



12 December 2011

Dear Parents/Carers

Autumn 2011 Newsletter

I hope I find you all well. As usual, lots of new things have been happening at Handsworth Wood Girls' School since the beginning of term which has kept us all very busy. Our refurbishment programme is now completed and we finally had the "official" opening of our Science laboratories on 6 December. Professor Julia King, Vice-Chancellor of Aston University, accepted our invitation to preside over the opening. Professor King is one of the country's top female scientists and therefore she was probably the best person to ask. At the opening, our Head and Deputy Head Girls showed our guests around the new facilities, then we were treated to speeches from our Chair of Governors, Ms Brenda Addison, and Professor King. This was followed by some of our A Level Chemistry students demonstrating some science experiments. Professor King spent a lot of time talking to our students about careers in science, including medicine, forensic science and environmental issues. We are all extremely grateful that she gave up her time to visit our school. Some of our A Level Media Studies students videoed this event, and the film will be put on our website soon so that you too can see the opening.

The new Sixth Form curriculum has resulted in a big increase in numbers in year 12. We now offer the following courses at AS and A level: English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, ICT, Business Studies, Psychology, Sociology, Law, French, Urdu, Islamic Studies, Art, Theatre Studies, Government and Politics, Accounting and Media Studies. In addition, we offer level 3 BTEC courses in: Health and Social Care, Business, Art, Child



Development, Performing Arts, Sport, and Science. Students are also able to access enrichment programmes to support their academic and personal development in preparation for post 18 choices, at university, college or work. We had a successful Sixth Form Open Evening on 9 November for year 12 entry in September 2012. Further information on our Sixth Form can be found on our website or you can obviously contact the

ASPIRING FOR EXCELLENCE



school. We will be taking applications to the Sixth Form for September 2012 all through next term.

Further developments to the curriculum have seen the introduction of our Discovery Days, where the teaching timetable is collapsed and students spend a day doing something entirely different. A Discovery Day takes place every half-term and gives the students the opportunity to work in teams on a special project. This term, students have done the following:

Year Group	Discovery Day 1	Discovery Day 2
7	World Challenge – outdoor education	Global Awareness – Chinese Culture
8	Bullying – delivered through Drama, Art and Music	Fire Safety – delivered by a fire officer from Stourbridge Fire Station
9	Our City, Birmingham – delivered by the English department	Identity – delivered through Drama, Art and Music
10	Citizenship – guns, gangs and violence – delivered by the police	Arts trip into Birmingham
11	Arts trip into Birmingham	Study skills and English Controlled Assessment preparation
12	Study Skills	Leadership development – supporting year 10 on their Arts trip
13	UCAS preparation	UCAS preparation

You should all now have received a progress report for your daughter this term which is a result of our new policy on reporting to parents. We will now provide a progress report twice a year and a full report once a year for each student in the school, as well as a parents' evening where parents are invited into school to talk to the subject teachers. These parents' evenings are between 4.30 – 6.30 p.m. and are on the following dates:

- Year 11 - Thursday 2 February 2012
- Years 12 & 13 - Thursday 9 February 2012
- Year 9 - Thursday 8 March 2012
- Year 10 - Thursday 29 March 2012
- Year 8 - Thursday 8 May 2012
- Year 7 - Thursday 12 July for 2012

Due to Government cutbacks and changes in policy, careers education, information and guidance now has to be delivered by schools. The service delivered by Connexions is also

ASPIRING FOR EXCELLENCE



finishing at the end of this term. We have appointed Mrs Jackie Plimmer as our Careers Education Information and Guidance (CEIAG) Co-ordinator. She will be in contact with you in the new year with further information on her role, how students can access information on careers and how she and the school will help them in making those important decisions on future education, training and employment.

The students have continued to work hard in their studies this term but have also found the time to raise a considerable amount of money for charities:

- £586 for Children in Need
- £550 for the Birmingham Children's Hospital
- £281 for Go Pink Day, which raises money for research into breast cancer
- £505 for the Handsworth and Handsworth Wood Golden Age Forum, who work with the elderly in our community.

Their commitment, enthusiasm and generosity for people who are in need of support is commendable and it is with great appreciation that I acknowledge their efforts.

We have also continued to provide a wide range of activities for our students beyond the classroom, and once again they have energetically and enthusiastically thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the opportunities we offer. Activities this term have included performances from visiting theatre companies, an overnight camp for year 7 and 8 students at Woodlands, tree planting in Handsworth Park, producing and delivering a radio broadcast with Kerrang Radio which is available to listen to on our website, a year 9 trip to the Space Centre in Leicester, a visit from one of our local poets, Spicy Fingers, and an ice skating trip for all students who have at least 94% attendance as a reward. I would urge you to look at our new website so that you can see more details of the arts activities that have been taking place: www.hwgs.org.uk.

Attendance is now improving from previous years and I would like to thank you all for your support in ensuring that your daughter comes to school every day. Mrs Liz Zambon is now our Designated Liaison Officer for attendance and she works closely with the local authority and the court office on attendance matters. Students who have less than 95% attendance have less chance of gaining their target grades at GCSE which will clearly weaken their chances of getting employment in a job they aspire to in the future. Students should only be absent from school if they are unwell. Holidays during term time are not authorised at all and students will be taken off the school's roll if they are taken away on holiday for an extended period of time. This term one family has been prosecuted so far for failing to send their daughter to school and each parent has been fined £490, totalling £980 for the family to find.

We will be saying goodbye to Mrs Phyllis Allbrook who has been teaching English here for several years at the end of this term. We all wish her health and happiness in her retirement and I am extremely grateful for the work she has done during her time here. In January, we have two new members of staff starting: Mrs Katie Beasley, teacher of English and Literacy Co-ordinator, and Miss Mohibun Neesa, who will also be teaching English. I wish them both well in their new jobs and I look forward to working with them.

ASPIRING FOR EXCELLENCE



**Handsworth Wood
Girls' School**
visual & performing arts

I would like to thank you all for the support you give to your daughter and the school to help her progress and achieve success. This term finishes on Friday 16 December at 1.10 p.m. for the students and we all start back on Wednesday 4 January 2012 at 8.40 a.m.

For those who celebrate Christmas, I trust you will all have a lovely and peaceful one. Yet to you all, enjoy the holiday with your families and friends, and I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year for 2012.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Walters
Headteacher

ASPIRING FOR EXCELLENCE

Ms N Walters – Headteacher Handsworth Wood Girls' School, Church Lane, Handsworth, Birmingham B20 2HL
T. 0121 554 8122 F. 0121 551 6805 enquiry@hworthwg.bham.sch.uk www.hwgs.org.uk