



WEST KIRBY SCHOOL

A DAY AND RESIDENTIAL SPECIALIST SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

West Kirby News

Autumn 2021

Welcome to 2022!

West Kirby School and College celebrate Ofsted “Outstanding” grading in recent inspection.

“Pupils have the best possible chance to succeed.” (Ofsted 2021)



Leading Parent
Partnership Award

2021-2024

“There is a high level of commitment to parent partnership from all staff, who understand the importance of building positive relationships with parents to improve the outcomes for children”



WKS Residential Provision update p.7



Career Pathways update p.6

Message from our Principal, Miss Thomas



Happy New Year to all!

Welcome to another newsletter, which is packed with achievements and activities. As you can see, despite obvious national limitations, last term we were able to engage pupils in a range of interesting, educational and experiential opportunities. Thank you to parents / carers who continue to support pupils and staff in making learning come to life.

This busy term saw the school achieve the Leading Parent Partnership Award and culminated in a hugely successful OFSTED, in which the school was graded 'Outstanding'.

This is no mean feat as, following the change in the OFSTED framework in 2018, the number of special schools maintaining Outstanding has been consistently reducing. I am so proud of our school community; of the hardworking teachers and pupil facing staff; of the residential care team who support staff and work with pupils both day and the evening; of the 'behind the scenes' premises team which cheerily keeps us fed, clean, tidy and well maintained; of the fully supportive and caring operations team; of our wonderful children and young people and of you, the parents/carers who work with us and support us.

Our team effort was recognised and celebrated, and we are really pleased with the result. This now acts a springboard for us in terms of what we want to achieve during the rest of the year, namely:

- Continue to bring back trips and learning activities outside school, regulations allowing*
- Look at bringing back residential trips, e.g. DofE and end of term residentials*
- Explore how we can improve our curriculum further; we want to make sure our pupils continue to get a bespoke learning package and are developing Animal Care and The School Bakery*
- Support pupils in how they grow through our Personal Development and our RSE (Relationship, Sex and Education) curriculum*
- Keep working with young people of all ages to promote successful career choices*
- Help our pupils to become happy and productive members of society*
- Help pupils achieve the best academic results they can*

We have so much to achieve and are aspirational for all of our pupils.

Best wishes

*Miss Thomas
Principal*

West Kirby School and College graded Ofsted 'Outstanding'


Ofsted
Outstanding
Provider

West Kirby School and College are delighted to announce Ofsted graded our school 'Outstanding' in a recent inspection, recognising our continued success.

We're very proud to to be judged 'Outstanding' across all categories including effectiveness of leadership and management, quality of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare and the outcomes of pupils.

John Edwards, Interim Chief Executive, Education and Skills Funding Agency said *"To have maintained your outstanding Ofsted inspection outcome, despite the many complex and significant barriers faced throughout Covid, is extremely impressive."*

Miss Thomas, Principal, comments: *"I am really proud of our exceptional staff who have worked unfailingly before and during the pandemic. They have ensured the school has developed and excelled in meeting the needs of our fantastic children and young people. Also, huge thanks to our cohort of parents and carers who work with and support us on a daily basis, like our stakeholders their help is invaluable."*

"You have created an environment where your learners flourish through a personalised curriculum offer and effective teaching and support strategies, which enable them to experience a wide range of learning opportunities, broaden their life and independence skills, and make significant progress towards their life goals and preparation for adulthood."

Education & Skills Funding Agency 2022



“ Ofsted say...

- Pupils have the best possible chance to succeed.
- Staff are proud to work in the school. They feel exceptionally well supported to do their job.
- Pupils feel safe because they know staff will listen.
- Leaders have high ambitions for every pupil.
- Broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum
- Leaders and staff make sure that pupils are able to develop resilience and ability to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are taught to respect everyone and are sensitive to feelings of others.
- Many pupils arrive after a period of disrupted education and staff get them back on track. They help pupils manage their own behaviour, to re-engage with learning and to gain qualifications that set them up well for adult life.

”

Leading Parent Partnership Award

We are proud to announce we received the Leading Parent Partnership Award. This is awarded as external recognition of the importance our school places on establishing and developing positive, strong parent and carer relationships. These relationships underpin the learning and wellbeing of our young people.

