

Headteacher's Letter

Dear Readers,

As we come to the end of the first term of the academic year, besides turning our mind to turkey and presents, perhaps we need to reflect on the past year and the things we have achieved. This seems the best way to celebrate our success but also consider what is still to do.



Along with all the musical, sporting and social events, which abound at school and engender so much pride, the most pleasing part of the year were the two days in August when we were able to see so many students celebrate so many good results; after all, Aldridge is about achievement. However, there are many personal successes which also brighten our reflections at this Christmas season; our new partner school in America; our scholars going to Oxford and our Year 10 finalist in the Clothes Show live competition. So much ability and drive from so many young people.

Still to do? Even better results, even more work with international partners and our local schools but most importantly making sure all our students enjoying learning more, so they can become the best possible citizens for tomorrow.

So, as we prepare for a little excess and a little more time with loved ones, we can be proud of what has been achieved, confident in what is still to do and thankful for what we have.

We are indeed fortunate to be part of a proud school and here's to an even more successful 2010.

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone at Aldridge School and in our broader community who have shown such kindness in helping me take up my post as Headteacher. I feel that I have been here a long time, amongst friends, so thank you.

Seasons greetings to you all.

Mr D. Mountney BSc MA

Under 14 South Staffs County Champions!

On Saturday 21st November the Aldridge School Under 14 team (girls from Years 8 and 9) took part in South Staffordshire County Schools Tournament in Wednesbury. They beat the opposition and became Under 14 Staffordshire County Champions. Well Done!



Sainsbury's 'Active Kids' Vouchers

On Tuesday 1st December, 25 girls from Years 7 - 10 took part in an hour long dance session with a specialist instructor. The girls demonstrated their dance skills and learnt a fast and exciting hip-hop routine after a vigorous warm up.

They were energetic and eager to learn and the instructor was very impressed. The session was one of the many ways the PE department has utilised the vouchers received by the school and kindly donated by parents, pupils and staff.



Envoys to the Embassy

Thursday 19th November dawned bright and clear for Tom Ward to travel to London to visit the DCSF and the American embassy. The Head Boy was accompanied by Tia McGregor Year 11, Shivinder Timmins Year 9 and Mrs Shelley.

Wendy Parmley greeted us at the DCSF and introduced us to the other guests. Lunch was attended by Diana Johnson the Minister for Schools and Tom, Tia and Shiv seized the opportunity to share their experience and advise the Minister accordingly. As she was on her way to an education debate in the Commons we like to think she left suitably informed.

Our arrival at the embassy was managed by Donald Maynard, a cultural attaché. After some photo opportunities by the various monuments in the park he very kindly answered questions and gave an insight into diplomatic life. He has obviously embraced the British culture as he admitted that the move to England was more traumatic and expensive for his cats than for his children!

Under the stern gaze of a marine with a machine gun we moved to security. Cameras, phones, I pods, memory sticks and car keys were confiscated. A moment of anxiety when it was discovered that the photograph of a nine year old Tia bore not even a passing resemblance to her fifteen year old self. Problems were compounded when her passport revealed a string of names of which Tia and McGregor were a very small sample. Donald spoke urgently and at length into his phone and we were eventually allowed to enter the vast marble foyer hung with portraits of past ambassadors.

Down in the basement was the impressive video link and all were amazed by the clarity of sound and pictures. All contributed sharing their own visions of a cohesive community prompted by Obama's speech. Similar ideals were expressed by young people on both sides of the Atlantic. An opportunity for a question and answer session between the young people of Washington and London made the time pass very quickly and we were soon back in the foyer for an official photograph before collecting confiscated belongings and going out into the dark chill of the evening.



The tired group made their way back to Euston and a long wait on a delayed train. It was a memorable day and thanks must go to Wendy Parmley, Diana Johnson, Donald Maynard and Mr Mountney for promoting our link with Washington and making the visit possible.

US Embassy Visit

Hoads of busy traffic set against a backdrop of towering architecture greeted me from outside our taxi, as an interior "Reuter's" link served as a further reminder of my presence within a universal centre for commerce and business. Buildings stood like swans: presenting a white and graceful exterior, yet promising a wealth of activity and commotion beneath the surface. I would have been content to sit in that taxi all day, assessing the cultural, religious and artistic significance of every building, statue and spire I saw along the way, but that wasn't why we were here. In fact, our taxi was heading right into the centre of Whitehall, transporting us to carry out a little business of our own.

After devouring a rather large traffic queue we were shown into the Department of Education, where I proceeded to devour a somewhat exotic assortment of sandwiches. Fully fed, I was then introduced to one of the highlights of the day, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools: Diana Johnson MP. A period of engaging conversation ensued, in which Rt. Hon Mrs Johnson showed genuine and refreshing interest in what we, just a group of ordinary children from ordinary state schools, had to say.

Half an hour, and a series of extensive security checks later, we found ourselves inside the US Embassy, of which the grandeur and prestigious portraits were enough to intimidate the steeliest of nerves. From here, we were lead into an equally grand conference room and began to bridge the Atlantic with our thoughts for a better community. Interacting and sharing comments with our American counterparts was something I doubt I will ever be able to do again, and was something I genuinely found fascinating and enriching.

By Tom Ward (1333L)

Christmas Card Competition

All Year 7 art students have participated in the Kendrick Christmas Card Competition, judging will take place on Friday 4th December and winners will be notified on Monday 7th December by the company. Kendrick construction is a Walsall based building contractor who is celebrating their 130th anniversary year in 2010.

