

The news magazine of Woodkirk Academy

Issue 2 Winter 2015

Inspire

Your aspirations, our inspiration

A photograph of two students, a boy and a girl, in a science laboratory. They are both wearing blue school sweaters with yellow trim and white collars, and clear safety goggles. The girl in the foreground is smiling and holding a test tube, while the boy behind her is also smiling. They are working at a wooden table with various lab equipment, including a rack of test tubes, a microscope, and a wash bottle. The background shows a typical classroom setting with shelves and posters.

An equal
education

*Woodkirk students embrace
lessons in equality and diversity*

Going From strength to strength



Welcome to the winter edition of *Inspire*. I hope you enjoy reading about our students' fantastic achievements last term, from excellent attendance to the celebration of our many successes in promoting equality and diversity across the Academy. You can also read about other positive developments in our provision for students including the creation of a new 'pastoral support centre' - B16 - which opened in November. I am sure you will agree that Woodkirk Academy continues to go from strength to strength.

Jonathan White
Headteacher

A hello from our Head Boy and Head Girl

As Head Boy and Girl of Woodkirk Academy we have the privilege to introduce the second edition of *Inspire*. We enjoy an exceptional learning environment and an excellent atmosphere, which is the result of the combined efforts of both the Main School and Sixth Form students and the dedicated staff. Our leadership responsibilities include chairing the Senior Student Council meetings, representing the views of the student body to the headteacher and governors, and taking part in the many parental meetings arranged throughout the year.

As part of our commitment to the community, we organise various charity events and the Sixth Form has raised money for Macmillan Cancer Support, Children in Need, The Stroke Association, Martin House Hospice and Ewing's Sarcoma. We are sure you will enjoy reading about the many activities which happen on a day to day basis over and above the Academy's core purpose of teaching and learning.

James and Im



Attend today, achieve tomorrow

We are incredibly proud of our students' commitment to school, with our end of year attendance reaching an all-time high of 95.8%. This is an increase of 1.2% on the previous year and means our students participated in over 15,000 additional hours of learning.

Students are rewarded throughout the year for their attendance. Students with 100% attendance, and those who worked hard to show significant improvement in their

attendance, were rewarded with Love2Shop vouchers and chocolate. We also have a special reward for our Year 11 students, pictured above, who managed not to miss a single day in four years!

Attendance and achievement go hand in hand at Woodkirk Academy and we would like to thank you for your continued support in ensuring regular attendance and improving the outcomes of our students.



Students lead from the front

December 2014 saw the exciting launch of the Student Leadership Group – a professional forum where students can share their thoughts about school life.

The pastoral team and the Senior Leadership Team selected a representative from each of the 55 form groups, following a rigorous application process. These representatives will listen carefully to their form group and pass on important thoughts to their year group Student Leader and Deputy Leader. These eight Leaders, alongside the Junior Head Boy and Girl, deliver these ideas to the Headteacher and the governing body.



Results of which to be proud

Following the most successful set of GCSE summer results that Woodkirk Academy has ever seen - with the most impressive set of English and Maths results across the city – we are proud to continue to celebrate students' outstanding achievement.

The Academy has raised the bar even higher and it is now more of a challenge for students to achieve those all-important '1' scores across a Progress Report. The first Progress Report in November celebrated eight students with a full set of 'outstanding' scores across their report. Many of these students will be part of the 'top 100' whose names are broadcast across the Academy for all to rejoice in their success.

As an ultimate celebration, the Academy's annual Awards Evening took place on a chilly December evening. Our guest speaker this year was the Right Honourable Rosie Winterton MP, who delivered an interesting and lively speech before awarding the prizes.



Learn from the past, look to the future

As we celebrated Black History Month at Woodkirk Academy, we looked back with enormous gratitude to the African-Caribbean community for their immense contribution to Britain. Students also looked ahead with great confidence to the future of our country and local community.

In History, Year 8 students learnt about the British Empire and how Parliament passed an Act in March 1807 that made it illegal for Britons to participate in the trade in enslaved Africans, after 20 years of campaigning. In Year 12 Art, students were guided towards a critical and contextual study of civil and human rights with a brief to explore artists' work related to the politics surrounding human and civil rights including the Holocaust. In Music, Year 8s learnt how the African slave trade inspired Blues music!

An education in equality and diversity

Scientific study in DNA

We live in a dangerous world where millions of children are suffering and dying unnecessarily. This is wrong and has to change. In December, Woodkirk Academy explored with the student population the dangers that children across the world face on a daily basis: violence, exploitation and abuse; disease; hunger and malnutrition; war and conflict or disaster. The aim was to raise that all-important awareness of the plights of those who are less fortunate.

In Year 8 Art, students learned about the inequality that led to the French Revolution and at Key Stage 3, Modern Foreign Languages promoted different cultures and languages. In Year 9 Science, they studied genetic screening that is crucial when testing DNA for future diseases – not all children across the world are fortunate enough to have this protection. This medical expertise would be crucial to help in the fight against Ebola, for example.



The rhythm of life



On Friday 17 October, Woodkirk Academy welcomed, for the first time, the Songo Drumming Project – a performance-based group of drummers and percussionists – to celebrate Black History Month.

