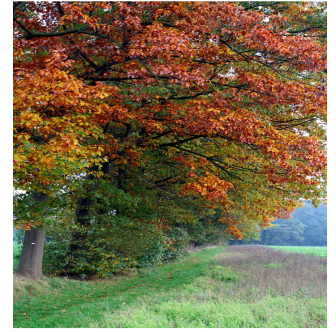




# PRIESTLEY SMITH SPECIALIST SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



## Headteacher's Letter to Parents and Friends

21st October 2011

### A GOOD START TO THE YEAR...

It is hard to believe that we have reached the end of the first half term. The time has absolutely flown by and the children have been involved in a vast range of activities.

It was lovely to see so many of you at the Parents' Evening on Tuesday and to talk with you about your children's progress. Denise McManus and Ian Reynolds, our Chair and Vice Chair of Governors, thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you and talk to you about the school.

Many thanks to those of you who have completed and returned the Parents' Survey circulated on Tuesday evening. We would be grateful for the return of the remaining questionnaires as soon as possible. The school is very keen to work in close partnership with parents and carers and this is a good way for us to find out what we are doing well and what we need to improve further.

### START OF THE SIXTH FORM...

As you know, our brand new Sixth Form started in September. The Sixth Form study area was completed over the Summer holiday and students have made a great start to their courses. The courses being studied this year are A level English, history, law and music technology, BTEC Business Studies, ICT, Performing Arts and Food Technology. Functional Skills in English and maths and Entry level geography and GCSE French are also being studied by Sixth Formers, as well as Independent Living Skills, mobility, P.E. and swimming.

We have very strong links with Great Barr mainstream school where one Sixth Form student is carrying out A level studies, with all work modified by our school and supported by Priestley

Smith staff. We have also made new links with Birmingham Metropolitan College. The majority of our Sixth Form students are spending each Thursday at the college studying a City and Guilds course in Employability and Personal Social Development. This is an excellent step towards the future, not only in the course being studied which strengthens the students' work skills, but also in the move towards future independence. It helps prepare our students for college education and prepares them better for life beyond Priestley Smith.

### A WARM WELCOME TO NEW PUPILS

In the last few weeks, a number of new students have joined the school. We would like to offer a very warm welcome to Musa in the Nursery, Shazia and Muqaddas in Year 4, Luqman in Year 6, Conna in Year 7, Shamaila in Year 9 and Hassan in Year 12. It is a pleasure to have them in our school. We are also looking forward to getting to know Cacper and Gobindpal who will join us in the Nursery after half term and Nathan who will be joining Year 1.

### END OF YEAR RESULTS

Once again this year the students' end of year results across all key stages were excellent. Many students progressed at rates beyond the national expectation.

I should particularly like to draw your attention to the results of our Year 11 students.

All Year 11 students did extremely well in their end of year exams and all gained the required results to undertake their chosen courses. One student gained 9 GCSEs at A\*-C and two others gained 7 GCSEs at A-G grade. A fourth student gained

Entry Level 2 and 3 grades in 6 subject areas. An excellent set of results and a well deserved achievement for both students and staff.

### YOUNG POET LAUREATE

Each year Birmingham City Council chooses a Young Poet Laureate to celebrate and develop poetry across the city. Students from all schools are invited to take part in the competition for selection as the Young Poet Laureate.

Saima Akhtar, a very talented Year 9 student, who loves writing poetry and songs, entered the competition to become Birmingham's Young Poet Laureate 2011.

Saima was short listed as one of the final ten entrants and in September performed a selection of her poems in front of judges and a selected audience. To be selected as one of the final ten from the enormous number of students who participated was an amazing achievement and we are incredibly proud of Saima.

### A NEW OUTDOOR LEARNING AREA FOR THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Over the Summer holiday our new Foundation play area was completed. We have been saving for this area for three years and construction was finally able to go ahead in August. The new play area, which cost just over £26000, is wonderful – with giant musical instruments, tactile roads for cars and bikes, a water wall, growing areas for planting etc. As you can see from the picture below, the children love it!



### FINDING OUT ABOUT THE PAST...

At the beginning of October Mrs Radford and her class went to visit Hanbury Hall and RAF Cosford as part of their history work on World War 2. They looked at aeroplanes, ration books, uniforms, gas masks and a whole range of other artefacts linked to the topic. At Hanbury Hall they were able to experience for themselves life at the time, dressing up, following ration recipes, carrying out chores etc.



### ...AND FINDING OUT ABOUT THE PRESENT

Miss Davis and the infant class visited the Science Thinktank as part of their topic on senses and had a fantastic time. They felt inside an enormous mouth and explored the tongue and teeth. There was a large nose that sniffed when they touched the nostrils and they felt the vibrations that came from a giant ear. They were able to listen to the sounds a heart makes when it pumps blood. Overall, a very exciting visit!



Visits such as these are essential for our students as they give them the opportunity to learn first hand. We are extremely grateful to the 'Parents and Friends of Priestley Smith' who subsidise these visits for us.

## **BACK TO BACK HOUSES**

On 13th September, Years 8, 10 and 11 visited the Back to Back houses in Birmingham.

On the day they had lots of fun dressing up in period clothes and looking at houses from 1860, 1910 and 1930.

It was a really good experience for everyone who took part, and it was also nice to meet students from Queen Alexandra College who were visiting on the day.

Year 9 will hopefully visit the Back to Backs during the spring term.



ERROR: undefined  
OFFENDING COMMAND: !!

STACK: