



InterFace



Science



The Westlands School Specialist Mathematics, Computing and Science Newsletter

Edition 2

February 2010

Introduction

Our new science specialism is well and truly underway. It was (if you can excuse the pun!) launched when the Starchaser rocket visited us back in September and you will see in this edition of Interface the range of activities happening in our school as a result of our specialist status. The science logo that comes with a specialist school is becoming a more familiar sight around the site, with signs and new lab coats being worn by the science staff.

We are still working on our Capital Project to improve learning facilities on the school farm. We are appealing to local businesses, previous sponsors and local landowners to see if they can support our own resources going into the project.

Work is on going with our partner schools to meet their needs and to provide a range of opportunities and support for their pupils and on a wider community level we are extending our network. We are planning our future family learning provision, working with Adult Education and Extended Schools, as well as developing excellent links with the Kent Science Research Centre. We are in the early stages of securing a partnership with Tesco and the benefit of this will be felt school wide.

Of course the real benefit of specialist school status is for our pupils and the status allows us to recruit better qualified staff and have better resources. Although we have made great strides since becoming a specialist school back in 2003, we are still a long way from where we want to be. We are already planning the attainment and participation goals for the future and how to use the expertise and opportunities of our specialist subjects to have a school wide impact.

I hope that you enjoy this informative and celebratory edition of Interface and, as ever, if you would like to contribute to our status please contact us.

Mr Golding (Deputy Head Teacher)

Mathematics Challenge

Two teams of Year 8 and Year 9 pupils entered a mathematics challenge at The Astor of Hever School. As the sole representatives of Swale the pupils did themselves proud, coming 8th overall which is a significant improvement compared to the 17th place achieved three years ago, once again showing how mathematics continues to improve, especially bearing in mind that most of the teams who finished above the school take part in similar *national* competitions every year.



Year 8 and Year 9 Mathematics teams

Special thanks goes to everyone who took part, including those who entered the heats at school but were not able to attend the main event as we were only allowed to send two teams.

It is not clear why the other local schools did not attend the competition (perhaps they realised they would not be able to beat the Westlands' teams?) so it is hoped we can organise a Swale event in the coming months.

Propulsion Lab

Following the success of the Starchaser rocket presentation before Christmas the company returned to school in February with a follow up day about rocket propulsion.

Some of the pupils who had been disappointed that the actual rocket did not launch were treated to a display of "science in action" with explosions and plenty of smoke thrown in. Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels were demonstrated with dramatic effect.



Propulsion and rocket fuels with Starchaser

Later in the evening, parents, Governors and a local Brownies and Guides pack attended the presentation.



Local Brownies and Guides aim for the stars

Further details of the Starchaser project can be found at www.starchaser.co.uk.

Creative Partnership

Mrs Kaur and Mr Willis are working with the Creative Partnership team and 10n3 to investigate alternative approaches to teaching mathematics. Watch this space for future updates.



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Members of 10n3 and the Creative Partners

Capital bid

As part of our High Performing Specialist Status we have the opportunity to raise £25,000 which will be matched by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Our vision is to convert a dilapidated mobile on the school farm into a dedicated animal handling and teaching area including an ICT suite.



From run down mobile.....



.....to purpose built animal handling and teaching area

At a time of recession it is obviously difficult for many businesses or individuals to consider financial support although any contribution, no matter how small, will be doubled by the DCSF. However, we are also able to accept materials and equipment towards our target of £25,000 and we can include contributions in the form of careers presentations by local companies, pupil visits to businesses to gain an insight into the world of work, pupil mentoring by local business people and many other joint ventures.

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss your ideas please contact either John Willis, Specialist Development Leader (on jow@westlands.kent.sch.uk) or Neil Golding (ngo@westlands.kent.sch.uk).

To obtain a sponsorship pack please contact either Neil or John. Alternatively, details are also available on the school website. The deadline for our submission is Easter so we would be very grateful to hear from any potential sponsors in the very near future.

Dance Show

The dance show was a huge success again this year and congratulations go to everyone who was involved.



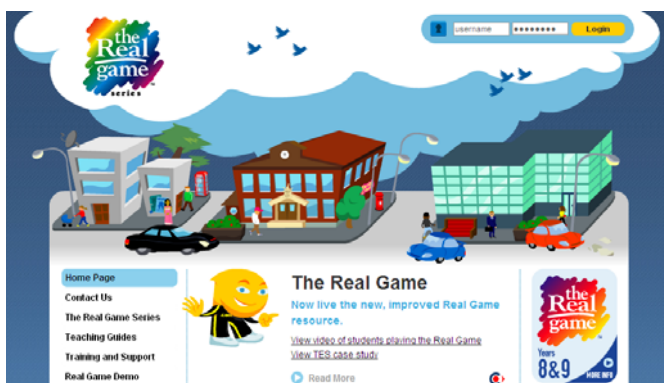
War songs themed dance show during rehearsals

Special thanks also go to Sixth Formers students Casey Collins and Lauren Rook who used their ICT expertise to produce a slide show which introduced each dance number. Casey was in charge of displaying this slide show on the two nights.

