

WEST KIRBY SCHOOL

A DAY AND RESIDENTIAL SPECIALIST SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

West Kirby News

Summer 2021

Welcome to our Summer newsletter



"The children are at the heart of the service." Residential Ofsted, June 2021













Message from our Principal, Miss Thomas

Dear Pupils, Parents, Carers and Friends,

When I started this job in September 2019, I didn't envisage what the two years ahead would hold....

This second year of the pandemic has meant that everyone: pupils, staff, parents, carers and stakeholders have had to pull together, just to get through.

Besides this, I am pleased and proud that we have made significant progress and enabled pupil achievements over the last 12 months.

During the summer term alone:

The school has been awarded a Silver Trauma Award (p.3). This is no mean feat and we are only one of a handful of schools in the North West which has managed to achieve this. We have celebrated Neurodiversity Week, again with our colourful and heartwarming umbrella display (p.4). Pupils in our Y11 cohort have been an absolute credit to themselves, during their two STEM / STEAM weeks, through work experience, during an outdoor pursuit week and transition week. You can read more about these weeks in this newsletter.

Mrs Davies, Mr Scullion and the STEM team have organised Discovery Days and Creative Days for pupils from Pathfinders and Adventurers to Post 16. These days are designed to allow pupils to explore and showcase their talents, to help them develop new skills and to work as a team to create something astonishing (book closing apparatus, which spans three desks), effective (high flying rockets) or detailed (small figure) photography. Staff and pupils have thrown themselves whole heartedly into exploring themes and developing personal skills.

During a recent inspection, our hard working and dedicated Residential Team was awarded a 'Good' grade from Ofsted. Inspectors praised the hard work of staff and fantastic relationships displayed between pupils and staff. We work hard to build trust, to promote independence and to support young people in dealing with their feelings through the wide range of events which they experience as part of their everyday lives. It is wonderful to have the team's efforts recognised.

During the summer, Mark Hall (Premises Manager) and his team will be working hard to effect some key changes across our school. As part of our vocational development, we are looking to make further improvements to our horticulture area, to build a small school bakery and to remodel a garage, thus creating an animal husbandary room. These will give staff purpose-built areas in which to teach children and young people. We are also planning re-modelling works in areas such as the school toilets, these will create single room facilities, which will be gender neutral.

All these works are important to us as they reflect the development of our School's ethos and aspirational learning for pupils.

As the end of this year draws to a close, I wish you a happy and healthy summer and look forward to seeing everyone in the autumn term.

Have an enjoyable read.

Best wishes

Miss Sian Thomas



Attachment & Trauma Award

Celebrating our "commitment to embracing inclusion at its best, successfully removing barriers to learning and participation in the life of the school."

The first school in Wirral and one of only 4 in the North West. It affirms that children and young people are firmly at the centre of all we do.

The Attachment and Trauma Sensitive Schools Award (ATSSA), accredited by Jennifer Nock Training and Consultancy, is recognition of commitment to the steps the school has taken to further develop a culture of compassion and nurture. This plays a pivotal role in getting our children and young people into a state of 'learning readiness'.

Miss Sian Thomas, Principal, comments 'I feel very proud to be leading a school where the staff are driven and dedicated towards helping young people across a range of divergent needs. As a school we work hard to ensure that we are equipped to enable pupils to thrive and flourish. This Silver Award clearly demonstrates the commitment of our staff towards achieving this.'

Dr Jennifer A Nock highlighted "The school evidenced a richness and depth of understanding and practice, particularly relating to sensory and emotional assessment and provision. Commitment to developing a culture of attachment and trauma sensitivity has been demonstrated through a high investment in CPD."

"Therapy is not something that the school simply provides, rather, the environment itself and the relationships therein are therapeutic."



The Award is only issued to those educational establishments that can demonstrate that they have met it's rigorous quality standards and can maintain them over time.

Silver Award

Mr John Davies, Pastoral Care Team, involved in the Award process says "We are delighted to have achieved Silver status and it demonstrates our commitment towards being a school environment that is inclusive, compassionate and caring to everyone in our community."

Additionally, Mr Stephen Peacock, Parent Governor expressed "This encapsulates the energy running through the school at the moment."

