



Wargrave Life

Introduction & Welcome

Dear Parents, Families and Friends

Despite all of the changes this year, the Staff Team at Wargrave House School continue to provide high standards of teaching, learning and care for all of our young people. Jackie McCann monitored Communication across the school and feedback for individual classes showed high standards across the school in the way strategies are used to promote this essential skill to ensure good learning takes place. Maths and English monitoring will take place later in the summer term.



We are also preparing for the final stages towards the submission of a portfolio of evidence in support of 'Eco-Schools' Green Flag. Students and staff have gained a deepening awareness of their own individual carbon footprints and efforts towards 'sustainability' both on a school and global front should be recognised in the Autumn term. Thanks to Janet Bailey and Chris Morris, our 'Eco-Warriors', Student Council and parent governor, Billy Duncan - you've done a fantastic job so far!

This half term Lakeside students have undertaken two highly successful and enriching

Residential educational visits to Cheshire and Wales, thanks to the hard work of Gennie Hyde and the Post-16 staff team - well done!

A busy time for Key Stage 3 students as SATS weeks have got underway and pupils entering for externally accredited exams at Key Stage 4 and post-16 are gearing up for their final tests. We wish them all the very best of luck and I'm sure all their hard work and effort will pay off!

As we enter the final half term, it's a busy time for all staff, too, in reviewing and evaluating how well we've done over the year and in planning towards next year and the future. You will soon be able to see one of our developments in particular when our new website goes 'live' in early June. It will be an ongoing project and should remain so - one that will continually improve with your suggestions and input. I will be in touch as soon as we have a definite date. See inside for more details.

We welcomed three new staff members in May. Lucinda Duffy was appointed as Deputy Head, Curriculum, Michelle Heneghan, as Transition teacher, Maria Clarke as Finance & Personnel Assistant and Rebecca Moss as TSA. We wish them all every success with their new careers at Wargrave. You will be able to say hello to Lucinda and Michelle at some of the events and functions planned for the end of the summer term (check out the forthcoming dates on this page).

Once the students return after the Whit break, they should be able to enjoy the newly installed Secondary Play and Leisure facilities, thanks to the fundraising efforts of all concerned. Work should have been underway over Easter, however, difficulties importing some of the materials meant that the Project could only be started at Whit. A display outside Transition Classes shows what we expect it to look like once we return to school in June.

Extended Schools Services (ESS) is well into development for a September start with many parents and Local Authorities showing their interest. We have recently



appointed Helen Slavin as Team Leader with responsibility for ESS. The service will be introduced in three phases, extending to weekend and holiday provision in 2009.

Let's hope that the rest of the school term enjoys finer weather than we did this time last year! We've planned lots of fun activities and experiences for everyone over the coming weeks and thank you all for your continuing and valued support.

Sheila Jaeger,
Director of Services

Wargrave House School

Issue 12

16 May 2008

Dates for your diary

☉ The Jungle Book Kids

Thursday 19 June

☉ PCP Working Group Meeting

Friday 20 June

☉ FE Hello/Goodbye Evening

Thursday 26 June

☉ SaLT 'Fun Day'

Friday 4 July

☉ Work Experience Week

Monday 7 July

☉ MFL Day Lower School

Wednesday 9 July

☉ Parents' Evening

Wednesday 16 July

☉ End of Year Service

Tuesday 22 July

☉ School Closes for Summer

Wednesday 23 July

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Hello/Goodbyes

HELLO!

We have had several new members of staff commencing their employment with us since our last issue.



Maria

Heneghan took over as teacher in class T1 while Rebecca Moss became our latest Teaching Support Assistant. Welcome to you all.



Rebecca

Don't Forget
The date of the
Speech & Language
Fun Day

Friday 4 July

The theme is
'Around the World'



Lucinda

First came our new Finance & Personnel Assistant Maria Clarke and more recently



Michelle

Lucinda Duffy took up her position as Deputy Head of Education responsible for the Curriculum. Michelle



After the hellos its time to say goodbye to Lindsey Rigby, Wendy Mann and Michelle Peake who all went on to pastures new. Thank you and good luck to you all.

