps. We are delighted that he will be visiting us again next term to build further on the work started with the members of Year 10.

Value Of The Month For March

Honesty

Diary Dates

Friday 30 March

End Of Term

Wednesday 18 April

Back To School

Attendance Matters

In February we began sending fortnightly attendance figures to all parents by e-mail. Our whole school target for attendance is 95%. At the time of writing our attendance stands at 93.5%, compared to 91.9% this time last year. In the world of attendance, a percentage point makes an awful lot of difference.

90% in a test would generally be a cause of celebration. 90% attendance means that you miss one school day a fortnight. How many employers would be happy to employ someone who is off work an average of once a fortnight?

At 85% you are missing an average of three days per fortnight. Statistics show that students with 85% attendance achieve an average of at least one GCSE grade lower than their predicted grade.

I hope that you find the information that we send you helpful. Small percentages can make a big difference to a child's chances of success.

Mr L

National Cup Winner



Year 9 student L M was awarded The Jack Beeby Cup for apprentice of the year from the Steam Apprentice Club. In making the presentation club president John Durling said "He has shown he is willing to learn and do tasks from

the mundane through to the more 'exciting' aspects of engine owning. He has looked to broaden his knowledge in the use of machine and hand tools so he becomes an all round competent apprentice."

Well done L!

Misja: Powtorka

Czyli skrocony przewodnik, który pomoże ci wspierać twoją córkę lub syna podczas ostatnich miesięcy w szkole Whitecross.

Zasada 'mało a często' przynosi dużo lepsze efekty niż 'wszystko na ostatnią chwilę'. Twoje dziecko powinno spędzać co najmniej pół godziny co wieczór, powtarzając materiał. Nie wierz w stare powiedzenie 'nie mam nic do zrobienia'. Nawet podsumowywanie wiedzy z minionego dnia jest świetnym sposobem na ćwiczenie przywoływania wiedzy z pamięci.

Efektywne powtarzanie to aktywne powtarzanie. Zwykle czytanie podręczników nie wystarczy – twoje dziecko powinno robić notatki wypisując główne punkty, może również ćwiczyć i sprawdzać wiedzę uzupełniając papiery egzaminacyjne z minionych lat.



Świetnym sposobem na skupienie uwagi oraz usprawnienie czytania jest śledzenie tekstu palcem. Co wydaje się śmieszne, naprawdę działa i sprawia, że czytamy szybciej, zapamiętując większą ilość informacji.

By zapamiętać informacje, należy przeczytać bądź przypomnieć sobie dany materiał kilkakrotnie. Z tego powodu, twoje dziecko powinno próbować spisywać informacje z pamięci, najlepiej godzinę po nauczaniu się, potem dzień, a potem tydzień po przyswojeniu informacji.

Rozpiska z planem powtarzania materiału jest niezwykle ważnym elementem całego procesu. Powinna zawierać daty egzaminów, poszczególnych prac do oddania oraz czas, który powinien zostać poświęcony na powtarzanie. To twoje dziecko decyduje, ile czasu powinno poświęcić na powtarzanie materiału, potem wpisać to w swój plan, a ostatecznie trzymać się tego!

History In London

Over the weekend of the 28/29 January, a group of 41 Year 11 History students visited London.

In the final module of their History GCSE, students have been exploring the different ways in which History has been presented. Visiting London gave students the opportunity to further look into how the past has been depicted.

We left Whitecross at 7am, arriving in London late morning and headed straight for the London Dungeons. This was a brilliant experience, although not all the events and people were presented in an historically accurate way, we had a wonderful (if scary) time!

We then visited the Imperial War Museum. We could have spent the whole day there, but time was against us so we had to carefully choose which exhibitions to visit. All students learnt a lot and were interested to see real life stories and artefacts from the Holocaust Exhibition and the Britain during the War exhibitions.

On Saturday evening we had a guided Jack the Ripper Walk. We walked to the sites and local places where his victims lived, and where the murders happened. We had a very enthusiastic guide, and we all managed to sleep that night!

On Sunday morning we visited the Cabinet War Rooms and saw the very rooms and some of the many artefacts that Churchill and his government used to direct war proceedings.

Walking down the Mall we came across a large English Civil War procession. It was the 363rd anniversary of the execution of King Charles I, and members of the English Civil War society were dressed up in their Civil War costumes.

