



Wargrave Life



Introduction & Welcome

Dear parents, families and friends,

This is the final term of 2008 with Christmas rapidly drawing near. Thank you to so many of you who supported the Carol Concert on Thursday last week. It was a privilege again to be accompanied by the talented Derek Paravacini. As you are aware, Derek is blind and has autism, but is considered a musical genius and amongst his appearances this year, he has played piano with Jules Holland, has visited the States and was interviewed on Radio 2! Derek certainly got our Christmas countdown to a great start. I hope you also enjoyed the staff choir's production of 'Away in a manger' organised by teacher, Jacky Bennison - the staff are not an easy bunch to manage!

There has been a lot going on at school this term. The new FE classrooms, named 'Lakeside Lodge' by our post-16 students, should be ready to move into early in the New Year. The classrooms which are warm



and well-furnished, will provide a high quality environment, extending and enhancing current Lakeside provision.

Wargrave House was also fortunate to achieve a government grant of £465,000 to support the development of a new FE provision. We are hoping to purchase land adjacent to the school and are working to design a modern residential college facility. I will keep you updated as our exciting plans progress.

In November, the Residential Department was inspected by Care Standards. This was the first of the new short notice regime, and staff rose to the challenge, achieving a well-deserved 'outstanding' standard of care. The outcome is testament to their unrelenting hard work and effort - well done Sue Dykes and team! Thank you to parents, once again, for your support in completing and returning questionnaires - it is so important for us to know your views about school so we can continually improve what we do.

Book Week was a tremendous success, setting a high standard as the first of our whole school themed weeks, embracing the New Secondary Curriculum. Read inside, about children's

experiences and learning during the week. We have already begun planning for our next themed week which will focus on Positive Lifestyles.

FE1 and FE2 have been working hard at the Pyramid Arts Centre in Warrington towards their pantomime production of 'A Christmas Cowell'. A visit to the theatre and a performance in school will ensure all children have the opportunity to see the fruits of their labour and have fun.

As I write this the children are enjoying the festivities planned for the week. Kitchen staff are busy preparing their wonderful Christmas menu and there will be parties and fun galore as school 'winds down' for the holiday period.

Keep an eye on our website, we hope to publish a video on the website in the New Year, produced and edited by Chris Linaker and Shaun Daniels, and your thoughts on this will be much appreciated.

On a more serious note, the lead up to Christmas can be a stressful time, for Wargrave families especially. On behalf of the staff at Wargrave, I wish you a peaceful and happy Christmas and New Year and look forward to welcoming you back in 2009.

Sheila Jaeger
Director of Services

Wargrave House School

Issue 15—19 December 2008

Dates for your diary

© School Opens

Monday 5 January 09

© NAS Accreditation Week

Monday 2 February

© FE1 & 3 to Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Friday 6 February

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Music for Autism returns to Wargrave House

It was coming up to that time of the year again when Music and RE coordinators move into overdrive helping staff and students to celebrate the midwinter festival. At Wargrave House we started planning early with most of the Christmas songs chosen by the end of August and the date for the Carol concert set even earlier. As soon as I could I fired off an email to John Lubbock of 'Music for Autism' to invite him and the very wonderful Derek Paravicini, internationally renowned concert pianist, to come to visit us and join with us in making music for Christmas. I was overjoyed when they decided they could make it and we started rehearsing the senior choir and staff choir for the event.

On the 11th of December they arrived along with Professor Adam Ockelford to perform for and with us. This also included an afternoon concert in school. Derek played a very large number of requests of all sorts and styles of songs all in his own jazzy rhythmical style. He played everything from "White Christmas" to "Good King Wenceslas" for the students who sang solo with him, conducted for him and also danced enthusiastically. He also played a few pieces from his repertoire with "Black and White rag" being the out and out favourite. Everyone had a

wonderful time as you can see in the photographs.