The LPPA is a nationally recognised award by AwardPlace. The assessment is made by an external advisor, with evidence gathered from a range of sources including staff members and parents; focused on the school's partnership work with parents and families. The key areas being:

- Transition
- Participation
- Communication
- Guidance
- Induction
- Home-school links

Miss Thomas, Principal, commented "We are exceptionally pleased. Our dedicated staff work closely with children and their families, enabling pupils' best achievements and helping to support children and young people through difficult times.

We believe that our strong, targeted interventions give a great range of advice and support for parents/carers. Our highly trained and knowledgeable staff and a dedicated Board of Trustees allows for a superb level of care for the young people with whom we work."

To find out more about the award visit the accreditors website
<https://www.awardplace.co.uk/>

“ There is a high level of commitment to parent partnership from all staff, who understand the importance of building positive relationships with parents to improve the outcomes for children “
LPPA, 2021



Leading Parent
Partnership Award

2021-2024

Highlights from the verification feedback report include:

- West Kirby School has strong leadership of parent partnership
- There is a high level of commitment from staff to consistently contact and share information with parents.
- There is an excellent induction process to meet the needs of each family ensuring each child gets the best possible start to their time at West Kirby School. Parents are welcomed, reassured and encouraged to participate in their child's education journey
- Transition is excellent, the careers lead works with parents and pupils to gather their views, share information and support next steps, ensuring a smooth as possible transition to Post 16 and Post 19 options
- Training and workshops are tailored to meet parents' needs, parents are consulted on the topics they are interested in and this information is used to inform the training programme. The school continued training on a virtual basis during covid e.g. Zoom coffee mornings enabling parents to meet up and access provision, reducing isolation
- Parents have a high regard for the school. They feel that each pupil is valued as an individual, that staff are caring and supportive and empower pupils. Parents also feel that they are supported by the school to make family life less stressful

Christmas Enterprise Market ❄️

In December we held our second successful Christmas Enterprise Market.

The challenge was on for all classes to have their own market stall. We were very impressed with the pupils' different ideas, the skills, team work, the creativity and participation. There were fantastic products from bath bombs, greetings cards, printed bags, personalised glasses, gifts, mugs, wax melts, sausage rolls, The School Bakery sourdough and Class 10S raffle!

On the day we were pleased to welcome so many parents, carers and members of our local community and were proud of such a positive atmosphere. Thanks to all for your support.



Career Pathways update

What a term! We've had more freedom to explore and have embraced the reduction of Covid restrictions.

College Visits

It was wonderful that the Covid restrictions were lifted enough to enable our transitioning pupils to have encounters with colleges. The colleges opened their doors again and welcomed WKS Year 11 and Post 16 pupils for tours and taster sessions at colleges campuses.

We've visited Wirral Metropolitan College, Cheshire South and West College, Greenbank College, Liverpool City College and Reaseheath College. A huge thank you to all the colleges that provided WKS pupils with the experiences that will help them in preparation for making a decision and transition when the time comes.

Meet the College Event

WKS were able to invite some of the colleges into school for a Meet the College event, which was a great success across the school. The opportunity to chat with local colleges within a safe, familiar environment is a good stepping stone to transition to college visits.

Pupils from Year 7 through to Post 16 joined us in the afternoon for their opportunity to chat with colleges independently, before parents and carers joined us for the event. Pupils and parents were able to tour WKS Post 16 and meet with teachers and staff in our revamped classes.

A big thank you to our local colleges Wirral Metropolitan, Coleg Cambria, Cheshire South and West and Liverpool City Colleges supporting our pupils to consider their future pathway choices. The pupils and staff loved the freebies!

Is your child transitioning from WKS in September 2022? Do you need support in selecting the next destination?

Please contact Mrs Shallcross, Careers Pathways Officer on hshallcross@wkrs.co.uk



Work experience

We are encouraging our Post 16s to develop their employability skills and they have been working hard..