All students thoroughly enjoyed the weekend, and their behaviour was exemplary. Thanks to parents for allowing their children to come, and to Mr K, Mr W and Miss D for giving up their weekend to accompany us.

Miss H

Mr T Is The 'A Team'

All our thoughts at the moment are on the impending departure of our maestro, the man with the ivory fingers, Mr T. After 12 years teaching at Whitecross Hereford, Mr T is leaving us to embark on a new journey exploring the island of Jersey. Mr T has been involved in too many concerts, performances, clubs, trips and activities to try and fit on a side of A4, however, some recent outstanding moments include his dedication to the Ski trip, performances of Buggy and Cinderella, the Pyramid orchestra and Pop Choir. Not forgetting his achievement three years ago as the teacher of the year.

It is hard to find anyone who has not been helped or inspired by Mr T in the school and the students are going to miss him enormously. We will all miss his teenage mutant ninja lunchbox, his infectious humour and all the happiness of having him around. Everyone wishes Mr T all the best for the future!

The Creative Arts Team

Email Alerts

Thanks to all those of you who have given us your e-mail addresses; we are still missing several. We would encourage you to forward them on to us as this is the fastest, most direct and cost effective way of contacting parents and guardians.

To add your address please send an e-mail to adurber@whitecross.hereford.sch.uk.

Mr L

Sickness Advice Update

Following the previous article in the school newsletter, a large number of children are still off ill, or are still being sent home ill at the present time, with symptoms of vomiting and/or diarrhoea and fever. The numbers are slightly larger than would normally be expected and the virus has been around school for a considerable time, and still doesn't seem to be improving.

If your child is affected with these symptoms, we would like to ask that children should remain off school until they have been symptom free for 48 hours. This advice should be strictly adhered to for the general health and well being of the whole school community.

Below are details from the flyer which was distributed by Herefordshire Council and the NHS, and we would ask you to take note:

Wash your hands frequently using warm water and a liquid soap, especially after using the toilet and before eating or preparing foods;

When you have washed your hands, dry them thoroughly with a paper towel;

Wash your hands before and after touching your mouth, and coughing or sneezing into your hands;

Discard or flush away vomit and/or stool and wash hands;

Make sure that the toilet and toilet area, flush handles, taps and door handles are always kept clean;

Cover vomit immediately with paper towelling to prevent spread of the virus, and report contaminated areas/ surfaces to domestic or facilities staff;

Symptomatic staff/students must stay off work/school until they have been free from all symptoms for 48 hours.

We would like to thank you for your continued co-operation in this matter.

Mrs S

K Takes Gold



On Sunday 4 March, K D took part in the Abu Dhabi World Professional Jiu Jitsu Championship Trials in Birmingham. The timed trials are held worldwide and the winners can continue to the main event in Abu Dhabi.

K entered the under 42Kg division and proceeded to win and take gold. He trains with the Combat Academy and all 4 members who competed returned with medals. Well done K!

Careers & Options Success

The annual Careers and Options evening took place on 23 February. The evening was well attended by students and parents keen to find out more about what is on offer both at the school and for life beyond Whitecross. The main hall was packed with stands from local employers, colleges and training providers all offering advice to students in Years 10 & 11. The sports hall was equally as busy as Year 9 students took time to talk to teachers about their options for key stage 4 courses. Every department put together fantastic and informative displays of students work.



World Book Day



World Book Day was a busy one at Whitecross! At 10.00am everybody's normal lessons were put on hold for ten minutes of reading; and all of the forms took part in a book quiz which was put together by Book Club - after a nail-biting tie-break the winners were SST, the only form of the final three to know Hermione Granger's middle name.

Everybody received a £1 book voucher, which can still be spent in book stores. Some of the staff got into the spirit of things and even dressed up as book characters! A Scarecrow, War Horse, Mrs Twit, Arthur Dent and The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo were all seen around school.

Twelve students entered the "design a bookmark" competition and the winner was S D (BSG), runners up were M F (SRM) and M G (SKF).

Overall, it was a fun day and we can't wait for next year!

