



Headteacher's Message

As this year draws to a close I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our parents and carers for their ongoing support during 2011.

The pages of this newsletter illustrate many of the wonderful successes enjoyed by many of our pupils in 2011. As I reflect upon our year, I consider it to have been our best yet, with record breaking examination results and record breaking numbers of parents applying to get their child a place at the school. I think what makes us successful here at Westlands is our resolute belief that the most important things children do at school are English, maths and science within the context of simple, clear rules and expectations. We have a happy, confident school community here at Westlands, and my role and that of my senior staff is to keep it that way. I look forward to an even more successful 2012.

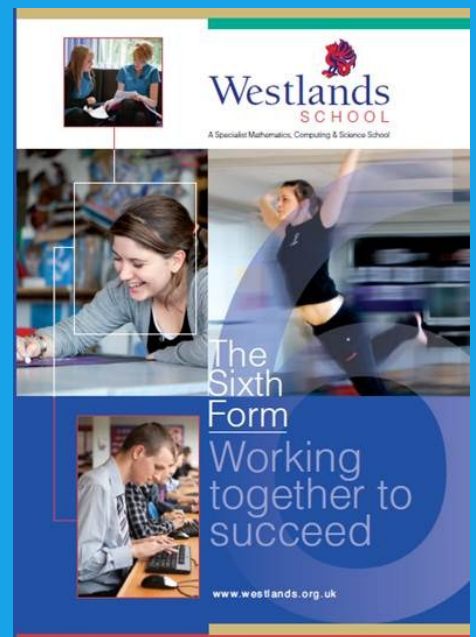
I am, as ever, thankful for all of the excellent work of our teachers and support staff here at Westlands and I am sure parents and carers will want me to celebrate the fantastic work they do in helping prepare our children for the future. Seeing the school in action on a day to day basis and the wonderful work of our pupils and staff, really does make my job a great experience.

I wish you all a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Westlands Sixth Form

We were delighted with the great turn out at the recent Sixth Form Open Evening. All the departments were available to speak to about future options at Post 16. All Year 11 students should now start to have an idea of what they would like to do next year and all Year 11s will have an interview with Mrs Hodges to ensure that their plans are in place and to advise them on how to apply. Our Sixth Form has increased in size and success. Our Sixth Form learning plaza is a great place for students to work. Facilities include over 30 new computers, a hot drinks machine and toilets all for just Sixth Form use. We have an ever developing curriculum which covers a wide range of professional, academic and vocational courses.

If you were unable to come to our open evening request a prospectus from the main office or look online at the bottom of our home page on: <http://www.westlands.org.uk>



Talented Westlands Pupils

With the 2012 Olympics practically on our doorstep, it is only fitting for us to celebrate the success of some of our own sporting talent. There have been many sporting successes by the pupils at Westlands School already this academic year, with hopefully many more to come.

Sport plays an important role in pupils' lives as it develops social, psychological and physical skills well beyond the classroom. We are proud to share the recent successes of some of our talented sporting performers with you and hope to continue in supporting them in their journey to the top.

Olympics: Westlands Goes for Gold!

We have been entering into the Olympian spirit of respect and fair play this term as the competitions to celebrate the lead up to the 2012 London Olympics sprang into action. Tutor groups have adopted Olympics countries to represent throughout the year, and pupils (and teachers) have been competing in lots of events to win participation points and medals for their countries. Last term's badminton competitions ended in a close run final between Madagascar (T02), Pakistan (S07) and Malawi (N13), with Madagascar taking the gold medal. This term's basketball competition sees Slovakia (T22), Slovenia (S16) and Nepal (N07) running as medallists in next week's finals. Other competitions, both sporting and non-sporting have been running throughout the year and will continue to do so during the build up to the 2012 Olympics in London. It is great to see so many pupils embracing the Olympic values and enjoying the honour of our country playing host to such a prestigious international event.

Congratulations To:

The Under 16 Girls Football team who achieved a Bronze award at the recent awards evening at Abbey School, Faversham and to Bailey Wootton (Year 10) who was selected for the Under 17 South East England Squad for ice hockey.

Athletics: Sean Molloy

There are not enough words that can be used to describe Sean's prolific journey to the top in Athletics. His dedication and determination to succeed is paramount to the success he is now reaping. Recently crowned English Schools Champion in the 800 metres, he is now a real contender to represent Great Britain in future Olympic Games. Sean has also managed to win Sports Person of the Year at the Active Swale Sports Awards.



Sean Molloy



Trampoline: Natasha Woodhall

Natasha has successfully qualified for the South Zonal Trampoline Competition by finishing 2nd at the South East Schools competition. She finished a strong 2nd in the Under 13 Girls Elite competition which saw very high standards amongst the field of 25 competitors. The top three individual competitors go through to the Zonal competition.