- Dapper Donkeys benefited from Archie's amazing work ethic on their farm
- Hayrack Church Farm has appealed to the animal lovers of Post 16. Fil has stuck with it since the beginning, where as some were put off by the reality that they had to scoop a lot of poop!
- Mentoring - Post 16 pupil Jack has been mentoring the younger pupils in WKS; supporting them to think through their future pathways and providing wellbeing guidance.

News Flash...College Open Events

Due to the increase of Covid restrictions, colleges have reverted back to virtual open events. We will let you know as soon as they open their doors again.

News from our Residential Provision

Hello to everyone and welcome to the Residential Department news

Hello everyone and welcome to our Residential Provision news update of what's been happening during the Autumn term.

Over Summer, our main residential home had a real renovation. Thanks to our very own staff member Miss Porter-Duffy for her talent for interior design; the home now looks fantastic, contemporary, welcoming and homely for our young people.

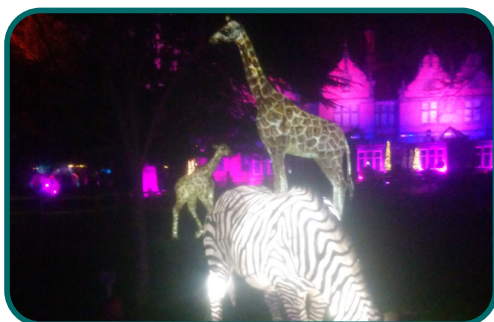
We have also had some new young people start with us for both for full weeks and the short break we offer to some of our families and young people, which helps residents develop and improve both social skills and independence.

As always, we've refreshed our activity planning for all our residents; this includes a number of new different and exciting activities, including trips to Activities for All, a local sport and recreation venue which provides climbing wall and ropes, laser quest, bowling, cinema and many other choices that the young people have suggested they'd like to do. Our team promote a more independent outlook and our older residents are encouraged to travel more independently, budget, plan and prepare meals for themselves and the group.



Some of our highlights this term have include:

- Seeing how our older residents have taken to the more semi-independent life in The Grove.
- After school yoga sessions
- Baking
- Some lovely trips and visits once again, particularly to Activities for All
- Feeling proud how our young people have coped with so well with the pandemic and restrictions.
- Our residential Christmas celebrations
- The highlight of the term had to be our visit at Christmas to the Chester Zoo lanterns. We had such an enjoyable time and made lasting memories of a great trip. It was lovely to see how excited and happy the young people were.



We look forward to the new term with hopefully more opportunities of getting out there and taking on new challenges with the young people. Of course, not forgetting the lovely families, who are so supportive of the residential team. Thank you.

WKS residential team

School Library update



Welcome to our school Library!

Over Summer we renovated our school library, and also welcomed a new school librarian Mrs Russell at the start of the year.

We're sure you'll agree it feels a welcoming and comfortable place to explore books, read and learn.

The library is stocked with a variety of books to suit all reading levels on our Accelerated Reader programme.

We were also pleased to see the Book Fair was a success, thank you for the support.



Celebration Evening



In November we recognised our pupils' achievements with our annual Celebration Evening.

Thanks to all the pupils, families, carers and Trustees who joined us to make it a special evening to celebrate pupils' achievements and receive their certificates from Miss Thomas, Principal and Mrs Wynne.

It was brilliant to see such a good turn out and have the opportunity to give students the recognition for their hard work and achievements in what has been a challenging year.

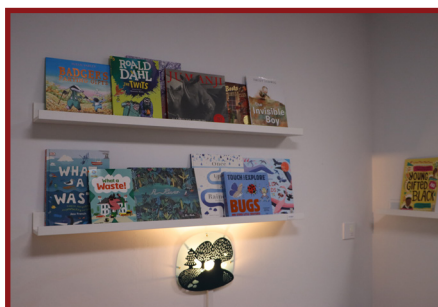
Well done to you all! We're very proud of you!



New Primary Library and reading areas

We're very excited to have opened a new library and literary themed reading area for our Primary department. Packed with the most current and a wide variety of reading books for pupils to start their reading journeys.

Promoting an interest and love of reading starts in Primary. We aim for our new library and reading areas to be welcoming and inspiring spaces to spend time reading. It's been really well received by our pupils - the carriage reading seats on Hogwarts Express are a favourite!