E B

Easter Camp 2012

Following the success of the Whitecross Easter Camp over the last five years, Year 11 students have been invited to attend this year's camp on Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 April. Revision programmes like Easter Camp clearly help students to succeed in their up and coming exams. The Camp helps students develop

revision techniques; offers them support from teachers, gives them opportunities to complete coursework and attend subject seminars. We are looking forward to making Easter Camp another great event and would encourage all Year 11 students to sign up. The deadline for submitting your application to your Learning Manager is Friday 23 March.

Mr Erwin

Year 11 Theatre Trip



On the 21 February 26 GCSE drama students were whisked away to the Bristol Hippodrome to see the touring production of the West End hit musical "Blood Brothers". Willy Russell's Blood Brothers tells the story of the Johnstone twins, Mickey and Eddie, brothers separated at birth who reunite and become friends in their childhood, unaware of their relation to each other or of the tragic consequences their relationship will eventually bring about.

At 7.30pm we all settled into our front row seats with our supplies of sweets and popcorn. Two hours later we emerged from the theatre after watching a completely captivating performance. Mr H, who is a real fan of musicals, said "the show was absolutely amazing, the ending moved me to tears".

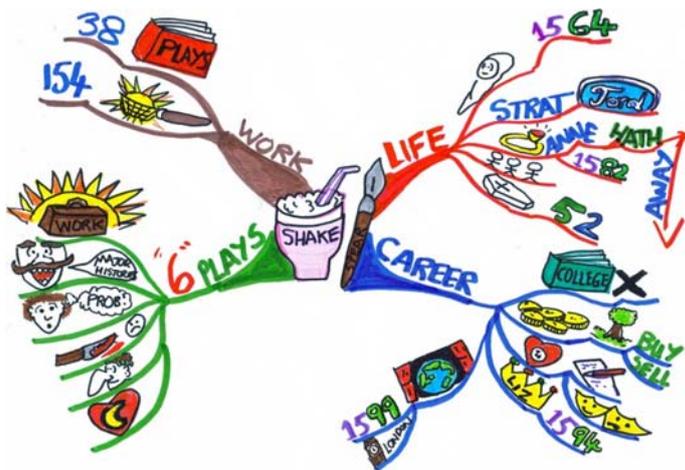
Miss G is now looking forward to reading the reviews that students will produce as part of their GCSE Drama course. She also, along with Mr H, Miss M and Miss W, would like to thank all of Year 11 students for making the evening such an enjoyable experience.

Miss G

Learning Latest

Our constant drive to ensure every student achieves the very best grades they can has continued this term. As we have reported elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter, we were really excited to be able to welcome David Thomas, World Memory Champion, to school last week. This forms part of our strategy to improve the way in which children retain information.

Being able to remember and recall information is one of the most important skills needed to perform well in examinations. Schools tend to assume that students know how to revise and prepare for examinations. We believe that this is a gap that we can do something about.



A mind map about Shakespeare

One of the key techniques for remembering ideas and information is to use a mind map. Mind maps were pioneered by a man called Tony Buzan back in the 1970s. Since then the phrase 'mind map' has become quite common. However using mind maps effectively is a skill that needs practice and an understanding of the theory behind them.

We plan to make much more use of mind maps and other techniques across all year groups to help them improve their long term memory and to give them the skills that will enable them to remember and recall large amounts of information for examinations.

How you can help:-

One of the rules of good mind mapping is that they have to be colourful. Making sure your son/daughter has a set of coloured pens or pencils would be really helpful.

Tony Buzan's website has an excellent piece of free mind mapping software. It also contains a lot of background to the man and his ideas. It is well worth checking out.

<http://www.thinkbuzan.com>

BTEC Public Services



Students on the BTEC Public Services course have recently been enjoying a taste of adventure. In February they attended the Castle Green Canoe Centre for an afternoon on the River Wye. Despite the frosty conditions everyone had a great time in their kayaks and canoes with a few foolhardy souls choosing an early bath in the river before a warming shower at the centre.

In March a group visited the fire station in Hereford. They spent an hour being shown around a fire engine, trying on equipment and having a go with a thermal imaging camera. The afternoon ended with a chance to take control of a hose under full pressure.

Think Before You Drop

It takes 30 minutes to clean the Bays after breakfast and an hour each after break and lunch. 45 minutes is spent each day picking up litter in the outside areas. The school has recently invested in new litter bins. Respect your learning environment and bin your litter.