School Website

Over the last several months we have been working with a freelance web designer, Michelle Kay, to produce an updated website. Michelle has donated her time and expertise free of charge to the school for which we are very grateful. It has been quite an arduous process selecting the layout, colours, photographs, not to mention the written word. The good news is it's almost finished! We are in the final stages and hopefully you will be able to view it, on line, when we return after the Whit holiday.



Playground Project



We reported in the last issue that the long awaited refurbishment to the Senior Playground was to be carried out in the Easter holidays, unfortunately this did not happen. Apparently the equipment was stuck in China! However, we have been promised that the work will be taking place in the Whit holidays and hopefully in the next issue we can present some 'before' and 'after' photos for you. Watch this space!

Hello Babies!

You may recall in the last issue about Karen Counce and Nicola Breslin, two of our TSAs who left to start their maternity leave. We are happy to report that the babies are here!



Two little boys, **Ethan Counce** and **Nathaniel Breslin**. Welcome to you both and well done girls.

Extended School Services

You may recall the questionnaires you all received at the end of last term regarding extended school services. At present we already provide a successful 'after school club' and 'short term breaks' to some of our students but we would like to extend these services to include more activities such as holiday and weekend schemes. It is important to establish exactly what parents want, hence the questionnaires. Thank you for completing and returning the questionnaires, in total we had 34

returned and the results are as follows:

Short term breaks	21
After school club	19
Holiday scheme	22
Weekend activities	23
Outreach support	10
Residential holidays	24
Training/support for parents	9

As you can see from the results Holiday & Weekend schemes were very popular.

It is our intention to hold a series of parent meetings in the near future to keep you informed and included, as soon as we have the dates arranged we'll let you know. If, in the meantime, you have any questions or queries please get in touch with Sue Dykes, Head of Residential Services or Steve Bentley, Family Support Worker, both will be more than happy to hear from you.



Wingate Centre Residential April 2008

On Monday 21 April six students from Lakeside went on a three day residential to the Wingate Centre in Nantwich. On the way to the centre we enjoyed a pleasant stroll around the Stapely Water Gardens. When we finally arrived at the Centre we



had an hours gym session in their very large gym which included a sunken trampoline. All the students achieved a trampoline award.

Tuesday morning was bright and sunny and the day included a trip to Cheshire Ice Cream Farm which of course we all enjoyed! Followed by a visit to the Cheshire Candle Factory where the students were able to make their own candles.



After our evening meal back at the Centre the students enjoyed some leisure time on the large outdoor play area.

On Wednesday we rose to another sunny day ready to return to school via the Anderton Boat Lift. The students experienced the Boat Lift



followed by a lovely cruise down the river.

As always the students' behaviour was excellent and it was a pleasure to take them away. I would like to thank all the staff for their hard work on the residential and for giving up their time to ensure the students had an enjoyable and rewarding residential.

Chris Morris
FE Co-ordinator



Story-telling Twilight Session

The Speech and Language Therapy Department ran a twilight session on 26th February for staff on Story-telling and Creative Communication. This was based on a course that some therapists attended run by BILD (British Institute for Learning Disabilities) (Enriching lives through creative communication).

This twilight provided the opportunity to recap and discuss how previous training on Narrative Therapy has successfully been put into practice across the school. Narrative therapy is a structured approach to develop understanding and use of language which uses colour coding and symbols, targeting the key concepts of 'who', 'where', 'when', 'what happened' and 'the end'. The twilight also covered

storytelling and story sharing for less verbal students, and the importance of giving them the opportunity to share their experiences with others, and access this function of language which we all use regularly throughout the day and find rewarding. This included using objects, gestures, words and sensory experiences e.g. touch/smell to participate in telling a story together with a member of staff, or more verbal student. Staff then generated ideas on how this approach can be used throughout the day e.g. at news time, using objects and photos collected and brought in from their weekend/holiday activities.

