We are a good school!

by Robin Wilson

Introduction
A brilliant year for all pupils and staff at Woodlands School. The icing on the cake was the news that the school has been graded “Good” by Ofsted. The school received the grading “Good” in all the areas of reporting: Leadership and management; Behaviour and safety of pupils; Quality of Teaching; Achievement of pupils. Headline comments include:

"Pupils’ behaviour in and around school is good. The school is a calm and orderly environment. Many pupils arrive with a history of troubled behaviour and poor attendance, but over time they make good improvement in both areas. Pupils’ progress has started to accelerate rapidly due to the higher expectations of staff and a sharper focus on learning. The use of subject-specific teaching assistants in classes has further contributed to pupils’ improved progress. Teaching is consistently good. Staff provide very effective support for pupils so that they can access learning. They encourage pupils to develop their academic and personal self-confidence well. Senior Leaders and Governors have set the school on a clear path of improvement. Initiatives are gathering pace and having a positive impact on pupils’ achievements, behaviour and improved teaching.”

Everyone associated with the school is absolutely thrilled at achieving this outcome, which is of course the result of two years focussed work. Importantly for myself, as the Head, is the recognition that pupils are beginning to make accelerated progress. This is despite all the barriers to their learning that pupils who attend Woodlands bring with them. Additionally, the impact of the whole school reading programme, where every child in class reads for twenty minutes daily has been fantastic as we have seen a significant increase in all pupils ability to read. We hope to build upon this success in the next academic year by the introduction of Accelerated Reader which provides further incentives to read, providing quizzes for pupils to complete when they have finished a book. Who will be the first pupils to gain the status of WORD MILLIONAIRE?

Thank you all for your continued support this year, whether a parent, governor, representative of the Local Authority or just a ‘friend of Woodlands’, it is very much appreciated and I hope to see you at our annual parents evening and BBQ celebration.

Acorns Oswestry - Now Open!

Acorns is a satellite of Woodlands School and we are proud to announce that we have opened our first in Oswestry this year! The Acorns provision offers primary education for up to twelve pupils from years 5, 6 and 7.

DID YOU KNOW?

Woodlands are on the social network website Twitter! We post regular news and information about the school and occasional photos of our events. Follow us at: www.twitter.com/WoodlandsCentre WOODLANDS TWITTER @WoodlandsCentre
Vivo Awards

By Tim Baker

Vivo is a web-based rewards system proven to improve student engagement and help achieve school values. We have continued using the system this year and it has proven again to have a positive impact on behaviour and motivates pupils towards their goals.

Top 10 Vivo earners for this school year:

1. Roman Brown
2. Leslie Sumner
3. Paul Childs
4. Richard Owens
5. James Smith
6. Brandon Parker
7. Aiden Eley
8. Levi Antwis
9. William Bagnall
10. Cameron Diggory-Groves

Woodlands and Acorns pupils have already received over 181,000 Vivo this school year, beating last year’s total.

Items purchased ranged from 3D puzzles and Funky Fish Keyrings to Mini Hamburger Speakers and Squishy Mesh Balls. Pupils also supported charities again with donations to the NSPCC, RSPCA and Cancer Research.

DID YOU KNOW?

We have an active website you can see at www.woodlandscentre.org which is updated with news, events, dates, letters and policies regularly. Information on the school can be obtained from our site along with useful links you may be interested in

WOODLANDS SCHOOL WEBSITE
http://www.woodlandscentre.org

Year 7 Transition

by Catrin Kenyon-Owen

This academic year, Class T1 have been involved in Bikeability – a two day initiative to educate young people on how to maintain bikes and road safety. The children really enjoyed going on a bike trek around the locality, and one child stated “I’d like to do the next part of the course!” They have attended two Forest Schools courses, in which most achieved an OCN Level 1 qualification in Survival and Bushcraft.

During Personal Health Social and Citizenship Education (PHSCE) classes, the pupils have been working on social games, designed to encourage confidence in speaking and listening skills, and getting along with others. We have all learned a lot about each other and have had plenty of laughs.