"I love our new reading café. I snuggle up with a hot chocolate and my book" Matthew

"I love how cosy it is!" Lucas



Welcome to PE at WKS

What a wonderful start to the year. There have been many opportunities seized within the PE department this term.

We have introduced new sports to the curriculum; entered Merseyside competitions; invited Judo and Basketball coaches into school and students are starting to wear our new PE kit to lessons. There are more opportunities to be offered this year such as new extra-curricular clubs, more new sports in lessons, more competitions such as the Wirral School Games and a student survey on your views of how to continue to improve PE.

Mr Musgrave, WKS PE Lead



New PE Kit

In September we introduced a new PE Kit which we are currently in the process of rolling out across the school. We have had some supply delays unfortunately, but hope to now fulfill all orders.

Pupils are welcome to wear their PE kit to school on the day they have PE.



WKS at Panathlon Games

We've been really proud of our pupils who participated in the Panathlon Challenge Merseyside games during the Autumn term.

Panathlon Challenge provides competitive sporting opportunities to children with disabilities and special educational needs.

West Kirby School competed in various tournaments including Boccia, Dodgeball and Wheelchair Basketball.

We had a fantastic time and thrilled to say we won the Wheelchair Basketball and Dodgeball!

Well done to everyone involved. We hope everyone will get the chance to represent the school should they wish.



Visit www.panathlon.com for more information

WKS ELF Run



Thank you to everybody who got involved and supported our first WKS Charity Elf Run in December. We raised £332!

Our pupils, staff and even Trustees got 'fit and elfie' round West Kirby Lake to support the local WUTH Charity - Wirral University Teaching Hospital. (Clatterbridge and Arrowe Park Hospital)

Thank you!



WKS Elf Run 2021



165%

£332

raised of £200 target
by 21 supporters



Sports Clubs at WKS

We're pleased to see how popular the after school sports clubs have been at West Kirby School. Big thanks to Mr Evans who is leading this and a team of staff volunteers.

- Basketball
- Football
- Dodgeball
- Multi-skills

We welcome a mixture of age groups and abilities to come along, have fun, get to know others and develop your skills.

Want to join a club? Speak to Mr Evans



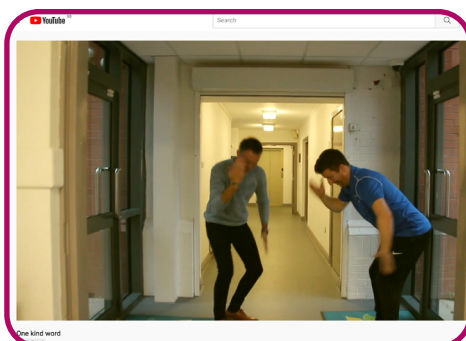
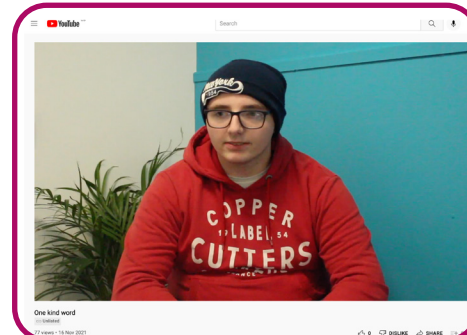
Anti-Bullying week



For Anti-Bullying Week our Pastoral Care Team, the Anti-Bullying school Leads, raised the profile of Anti-Bullying and the theme this year, **'One Kind Word'**.

Typically, we saw a fun approach from PCT to engage pupils - a teaser Anti-Bullying Week video, online assembly 'One Kind Word' video, Odd Socks Day and Odd Socks competition!

Pupils from different year groups, including our Post 16, got involved in the video productions to create an impactful message about how it feels to be bullied. The main assembly video 'One Kind Word' was a school team production effort, with many staff sharing their 'Kind Words'.