The training also targeted the development of attention and

listening, social interaction, moral development etc, using role play, puppets, props and a variety of sensory experiences including sound and movement to motivate and enthuse our students.

We had positive feedback from all who attended the twilight, and many of the ideas generated are now being used throughout the school.

Parents can help their child to re-tell their 'stories' by sending in artefacts, leaflets and information to support their child remembering events they attended over the weekend or holidays.

Emma Rixon, Speech and Language Therapist



Young Enterprise Finals 2008, Danny Cavanagh, FE Teacher

On Friday 11th April a group of students from the Lakeside Further Education Unit participated in the Young Enterprise, Halton & St Helens Area Boards Final at the Park Inn Hotel, St Helens.

The students had the opportunity to perform a 5 minute presentation to: a group of 14 other participating schools; the Mayor and Mayoress of Halton and some representatives of local businesses.

The students started their own company in September 2007, and decided to make and sell their own magazine, Imagine. They have worked extremely well under the guidance of local businessman, David Mason, from NGF Europe; and teaching staff from Wargrave House School. The students involved have used their personal strengths to perform the roles of directors within the company, having learnt the structure through the Young Enterprise programme. In

March this year Imagine had an opportunity to sell their magazine at a trade fair in Kirkby town centre, where they made good sales despite adverse weather and a poor attendance from the public. Director Robert Brennan deservedly won the best salesman award at the event.



There have been many challenges for the team and they have achieved many goals, but their performance in the presentation exceeded even the highest of expectations. The students had all contributed to the

preparation of the presentation, which included a power point slide show designed using the company logo and colour scheme, with photographic evidence of the team's journey. The four students involved in the oral presentation showed amazing confidence and composure despite the pressure of a very large audience.

The other students present set up a trade stand in the foyer and had to answer a series of questions from a team of judges on the performance and management of the company. Again the students rated very highly and were rewarded at the end of the day by receiving the prestigious **Team Programme award** for the St Helens area.

The team were extremely proud when they went to collect their trophy from the Mayor and relieved that all of their hard work throughout the year had been recognised.

News from Steve

Dear Parents, as usual I have been reading through the information I receive in the post and have found two articles which I thought may be of interest to you.

Start Here

www.autism.org.uk/starthere

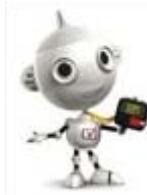
The NAS is one of ten charities to have access to a new online signposting resource called StartHere. An easy-to-use information service, StartHere is designed to direct people to specialist organisations that can help. Select 'Start straightaway' and choose your nation on the clickable map. You can access information in a range of areas including medical conditions, education, housing, rights and services, and work. You can use

the left-hand navigation area of the page to go back to the map, home page or other options.

Digital TV

From 2008 to 2012 television services in the UK will go completely digital. In the North West this will happen in 2009. To help you with the switchover a help scheme is being introduced to provide practical support to help you select, install and use digital TV equipment.

Where necessary this may include provision of a set top aerial or a rooftop aerial upgrade. The scheme will cost eligible households a subsidized amount of £40 for basic equipment and help unless you are on



Pension Credit or Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance in which case it's free.

To be eligible for the scheme someone in your household must be entitled to one of a range of benefits including DLA. If you are eligible you will be contacted in advance of the switchover in your region. For more details call the Switchover Help Scheme Contact Centre on 0800 519 2021 or www.digital.co.uk/helpscheme

Finally, I hope the holidays pass peacefully and don't forget I am always available at the end of a phone should you need me.

Regards

Steve



Sharing Good Practice

The 'outstanding' reputation of Wargrave House School continues to attract interest from outside agencies keen to develop their practice in the field of Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

At the beginning of May, a half day seminar was organised for teaching and support staff at St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise in St Helens contributing to their training

programme. A tailor made programme focused on psychological theories and ASD specific teaching approaches to further support their practice in this field. Feedback from the delegates demonstrated the value of this aspect of our work and how their practice could improve as a result.