The pupils have worked well in their new module, Humanities Projects – “HP”, (which we like to call Hire Purchase), where they have studied different topics with a cross-curricular emphasis. Last half term they studied Australia and of particular interest was Aboriginal art with its symbolism and narrative themes. Pupils produced their own artwork inspired by Aboriginal art. This half term, the pupils have been learning about human impacts on the environment, in anticipation of the activity week at the end of term with the same theme. T1 have been looking at the ways in which we can save energy and look after our environment by recycling and avoiding littering.
Events & Activities
by Woodlands School

Curriculum Enriching Weeks
Since the start of the school year we have been holding topic based themed activity weeks at the end of each term. Students have been developing specific skills (ICT, literacy, numeracy, independent learning, collaboration, work related learning, problem solving and cultural diversity) in real and relevant learning experiences.

In December we held an Italian activity week which included visits to the Dewa Roman experience in Chester and to CrossFit Gym (www.crossfitoswestry.com), Oswestry to take part in a Roman sports session. Amongst other activities students cooked Italian food, designed Venetian masks and created Woodlands ‘Cosa Nostra’ families.

In March there was a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) activity week in which students had the opportunity to produce tiles with an industrial theme, play chess, visit Thinktank in Birmingham (www.birminghammuseums.org.uk) to take part in Drag Racer and Robot Battles challenges.

At the end of this term, the theme for activities will be The Environment. Events from this week will be tweeted and posted under ‘News’ on the school website as they happen.

Ofsted 2015 -GOOD!
We have mentioned it elsewhere in the newsletter but once again, as a proud school, congratulations to everyone for this great result and long may our success continue!

Car Boot Sale
We held our first car boot sale on the morning of Sunday 28th June. As well as the usual trading, a tombola was in operation offering a vast selection of prizes, big and small. Bacon butties, chips, tea and coffee were also readily available to purchase.

The weather held up and the morning was a great success, raising funds for the school!

Bikeability
A number of key stage 3 students undertook a two day ‘bike ability’ course which was a huge success. Day one of the course involved bike maintenance and road safety information. Day two involved an on road bike assessment in and around Wem. This included signalling and crossing main roads at T-junctions.

All students passed the course and there was a great sense of enjoyment throughout.
www.bikeability.org.uk

Walford Animal Care
This year the students went on a trip to Walford Animal Care. Here they learnt about lots of different animals including the lamb pictured below! www.nsc.ac.uk

Message from Joe Hart
After the school received their fantastic Ofsted results, Manchester City and England goalkeeper Joe Hart sent the school a video message. Joe is a local success story and the students are very proud to have their schools recent Ofsted achievement acknowledged by such a big star. You can see the video on our website or our YouTube page!

Visit from the High Sheriff
The High Sheriff of Shropshire visited us this year and was very impressed with our pupils and the work that we do here. The High Sheriff is the Queen’s representative in the County for all matters relating to the Judiciary and the maintenance of law and order; much of the High Sheriff’s year is therefore spent supporting and encouraging the voluntary and statutory organisations who work in this area.

Macmillan Coffee Morning 2014
Pupils raised £40.50 at a coffee morning that was held at break time on 26th September 2014. A big thankyou to Claire McGuiness for helping to organise the sale. http://coffee.macmillan.org.uk
Family Liaison & Mentoring

by Niki McGarvey

Our overall attendance is up by 2% from this period last year. We are implementing several new strategies in School to further support and encourage this trend. Parents and pupils will receive letters where there has been an increase in attendance. Additionally, Glyn Thomas will, as of half term, also be taking on the role of creating and designing an attendance board, identifying pupils with attendance above 90%. There will be weekly and half termly prizes for this group of pupils. However, as a School we recognise fully that without the support of home it is unlikely pupils could be successful in School. Therefore, supporting all parents/carers with the pastoral needs of pupils at home is at the heart of my role.

Congratulations to Niki and our ICT and PE Teacher Kevin, who got married this year and for the birth of their son Brodie!

Mentoring

The mentoring programme has been up and running now for 18 months. Its impact within school has predominantly been positive and effective. Principally, all pupils are given 1-1 mentoring sessions weekly or fortnightly, ensuring that pupils are able to ‘touch base’ with their mentor to raise any concerns they may have. Also mentoring sessions provide opportunities to praise and reward pupils successes. Furthermore mentors are able to maintain regular contact with parents/carers. This process promotes an open and non-judgmental forum where the emphasis is on supporting one another to achieve positive outcomes for the pupil. The first 18 months of this strategy has highlighted that mentoring is essential in supporting our pupils and was praised in our recent Ofsted Inspection.

