

Newsletter

January 2014



Whitecross Hereford
A High School and Specialist Sports College

Where Are They Now?

We always like to hear from our students once they have left us. It is rewarding to hear how they have succeeded in life and their reflections on their time at Whitecross. There are also lessons learned from students past to be passed on to current students.



“My name is Matthew Crowe and I am currently a Geography teacher at a high school in Dudley. I attended Whitecross from 2000 to 2005, and gained 11 GCSE's at A* to C. I then went on to Hereford Sixth Form College and studied Geography, ICT, Psychology, Law and General Studies at A level. During my time at school I was really interested in Geography as a result of the infectious enthusiasm shown by my teacher at the time – Mrs W. This made my decision to study Geography at A Level and then to complete an Undergraduate Degree at the University of Chester an obvious choice for me to make.

At University I still didn't know which career path to take - all I knew was I wanted to do something Geography related. I was offered a six-week work based learning placement and I decided to go into a high school and do some teaching. Based upon this fantastic experience I decided I wanted to be a teacher, so after a gap year to work and get some money behind me, I went to Swansea Metropolitan University to train as a teacher on their PGCE Secondary Geography course. I am now in my second year of teaching and thoroughly enjoying making a difference to the lives of young people.

During my school years and since leaving I have been given so many opportunities to take part in various academic and social activities. I have been fortunate enough to travel to various parts of the world: the USA, Canada, Iceland and Europe to name a few. I have friends all over the UK and in fact in different parts of the world.

My advice to students would be to seize every moment and make the best of every single opportunity that you are given. Ask questions, ask for advice, and ask for guidance as you continue your journey through life.

'I hope that you leave school with an interest in Geography that stays with you and takes you places', is a quote from my Geography teacher in my leaving book when I left Whitecross at the end of Year 11. This is exactly what happened.

Whatever your interest, passion and vocation in life, whenever you find it, enjoy it and use it as your passport to life.”

If you have a story to tell why not get in touch? Send an email to:
cstokes@whitecross.hereford.sch.uk

Plans are coming together for an evening for ex-students in the summer term. More details will follow soon.

Value Of The Month For January

Honour

Fantastic Fundraising

SAM students have worked extremely hard to raise nearly £100 in aid of Blackmarston School. The boys rose to the challenge, with P O arranging a fantastic cake sale and the girls, led by E W and M S, arranged a guess the names of the bears' competition. They all worked really hard and should be congratulated for their efforts. 'Molly' the bear was won by L A and 'Roy' was won by Mr R. The students would like to thank the parents who donated cakes and supported them in their efforts.

Mrs M

Whitecross Car Park

Cars, minibuses, coaches, lorries, pedestrians and cyclists can sometimes all be on site at the same time, especially at the start and end of the school day. Please may we ask all parents and visitors to follow the road signs, keep speed to a minimum and park only in marked bays. By double parking, the roadway is obstructed and needs to be kept clear in case of emergency vehicles. Thank you for helping keep Whitecross a safe place for all.

Parent Pay

The school is investigating the possibility of setting up an on-line system to enable parents to make payments for dinner money, school trips and events. The system we are looking at is Parent Pay (www.parentpay.com).

For those parents who are unable to access on-line there is provision for a 'payment card' that can be used at local Pay Points. (Grandstand Road Co-op and One Stop, Yazor Road Martins, Whitecross Road Co-op and Holmer Road Co-op in the petrol station).

We would retain the facility for parents to pay by cheque and would keep the cash loaders in service in the first instance.

Like all new systems, it comes at a cost to the school; an annual licence fee and transaction fees. Therefore we want to be sure that it meets the needs of our parents and is 'worth the investment'. We would probably set a minimum of £10 per transaction.

We intend to canvass a random selection of parents of students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 to gauge interest, and will only require you to respond by letting us know how advantageous you would find the system (Significant, Moderate or Not Interested).