'Brilliant'

'Very informative'

'Could have sat and talked about this all day'

'Enjoyed the course—makes you think!'

- just a few of the comments we received on our evaluation forms.

Our commitment to training recognises the important role we have to play in sharing good practice in ASD and investing in the future support of our young people.

Charity Spring Ball

In May 2009 we will be holding a Charity Spring Ball in a local hotel in an attempt to boost our fundraising efforts.

Part of the evening will consist of a 'Grand Auction' this is where parents may be able to help. We need some fabulous items to auction. We will of course be trying to access these gifts ourselves nearer the time but

in the meantime if anyone has any  'connections!' who might wish to furnish us with a generous donation to auction we would be most grateful. If you can help please contact Sue Gledhill, senior administrator at the school who will be co-ordinating the event.

Thanks in advance.

Don't Forget!

**Parents'
Evening**

Wednesday

16 July

Lakeside Llangollen Residential

On Wednesday 7 May, 14 Lakeside students and 5 staff set off for the Tyn Dwr Outdoor Centre in Llangollen, North Wales for their 2 night residential adventure.

The sun shone down on our 3 day, jam packed programme of activities which began with a packed lunch picnic in the beautifully landscaped grounds of the centre. After lunch it was off to Llangollen to buy souvenirs and gifts, one (or two!) ice creams followed by a refreshing drink at the 'Corn Mill' overlooking the River and soaking up the sunshine.

After dinner it was time for our



first real adventure - the telegraph pole challenge! Each person had to climb to the top of a telegraph pole, stand on the top and after a 180 degree turn jump off into mid air! This activity required plenty of courage (especially the staff!) but also high levels of cooperation and communication from the two teams of students as they worked together to ensure the safety ropes were in place for each other. They did a fantastic job!

Day two started with a hearty



breakfast followed by a short drive up to Trevor Quarry to start the rock climbing. Again, everyone

took part, each individual giving their very best and pushing themselves to their limits.

With the good weather still on our side, it was off to the Llangollen canal for the raft building challenge. Students were spilt into two teams and given a limited amount of equipment to build a sea-worthy vessel. Four plastic drums, four poles and few ropes later the sailing competition began! Despite both rafts staying intact, keeping a team a 7 students aboard proved somewhat of a challenge - I think it's fair to say that there was a little more swimming than sailing going on!



It was definitely time for showers upon return to the centre, the efforts of the day rewarded with a fabulous barbecue tea and ice cream. The group then ventured into Llangollen for a drink and a chance to prepare for the special evening



activity - 'Wargrave's Got Talent'. Students were invited to prepare a short 'audition' for the panel of staff judges and the student audience. Acts ranged from singing to news articles based on the visit



so far. Despite the very high standards students undertook

a secret vote and Tom Hawkins was declared the winner with his brilliant repertoire of staff impressions!



On our way back to school we had time to visit the Anderton Boat Lift in Cheshire where we had a trip in a barge down the 120 year old boat lift, a cruise along the canal and time to explore the hands on exhibition. It was soon time to return to school and I'm pleased to say we arrived back with 14 very happy students and 5 (exhausted but very proud) staff!

Throughout the busy schedule, every student was a credit to Wargrave House School. The instructors and centre staff could not speak more highly of their efforts, conduct and teamwork in every aspect of the trip. All this would not have been possible without the support and commitment of the school staff. I am extremely grateful to both those who helped prepare resources prior to the adventure and those who gave up their own time to accompany the students.

Please look out for more photographs and video footage at the forthcoming parents' evening on Wednesday 16 July.

Annual Conference on Autism

Details of the 5th national annual conference - 'Autism, a hands on approach' have just been released. This is an annual national conference organised by professionals and parents in partnership to discuss key concerns, practical issues and sharing evidence based approaches. Some of our school staff attended the conference last year and it proved an invaluable resource in updating ourselves on the most up-to-date issues and practice in ASD.