Food & Design Technology

by Debbie Jones & Alison Wood

Food Technology

Since September the school has invested in a new GCSE Catering course. This has meant new equipment such as: cookers, a glass fronted fridge, a chest freezer and food processors. This GCSE course is a suitable qualification for anyone who wants a broad background in this area and offers valuable preparation for entering the world of work. This course will provide opportunities for students to develop a range of transferable key functional skills in customer service, for example using maths in the context of portion control. It will give them the capacity to work both independently and within a team.

The students that have taken part in the practical examinations this term (controlled assessments) have enjoyed the experience and achieved good grades. They are now working towards their next controlled assessment in the spring term before the paper examination next summer.

Design Technology

We have had a great year in Design and Technology with some creative and inspirational products being designed and manufactured. KS3 pupils have been working with a range of resistant materials, completing a variety of projects in wood, metal and plastic. The work produced by pupils has been of a really high quality and the effort and enthusiasm shown by all has been superb!

The majority of pupils in V2 and V3 have been working on GCSE projects, with some outstanding results. Controlled assessments have included the design and manufacture of TV units, bedside cabinets, chairs, coffee tables and lighting. Pupils have been completing practical projects and supporting folders as well as learning the theory required for the summer exam.

Pupils in V3 have been working on their BTEC in construction and have successfully completed units in Carpentry, Joinery and Brickwork.

V3 celebrated the successful completion of their brickwork unit with a BBQ. Aiden Eley, Head Chef, cooked up a treat of hotdogs and burgers, much enjoyed by all. T2 joined us for the celebration and admired the work of the other pupils. Steve, the college tutor leading the course, awarded Leslie Sumner with a special prize to acknowledge his dedication and commitment throughout the ten weeks course. Great job...Well done to all!
Outreach Service
by Jane Otter

It's been another successful year for the Outreach Team. In September Kat Edmonds joined us as a full time Outreach Teacher. Previously Kat has worked as a SENCO in a large secondary school, an Advisory Teacher for Cheshire East and has taught in both mainstream and specialist schools.

We are also delighted that Rachel Butterfield is now joining us permanently as an Outreach Teacher for both Behaviour and Learning. Rachel has recently been doing sterling work supporting a local Primary school as their SENCO through the Outreach Service.

Robin continues to be a regular ‘superhero’ for the Local Authority and has recently provided several emergency responses when a pupil’s place at a school was in jeopardy.

News that Outreach would be considered in the recent Ofsted inspection led schools to send the most wonderful and thoughtful letters and emails. The comments emphasised the very individual service that is provided, as each school highlighted unique elements that they valued. Reading them made us realise that we are achieving our aims of providing a highly professional child centred service in which we are genuinely seen as part of the school team.

In an exciting development, we are now launching the Woodlands SEN Forum. These are termly meetings providing schools with the opportunity to meet to share good practice, network with colleagues and to have training in relevant subject areas. The first round of forums are being facilitated by Jayne Corns and Lis Rawson.

We are now commissioned by schools in Shropshire, Telford and also Cheshire. The year has been a busy one with the introduction of the new SEND Code of Practice. As the School year draws to a close we are about to embark on our programme of transition support for pupils moving into Year 7. This year the Team will be working with over 140 pupils from across the county during the two week period.

Staffing Changes
by Robin Wilson

This year we have seen various staffing changes. Sadly, Karen Vernon Smith left us this year to give more time to her new born baby and Mike Richards, one of the longest standing members of staff retired last Summer, both will be missed by staff and pupils, we thank them for all the tremendous work that they have done and we wish them the very best for the future.

A warm welcome to our new members of staff who joined us this year, Alison Wood, who is our Design & Technology teacher, Hannah Burrage our Science teacher and Catrin Kenyon Owen our Year 7 transition teacher. Chris Peel, Hannah Arkwright and Sara Hoult our Teaching Assistants also joined us in September.

Hannah Cargius joined us whilst covering English as supply and has stayed with us to teach Drama from September.