Dr Jennifer A Nock, Award Accreditor, told the school "We hope you will feel particularly privileged to share your journey, which has been achieved during a particularly challenging time."

"Commitment to embracing inclusion at its best, successfully removing barriers to learning and participation in the life of the school"

Our "rainbow of positivity"





Our neurodiversity awareness umbrella installation raises a smile again!

For the second time we have installed our school umbrella project to raise awareness of neurodiversity. As one parent described it "A rainbow of positivity"

During Neurodiversity Celebration Week, pupils across the school decorated the umbrellas with their talents and skills or messages about being unique and celebrating difference. https://www.neurodiversity-celebration-week.com/. Big thanks to staff for installing it for us!

Mrs Rachel Kelleher, Communications, says "We love to encourage our young people to think positively about themselves, reflecting on their strengths and of 'difference' as a norm or something to celebrate. The reaction from passers by is always a smile. Importantly, it

sends a strong message out to our local community about neurodiversity awareness, something we're passionate about at our school."

We were really pleased local schools participated in the project with some fantastic umbrellas, including Calday Grammar, Ridgeway High, St Joseph's Upton and Thingwall Primary.

The project was initiated by The ADHD Foundation. The Umbrella Project celebrates the intelligence, ability and talent of every human being-including every neurodiverse individual, empowering and enabling the next generation of children and young people.

Tony Lloyd, CEO, ADHD Foundation commented "This school is outstanding in it's work to enable children who struggle in mainstream education to achieve their potential."





Year 11 adventures!

Our Year 11s have had a much deserved (and hopefully memorable) adventure and alternative learning few weeks since the end of the exam assessment period.

From STEM activities, external visitors, rocket making on the beach, a WKS Bake Off, pizza parlour, work experience week, to a fun outdoor activity week and finally transition week.

STEM activity week

West Kirby School have a new partnership with STEAM School, a virtual academy for future inventors and entrepeneurs, to encourage learners to take thoughtful risks, be persistent problem solvers, embrace collaboration and work through the creative process.

Activity highlights included rocket making with a beach trip for launch day and our very own Bake Off, judged by Miss Thomas and Mrs Wynne! The standards were very high, but Harrison's Welsh Cake was the winner. We've also had a visit from Bloodhound Education learning about their rocket car, inspiring pupils to make their own.



Work experience

Our Year 11s spent a week doing work experience with a variety of different local employers. See page 8 to find out more.

Outdoor activity week

Our young people let their hair down after their work experience week, with trips for outdoor adventures, including Manley Mere, New Brighton Wild Shores waterpark and Chester Zoo.

Transition week

Finally, for our pupils moving up to Post 16 they had a trial week in their new classes.

Well done to you all on a fantastic few weeks!



















News from our residential provision

Hello to everyone and welcome to the residential news

This half term, we have welcomed a new young person in our residential house. Kaiden has arrived with lots of enthusiasm for making the garden a special place and is already in the process of growing plants in the retro telephone box in the garden. He has added to the vegetables that Henry has been growing and has some lovely plans for a quiet space out there. Kaiden treated us all to homemade borscht soup with vegetables picked in his horticulture lesson.

We have been lucky enough to have Miss Emma Killey join us after school on a Thursday to go cycling along the Wirral Way. It's great to be out and about in the fresh air.

The young people enjoyed a meal out at the Greave Dunning to celebrate the end of the school year.







This year we bid a fond farewell to Damon. He has been with us now for 3 years. Goodbye from all of us....



"Good Luck Damon, moving onto a new chapter in your life. It's been a pleasure supporting you and watching you gain so much independence" – **Helen**

"Goodbye D, It's been an absolute pleasure to work with such a kind, thoughtful young man. Have the confidence and the belief in yourself that you will make many friends who will see in you what we all have. Good Luck Buddy, will miss you lots!"

Maria

"It's been a pleasure being your keyworker and seeing you mature into an independent young man. You have been a good role model for your peers at GHF and good company. Wishing you well for your future.

Ready For The Future!

Take care" - Kim

Our team has seen this young man develop, now ready to move on to his next journey of college and independence, with so many skills learnt and confidence in his future. Throughout, he has worked with staff who have nurtured and supported him to achieve his personal goals. Proudly for Damon his personal efforts have now been fulfilled. As a team we can only thank him and his supportive family for working and caring with us. To watch Damon leave as a confident, independent young man has been a real pleasure for us.