The South Zonal competition will be held again in Uckfield on 15 January 2012 and Natasha will be competing against the top three finishers from the Southern, South West, London, and South East Regions Schools competitions. We wish Natasha the best of luck for this important event.

Football News

The Year 8 Boys Football team was entered into the English Schoolboys FA Cup. The competition started with 774 school teams and Westlands reached the last 64 teams. They were knocked out of the competition by Kemnal Technology College in round 5, narrowly losing 4-3 with Kemnal scoring three minutes from time. Special mention goes to Tom Carlton who scored twelve goals in five games and Connor Wilkins for a superb defensive display in all matches. All the boys have played extremely well this season and can feel very unlucky at not progressing further in this year's cup competitions.

Girls Rugby: Tasmin Bricknell, Manwunyo Graham and Kiera Peters

All the above girls have been selected to play for the Under 15 Girls Kent Rugby Team. Tasmin not only plays for Kent but she also has been selected for London South East Team, with the target of reaching the England Team in the near future. She has also started to develop her rugby knowledge further by attending the Level 1 RFU Coaching Award where she is mentored by Rachel Burford. Kiera and Manwunyo have only recently started playing rugby through the influence of Miss Bridges' desire to start a school team. This then led to them taking their already natural ability into finding a local club and attending the Kent trials, where both girls shone and proved they have the potential to progress even further in the future.



Tasmin Bricknell & Manwunyo Graham



Kiera Peters

Parents' Forum

Parents' Forum has been established for six years now and it is a really productive exchange between senior leaders of the school and parents in an informal and pleasant environment. New initiatives at the school are always discussed at Parents' Forum and your feedback and perspectives are welcome. At the next meeting we intend to give feedback from the recent pupil and parents' survey. All parents are welcome to attend; the next meeting is Wednesday 18 January, 7pm in the school library. Refreshments will be available. We look forward to meeting all existing members and any newcomers. Have a lovely Christmas and see you in the New Year!

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The award is open to anyone from the age of 14 to 24. We have recently had a group pass their bronze expedition and are currently signing up a new cohort. Anyone interested should speak to Miss Sanford in room D28 or visit the information in the folder on the school public shared network.

Charity

This year our chosen charities are Families Against Neuroblastoma and the National Autism Society. Many of our pupils and their families can identify with the awareness that both these charities raise and we know that the continued generosity of everyone at Westlands School will make a significant impact on the work these charities do in the future.

Students and staff are also encouraged to carry out individual fundraising events. If you have ideas they should be discussed with Miss Sanford.

Westlands School would like to thank all pupils and families for their generous support.

Art News

An Art Career display is currently on show in the art department to inspire and inform pupils. There are two new murals on A Block, painted by Years 9 and 12 together with Mr Caddick. Mr Caddick is now studying to be an art teacher at University in Canterbury.

Year 11 BTEC students visited the Victoria & Albert Museum in London to study the Asian Art collection first hand, to inspire their Cultural Carnival Shoes project. A good time was had by all.

Geography Field Trip

The Year 11 geography GCSE class completed an exciting field trip to Herne Bay earlier in the term. The pupils learned how to use an array of instruments in order to gather data for their controlled assessment. Pupils were collecting information to prove their hypothesis 'Many factors affect the gradient of a beach'. Some of the experiments included taking beach profiles, measuring the direction of longshore drift and asking members of the public a series of questions. The day was rounded off nicely with fish and chips and an (unsuccessful) hunt for an ice cream. See you next year, Herne Bay!



Pupil Parliament

It was a proud day for Pupil Parliament last month when three of its members, Olivia Webb, James Wright and Jordan Roberts-Marley, represented Westlands at the Swale Youth Forum. Not only did they attend the meeting as usual, but this time they chaired the whole thing and in front of the Mayor!

It was their job to manage the discussions and also give a presentation on what our school was doing with regard to celebrating the London 2012 Olympics. The main aim of the meeting was to develop links between schools and their Pupil Parliaments to ensure youth views and projects were given adequate awareness and support.

Well done to Olivia, James and Jordan who did a fantastic job and spent a considerable amount of time preparing for their presentation!

SCROOGE - The Panto!

On 13 and 14 December Westlands School drama department put on their annual pantomime. This year it was the grumpy and miserly Scrooge that entertained an audience of family, friends and staff. Over 30 pupils were involved from Years 7 - 14 and had been rehearsing hard since September to pull it all together. Megan Shaw (Year 14) played the 'bah humbug' Scrooge while Robert Wilkinson (Year 13) delighted with his take on Nora, the pantomime dame. Other performers included Jenna Jenkins (Year 8) as The Ghost of Christmas Past and Jake Pointer (Year 8) as The Ghost of Christmas Present.

PE Kit

There have been a growing number of students who are failing to bring their PE kit to their lesson. Parents are advised that all pupils are expected to bring P.E. kit to school and change to take part in the lesson. Any pupil who does not have kit will have their uniform card signed and a detention. We also encourage pupils to wear navy tracksuit bottoms and a navy Westlands School sweatshirt to keep warm outside.