Tim Baker our first Business Manager joined us this year. Tim has over 30 years of experience working in Local Government and a strong educational, managerial and financial background. We also began an Apprenticeship scheme in which Apprentice Teaching Assistant Madeleine Evans and Apprentice ICT Technician James Ritch joined us in September.

We bid a fond farewell to Mike R who retired last year.

James & Maddie our apprentices who have settled in well at the Woodlands and both proven competent members of the team.
English, Literacy and Drama

by Rachael McFarland & Hannah Cargius

English and Literacy underpin academic progress across the whole curriculum and in our bid to see pupils consistently making good progress, we have been spending a lot of time developing the English curriculum in order to help pupils to succeed. Our main aim is for pupils to leave Woodlands with enquiring minds and an interest in reading for pleasure as well as for purpose so that they can engage with what is going on in the world around them.

The key stage 3 curriculum has been developed to include changes happening nationally in English. Pupils now have to study grammar as part of the National Curriculum but to make this more engaging, we have done lots of creative writing where pupils have had a scope of personal choice on themes and topics. Pupils wrote some fantastic stories and descriptive pieces for their pupil progress files both in key stage 3 and 4. The ones written by key stage 4 pupils went towards their GCSE folders. The grammar work we did ensured pupils were able to use a range of sentences effectively and accurately in their work in order to present their ideas in clear and engaging ways.

Pupils have been working very hard for their GCSEs and the controlled task pieces produced this year have been really creative. Particular credit goes to Henry Robinson and Paul Childs for their effort and dedication to their exploration of ‘Of Mice and Men’ and War Poetry. A massive well done to year 10 pupils also, who have also completed two coursework tasks in eager preparation for next year and a special mention goes out to Declan Bentley who has completed controlled tasks for GCSE, despite only being in year 9! Well done Declan!

As part of the GCSE Speaking and Listening unit, pupils worked tirelessly to create speeches about a topic they are passionate about. From Leslie Sumner’s speech about horror films to Will Bagnall’s love for rugby and Aaron Thomson’s interesting presentation of hockey, it was a great month of learning about the pupils’ passions and interests outside of school. All pupils completed their GCSE Speaking and Listening tasks with dedication and enthusiasm.

Pupils particularly enjoyed studying the novella Of Mice and Men earlier in the academic year. Many of them engaged with its stark themes and all enjoyed discussing these as a class before writing about two of the main characters. Some pupils have used their pieces for their GCSE folders. The majority of pupils wrote thoughtfully and with great sensitivity.

In preparation for their examinations, pupils have taken part in revision sessions. In English, we spent the morning looking at how to time writing answers effectively for different questions; how to interpret questions and how to plan answers. Pupils commented on how helpful they found the session and were hopefully more confident when they got into the examination than they would have been otherwise.

More recently, with D Day commemorations going on across Britain, pupils have been looking at war poetry and discussing the experiences of soldiers, more particularly in the First World War but also war in general. Looking into next year, as a faculty, we will be looking at gearing up for changes the Government are making to the GCSE examinations. These will be the examinations our current year 9 going into year 10 will be taking. So more curriculum development work will be taking place in order to provide our pupils with the best opportunities to succeed.

This academic year, we have focused on developing pupils’ reading and our 20 minute daily reading sessions for all pupils and staff have become very popular. Reading was taken forward by new addition to the department, Hannah Cargius. Hannah has a varied background in drama, media and English and we are really pleased she is able to stay. As reading has been so successful we will continue to support pupils next year with this as well as extending our focus onto spelling. We are looking to bring in a structured programme for spelling that charts pupils’ progress and accelerates learning. We also want to develop pupils’ speaking and listening with specific days during the year where we ditch pen and paper and focus on effective talk. In all, we are really looking forward to next academic year and the opportunities it presents for pupils.

Holes

This year in English, year 8 and 9 pupils have been reading and studying the fantastic story Holes by Louis Sachar. It tells the story of Stanley Yelnats and his misfortune at ending up at Camp Green Lake for naughty boys. Stanley’s cursed family and flashbacks to the outlaws of America kept the whole class wanting to read more! James Smith, Roman Brown and Cameron Diggory-Groves created some excellent Camp Green Lake leaflets as well as some really creative wanted posters for Kissin’ Kate Barlow.

