

# Newsletter

## January 2013



Whitecross Hereford  
A High School and Specialist Sports College

### Namaste From India



Our students have had a wonderful time in India and should all be safely home by the time this newsletter reaches you. A full report will appear in the next newsletter, but if you can't wait that long, have a look at their blog which can be found on the home page of the schools website.

### Alice In Wonderland

Staff and students are busy rehearsing for the school production of Alice in Wonderland. There will be two performances on Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 February.

Tickets go on sale on Wednesday 30 January and will cost £3.00 per ticket or £10.00 for four tickets. They are bound to sell out in record time so don't be late for this very important date!



### Message From The Headteacher

Happy New Year and welcome to our first Newsletter as a 'converter Academy'. We became Whitecross Hereford on 1 January 2013 with three 'Members' of the Academy Trust; our previous Chair and Vice Chairs of Governors'. Their first action was to invite the previous Governing Body members to form the new Governing Body. Practically there will be little change for students: our uniform is the same, our expectations and commitment are the same as are our staff, holiday dates and school timings. So what has changed? We now have more flexibility over the money we are allocated by the Department for Education and can choose to buy our services from agencies other than the Local Authority. We also have more autonomy over what we teach and can ensure that our learning programmes in Key Stage Three are appropriate for our students and prepare them well for their Key Stage Four curriculum.

Our commitment to being a Sports College is as important as it ever was. This has been recognised by the Youth Sport Trust who have awarded us Premium Member Gold status because of the excellent work we do in Physical Education and in using the skills and values of sport to support other areas of the curriculum.

Working in partnership with parents and guardians is crucial to enable all students to achieve their personal best. We continue to focus on getting the little things right so that the big things, success, will follow. Thank you to everyone who is contributing to our students being in correct uniform and equipped for learning; that together with excellent attendance are the foundation on which we build achievement for our students.

**D S**

Value Of The Month For January

# Honour

## Are You Sitting Comfortably?

Ten Year 9 students have started helping Year 4 students at Trinity with their reading. In the week after Christmas, a launch event was held in our library, to which ten Year 4 Trinity boys were invited with their teachers. They all took a Star Test, which is the first stage of our successful Accelerated Reading Programme, and then they were given a book at an appropriate reading age for them. They will continue to read these books and take further end-of-book quizzes, under the supervision of our Whitecross Reading Buddies for a ten week period. Whitecross students will visit their Trinity charges once a week on Thursdays. Just before Easter, we will gather in the library and celebrate the progress that has been made by Trinity readers. It is anticipated that the confidence of our Whitecross Reading Buddies will also increase! Many thanks to Mrs C and Mrs T, who made this happen!

## Theatre Company Performs

'About Face Theatre Company' based in Leominster have visited Whitecross this week. The actors have learning difficulties and the show called 'Don't Stare,' aims to raise awareness of the issues of hate crime and prejudice and puts over the key message that being different should not mean being or becoming a victim. Year 7 had the privilege of watching the show and taking part in a workshop aimed at exploring how the themes of the play affect each of them.

Some comments voiced after the show and workshop by students included:-

"People should not be judged by the way they look and everything. We should get to know them. Accept them."

"The group has inspired me by having the courage to come here and perform."

"Everyone is different and we should enjoy that."

**Mrs H and Mrs L**

## First Aid Matters

If your child suffers a bump to the head, a member of staff will send for a first aider who will assess the situation. If the student returns to lessons, we give them a 'head injury' letter to give to you so you are aware of the situation and monitor for any symptoms that might develop later. We ask you to sign and return the slip on the bottom of the letter for our records.

## Emergency Closures

Wherever possible we will endeavour to keep school open as we are aware of the difficulty schools being closed presents to parents and guardians. However, safety must be our greatest priority and there will be occasions when we must close either because the site is unsafe or we are unable to get enough staff to site to supervise students. We will always endeavour to make the decision as early as possible and inform you as quickly as we can. If we close before school starts there will be a message on the school website and in the school section of the Herefordshire Council website; local radio stations also have this information. I will tweet using the Whitecrosshead twitter account. If there is no message to say the school is closed then we are open. There was confusion on Monday 21 January because the message left on the Herefordshire Council website suggested there would be an update in the morning, which there wasn't. This was the first time we had used the automated system and we have learnt from this. If we have to close during the day we will allow students to leave school assuming they tell us they can get home safely, if not we will supervise them until alternative arrangements can be made. Again we will put a message on the websites and tweet. We will also send a text / email message.

On occasions we will open for specific year groups and it is important that you check this information on the Council and school websites.

Thank you for your support.

**D S**

## Festive Celebrations

Our annual carol concert took place at Holy Trinity Church where staff, students and parents joined together in a festive celebration. Carol singing and performances from students and staff were rounded off with tea, coffee and mince pies. Voluntary donations were made for tickets for the evening and the proceeds were split between SSAFA Hereford and the St Peters' Church Open Door Project, each receiving £60.50.