The Real Game

Year 8's are getting the chance to see into the future as they play the Real Game in ICT. Pupils get an insight into how their lives might plan out if they follow different career paths. The reality starts to dawn as they see how much money they might earn and look at what they can buy with the income from their chosen job. The work combines skills from Careers, ICT lessons and Values.

For further information please visit the Real Game website at www.realgame.co.uk or Mrs Phillips, Careers Officer, in the careers department at school on jep@westlands.kent.sch.uk



Rural Dimension

The school farm has entered the Weaner to Sausage Schools Competition, which is a national competition to make a sausage from pigs reared on the school farm. The competition covers the full cycle of production, from rearing through to choosing the flavour, taster sessions and package design. By entering the competition the pupils will gain an insight into the whole production process and be able to apply their skills they have learnt in school.

We have four weaner pigs which are currently being weighed by Animal Care BTEC pupils on a regular basis. Hopefully mathematics pupils will take over the weighing process in the near future. A sample taster session with school staff has already taken place to see which flavour is most popular and the clear winner was honey and mustard with walnut and raisin coming second. We have also had a local butcher, Terry Rose, show pupils how to produce sausage meat and a local farmer, Ian Machin, is loaning us an actual sausage making machine to complete the cycle. Look out for details of how we get on in the next issue of InterFace.

Full details of the competition can be found at www.realfoodfestival.co.uk and then clicking on the school farms competition link.

Early entry mathematics GCSE

All of Year 11 took their mathematics GCSE examinations in November 2009 and many pupils achieved their GCSE target grade including 46% who achieved grade C. What a fantastic achievement! Some English sets also took their GCSE examinations and they achieved a similar result as well.

By taking their examinations early and achieving grade C in one or both subjects some pupils have been able to devote more time to mathematics or English to ensure they achieve grade C in *both* subjects and some have been able to concentrate on other subjects such as science and art. Achieving GCSE grade C in both mathematics and English could significantly improve pupils choices of further education courses or employment prospects. All pupils have the opportunity of taking GCSE mathematics again in June to improve their grades but, with the knowledge they already have a good grade.

The STEM agenda

We have a new STEM project (STEM being short for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) currently being trialled with a Year 9 group, using the laser cutter and electronics. The Year 9 group is making a mono speaker and amplifier for use with an MP3 player, built from ash and pine. If successful the project will be extended to all Year 8 groups.

The wood was kindly supplied by Elizabeth Henley Kitchens of Claxfield Road, Teyham (0845 1303919).



MP3 speaker and amplifier made by Year 9 pupils

Mr Collard's Sixth Form construction group visited Measham Brick Works in Leicestershire to gain a valuable insight into one aspect of their industry.



Extended Schools

We are currently in discussion with Kent Adult Education and Kent Extended Schools to coordinate a joint school program of adult and extended schools opportunity for Swale, involving all six of the Swale secondary schools. Further details will follow in upcoming issues of InterFace.

Family Learning

The science department have purchased three amazing telescopes and will be running a club after school on Wednesdays.



If you enjoy astronomy, space or science fiction and would enjoy learning about our solar system and beyond feel free to attend.

If you have your own telescope and want some help looking at and tracking interesting objects in the night sky come along.

The club is open to pupils from any year group and staff and parents are equally welcome. We will meet at 3.15-4.15pm in room16 (or out in the quad/on the field!)

Further details can be obtained from Mr Fazzani on jaf@westlands.kent.sch.uk.

Miss Gough has been running an after-school dance club at Woodgrove Primary School in preparation for their end of term Valentines disco and will shortly help the local Brownies to prepare for their agility and dance badges. If



any parents would like Miss Gough to run another Family Learning dance course please let her know on hg@westlands.kent.sch.uk.

Mr Collard would like to run a 10-week bricklaying course starting on March 10th but, at the moment, we need more people to make the course viable. If you are interested please e-mail jsc@westlands.kent.sch.uk.

Mrs Kaur held a very successful series of Indian cookery sessions with some very tasty results!



Mums, Dads, Sons and Daughters

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