Good Luck D for the future, from all of us on the team" - **Gary**

Our residential provision receives Ofsted 'Good' grading



We're proud to announce our recent Ofsted inspection for our residential provision has been graded as 'Good'.

Miss Sian Thomas, Principal and Head of Residential comments "I am really proud of the team and have thanked them for everything they do for our pupils and for all the hard work they put in".

The report details some lovely key findings regarding the level of care and support which our children and young people receive.

To read the full report please visit the residential provision section on our website www.wkrs.co.uk.

"What he has achieved over the last year was thought impossible a year ago."
Parent

"I'm quite new to the residential home, but so far it's been brilliant." Resident





"An **outstanding feature** is how the school remained in contact with children throughout the COVID-19 restrictions. The school used a social media application to connect with children who were at home."

Ofsted said....

"The relationship created between staff, children and parents are strong, which promotes trust. One parent told us 'They go that extra mile when supporting the children and families'.

"The home has undergone refurbishment and a new semi-independence home has been built. This is of an exceptional standard."

"An **outstanding area** within the residential setting is how children are prepared for independence."

"Full use of community facilities plays a prominent role in the activities taking place. **Activities is an area of strength."**

"The Principal of the school (also Head of Residential) and the Manager of the residential setting work closely together so there is a seamless transition between school and the residential provision. The children are at the heart of the service."

Work experience 2021

Where do we begin? First planning a week of work experience for our Year 11s in a pandemic, then the Covid restrictions had employers and the world up the wall with what they could and couldn't do, and then there were last-minute changes to opportunities available.

And it could not have gone any better. A fantastic week.

Our Year 11s, embraced it with enthusiasm, motivation, maturity and commitment. They were eager to leave every morning and reluctant to leave at lunch and at the end of their shift. It was a pleasure to watch our Year 11s being flexible and willing to adapt to new circumstances.

From caring for donkeys, to reading with young children, sorting stock, clearing tables and preparing ingredients for coleslaw; they proved that they have the inner strength, the ability to be successful and a strong work ethic.





Watch their video to find out more about their experience

The employers equally welcomed pupils and provided them with a taste of working life - a sound understanding of life outside WKS.



The pupils have benefited by:

- Gaining an understanding of the work environment and what employers expect of their workers.
- An opportunity to explore possible career options.
- A better understanding of how the school curriculum can help prepare them for work.
- Enhanced opportunities for part-time and casual employment.
- The opportunity to include the employer's work experience in future job and course applications.
- Developing work-related competencies and acquire skills, plus the chance to 'try out' a workplace.

















We would like to thank the following employers for their support, participation and commitment to WKS staff and our pupils:

- Artisan Gelato, West Kirby
- Barnardos, West Kirby
- Carr Farm, Atrium Restaurant
- Carr Farm, Forget-me-Knot Farm •
- Dapper Donkeys

- Greasby Infant School
- Oxfam, West Kirby
- Scope, West Kirby
- Toast, West Kirby



GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK TO YOU ALL!!

"We are so proud of you. Look at how far you have come! Find what makes you happy and be proud of yourself." Miss Thomas

"The hard work has paid off! Have a great summer, good luck with your studies and don't forget the sunscreen!" Mr Scullion

"Good luck and all the best for the future, be proud of who you are and believe in yourself, keep in touch!" - Miss Millington

"I look forward to hearing about all the challenging and exciting endeavours that you will have faced up to in the future. Best of luck." Mr Hulme

"Good bye and good luck, you will be missed, COZ, what excuse have I got now for ordering in pizza" Miss Rollinson



A fond farewell to all our leavers. We wish you the best of luck for your future beyond West Kirby School.

This last year has flown, since September we have seen the pandemic grip the world with lockdowns, mass vaccinations, a shift in American politics that rippled through the globe and England getting to the finals in the Euro 2020. Whilst all that was going on, a small group of 7 young people were preparing for their examinations and to leave WKS.

These seven amazing individuals have faced unprecedented uncertainty about what their pathway to the next destination was and some were only able to participate in virtual events up until the end of May. The pupils have faced the uncertainty of these times with resilience and determination.