The event takes place at the Pinewood Medical Education Centre at Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport on Wednesday 5 November this year. The cost for parents is only £30 which is excellent value for money as confirmed speakers include a number of high profile professionals from a variety of ASD related fields.

Confirmed speakers include:

Dr Catherine Aldred

Dr Sue Barrett

Dr Carol Dunn

Prof. Jonathan Green

Ms Ele Hill

Prof. Rita Jordan

Ms Emma Noble

Dr Greg Pasco

Ms Cheryl Salt

Dr Steve Tyler

Mr Philip Whitaker and

Ms Tina Wood

Some of the issues which will be addressed include :

Autism and Associated Mental Health Issues

Challenging Behaviour

Support through Key Life Challenges



autism
a hands on approach

**Autism in Girls
Bullying and Autism
ASD and ADHD**

There will also be parent speakers and various workshops where you can explore your particular area of interest. The venue also provides child care facilities for parents who wish to attend which can be invaluable.

If you wish for further details or joining instructions please do not hesitate to contact me at school and I will provide you with an application form.

Gennie Hyde

Acting Head of Education

**Person Centered
Planning**
**The next working
group meeting will
be on**
Friday 20 June
at 10.00 am

Psychological Theories

Julia Dunlop, Educational Psychologist, Blackpool (you may know her as Julia Leach from early research papers) presented an overview of psychological theories in autism to day and care staff in April. Parents were invited and one was able to attend.

The sessions covered three of the generally accepted theories which help provide a theoretical base around which interventions can address needs. She covered concepts of Theory of Mind, Central Coherence and Executive Functioning. The talk was both enlightening for newer staff, and a useful reminder for others, staff and parent alike being able to identify within their children's aspects of behaviour and learning styles and reasons why we use the strategies we do.

Feedback from the training was very positive. It is so important that those working and caring for young people with ASD have a good understanding of the condition so that we can help them attain their full potential.

Our next INSET ('twilight') will be held on:

1 July 2008, 3.30 to 6pm.

This will focus on Mental Health Issues and ASD and the session will be presented by Mick Connelly, who works for the Complex Learning Difficulties Service in Blackpool. Mick was a member of the Northwest Regional Partnership group on ASD and works closely with services and schools. Parents are again very welcome to join us. The session will be repeated for Care staff on Friday 11 July at 10am to 12pm. Anyone interested should contact Gill Cooke at school.

The Back Page by John Thompson

Super Saints Support For School

Gareth Friar, community coach with St Helens Rugby League Club has continued his support for Wargrave House School this half term with continuing development of skills coaching for Lakeside students.

Gareth said:

'I'm really impressed with the improvement in the kids, they really listen and try their best at developing their skills'

Gareth has made a lot of friends at Wargrave House and we wish him all the best for the future as his stint at WHS comes to an end.



Students Compete in New Age Kurling



On April 7 students from LG 4 competed in the St Helens Schools New Age Kurling tournament at Lansbury Bridge School.

"New Age Kurling" is a form of the game of Curling but instead of playing on ice it is played on any smooth flooring, such as a sports hall or dance floor. The game is played with rubber kurling stones and pushers, the stones have three ball bearings on the bottom to allow the stones to move along the ground - a target is placed on the floor to aim towards, like in the traditional game.

Not only is this a relatively new sport on the world stage it is brand new to the students at Wargrave House who were able to practice using equipment borrowed from Lansbury Bridge.

As the competition progressed WHS got more and more used to the setting and settled in to the competition, eventually winning half their games!

Although the team did not win the competition they gave a great account of themselves and are to be congratulated by the way they managed to compete against much more experienced opposition.

Well Done All!

Sainsbury's Active Kids

Just a reminder to everyone - the active kids voucher collection programme is coming to a close and any further donations would be warmly welcomed.

Thanks.