Ms H

CCF Marches In

Plans and preparations are well underway to create our very own Whitecross Combined Cadet Force, which will be affiliated to The Cathedral School. Our first cohort of cadets will be from the current Year 9. We have recruited four keen Whitecross staff, who are currently training. Their commissions from the Queen are expected in the next month.

Activities offered by the CCF include adventure training, leadership training, outdoor survival, navigation, flying and sailing as well as drill, turn-out and weapons training. Cadets will be able to go on residential courses both at home and abroad and also take part in national competitions for the various skills areas.

There will be a chance in Spring for Year 9 students to experience some of the activities the CCF offers, and to meet some of the staff and students from the CCF at The Cathedral School. A few lucky Year 9 students will also be able to take part in a mountain biking expedition in Scotland in April and separately in an adventure training course at Capel Curig, North Wales. We will report on these events as they happen and will be recruiting for the CCF in the summer term.

Mrs H

Worldwise Quiz

We took 3 year 9 students to the Geographical Worldwide Quiz held at the Cathedral School in November. They put in a really good performance against teams of GCSE students from schools all over the county. We were really proud of M J, E D and A G for taking part, and we plan on taking them back again next year for a rematch! We came 8th out of 9. Well done!

Mrs W



Sporting Success



Year 8 students have made it to the final of the Herefordshire winter games to be held in February at the Herefordshire Leisure Centre.

The girls narrowly missed out on the top spot and finished only a few points behind The Hereford Academy.

The boys went one better and were clear winners over the other 6 schools in the competition.

We hope that their success continues at the final next month.

Mr B

News From MFL

Last summer we had some great results in Languages at Key Stage 4, with 72% getting A*- C in Spanish, and 79% getting A*- C in French. Currently 113 students study Spanish in Key Stage 4 and 28 students study French! Universities very much prefer students to have a qualification in a language, and Whitecross is rising to the challenge of giving students the widest possible opportunities with their further education options.

We ran two GCSE trips to Spain and France, and a trip to Le Touquet for our Key Stage 3 French students. More trips are planned as we know students get a great deal from such experiences, both linguistically and culturally.

Mrs H runs a club for EAL students, where they share ideas, make friends and play games with English buddies, improving their knowledge and understanding of English and helping them integrate more quickly into the Whitecross community. This year 12 students will take Polish GCSE! The Polish school, based at Trinity Primary, is a great help with this.

Studying languages is tough. Students need to learn new structures and vocabulary in order to manipulate and create language successfully. This is helped by regular, frequent revision and learning at home, and we would urge parents to assist their child in this. We run revision and help sessions for Key Stage 4 students after school on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, depending on their teacher, and we have two native speakers as foreign Language Assistants who help one lesson a week, as well as after school. Students also have access to their exam textbooks and further examination exercises on the internet, enabling them to work at home. Any encouragement parents can give to persuade their child to attend extra sessions or work independently will pay dividends in their exams.

Mrs F

Attendance Matters

Well done and thank you. So far this year, Whitecross students have been in more lessons than at any time in the last 10 years! So to every student who has dragged their achy, coughing, tired bodies to school, to every parent who has turned on the light, thrown back the duvet and sent their children in, well done and thank you.

As I write, I have 181 Gold attendance certificates on my desk, waiting to go out to assemblies. That's 181 students who haven't missed a day since September. I have a further 246 Silver certificates and 105 Bronze. Currently you receive a Bronze certificate for reaching 95% attendance and Silver for hitting 97%.

The certificates are to acknowledge achieving more than the norm, for setting higher standards. The trouble now is that 95% is the norm. 95% attendance is now typical rather than out of the ordinary. Therefore, from this term onwards, the threshold for the certificates will go up to 96% for Bronze and 98% for Silver.

The higher the challenge that we set our students, the more they show that they can achieve. Keep up the good work and remember, the world is run by people who turn up!

Well done and thank you.