DNA

GCSE pupils have begun reading the Dennis Kelly play about a group of 14-year-olds who accidentally kill one of their classmates. When they realise the terrible mistake they’ve made, they try to cover up the crime, but inadvertently implicate an innocent man in the process. At each moment when they could come clean, the group instead weave a darker, more complex web of lies. Looking at the perceptions of gangs and youth in the UK, GCSE pupils are really getting stuck into the play before completing their controlled assessment task. V2 in particular have really got their teeth stuck into this play with some fab acting and portrayal of the characters. In particular Kyle Moore, Liam Lutner, Brandon Parker and Will Bagnall have displayed some fantastic acting skills.

Drama

Pupils have started doing Drama lessons during this summer term exploring their role as an actor and developing their understanding of characters and plays. These lessons are really explorative and practical, allowing pupils to get out from behind the desk! Each class has had an introduction to Drama skills as well as fun Drama games and warm ups. A big well done to all the pupils so far for really engaging in something new. It turns out we have quite a few divas in Woodlands!
Mathematics & Science

by Anne Louise Haubenschmid & Hannah Burrage

Mathematics

Since September last year the Maths department has benefitted from the expertise of our specialist TA Hannah. Hannah quickly built positive working relationships with the students and has proved to be a valuable member of the team.

Students in Year 11 have been working throughout the year towards improving the GCSE grades they achieved last Summer. All have achieved Functional Mathematics at either Entry Level 3 or Level 1, with some awaiting results for Level 2. Once again all Year 11 students have undertaken Statistics GCSE at Foundation level. Final examination results are looking promising for this group of students. Particular mention for their efforts must go to Paul, Toni, Nick and Matthew who continued attending Maths lessons until the end.

Year 10 have experienced their first attempt at the Mathematics GCSE exams at Foundation level in June for which they have been practising hard for several months. Students whose exam results are particularly good will be given the opportunity to take the GCSE at Higher level during the next academic year. All Year 10 students have achieved Functional Mathematics at Entry Level 3 and have started working towards a qualification at Level 1 or Level 2 later in the year.

Year 9 students have successfully completed the first year of their GCSE course at Foundation level. Most of them have been working in vertical groups with the Key stage 4 students so have experienced the revision process for the summer exams. They have responded well to the challenge of a range of problem solving activities through the year.

Year 7 and 8 students have generally continued to work very well and have made good progress. There has been an increased focus on developing students’ problem solving skills through a regular variety of tasks which feedback has shown as enjoyable. Students have continued to enjoy using laptops and tablets for a diversity of Maths activities this year.

We have continued to subscribe to MyMaths.co.uk which is an interactive internet resource that our pupils can use within school and at home for consolidating learning. MyMaths allows pupils to select the level of work they are doing, work on lessons at home which they have been taught in class and choose appropriate material for their level, thus encouraging independent learning.

Science

This has been my first year as the Science teacher here at Woodlands and I must say that it has been a lot of fun! I have been impressed with the level of achievement and resilience shown by the pupils. We have been on several trips, including the Enginuity museum with the younger pupils and the Thinktank Science museum in Birmingham with the older pupils. I think it’s fair to say we all had fun and the pupils represented the school very well.

This year the KS3 pupils, who are in the T1 and T2 groups, have been following the new Science National Curriculum as they would in any mainstream school. This has allowed these pupils to build on their subject knowledge through scientific enquiry, allowing them to gain a broad knowledge and skills base which will serve them well when they begin their GCSE’s.

The 14-16 year old pupils in the V1, V2 and V3 groups have all been studying for their OCR Environmental and Land Based Studies GCSE. This has been a challenging course, involving over two months’ worth of coursework and a trip out to Dudley Zoo. The pupils have completed some excellent coursework which they should be exceptionally proud of. The star of the year has to go to Declan Bentley for gaining the highest mark in his coursework – and he is only in year 9, well done Dec! The Science exams also seem to have gone very well and many of the pupils had clearly been revising hard in their own time, in addition to in lessons – I look forward to the results in August!