It has been an eventful year with a high number of curveballs from our pupils, from wanting to join the army, to deciding to live independently or deciding that they didn't want to participate in further education and have pursued volunteering and employment instead. Working closely with parents/carers we faced every difficulty and obstacle with our leavers together.

Wirral Metropolitan College
STOKE
ON
TRENT
COLLEGE
The SixthForm
College
Birkenhead

COLEG
CAMBRIA
The City
of Liverpool
College

Our amazing **leavers of 2021**, will be leaving WKS to join the following colleges:

- Wirral Metropolitan College
- Birkenhead Sixth Form College
- Coleg Cambria
- Liverpool City College
- The Priory College
- Stoke on Trent College

We pride ourselves on the relationships forged with our pupils, colleagues, partner colleges and organisations over the years that make our work meaningful for our pupils' future pathways. I would like to thank all colleges and partner agencies for the support they have provided to both our pupils and ourselves.

Whilst their transition to their next destination was out of ordinary, they've achieved whilst at WKS, both academically and emotionally. We have prepared them for their next challenge ahead with a strong foundation for their next destination.

As you walk out of the WKS doors, your new journey starts. Never forget what you achieved at WKS and how hard you worked to overcome barriers. Use the strength and resilience you have learned and developed with us. Be aspirational, have faith in your dreams in whatever you are doing, this is your journey and only you can reach your destination. I am very proud of you all!

Mrs Helen Shallcross

Career Pathways

Considering your transition or future options?

Please contact Helen Shallcross, WKS Career Pathways Officer on 0151 632 3201 or email hshallcross@wkrs.co.uk

Primary department update

We have had a fantastic summer term in Primary and made the most of the sunny weather. We have enjoyed lots of walks, trips to the parks and beach. We have even been to Chester Zoo and our Year 6 pupils completed a week of swimming lessons – we have been busy!

As the summer term comes to an end, the primary staff would like to say good luck to our amazing year 6 pupils: Ethan, Charlotte, Will, Declan, Arend and Michael who will be moving into Year 7 in the main school.

We are so proud of you all and we know you are all ready for the next stage of your learning.

Pathfinders' news

This term we have enjoyed reading Into the Forest by Anthony Browne.





We have used these vehicle texts to help us write non-chronological reports and recounts.

In 'Learning Means the World', we have completed a 'Going Wild' topic. We created animal fact files, created a 'rock' pet, learnt about endangered animals, and wrote pet power points which we presented to the class. For drama we acted as animals. We even saw some of the animals we had learnt about at Chester Zoo.

We looked at survival kits and decided what we would put into them. We even tasted kendal mint cake! We learnt all about herbivores, carnivores and omnivores. Mr Morgan performed the

most incredible song to help us remember what those words mean.

Our other topic was called, 'The Visionary'. In this topic we learnt all about Ada Lovelace and her incredible story. We created our own flying machines and learnt how to do coding.







Our highlights

Mr Morgan 'I really enjoyed our trip to the zoo, especially when we went on the boat ride, pupils were all so well behaved'.

Mrs Gooding 'I am so impressed with the way Pathfinders have improved in maths, well done boys'.

Miss Mault 'My highlight this term is the progress they have all made since starting. I am so proud our pupils are all able to reflect upon their behaviour'.

Miss Bennett 'I was so proud of pupils during the transition sessions into year 7. They were all so sensible and mature'.

Mr Quayle 'Playing football is definitely my highlight this term, they are all improving in their skills and I think are all future England stars'.

Adventurers' news

We have been busy this term writing our recounts and non-chronological reports. We have really enjoyed our class read, 'Why the Whales Came' by Michael Morpurgo.

Our first topic this term was, 'The Pharaoh Queen'. In this topic we learnt all about life in Ancient Egypt, their different God, the importance of the River Nile and how this influenced the culture and traditions in modern Egypt. We made Egyptian jewellery and a 3D Sphinx. We also learnt about the continents and oceans.





In our other topic, 'Under the Canopy' we learnt all about the rainforests and even saw some of these animals at Chester Zoo.

In science we have learnt all about the different part of the plants and investigated what plants need to grow. We even looked at nature in the local environment.

In PSHE we looked at family trees and even looked at the royal family tree. In Maths we have studied lots of topics including fractions and time. We also learnt to put up tents and made smores by toasting marshmallows.