Pupils who are unable to take part practically due to injury need a doctor's note. Pupils with doctor's notes can, in most circumstances, still participate in the lesson by refereeing, coaching, or mentoring and need to change into P.E. kit.

Down on the Farm

A busy start to the year with an influx of new Year 7 pupils all wanting to work on the farm. Unbeknownst to them their first show was on the horizon, Ardingly Fatstock Show, which meant a crash course in haltering, walking and washing lambs! Not only that, there were a range of craft competitions taking place and this year we invited Westlands Primary to enter the colouring competition. This was a huge success and they won many prizes including 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. Although we always say that Young Farmers is team work, I think special recognition should go to all those who attended the show and especially to Nick Richardson whose written account of his Young Farmer career earned him a Young Achievers Award, and to Matthew Amer who was runner up.





London Youth Dance: Future Star

Freddie Kelly (Year 11) gained one of the ten places out of hundreds of applications for a London Youth Dance education programme. Securing this place gives Freddie the opportunity to work alongside London based professional performers, and gain invaluable knowledge about the profession that he wishes to pursue. This project is a three tiered mentoring scheme which partners up a young person showing particular promise and ambition with a vocational dance student, in turn matched with a professional mentor. Freddie really deserved to be given one of the places on this project because he works so hard in dance and has a real passion and talent for the subject. This amazing opportunity will build his confidence and is a perfect stepping stone towards his future in the dance profession. Freddie's first workshop was held in London on Saturday 5 November where he met the team of professionals which he will be working with throughout the next twelve months.

Afternoon Tea

The Year 10 GCSE catering class produced an afternoon tea to be enjoyed by their chosen member of staff this term. Each team of two made a different recipe within a tight deadline. They worked extremely hard and the display of food they made was excellent.

Mrs Gibson, Deputy Head Teacher, commented after the event, "A veritable feast of goodies were displayed by the Year 10 catering group. I couldn't resist the very decadent scones. Definitely blew the diet that day!"

Beth Hills, one of the Year 10 catering pupils said "I really enjoyed the afternoon tea project. It was really fun making and decorating things". Well done everyone!

Year 9 History Trip to the Somme

On 24 November 2011, the history department and 41 eager students met at Westlands at 6am and set off for the Somme, determined to learn more about the events of World War One. Following a long journey, the group finally arrived at the Somme 1916 Museum. Students got a chance to find out what weapons were used in World War One and to discover more of what life was like in the trenches. Their second port of call was Thiepval, where the names of thousands of lost soldiers from the Somme can be seen. The image of those names will stay with all those on the trip for a long time. The final part of the visit involved visiting Ulster Tower and looking around the graves of those Ulster soldiers who gave their lives at the Battle of the Somme. Finally, students got to see what it was like to fight in the trenches when they visited Newfoundland Park and saw where Canadian troops had fought against the Germans. The trip home was a quiet one as most people were asleep due to a long but excellent day out.

Fizzy and Energy Drinks are Banned

We have been growing concerned about pupils bringing energy drinks into school as these are not at all healthy and can negatively affect behaviour. These drinks are banned and if found will be confiscated. We have also decided to ban any fizzy drinks as, again, these not considered healthy. If pupils want to bring a drink into school they should bring a fruit based drink or water, which is the best 'brain-fuel' there is! We thank parents for their support with this action.

Bike Safety in Winter

We have noticed that a number of bicycles that pupils use to get to school are not at all roadworthy. Some do not have brakes that work or lights for dark mornings and evenings. We have also noticed that most pupils do not wear a helmet when cycling. We encourage pupils to cycle to school, but they must respect other road users and be seen and protected!

Similarly, some of our pupils ride their bikes in a reckless and dangerous manner, particularly around the junction of the A2 and Staplehurst Road. We urge pupils to ride safely.

We have a safe and secure compound for bikes to be stored in during the day. The school cannot be held responsible for any damage caused to bikes, but the compound is covered by CCTV. Bikes chained outside the compound are at a greater risk of damage and potential theft.

Uniform Reminders

Pupils are not allowed to wear hoodies to school – no matter how cold it is! They should wear a warm and waterproof coat.

Coats and jackets should be worn over (and not instead of) blazers.

Black school shoes must be worn.

Reminder

Term 3 starts on Wednesday 4 January 2012



Absent?

Late for School?

TELEPHONE : 412944

Please note that pupils recorded late before 08:45 may receive a lunch-time detention, but any unauthorised lateness after that time may result in an after school detention.

Term Dates 2012

Term 3	04/01/12 to 10/02/12
Term 4	20/02/12 to 30/03/12
Term 5	16/04/12 to 01/06/12
Term 6	11/06/12 to 19/07/12

Staff Development Days (Provisional):

12 March 2012
29 June 2012
20 July 2012