The Animal Man

In May 2014, Woodlands had a visit from “The Animal Man” from Corner Exotics brought in many rare and exotic animals for the pupils to interact with during our Science lessons. Pupils... and Teachers were put out of their comfort zone with some of the animals including tarantulas, snakes and scorpions! This however had no effect on the enthusiasm and commitment by the pupils who were all brilliant.

http://www.cornerexotics.co.uk

100%

Of pupils gained a GCSE grade in Mathematics, congratulations everyone!

MATHS & SCIENCE EVENTS

Thinktank Museum

This year students got the chance to visit the Thinktank Science Museum in Birmingham. All students had bags of fun and learned lots at the same time. Will Bagnall in particular enjoyed himself in the hamster wheel

http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank

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100%

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WOODLANDS GCSE FACTS

100%

Of pupils gained a GCSE grade in Mathematics, congratulations everyone!
Humanities & PSHE

by Julia Taylor

This year in Humanities year 11 have been working towards their GCSE and have completed some excellent pieces of coursework around the topic of racism. We are expecting some very good results in the summer!

We have had visitors in school to teach the topic of Health and Hygiene which was delivered by our excellent School Nurse, Laura and her team. Pupils responded really well to these sessions and learnt a lot about how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

Both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupil went on a trip to the Chester Dewa Roman experience.

Pupils visited the museum where they learnt about Roman Life, including some interesting uses for sponges on sticks in the public conveniences of Ancient Rome. We then went on a march with a centurion (who was wearing sandals in December cos he’s hard!) through the streets of Chester to the amphitheatre where he taught pupils how to actually fight like a Roman soldier rather than like two ladies hitting each other with handbags.

Computing & Media

by Kevin McGarvey

Computing is a very important aspect of Woodlands School, with pupils regularly showing a keen interest in the subject so it is no surprise that it has been a very busy year here for Computing & Media! Pupils have been working through a wide range of aspects from the Curriculum and there has been a record number of pupils taking their Creative iMedia qualification. Pupils undertaking this have had to work through a number of units which involved making comics, creating video and graphic design. They have also had to take a pre-production skills exam. Well done to all those pupils who have been working diligently all year for this fantastic achievement.

The lower school has been developing their computing skills and have covered a number of areas such as coding, E-Safety, blogs and video creation. Their work can often be seen on the school website and through the school Twitter feed which is updated regularly. You can also see the computing literacy word of the week which is also displayed on Twitter and within the classroom every week.

E-Safety is a big concern for many parents and at Woodlands we do a lot of work to educate our pupils about how to stay safe whilst using the internet. This year we did work for E-Safety say which was enjoyed by all and highlighted to pupils (and staff) what’s good, what’s not and how to report things such as abuse or bullying.

ICT and Computing is well supported at Woodlands with input from Mike Foden in our ICT support - not only providing technical help with ICT throughout the school but promoting new ideas and technology that the school can make use of in the classroom, which has been a valuable asset for the computing curriculum to take us forward.

Next year we are looking forward to the further development of a new Media Suite and moving forward with iPads, this will enable us to produce new media on a bigger and better scale and also give pupils access to a wider range of ICT equipment allowing them to create and develop more advanced materials for their course work.

E-Safety is very important to us at Woodlands, if you would like to know more about E-Safety for your children please visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk which has some great information.
Art
by Alison Wood

It has been a hard but exciting year for the Art Department. All Yr 9s, 10s and 11s have been working hard towards their GCSE units or to achieve an Entry Level Qualification. Key stage 3 have been creating some fantastic projects including those based on fish, Day of the Dead and Clay Monsters.

We have been very successful in all three cross curricular weeks, firstly with Italy week where students created their own Venetian Masks; in STEM week where students worked together to make a tiled mural which is now displayed in the Dining Hall and finally Environment week where students worked together to create their own art project based on this theme.

Acorns at Oswestry
by Claire McGuinness

Acorns Oswestry opened in January 2015. Although we are able to educate up to 12 pupils on site we started with just two, Rebecca and Levi.

Despite the cold weather we were able to make a start on the outside area choosing and buying plants for the large pots and also selecting some herbs for planting in the flower beds. By the time Owen joined us in the spring we were chitting our potatoes ready to take part in the contest that takes place throughout schools in England organised by the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board. The results of our potato growing were 888g of the regional variety potatoes and 802g from the rocket variety. Not bad from 5 seed potatoes! Those who wanted to took them home to cook and try. All pupils received a certificate.