To mark the special occasion they have asked schools in the local area to participate in designing their corporate Christmas card. The competition is being run in conjunction with the Express and Star Newspaper who will publish pictures of the winner and other selected entries nearer Christmas. In addition all entries will be published on the following web site:

www.kendrickchristmascompetition.co.uk

The winning designs will be made into 100 Christmas cards and sent to their clients, contractors and customers as well as featuring on the new web site to be launched on the 9th December 2009.

The winning design will be in the Express and Star and other prizes to be won such as a family ticket to the West Midlands Safari Park Santa Safari including return travel and four premium tickets for Sleeping Beauty at the Birmingham Hippodrome on opening night; with a three course meal at the Hippodrome restaurant.

Bookweek 2009

From October 19th to 23rd, Year 7 pupils at Aldridge School took part in Bookweek 2009. This involved lots of fun and exciting activities for us during the week. There was a Bookweek quiz to do in all of our subjects.

To mark this special occasion our Librarian, Mrs Kaur, organised an assembly where Year 7 and 8 pupils had the chance to meet the author Pete Johnson. He gave an amazing performance and told us about his new book 'The TV Time Travellers'.

At the Awards Ceremony, Richard Shepherd MP presented prizes to the winners of the competitions. Over 100 of us had won a signed copy of Pete Johnson's latest book. I won a prize for the P.E. Competition. The ceremony was brilliant, as I managed to shake hands and have a photo taken with my local MP.

I thought that Bookweek 2009 was a great way of ending my first half term at Aldridge School. I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the competitions and receiving an award. As part of the celebrations, we were all given a piece of cake that was made especially for Bookweek. It was in the shape of a book and was absolutely delicious!

By Ursula Langley (776B)

Balloon Powered Buggies Go the Distance!

Pupils and relatives from our primary feeder schools (Cooper and Jordan, Leighswood, Radleys and Whetstone) took part in a Balloon Powered Buggy Race. Pupils designed and built a lightweight buggy powered only by a balloon and competed to travel the greatest distance. Marks for design were also awarded and the constructions were extremely imaginative and creative.



Feedback from the competitors was amazing and it appeared that everyone had thoroughly enjoyed the evening and the fun atmosphere, as well as the building of the Buggy over the several weeks beforehand.

The photograph shows the winners. However, everyone went home with a small prize for taking part.

Community Service Award

Eleanor Grice (1213D) has won the Aldridge 8 District Lions International Community Service Shield. Eleanor won the KS5 category on Tuesday 17th November beating entrants from St Francis and Barr Beacon to first place.



Clothes Show Winner

Exciting news from the art department! All of the Year 10 art students participated in the 'Clothes Show' – Young Artist of the Year Award for 2009. All pupils worked to a set brief and produced an A3 poster displaying what they felt the clothes show represented.

All of the entries were submitted in October. The Clothes Show has since selected their 10 finalists from entries up and down the country to participate in a judging day on Monday 7th December at Birmingham's Clothes Show Live 2009 event. The chosen finalists will join a panel of judges on stage for the awards ceremony where one lucky winner will receive a cash prize of £500 along with £1000 for their art department. They will also have the honour of having their design promote the 2010 Clothes Show Live Event on all the educational promotions distributed to schools, colleges and universities nationally.

The lucky winner will also be given the opportunity to participate in work experience in the design industry. The fantastic news is that one of our students Jessica Lenton (1070B) has been selected amongst the ten finalists, we wish her all the luck at the event and hope that her achievement will inspire others within their own art practice.

All of the Year 10 art students will be able to view Jessica's design on their Clothes Show trip on Wednesday 9th December in the Awards Hall of Fame section of the show.

Sport Leaders



Two Year 11 pupils have been spending their Friday evenings assisting in the running of an after school football club at Cooper and Jordan Primary School in Aldridge. Ryan Hawkins (1106D) and Rob Edgar (1130S) completed the Sports Leader UK level 1 award whilst in Year 10, which has helped them develop their planning, organising, delivery and officiating skills in all areas of sport.

NSPCC/Childline Training session

A group of 18 Year 10 and Sixth Form Aldridge School students attended an NSPCC/Childline Training session run by Leesa Mulins from the NSPCC.

The students were trained in communication and listening skills, working with other people, problem solving, team building and confidentiality. With these skills they are now able to become "buddies" and help fellow students with any social or emotional problems.

The "buddy system" supports Aldridge School's commitment to Peer Mentoring and builds on the existing cohorts of Aldridge Ambassadors and Academic Peer Mentors.

Each Buddy received a certificate of achievement to mark their training signed by Esther Rantzen, CBE, President of Childline.



In Brief . . .

The APCC Group met on Tuesday 1st December, minutes of the meeting will be on the web site along with the date of the next meeting. If you are interested in joining please e-mail the school.

Breakfast Club - There is a Breakfast Club running for Year 7 pupils from 8:00 am to 8:30 am in Goodesell Dining Hall - January is 'Breakfast Month' so don't forget to join us!

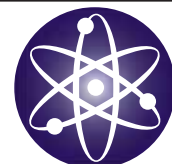
Maths Club - Mrs Taylor and Miss Wragg have started a Maths Club, it runs on a Wednesday Lunchtime.

Italy Ski Trip February 2011 - Places are available please see Mrs Herriotts in Room 47 for details.

Aldridge School - A Science College

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Tynings Lane, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 0BG
01922 743988 www.aldridge.walsall.sch.uk



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