



PRIESTLEY SMITH SPECIALIST SCHOOL END OF TERM NEWSLETTER



Headteacher's Letter to Parents and Friends

15th December 2011

A GREAT END TO THE TERM

The Autumn term ended with two very entertaining productions by the Primary and Secondary departments.

On Wednesday 7th December the Primary pupils performed "The Princess Who Couldn't Smile", with a usually very smiley Emily Jones as the miserable princess.



On Wednesday 14th December the Secondary department performed "Annie" which told the well-known story of Annie, played magnificently by Saima Akhtar. This show was an excellent opportunity for many of the students to show off their skills in dance, song, music and acting.

Both performances were superb and were well attended by parents and friends of the school. Audiences showed their appreciation of the talents of the pupils and the behind-the-scenes work of staff and joined students and staff for refreshments after the concerts. It is extraordinary how the students and staff rise to the occasion at this time of year and present something original and exciting every year. Well done to you all!



MOOR HALL END OF TERM PARTY

As always happens at this time of year, Moor Hall Hotel invites all Primary pupils and Year 7 for lunch and a party. This annual event began 9 years ago when the hotel acted as sponsors for the school because we were fortunate enough to be donated a new minibus by The Variety Club of Great Britain. They have had an interest in the school ever since and in their words, "Start Christmas off" by staging this event for us, which includes a beautiful Santa's grotto, constructed just for the day and a visit from Santa himself.

This year the Deputy Lord and Lady Mayor were also invited and showed their talent on the dance floor at the disco!

Our thanks go to all the staff of the hotel for making this such a wonderful occasion for the children. It does not cost the school anything except a short sing-along as a finale which all the hotel staff attend.



SECONDARY PUPILS GO TO THE PHYSICS FACTORY

In November Years 10 and 11 visited the Physics Factory in Birmingham as part of their science studies.

During the visit students looked at the electromagnetic spectrum, radiation and radio active sources, discovering, for example, how

mobile phones work. The highlight of the visit was the hover board on which students floated across the room!

SECONDARY CHRISTMAS FAYRE

On Friday 2nd December, the secondary pupils, led by Year 10, hosted their annual Christmas Fayre. This is a very busy occasion for them, gaining support from local businesses, organising stalls, pricing thousands of goods and generally fund-raising for their charity, Acorns Hospice. The Primary department were invited as well as pupils from other mainstreams schools. It was a most successful event which raised in excess of £600.



A VISIT TO THE GERMAN MARKET

The Secondary department enjoyed a festive morning at the German Market in Birmingham on December 6th. We sampled traditional German food (and not so traditional burgers and hot dogs) and made an early start to our Christmas shopping. Soaps, salt crystal candles, felt hats and sweets were popular choices.

We also had a free ride on the carousel and a hot chocolate courtesy of the Council – the hot chocolate being particularly welcome given the cold weather!

Some of the pupils travelled in by public bus and a member of the public travelling with us commented on the high standard of behaviour and on how well the pupils got on with each other! A good end to a good morning!

OTHER AUTUMN TERM ACTIVITIES

On 15th November the pupils from both junior classes went to the Walsall Leather Museum where they learnt first hand how to work leather. They were allowed to use all the tools with a little help and made their own key-rings to take home.



As part of their topic on World War 2 the Upper Juniors visited RAF Cosford to experience a Wartime Christmas. Not only did they sample the food of the time but they also wore the uniform!

JUDO VI DAY

Early in November a city wide event took place at the Alexander Stadium which showcased judo for the visually impaired. It was attended by pupils from all over the region and a large number of our Secondary students took part.

As you know, we have a thriving after-school judo club which has recently gained additional support from the Thomas Cook Children's Foundation. The Foundation has provided a grant towards transport costs which will enable additional students to join the club after Christmas. The judo coach, Les Davis, has worked extensively with pupils with visual impairment and is currently working towards the club becoming affiliated to the British Judo Association.

One of our students, Mohammed Ahmed, took part in the Samurai Judo competition on Saturday 19th November. This competition was against fully sighted students and we are delighted to report that he won a silver medal, after only learning judo for a year. A fantastic achievement.

Martin and Mohammed also recently gained their first grading in judo.

PARENT AND STUDENT SURVEYS

Over the last term we have carried out both parent and student surveys. The response to both was excellent, with 62.9% of parents returning the survey and 98% of students.

By now you will have received your copy of the parent survey analysis. We are delighted that 100% of parents felt that their child is happy at school and is making good progress. The lowest positive score was 95% agreement so we have analysed carefully the *strongly agree* and *agree* categories to identify areas to improve.

The student survey was equally positive, with 100% of students stating that they enjoy school, feel safe, are rewarded for working well and behave well in class. Again we have identified areas to improve by examining carefully the balance between *strongly agree* and *agree*.

PRIMARY LINKS



The Primary department has been out and about in the local area, working with Richard Weaver who is a newly appointed Park Ranger at Perry Park.

Richard has introduced the juniors to the delights of fishing, bird-cake making and creating seasonal wreaths from willow. Fishing was particularly popular because every pupil caught a fish, all of them huge. The children returned to school, covered in mud but smiling! We hope to continue our links with Richard into 2012.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

During the Autumn Term we carried out a full review of the school's behaviour policy, bringing it into line with our recent work on Rights Respecting Schools.

Groups of students, staff, parents and governors were involved in this consultation and I should like to thank Mrs Iqbal, Ms Wallis, Mr Tuby, Mrs Thorne, Mr Kazi, Mrs Dar and Mr Manzoor for reviewing and commenting on the document. We greatly appreciate the feedback from parents in the formulation of our policy and practice.

A copy of the revised *Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy* is available from the school and will also shortly be added to the school's website.

END OF AUTUMN TERM

The term ends for students at 1.45 p.m. on Friday 16th December 2011.

SPRING TERM 2012

Staff will return on January 4th 2012 for refresher training on Child Protection but students will not return until **Thursday 5th January 2012**.

The staff of Priestley Smith wish you a relaxing and enjoyable break and a happy and healthy New Year.

With best wishes,

Helen Porter