As a group of three, we enjoyed a visit to Ellesmere having a look at the lake and the sculptures and installations around the area. It was sunny enough to have an ice-cream outside the wildlife trust centre and we weren’t even bothered by the geese.

Liam joined us a week or so later and by this time we were swimming every week. Some of our initially reluctant swimmers are now making a supreme effort to learn how to swim – special congratulations go to Rebecca for swimming without a float and Levi for braving the deep end!

With the addition of Charlie and Fin by the end of May, we were a really good group of seven pupils enjoying regular matches of dodgeball in the hall and the lunchtime tradition of Uno. We look forward to welcoming new pupils in the autumn term.
Clubs & Enrichment

by Robin Wilson & Suzi Hollinshead

Our enrichment activities enable pupils to choose, experience and participate in a varied programme of sporting and other sessions. This year pupils have been able to select a variety of activities including dog walking, cycling, film club and horticulture.

Bee Club

Parents will be aware that as part of the Horticulture project, we have our own school apiary. Last summer was very productive and the bees made golbs of honey. Many pupils got involved in the project, including ‘manipulating the bees’, extracting and selling the honey. A further development this year will be the production of beeswax furniture polish. Great care has to be taken in producing this item because the wax needs to be melted and the turpentine added which is very inflammable. We have in our midst an entrepreneur by the name of Aiden who successfully sold the honey to staff and forced them to ‘give up their dosh’

As we approach this honey season, the bees are not doing as well this year and at this point it seems unlikely that we will have a bumper crop like last year.

Breakfast Club

We continue to have a pleasant start to the day at Breakfast club and most of the pupils join us for toast and cereal.

Many thanks to the pupils who help us clear away every day, much appreciated.

Wendy and I are always open to suggestions if anyone has any ideas for a change of menu.

No you can’t have a fry up Greg! All reasonable requests welcome.

DID YOU KNOW?

Studying bees adds significantly to the wider education of pupils. For example:-

1. Bees are pollinators vital to our food chain. The social life of the honey bee colony provides a controversial start to thinking about the structure of societies.

2. The tools which have evolved on the limbs and mouthparts of bees are neat examples of adaptation and engineering.

3. The harvest from honey bees of honey, pollen, wax and propolis has nutritional, craft, manufacturing, and medical applications.

4. Pollination by bees is important for genetic sustainability. Genes that have evolved in other animals are important to our future, too.

Examinations

by Robin Wilson

At the time of writing this for the newsletter there is only one public examination to be completed. It is fair to say that all pupils have tried their best in these set of exams. It is, of course, a stressful time for all pupils, across the county and beyond. It is particularly stressful for pupils who attend Woodlands due to their individual needs which have led them to come to the school.

It is important to thank all parents for their understanding at this time, not just the parents of pupils who are sitting examination, but all the parents for supporting the process. At Woodlands we try to give the pupils the best possible opportunities to be successful and also access their entitlement.

This includes providing a reader and a scribe where assessed as necessary and appropriate. Consequently pupils who are supported in this way can only do so by being in an individual space with a dedicated member of staff. This has proven to be key in supporting our pupils as has careful planning with regard to where they sit the examination and which member of staff will invigilate. We try to keep things as consistent as possible.

Consequently this has meant that we have had to close the school to pupils who are not sitting exams as we use all rooms and it often involves all staff. It is essential that these pupils have the best conditions to succeed with the examinations. Moreover, next and in following years, the situation will be even more necessary. As parents will probably be aware, the government has removed course work and controlled task from examinations, where possible. Therefore the final result will be based entirely upon the results obtained on the day.

We hope to continue these arrangements in future years so that we can best support Pupils at this very important time. May we take this opportunity to thank every involved in the preparations and organisation of the examination timetable and support but also thank those parents of pupils not yet taking examination in terms of their understanding and support for the process.
Forest Schools
by Claire McGuinness & Gareth Lewis

During the spring term this year T1 and T2 continued to attend Forest Schools every Wednesday, run by the company Step Out, which is headed by Sarah Robertshaw. However, building on the knowledge and skills they had gained from previous Forest Schools courses, this time they had the opportunity to work towards the OCN Level 1 in Survival and Bushcraft. This entailed learning how to survive in a forest by using natural resources and only a few tools.