Our highlights:

Mrs Fitzgerald 'The Zoo trip was my perfect day, I was so proud of how well all the pupils behaved, they were all amazing.'

Mrs Draycott 'Watching pupils work as a team and put up tents was a real highlight for me. They were all so sensible making 'Smores', they tasted delicious.'

Mrs Hughes 'Taking Year 6 swimming was an absolute pleasure. We were so proud of their skills'.

Mr Pickering 'Supporting with the transition was such a pleasure. I was so impressed with your resilience'

Mrs Taplin and Miss Gilmartin 'We have loved our Wednesday OT sessions with them all. They have engaged so well in the sessions all year.'

Mrs Wynne 'My highlight has been working with the West Kirby 'Amazon' delivery team. We have the most organised stock cupboard in the Wirral'.

Pupils win Engage Creative Awards!

We're so proud of our pupils scooping Engage in their future Creative Awards. A massive congratulations to you all on your entries and achievements.

Photography category

Post-16 GoldKyle M, "Footprints on the Beach"

Post-16 SilverFil, "Journey Beyond the Gate"

Post 16 Special Recognition Ryan, "The Dog Walked"

Certificate of ParticipationDylan "Breaking Through"

Poetry category

KS3 Joint Gold - Kyle M, "Tenerife"

Tenerife

A wonderful summer's day; the sun beating down on lizards basking. The sound of waves assaulting the rocks; fish dance through crystal clear water.

Hermit crabs fight for homes, like an everlasting battle. Birds shoot through the sky like torpedoes, singing their sorrows and joys.

Wasps swarmed the sky, like a nation at war. Ants march across grasslands and pavements voraciously, fighting for their queen,

A journey to this island seems calm and peaceful, however this small world is at war for survival.

by Kyle M

"Congratulations Kyle on your fantastic creative writing." Mrs Clemenson











WKS charity and community activities

Bench donated to local church

We're proud to work closely with our neighbour friends, West Kirby United Reformed Church. We recently donated a bench for their new community sensory garden.

Our Year 9 pupils built the bench with Mr Saunders in DT. Pathfinders Primary pupils and Year 10s joined us for the delivery and we received a warm welcome from the church and some delicious homemade cakes.

We look forward to using their garden for quiet time.









Refugee Week and Asylum Link Merseyside donations

Mrs Clemenson raised awareness of Refugee Week across school through an assembly; exploring and increasing understanding refugees and asylum seekers and also organised a collection and donation delivery to local charity Asylum Link Merseyside.

Thank you to staff, pupils and families for their very generous donations of clothes, toys and toiletries. Our Year 9 pupils, along with Mrs Clemenson and Mr Brown kindly took our collection to Asylum Link Merseyside where it was very gratefully received. We received a lovely thank you video you can watch on our website.





WKS achieve AQA Unlocking Potential



We are so proud to announce that our pupils completed and passed DKHT / AQA Unlocking Potential Programme.

We have had an exciting six months, working alongside Henry Cookey our DKHT Athlete Mentor. Our pupils were simply amazing, the community action project went so well, we extended it to three weeks!

This is what our AQA DKHT Team and the Poop Army succeeded in doing:

- Planned the event to coincide with the 'Keep Britain Tidy Campaign'
- Assessed poop in the area prior to the campaign
- Designed T-Shirts, posters, graphics and logos for our Scoop the Poop campaign
- Gained permission from Wirral Borough Council
- Co-ordinated and delegated the tasks between themselves
- Encouraged local businesses to have poop bags for their customers
- Planned, scripted, filmed and presented a video to recruit a Poop Army of support from pupils across the school through assemblies
- Promoted the event and activities through our website and social media platforms and reached at least 2796 people - including parents, carers residents of West Kirby and community
- Distributed 1400 biodegradable poop bags to local businesses and in dispensers around the marina, Wirral Way and in the parks for dog owners to utilise.
- Highlighted endless piles of poo with washable, environmentally friendly spray paint

They were amazing!





The impact on our local community was noticeable, as the week after the event, there was less poop in the local area and most of the poop bags were utilised. The impact on the pupils involved was immeasurable, as the programme brought out the best in our wonderful young people, so they could see that with perseverance and commitment they can achieve their goals in life.