....and because attendance matters, we are continuing to invest in supporting parents with issues getting their children into school. Mr Morgan is our Attendance Co-ordinator and supports students and their families with attendance related concerns. Mrs D is on the end of the phone and taking messages about absences on a daily basis. We also buy into support from an Education Welfare Officer, who assists us in the small number of cases with long standing concerns. Our attendance policy is about to be reviewed by the School Governors and can be found on the school website.

Mr L

Learning Manager, Student Services

Year 11 Interviews

On Wednesday 11 December, we held another very successful Mock Interview Day for our year 11 students, to help them prepare for life after school. During PSHE lessons the students had produced their CV which was presented to the interviewer. It was lovely to see our students dressed in their smart interview clothes, presenting themselves well throughout the interview. The feedback they received was most encouraging, and it will support them in the future. We are very proud of them!



We are privileged that our local and wider business community came along and supported us on the day. We would like to thank the following organisations for their support - The Army, Asda, Cargill Meats Europe, Heineken (Ledbury), Hereford College of Arts, Hereford Sixth Form College, Herefordshire Housing, Herefordshire & Ludlow College, Hoople Ltd, Nova Training, University of Worcester, West Mercia Police and our very own Marketing Manager.

If you feel that you or the organisation that you work for would like to support this event in the future, please contact Mrs Holmes in the Careers Office.

Hog Roast and Ceilidh
Saturday 10 May

It's Not All Classrooms



It's not all classroom based studies at Whitecross. Some of our students undertake an extended work placement and study for a BTEC in workskills. This means that they are out of school for one day a week working with an employer and gaining some real life experience of the world of work. Many students have already benefited from this scheme, and we would like to thank the local businesses who have given their support.

Springbok Inspires



Thinus Delpont has played at the highest level in rugby union, representing South Africa at the 2003 World Cup. He has also played for Gloucester and Worcester Warriors.

He recently visited the school and worked closely with a small group of students, inspiring them with his own story of how he became successful.

In a series of practical workshops the students learnt to cooperate and communicate with each other and we saw marked improvement in their team work by the end of the day.

Thinus came to the school as part of Sky Sports 'Living For Sport' scheme which uses sport and sports stars to improve the lives of thousands of young people across the country.



LIVING FOR SPORT

DofE Returns

After a brief absence the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is now up and running again at Whitecross. The school is now a Directly Licensed Centre and Miss H and Mr G travelled to St. James' Palace last year to be awarded with the licence during a Gold Award presentation by the Duke of Wessex.



We now have 21 Year 10 students signed up and ready to tackle the Bronze Award which will see them dedicating time to learning a new skill, a physical activity and volunteering in the local community. Students will also learn navigation, first aid and a number of other new skills that will be put to the test with an overnight expedition later in the year.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme looks great on your C.V. and is held in high regard by colleges, universities and employers. We will be extending the scheme to Year 9 students later in the year.

Return From India



15 students and three members of staff recently spent ten days in India meeting up with old friends and making new ones. The annual exchange with the Heritage School is a fantastic opportunity for our students to experience a culture that is very different from our own.

While in Kolkata the students stayed with host families and attended school where they were made prefects and had to perform duties such as supervising younger children.

A link to the blog that was written while they were there is on the homepage of the Whitecross website. Further reports will follow and a celebration evening will be held on the 13 February when a photographic display of the adventure will be available to parents and guardians.



Sickness Advice

If your child is affected with symptoms of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, we would like to ask that children 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.

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

Ceilidh and Hog Roast

After last years' successful event Whitecross will be holding another evening of live music, dancing and great food and it will be held on Saturday 10 May.

Put the date in your diary; more information and tickets will be available soon.

This event is organised by the PTFA and all proceeds will go to the Whitecross minibus appeal.



Dates For Your Diary

- Wednesday 12 Feb - Herefordshire Games**
- Thursday 13 Feb - India Trip Celebration**
- Monday 17 to Friday 21 Feb - Half Term Holiday**
- Thursday 27 Feb - Careers Covention and Options Evening**
- Thursday 13 March - Year 9 Parents Evening**
- Friday 7 March - Staff Training Day, School Closed To All Students**