

September 2009



WKRS Newsletter

"Changing Children's Lives"

Welcome to a new school year.

We have returned to school with the major building work completed and a new computer system installed.

We have also been joined by several new members of staff. In our Speech and Language Department we have two new members of staff – Ms Charnley who joins us from Warrington Primary Care Trust and Ms Hoskins from Cheshire East Community Health. Ms Marsland a very experienced teacher with pupils of all abilities has joined us from Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School in Liverpool as ICT Teacher to help us develop our standards still further, she will also work in her role of ICT Co-ordinator to ensure that all staff are enthused and enabled in this increasingly important area of learning. Ms Nugent has joined us from St Patrick's High School in Northern Ireland in our Arts Faculty, she is an experienced and successful teacher and artist herself, she will also be teaching RE. In Care/Education Support we have been joined by Ms Cherry, Mr Mayne, Mr Phillips and Ms Shakeshaft and we have two new TAs – Ms Clough (from the Royal School for the Blind in Liverpool) and Ms Whitfield (from Wirral Hearing Support Service).

We wish them all well and hope they are now settling into the school.



As some of you may have seen, we now have a new reception area at WKRS

Principal - Mr G W Williams
Vice Principal - Mr D Barden
Head of Support Services – Mrs M Josey
Head of Care – Mrs Y Blackledge
Chair of Governors - Mr J Wylie

School Information Letter
Number 24, September 2009

PE Department

September –

Caldy Rugby Club will be in school to take weekly coaching sessions for KS2 & 3.

Athletics JSLA – Seniors are attending a session at Clare Mount School.

Boccia – Merseyside Championships take place.

October - Athletics – Primary indoor meeting.

Swimming – Merseyside Swimming Gala.

November – Multi-skills for Girls at Leasowe.

Sports coaches will be in school during the term offering different groups – Dance, Handball, Judo and Boxercise – 6 week sessions.

Examinations 2009

Congratulations to all pupils and staff whose hard work came to fruition in the examination results in August!

Once again pupils achieved the results expected with an increase in the number of Post 16 and year 9 pupils gaining GCSEs.

GCSEs were gained in 11 subjects - English, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, Additional Applied Science, ICT, Music, Photography, Design Technology and Arts Award.

Once again there were AS achievements for Post 16 pupils in Photography and one student gained two full A levels in Photography and Film Studies. Thanks must go to the staff at West Kirby Grammar School for Girls who made it possible for the Film Studies A Level to be achieved.



Last year West Kirby Residential School embarked on a program of mini bus driver awareness training. The scheme is called MIDAS and has a nationally recognised accreditation.

MIDAS provides:

- Ability to provide a consistent programme of driver training
- Nationally recognised minimum standard of best practice
- Multi medium package of educational support
- In house Driver Assessor Trainer Support
- Communication of legislative changes
- Documentation and advice on recording and monitoring the programme
- Confidence in the management and delivery system.

The benefits are:

- Enhanced passenger safety
- Improved passenger comfort
- Increased driver confidence
- Reduced stress on mini bus drivers
- Potential reduction in vehicle running costs
- Potential reduction in insurance premiums
- A better image for the organisation
- A better image for minibuses

Overall WKRS sees the development of this scheme as a major step forward. It will ensure children have a safer and more pleasant journey to access and experience all that the school can offer in offsite visits

Fundraising



Most of our fundraising activities this year continue to be focused on our 'Footsteps on the Map' activities related to our partnership with the school in South Africa. Recently, during the summer holidays, a group of staff walked the very challenging Wales 3000 range of mountains. Mr Scullion led a group composing Miss Killen, Mrs Hunter, Mr Cavanagh and Mr Barden. More than £400 was raised. Our sponsored walk 2009 contributed more than £400 to the project, next year's sponsored walk will also raise money for the same project. The Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, Dame Lorna Muirhead, generously donated £500 from a fund of which she is patron. In July (Friday 9th to Sunday 18th next year we will attempt to raise more than £10,000 when a group of staff and pupils will attempt to cycle almost 1000 miles from Land's End to John O'Groats.

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

As a Specialist College we are able to show clearly that as a result of our young people accessing programmes and support to help their behaviour, they show improved academic results.

Last year we developed successful programmes with other schools and colleges. More than a dozen students from Universities, including Liverpool, Edge Hill and Chester, spent time on teaching and other projects involving our staff and pupils. Teachers and pupils from other schools visited West Kirby to make use of our facilities and to attend various events such as our Mini Play Day, Inset and Sports Events.

West Kirby Residential School Christmas Cards and Calendars

Our photographic department calendar has proved very popular since being introduced two years ago and will again be on sale from the start of December. Our new art teacher, Miss Nugent, will be working with pupils to design Christmas cards which will also be on sale in December. Information will be sent to everyone later this term when these materials have been printed.

Harvest Festival

Our first large whole-school event to which parents are invited this year will be our Harvest Festival on Wednesday 4th October. All parents and Carers will be welcome.

Themed Days

Like many schools West Kirby Residential School has been having 'focused' school days and weeks for a number of years. These have included 'Arts Week', 'Humanities Week' and 'PSHEE Week' recently. This year you will note on our calendar that we have included a 'South Africa Day', 2 'Arts Days', a 'Maths Day', and a 'Drama Day'. Having a whole day devoted to one specific aspect of learning enables greater width and depth of learning and highlights the importance of what that area has to offer.

Residential Trips

We have two residential trips planned for later this term, both will stay at a youth hostel we have used several times recently. In October a group of youngsters who are relatively new to our school will stay a night in Holly How Hostel in Coniston in the Lake District. In

December a larger group will use the hostel as a base for Arts based activities. More information will soon be provided for the parents and carers of youngsters involved.

Oasis

On Friday 25th September we will have the official opening of our new sensory room (to be known as **Oasis**). Our honoured guests will be the Lord Lieutenant of Liverpool – Dame Lorna Muirhead – accompanied by her husband, along with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Wirral. The room is to be called 'Oasis' and has been funded entirely by generous support from the Wooden Spoon and CHUC Charities.

There are two main goals of a multi-sensory room: to promote intellectual activity by therapeutic work and to encourage relaxation in a safe and comforting environment. Our room encourages stimulation of the senses, including sight – with different lighting effects, sound – with nature and animal sounds and different types of music and visualisations, touch – with different textures of fleeces, blankets and textured wall panels, and smell – using aromatherapy diffusers.

Sensory stimulation can be controlled by the client in the room – they can choose how much or how little stimulation, and which senses to activate, i.e. they have control over their environment whilst in the room.

Mrs Meadows, the physiotherapist at WKRS, said "I am really excited about the completion of the multi-sensory room. I envisage sessions available to pupils either individually or in small class groups, staff, parents, taxi drivers and escorts, governors and directors. Hopefully pupils and staff from local schools will also be able to book sessions. Most clients will use the room for relaxing and fun activities, but therapeutic work will be done on visual tracking, listening, auditory processing and self-regulation."

Several of the pupils have already used the room and have been very positive, using comments such as:-

"I never want to leave this room."

" I could stay here all day."

"It feels as if you're under the sea."

"Wooooooooooooooooow!"

Anti-bullying week – 16th-20th November

As is normal at WKRS we will hold assemblies on anti-bullying during this week. We strive to make WKRS a safe and happy place for our pupils.