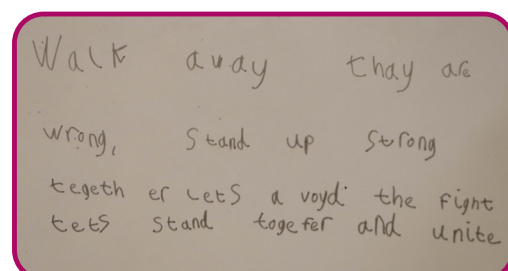


Poet Levi Tafari visit



A local Poet, Levi Tafari, joined us for the day, organised by Mrs Abernethy, Learning Support Manager/Reading Team. Levi is known as a rhythmic, poetic, consciousness raiser and Urban Griot.

Pupils loved his contemporary style, challenging ideas about both diversity and bullying. We saw some brilliant creative writing about how to approach Anti-Bullying.



Meet our Animal Care department

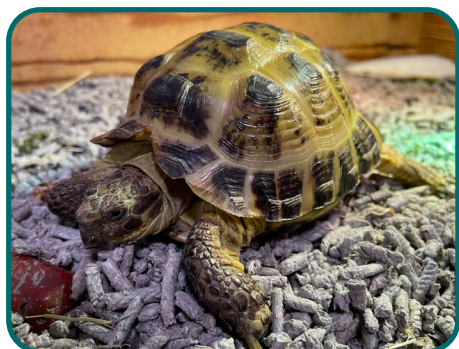
We're pleased to share exciting news that we've opened an Animal Care department at the school.

Our Animal Care team is run by Mrs Booth, Miss Allison and Animal Care Technician Miss Hitchmough. Years 7-9 have Animal Care on their timetable each week and BTEC Animal Care is a new option for pupils at KS4.

Pupils have been involved in choosing and buying the animals and researching to get their habitat ready for arrival. All names have also been chosen by our pupils which creates some excitement around the school!

Our school mini zoo is growing quickly and includes:

- Reptiles - Jessie the tortoise and we're hoping for snakes, bearded dragons and geckos
- Mammals - Rabbits - Latte & Cookie Dough, guinea pigs - Stacey & Maggie and our new mice
- Birds - Our chickens which live in the chicken coop built by pupils.
- Insects - A stick insect collection
- The opportunity to meet visiting dogs and cats.



Benefits of animal care

Having animals to care for ties in with the school curriculum of developing emotional and social needs – empathy, care, love, compassion, understanding, commitment and building confidence.

Pets can also encourage a child's learning needs, especially in reading, communication, observation and speaking. It also brings wider benefits including lowering anxiety, teaching skills about treating others kindly and cautiously, modelling gentle behaviour and teaching compassion. It's a great conversation starter that allows friendships to grow and social skills to be learnt.

BTEC Animal Care broadens our vocational subjects and options at KS4, with the opportunity to gain employability and learn life skills.



Are you Going for Gold?



Going for Gold is the reward scheme at West Kirby School. It focuses on our pupils' positive behaviours and attitudes across the school day.

What's new?

A new weekly incentive has recently been launched for pupils in Years 7-11. The awards are for the 11 'top earners' in each class.

The GFG points will be calculated at the end of the week by Mr Pickering. Mr Brown will then come round the classes on Monday morning. The top earner will be given a certificate and the opportunity to take a surprise from the golden box.

Get earning those GFG points!

Mr Pickering and Mr Brown



Pupil Voice update



Pupil Voice is the school council at West Kirby School and College. Many of the topics that pupils bring forward and discuss result in positive changes and developments around the school.

We also seek opinions of students through Pupil Voice for school developments.

This term we have welcomed a new Pupil Voice team, with at least one pupil volunteer from each form group, across the whole school. Our team have already had input into school life:

- Environmental improvement suggestions and meeting with Mr Hall, Premises Manager
- School Ambassador programme
- School lunch menu
- Christmas dinner
- School charities

We look forward to hearing what you have to say this year!

Pastoral Care Team update

Makeover for the Pastoral Care Suite

The Pastoral Care suite has been rejuvenated for our pupils with a fresh modern look.

Works began in Summer 2021 and completed in early September with the arrival of new furniture. The feedback from pupils has been extremely positive. Pupils have remarked that it is 'cool', 'a nice room', 'calming' and 'it's a lot more modern'.