As you may know, Derek was born extremely premature and suffered damage to his eyes which left him blind and in early childhood he was diagnosed as having learning difficulties and ASD. Despite this and through the expert tutelage of Professor Ockelford he has developed a unique talent combining perfect pitch and an amazing memory for music. He can listen once to a complex piece of music and later play it back note for note. Perhaps even more amazingly he can also improvise around that tune and develop it in his own style.

Concert in the Gym



Previously, I'd sent him the pieces we'd practiced in school for the carol concert some time in October and he turned up on the day having heard them once or twice and played them straight away note for

note. We had a very brief rehearsal after school and we were ready for the Carol concert. In the evening after a rest and a meal we arrived at the Church and set up. Derek was the consummate professional and never missed a note. Staff, students and parents sang their hearts out and I was so proud of the music that they made. The guitar group played really well and all the readers did their part too. I really hope that they felt as proud and pleased as I was about their performances. That's the thing about being a conductor, you get to listen, rehearse, suggest improvements but ultimately you are the silent part of the performance. I just hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did and I hope that our link with Music for Autism will continue and go on from strength to strength. I'd better go and email them with the dates for next term...

Jacky Bennison,
Music/RE Co-ordinator



Parents Consultation Evening

Many thanks to all of you who were able to attend our recent Parents Consultation Evening. Discussions were held with class teachers, support staff, speech and language therapists, care staff, the senior management team and our Family Liaison Officer, Steve Bentley.

Once again, the standard of students' work on display was excellent. It was a real pleasure to see how much hard

work our children and young people have already done in the short time since the start of the new school year.

Overall, the evening was very successful and written feedback from parents reflects a true celebration of achievements so far:

Overall progress:

"Very happy to see K engaging in lots

of activities with her peers. Her overall progress appears very good."

"We are delighted with A's progress. He has made considerable and significant progress in relation to his IEP targets and we would like to thank the teaching staff for this."

(Continued on Back Page)

News from Steve

Hello everybody,

To follow up on previous information, as you are perhaps aware the switch over to digital TV is on the 4 November 2009. Families who have a member claiming a disability benefit will be contacted automatically between April and June. They will be offered help and sent information packs. The help scheme can be contacted on:

0800 40 85 900

between 8.00 am and 9.00 pm.

The National Autistic Society has

published some new information sheets:

- ☺ Employment and Support Allowance (E.S.A) for young people aged 16 years and over
- ☺ Borrowing Money and Managing Debt
- ☺ Managing your Money
- ☺ Lasting Power of Attorney
- ☺ Understanding a parent with autism - a guide for young people.

These are available from the NAS Autism Helpline on 0845 070 4004

or by email on:

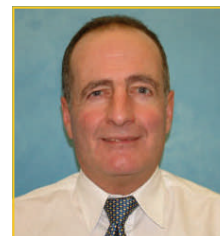
autismhelpline@nas.org.uk

I hope you all have a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

See you all in 2009

Best Wishes

Steve

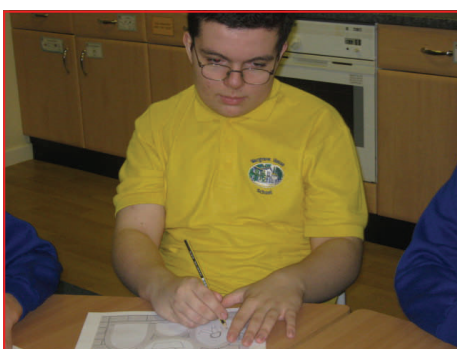


Book Week

Book week has been and gone! Students and staff tell me it has left good memories and given everyone new and enjoyable experiences.



Thomas and Adam designing stained glass windows to tell a story



Book Week is the first of our themed weeks brought in to address the changes to the Key Stage 3

curriculum in a way that meets the needs of our students.



Students making paper in class
LG4

The theme was the processes that go into making a book. The students made the paper for the pages, printed words and images,



explored the history of the printing press, designed their own book covers and researched famous writers, namely William Shakespeare, as well as a range of sensory experiences to help develop a piece of work to be included three departmental books.