Well done to Aiden, Ben, Corey, Harvey, Ryan and Thom!

Due to covid restrictions, we did not make it to the London Zoo Celebration Event, we felt that it was safer to remain in the North to celebrate their achievements. Instead, we had a great day out to Wild Shore in New Brighton, and they have received their certificates and Amazon vouchers. Henry was an inspiration to our pupils (and our staff!) and we would like to say a huge thank you to him for all his support - Thanks Henry!

Duke of Edinburgh Award @WestKirbySchool #wksdofe



WKS DofE update

Despite Covid restrictions our Bronze team have been getting expedition skills practice in. It was brilliant to have the opportunity for a practice walk this term - we're so proud of them for a successful first team expedition!

Our Year 10s have also been doing Duke of Edinburgh tasters ready for Options in Year 11. We're pleased to have a new group of Year 11s Duke of Edinburgh Bronze pupils starting in September. We're looking forward to what we hope will be a more normal year.

Also brilliant to see our Primary pupils have got the DofE bug - they've had some fun learning some new life skills, putting tents up and cooking smores.

We're all looking forward to next year for more adventures.

Keep up the hard work you're doing a great job!

From your DofE Staff Team

Mrs Draycott, Miss Killey, Mr Davies, Miss Gilmartin, Mr Cox. Mr Scullion

If you're aged 14 or older and are interested in joining the adventure, speak to Mrs Draycott to find out more!









Thanks to everyone who continues to support our pupils Please follow us on twitter to keep up with our adventures! @WestKirbySchool #wksdofe

Changes to expect in September

We have lots of changes happening to the school building over the Summer holidays, improving and developing new areas of the school. Here's some of the projects:



Horticulture area

We'll be extending the decked pathway, round to the new chicken coop to make it easy to access in all weathers.





Animal Care area

We'll be creating an Animal Care area, by converting old garages. This is for the new BTEC Animal Care qualification starting in September.





Food Technology - Bakery

We'll be creating a small Bakery to the front of the Food Technology room. This is part of supporting our Vocational qualifications. This won't be completely finished in September.





Library

We'll be renovating the library to make it more welcoming and inspiring to visit. This is also a Learning Support area. Miss Dennis is moving her reception area to create a seating area for pupils.





Corridor flooring

More of the corridor flooring is being replaced. It's the same new flooring that has been used already in other areas of the school.







New toilets

Our toilets are being refurbished and will be gender neutral single rooms.



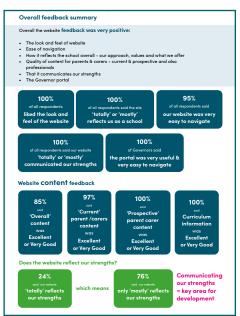
Talent Show

Covid bubbles didn't stop the show! An end of year Talent Show is a WKS tradition and we kept it going with a virtual performance streamed to all the classrooms. We had a range of music, singing, rapping, instruments, stage performance and acting. For some performers, participation counted towards their Artsmark Award. Well done to all our pupils who took part, you show real talent. And well done to Class EC for their entertaining group performance.



New school website feedback

We launched a new school website this year. Here's some of the feedback we received in a survey we did with a cross section of parents, carers, staff and governors. Thank you to all those who contributed, it was invaluable information and we'll be using it for future developments.







Virtual celebration assemblies

Throughout lockdown and bubbles this year, our virtual Friday celebration assemblies with Miss Thomas have brought the school together, given us an opportunity to celebrate our pupils' achievements and also given families the chance to feel part of the school community.

Thank you to all those for sharing news via community@wkrs.co.uk. And a big thank you to our talented Mr Scullion for his behind the scenes work, to make them possible!



Wishing you all a good Summer break and we look forward to seeing you in September!



Reminder:

Tempest Photography in school Tuesday 12th October

Exam results dates

Tuesday 10th August AS Level results

Thursday 12th August GCSE, Cambridge Nationals and vocational subjects

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West Kirby School and College
Meols Drive, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 5DH Tel: 0151 632 3201 Email: schooloffice@wkrs.co.uk
Twitter @westkirbyschool Facebook westkirbyschoolandcollege
www.wkrs.co.uk