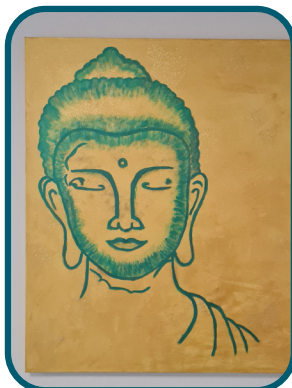
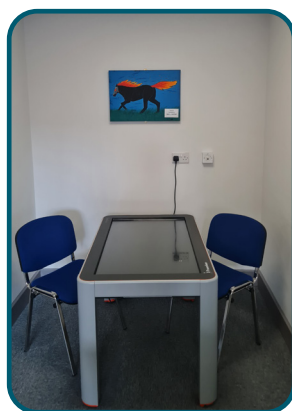
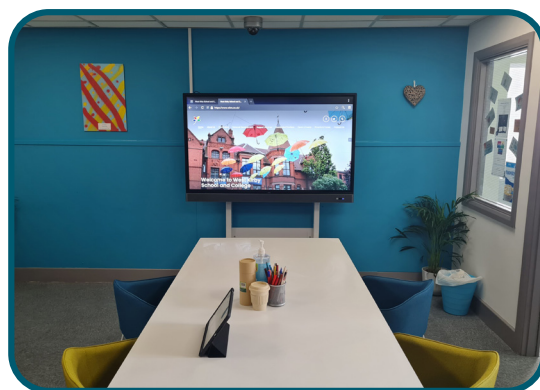
The room promotes positive wellbeing and can be used in a variety of different ways. We can complete group work with pupils, one to one interventions as well as social activities that encourage play and friendship, which is crucial in the development of social skills.

The team members would like to place a special thanks to the pupils and the Art department for their fantastic artistic contributions which now adorn the walls.

Check out the pictures!!!

From your PCT Team

Mr Horne, Mr Davies, Mr Brown, Miss Killey & Miss Roberts



Duke of Edinburgh Award update

WKS DofE

@WestKirbySchool #wksdofe



Our expedition training sessions are in full swing. Mrs Draycott is pleased to get back to face to face learning with the teams as Covid restrictions begin to lift.

The teams have been learning about first aid, route planning and navigation. We have been doing a number of team building activities to get to know each other and learn new skills; we also held our own version of 'The Cube' and experienced some team activities blindfolded.

Pupils continue to work on the other award sections in their own time; they are keeping fit and healthy and learning new skills! There are also a number of volunteer projects being undertaken.

We are looking forward to our practice day walks in the Spring, where we can travel a bit further afield than West Kirby to practice the skills we have been learning. We are also keeping our fingers crossed that we are able to get planning for our expeditions this summer.

Well done to past pupil Niamh who has finally been signed off for her Bronze award.

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

From your DofE Staff Team

*Mrs Draycott, Miss Killey, Mr Davies,
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**

Welcome to Nurture Group

As a development to our Support Services team, we've opened a Nurture Group within the school.

Our Nurture Group is led by two members of staff, Miss Bland and Mrs Curtis, who trained through NurtureUK.org; who are dedicated to improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people and removing barriers to learning by promoting nurture in education.

Nurture is set within a quiet space with craft, sensory and life skills resources, aimed at supporting pupils with attachment and emotional development.

The Nurture Group aims to develop feelings of safety, security, a sense of well-being, happiness and pleasure in achievement at school; learning through working together, interaction, social and emotional activities and structured and supported play.

Watch this space!



The School Bakery Launches

Our Post 16 BTEC Hospitality and Catering students have launched 'The School Bakery'. The bakery is an enterprise to support pupils' learning and bring meaningful life skills experience to their studies.

The School Bakery now has a signature sourdough loaf which is being sold within the school and was a best seller at the recent Enterprise Market.

Over the last term, businesses in the local community have worked with our students to assist in their research and skills development. Thanks to Owen McShane at SouredO/ Kensington Bread Company for bakery start-up support; and also local restaurant Hickory's for their employee taster visits, linking careers to curriculum.



School nominated charities

This year our pupils nominated and voted for their own charities to support in school.