It was a final chance to buy raffle tickets for our Christmas draw which was held the next morning with the top prize going to our very own Mr F. Proceeds from the raffle will go to the Friends Of Whitecross appeal, raising funds for a new minibus for the school.

## A Visit To Oakerwood



On the 30 November and the 7 December I was lucky enough to take students studying BTEC Public Services to Oakerwood for an afternoon of paintballing and team building. The students worked really hard putting into practice a lot of the skills we had identified as a class in our theory work. It was great to see them running around enjoying themselves and learning what makes a good team. The students displayed fabulous communication skills. They demonstrated the Whitecross values throughout each game. I am looking forward to taking them away again when the weather gets a bit warmer. Next time we are hoping to try some raft building, abseiling and rock climbing.

**Mrs B**

## Teachers In The Making



Year 8 students, who are entering for the ASDAN International Award, spent a lesson at Trinity Primary School, teaching Year 4 students some of the German they have been learning. Following a crash-course in some basic classroom language, they researched and planned their own lesson, deciding on learning outcomes and the best activities to achieve these. They also created all their own resources. Some were a little nervous before-hand, but come the big day, they managed to keep the little ones' attention and engage them in learning the new words. They have even been asked to go back again, and are keen to teach Year 3 students as well! We'll keep you posted ...

**Mrs L**

## Options And Careers Evening

Our options and careers evening will take place on Thursday February 28 from 7pm to 9pm.

The options evening is a chance for students in Year 9 and their parents to talk to teachers about their choice of subjects for GCSE's.

Year 10 and 11 students can meet local colleges, training providers and employers to find out about life after Whitecross. Parents and guardians are invited too.

## Attendance Matters

The school's attendance continues to rise, despite the high number of colds and other illnesses doing the rounds this year. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) are supporting student attendance through working with parents and guardians and, in a small number of cases when necessary, issuing fixed penalty warnings.

### Part time work

The EWS can prevent a child from taking on part time work if the child has a poor record of attendance or punctuality at school. When a business employs a child of school age they have to apply to the EWS for a permit. The EWS checks the child's attendance certificate before granting or denying the permit. We are hearing of cases of permits being denied due to low attendance. A part time job can be a very enriching experience for a child and it would be a great pity for that opportunity to be missed because of low attendance.

### Truancy sweeps

There have been 3 truancy sweeps so far this year, led by the EWS and supported by the police. These sweeps target students who are not in school that day and no reason has been provided for absence.

### Achievements

Many thanks to the 128 students who still have 100% attendance this year. In addition we have 471 students whose attendance is above the school's target of 95%. Thank you to all parents and guardians for your efforts in making sure your child attends school every day they can.

Mr L

## Attendance Update Translation

This is a translation of last months attendance update.

### Aktualności o obecnościach

Co należy zrobić, gdy dziecko jest chore?

W przypadku niepomysłnej sytuacji, gdy dziecko czuje się zbyt źle, aby pójść do szkoły, proszę skontaktować się ze szkołą pod numerem 01432 376080 i wybrać opcję 1, zostawiając wiadomość, podając imię dziecka i informacje o dolegliwości, na którą dziecko cierpi. Jest to konieczne, aby informować szkołę każdego dnia nieobecności dziecka, chyba że znana jest dokładna data powrotu dziecka do szkoły.

### Wakacje

Nowe zasady dotyczące obecności, obowiązujące od grudnia 2012.

Aby utrzymać zgodność z nowymi zasadami rządowymi oraz zasadami pobliskich szkół, wakacje podczas roku szkolnego nie będą dłużej usprawiedliwiane. Jeżeli uczeń zostanie zabrany ze szkoły podczas roku szkolnego, rodzice dziecka zostaną automatycznie skierowani do Wydziału Edukacji (Education Department). Rezultatem czego, będzie kara grzywny w wysokości między £60 a £120 na dziecko i rodzica.

Wyjątkowe okoliczności będą brane pod uwagę. Istnieje również możliwość poinformowania szkoły o nieobecności dziecka za pomocą wiadomości tekstowej, która należy wysłać pod numer **07624808600**. Proszę pamiętać o wpisaniu imienia dziecka, grupy wychowawczej, podaniu informacji o dolegliwościach, na które cierpi dziecko oraz daty powrotu do szkoły. Należy kontaktować się ze szkołą każdego dnia, kiedy dziecko jest nieobecne.

## Nestlé Box Tops

We are collecting box tops from Nestlé cereals which we can exchange for free books. If you have any of the promotional packs in your cupboards could you please cut out the tokens and take them to the library where Mrs T will be very happy to receive them.