We have been out and about as well as having visitors to the school. There are lots of articles and pictures in the pupil's news letter - it seems that sledging and the Shakespeare workshop were big hits with the students.

Staff and students have been asking about the next themed week so I'll let you in on a secret; the next one is Positive Lifestyles in March. I'm looking forward to lots of keep fit sessions to work off the Christmas pudding!

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas

Viv Austen

English

Co-ordinator



Communication

Some of you who have children in mainstream education may already receive text messages from your child's school keeping you up-to-date with events in school. Here at Wargrave House we have decided to trial such a system in the New Year.



Teachers2Parents is a web based system which enables us to text parents, staff, taxi drivers, escorts etc in a nutshell, anyone connected to our school who has a mobile or a land line.

Staff Hellos

Since our last issue in October we have had just one new member of staff, Sarah Young started in the residential department as a Residential Care Worker. Welcome Sarah, we hope you will be happy here with us at Wargrave House.



Again on the Care side Joanne Hesketh, RCW, successfully applied for a position in school as a Teaching Support Assistant and will start her new role in January, well done Joanne.

I am sure you will remember a few weeks ago when we had the threat of heavy snow overnight, this event highlighted the need to get in touch with a large number of people in a short space of time and hopefully this new system will allow us to do just that.

Here at Wargrave House we believe that communication is paramount and hopefully this system will enable us to share information quickly and easily with you.

As you can imagine to utilise this system to its maximum potential we have to ensure that all mobile and home phone numbers are up to date.

If you change your telephone number or you think your number may be out of date please contact the school's administration department.

Finally we would love to hear your feedback on the system, maybe you could suggest ways you think the system could be used, either way please let us know what you think.

If you have any questions or you would like more information please contact Sue Gledhill, Senior Administrator at school.



Medication—Reminder

If your son/daughter needs to take medication during school or residential hours please will you ensure the following:

- ☺ Only send in the required amount
- ☺ Medication **MUST BE** in its original packaging (blister pack **AND** box)
- ☺ Complete a green 'permission to administer medication' form. Blank copies of these are in the back of the home/school book, if not please ask for a new supply.

This will ensure all safety

precautions are adhered to. Many thanks for your co-operation.

Gennie Hyde

Head of Education



Anti-Bullying Week

This years' theme for anti-bullying week (17th - 21st November) was "Being Different - Belonging Together" and it was great to see students throughout the school and Lakeside discussing bullying, the impact it has and how to combat it.

T3 also took this theme for their class assembly on 19th November. They highlighted the significance and potential harm of bullying to their peers and brought this to life with a role play entitled 'Nic's shoes.' One

member of staff in the Transition department commented on how clever T3 were to have used the ideas of an aerosol to help students understand and actually see that once you've said something you can't take it back.

T3's assembly helped everyone to see the impact they can have on friends and classmates and ended on a positive note with a very suitable song chosen by Jamie Marks, 'That's what friends are for'. Anti-bullying week might be officially over but our reflection on

'Being different - belonging together' is to continue with a display that will be going up in the New Year, celebrating different aspects of students' personalities.

Lucinda Duffy

Deputy Head of Education



School Disco, Jackie McCann

DiscoMania hit Wargrave House School on the 13th of November!



The Speech & Language Therapy department hosted the school's first ever, evening Disco as part of our bid to promote positive peer to peer social interaction throughout our school community. For weeks in advance there was a marvellous buzz about who was going and what people were going to wear - it certainly gave people something to talk about.



Students designed posters to advertise the event, which also incorporated some of their great

ideas - such as having a 'Juice Bar'. This was a great success and was a place where thirsty

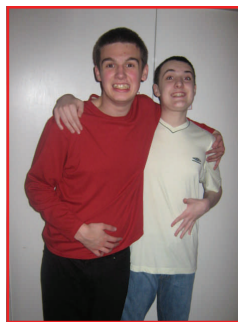


dancers could relax with a fruity cocktail! Those in need of a bit of peace and quiet could chill out and

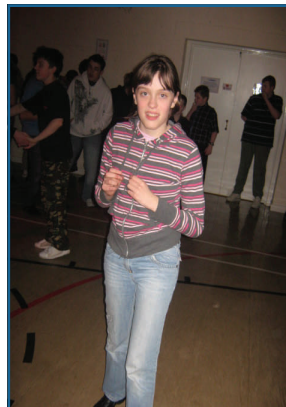


play board games with their friends! Small snack items on sale meant that we also provided our young people with an opportunity to make choices and practice their numeracy skills.