It was brilliant to see virtually every pupil had their say! Thank you to Mrs Clemenson for organising this.



International

National

Local



Non-uniform days



Fundraising events



WKS Macmillan coffee morning

Thanks to everybody who supported our Macmillan Coffee Morning - we were delighted to raise £172.78.

A special thanks to Miss Meegan and her team of helpers.



Children in Need non-uniform day

As a pupil nominated charity, we had non-uniform day for Children in Need. Miss Meegan and our pupils also ran a successful cake sale in the hall.

We're pleased to say we raised £160.22. Well done and thank you!



Summer school

Summer School 2021 was the opportunity for our new Year 7 pupils to build friendships with their classmates and forge relationships with some of their new teachers.

After a difficult few years, it was an opportunity designed to support pupil wellbeing and ensure a smoother transition into Year 7 for both our pupils already at WKS and those who were just joining us.

Summer school was split into two weeks, with each week dedicated to a separate Year 7 class, Class EC and Class RD. The focus of summer school was not academic, but focused more on the social interactions and enjoying activities that had not been accessible over the last fifteen months. However, elements of Maths, English and Science were covered each day in activities such as shopping (money) and cooking (weights and measures/reactions of ingredients when put together.)

During the second week, pupils were able to experience the joys and frustrations of mini golf (building resilience and tolerance), have a barbeque (managing risk and personal safety), visit the animals at Tam O'Shanter Farm and get wet and muddy at Manley Mere (team building).



They took part in craft activities with all pupils producing items to take home including tie-dyed t-shirts, hama bead designs and mugs.

The two weeks were a great success and were enjoyed by both pupils and staff alike. Some pupils have requested that they attend again next year, as they enjoyed it so much.

Music department update

Our Music department is led by Miss Comber and is a vibrant, growing area of the school.

We're pleased to see how many pupils are doing music lessons, either as a hobby or as part of their BTEC Music qualification. The Music Therapy sessions were very well received, last term with our primary pupils.

Mondays	<i>Guitar lessons</i>
Tuesday	<i>Drums</i>
Wednesday	<i>Piano</i>
Thursday	<i>Music Therapy</i>
Thursday lunch	<i>Choir</i>

Interested in learning to play an instrument or joining the choir? Please speak to Miss Comber.



Farewell to Chairman, Mr Wylie

In December we said goodbye to Mr John Wylie, the Chairman of our school and charity.

Mr Wylie joined us for Celebration Evening where we had the chance to thank him; pupils were also pleased he joined us for Friday Celebration Assembly where he spoke with them.

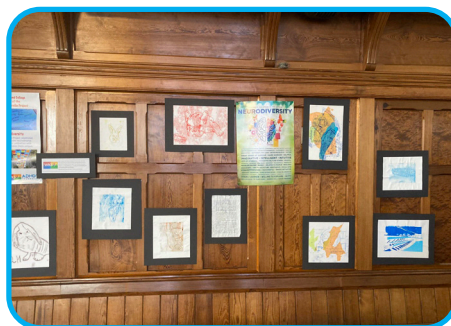
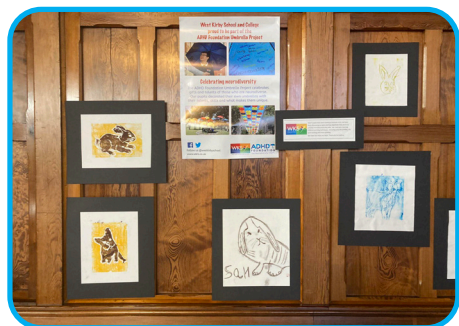
Mr Wylie has supported the school immeasurably and we wish him a happy and healthy future after the school.



WKS participate in Wirral Festival of Firsts



The school were invited to join in the Festival Of firsts Art trail in Wirral churches. Co-ordinated by Art Lead Mrs Davies, we exhibited a range of different prints produced by pupils in Year 9 to Year 13. Year 7 pupils set up the exhibition, learning how to mount work and learning about the things you need to consider when exhibiting work. The work was well received by visitors to the church.



Follow us on social media



West Kirby School and College

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