One of the skills they had to learn and demonstrate to achieve this qualification included building natural shelters using only materials from the forest (see picture), by first building a frame of poles which they had cut themselves from trees, reinforcing it with “muscle”, a term used for the twigs and branches, and then covering the structure with leaves and leaf mould to insulate and waterproof the shelter. Finally, a thick, springy layer of birch twigs covered with moss was lain within the shelter to create a mattress. Other skills included locating water sources and making water safe to drink, preparing wild food, starting fires using different methods including a bow saw, and making string.

The pupils, all from years 7, 8 and 9, worked hard to achieve all the required skills and enjoyed learning how to use tools such as saws, loppers and knives to cut down trees and prepare wood for survival uses. Safety was paramount throughout, the instructors taught the pupils the correct procedures for using tools and the safest ways to survive in the wilderness, such as the best places for setting up camp and what to avoid for example dead or uprooted trees.

Above all, everyone’s favourite part of each session was when the fire was hot enough to sit around while the pupils prepared snacks such as hot dogs, bacon sandwiches and made hot chocolates for everyone, yum!

The Governing Body
by Paul Nicholson (Governor)

This has been another exhilarating year for governors as we have overseen many exciting developments at school. We have worked hard to ensure that school was well prepared for its inspection, that we balanced our budget at a time when funding is tight and that all pupils made good progress.

We have seen several changes as some members have retired and new governors have taken their place. The full Governing Body meets each half-term and in addition our three main working committees meet throughout the year. The committees focus on different aspects of school life: Education and Standards; Finance and Facilities; and Premises, Health and Safety. Members of staff attend our meetings and through their interesting presentations they have kept us up-to-date with new developments in school, including improvements to the curriculum through themed weeks and vocational training and the sharing of good practice. As we monitor the work of teachers and pupils, our aim is always to ensure all pupils are making the best progress possible. The governors were therefore delighted when Ofsted reported that Woodlands was a ‘good school’! Well done to all the staff who have worked so hard to make that possible.

The Governors have also been excited about the opening in Oswestry of our new Key Stage 2 unit, Acorns. This should be a great help to those younger pupils who require the support our staff are so good at providing. Our Outreach department continues to go from strength to strength in providing support to schools throughout Shropshire. The Outreach staff have rightly gained a superb reputation with teachers across the county for the support that they provide.

Finally, the Governors would like to thank Robin and all the staff for their hard work during the past year. Their efforts in improving all aspects of the school’s work are very much appreciated. We hope they and all the pupils have a great summer break and come back in September refreshed and enthusiastic! To the Year 11 pupils who are leaving us this summer, we wish them every success.

DID YOU KNOW?

We occasionally have openings for School Governors. You don’t need specific qualifications, just an interest in supporting the running & success in Woodlands School, attending around 6 meetings per year. Please contact us for vacancies.

BECOMING A GOVERNOR FURTHER INFORMATION
http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/becoming-a-school-governor
Sport & PE

by Kevin McGarvey

Woodlands Physical Education Department has once again been very active ensuring that all pupils have been able to access a range of activities and sport that help promote learning, with the aim of developing lifelong participation in physical activity.

There have been a number of football fixtures in which the Woodlands team, managed by Greg Laux have participated and had a range of success. As a small school, we do well to consistently produce a team and compete to a good standard. All the games highlights are on our YouTube channel and are available for you to watch.

There have been a number of key performers on the football pitch this year with Mr Parsons proving to be a prolific goal scorer, supported by the craft and industry of Declan Bentley and Brandon Parker in midfield. Liam Lutner and William Bagnall have been fantastic in defence with Aaron producing some fantastic saves in goal. A special mention must go to Richard Owens who as just year 7, has been able to play above his age as a key member of the team.

Pupils have had access to a wide range of activities like football, basketball, table tennis, gymnastics, fitness, dodgeball, volleyball and even dog walking.

This year some pupils have had the opportunity to take a sports science qualification and this is something we will be looking to develop next year. A big thank you to Greg, Glyn and Chris who work hard and give up a lot of their time to support pupils at Woodlands in order to ensure they can access and achieve within Physical Education.