Those in need of a visit to the 'rest rooms' were pleasantly surprised by the offer of perfume,



hairspray and cosmetics for the girls, and aftershave for the boys (samples kindly supplied by 'Boots' Chemist). So everybody looked good and smelled divine!



The most popular room was the hall where our two fantastic DJs (from Lakeside) played all of the hits requested.

We had competitions for 'Best Dressed Girl/Boy'; 'Best Dancers' and 'Karaoke'. When the final track was played there was much disappointment that the evening had come to an end and students were already asking when the next Disco would be - p h e w ! You'll have to watch this space!



Ofsted Inspection

From Monday 10 to Wednesday 12 of November we had an Ofsted inspection within the residential department of the school.

Once again we passed the inspection with flying colours.

The inspector, Trevor Shirley, spent three days in school speaking with the children and staff, perusing over all the paper work and on Wednesday, when he gave his verbal feedback, he was extremely positive. He informed

senior management that not only had we passed the inspection but in the area of Assessment and Reporting we had exceeded the required standard.

As yet we have not received the final report but as soon as we do I will let you know. If you wish to have a copy please contact the administration department at school.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the residential and support staff for their hard work and

commitment which enables us to provide excellent services for our children. Well done to you all.

Sue Dykes,
Head of Residential Services

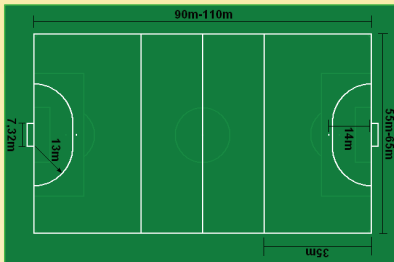


Team Handball

This term in Physical Education the transition department have been learning an entirely new sport - Team Handball.

Team Handball is a very popular sport in Europe and the British Olympic Association have classified it as a 'Category 1 Importance' sport for Britain to get involved with in time for the London Olympics in 2012.

The game is the second most played sport after football in Europe. The only country in Europe where it is not professionally played is the United Kingdom.



Wargrave House students have really enjoyed playing the game which is the fastest team game in the world.

The court on which handball is played is roughly the size of a basketball court with seven players per team though at Wargrave House teams are four or five aside due to the smaller dimensions of our court.

This has proved to be a very popular activity and is now firmly in place as part of the school curriculum as it not only improves co-ordination, communication, spatial awareness and fitness but is a lot of fun too!



John Thompson, PE Co-ordinator

Parents Consultation Evening (Contd.)

Standard of work/books:

"Great! Obviously been very busy"

"It's great that you are focusing so much on increasing his independence. We would like him to continue to receive homework when appropriate and to challenge him academically."

Education/support provided:

"Superior - we could not ask for more!"

"Excellent, very thorough and tailored to J's individual needs."

Speech and language therapy input:

"S's communication skills have come on greatly since he started at Wargrave House School."

"T's speech and language has developed further over the last twelve months, again due to the excellent provision provided at the school."

Further comments:

"Wargrave House School is an extremely good school and always aims for the highest standards and achievements. The excellent support provided and the ethos of the school reflects in the children's happiness and desire to attend school."

"M has grown from a boy into a young man in the three months he's been at Wargrave House School and he's so happy."

This is just a sample of the comments received and reflects the positive verbal feedback given on the evening. Your comments are extremely helpful in ensuring we continue to provide our students with the highest standard of education and care possible.

Gennie Hyde
Head of Education