They arrived with a vast selection of African instruments: djembes, dumdums and balaphones. Over 1,000 students were able to watch the cross-cultural performance and engage in this celebration. Our students, in groups of 50, were invited to perform themselves and present a performance to their year group. The Songo Drumming team made excellent tutors and our students picked up the rhythm very quickly!

Black History Month

During Black History Month, Mrs Barton delivered a series of assemblies to the whole school to promote knowledge of black history and equality. Students were also keen to understand how laws had changed to protect people who were not white. It was hard to believe that just 50 years ago, black or Asian people were not allowed specific jobs on buses in areas of the United Kingdom.

During the month, students also received additional learning around the theme during lessons. They explored and evaluated the role of Martin Luther King in his fight for equal rights. As well as this, a Year 12 English Literature group performed to a Year 8 class an original song and dance to commemorate the life of Mary Seacole, while a Year 11 English class focused on poems by John Agard: Checking Out Me History.



Another jam-packed year

2014 was extremely exciting for Woodkirk Academy in celebrating diversity and promoting equality and British values. In the summer, Le Tour de Yorkshire at Woodkirk shared in the cycling hysteria that swept across Leeds. October saw the celebration of Black History Month with the Songo Drumming Project. December's Human Rights and disability themes were promoted across ten different subject areas with students learning how those subjects contribute to alleviating the suffering some people experience.

We are looking forward to an exciting 2015 when students will continue to understand the importance of buying Fairtrade products and understand the plight of refugees across the world and how our help is invaluable.

Fundraising galore!

Woodkirk Academy students and staff have shown their thoughtfulness this academic year by supporting a range of charities.

In September, we hosted Woodkirk's Biggest Coffee Morning raising a phenomenal **£1,081** for The Macmillan Cancer Support. Then, in October, Sixth Form students staged a day of Halloween-inspired fancy dress, for Wakefield Hospice, raising in excess of £600. A bake sale for the Academy's annual Images of War Day on 11 November raised over £100 for Blind Veterans UK, which was personally presented to ex-Woodkirk student Simon Brown when he visited the school to speak to students about his own experiences of war.

Once again the school's Children in Need talent show proved extremely popular, and parents, students and staff worked together throughout the enjoyable and entertaining evening to raise money through raffles, auctions and donations. Our 2014 winner was Matthew Arnutt in Year 12, who delivered a fantastic performance of 'This is the Moment'. The final total raised by all was over £1,400.



Woodkirk welcomes senior citizens

In December, as has happened each year for decades, Woodkirk Academy was immensely proud to welcome many of the senior citizens who live in the local community. Woodkirk's Sixth Form students invited nearly 80 of them to a Christmas Dinner, which was cooked by the catering staff in school. The senior citizens were waited on by the school's Sixth Formers and were offered a day like no other. Presents and gifts were shared and students took to the floor with those guests who wanted to dance – an excellent afternoon for all.



Dealing with dementia, together



Kieran Berry in Year 13 has become a Dementia Champion. The Dementia Champion programme forms part of a national initiative by Alzheimer's Research UK to improve the care and quality of life for individuals living with dementia.

Firstly, Kieran will help to make the Health & Social Care students Dementia Friends, which will help them in their future careers. Kieran's first Dementia Friends session was to the GCSE Year 10 Health & Social Care students, followed by an additional 23 Year 10 students. His aim is to enable all the Health & Social care students to become Dementia Friends by the end of the school year.

Expeditions with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award



Our Duke of Edinburgh's Awards students have been making progress. The Bronze group successfully completed their final expedition, the Silver group completed their second expedition, which is classed as the practice expedition, and the Gold group completed their first training expedition.

All students arrived at Penistone train station on a Saturday morning and spent the day walking miles and miles to the Silkstone Scout Camp where they camped for the night. They all successfully worked in independent teams and found their own way back to Penistone train station.

Learning life-saving skills

A group of Year 10 Key Skills students had a fantastic hands-on experience on Restart a Heart Day organised by the British Heart Foundation. A helper from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service came into school with manikins for students to work with, and explained the importance of learning CPR.

An estimated 60,000 people each year

in the UK have an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and, sadly, less than ten percent of those people will survive. However, if a bystander starts CPR before medical help arrives, they could more than double a person's chance of survival. For students, it was a memorable experience with an end result that could save someone's life.

A musical affair in Morley

Once again St Paul's Church in Morley was packed as performers from Woodkirk's Music and Performing Arts department began the festive celebrations. This year's concert had been organised by Year 13 Music students. Other top performances included 'Joyful Joyful' from the Lower School's choir, Mexican Hat Dance from the Academy's Award winning Brass band as well as a stunning dance trio from an excerpt of *Nutcracker* by Year 13 Performance Studies students.

Other performances from Concert Band, Orchestra, Soul band, Junior Brass group, No Girl's Aloud, Upper School Choir, Performing Arts and String Group

demonstrated to the community the variety of talent on show at Woodkirk. The concert ended with an emotional performance from the school's talent show winner followed by all performers recreating their

very own version of 'Feed the World'. In the usual Woodkirk fashion, an extra effort was made by the organisers to raise money for their chosen charity Cancer Research through a festive raffle.



Come and join the family

The 'Addams Family' cast are continuing to work hard for the forthcoming school production. They're juggling learning dialogue, lyrics and choreography. Some students even have to master the Tango! Both staff and students are looking forward to the York Residential in January, a gruelling yet enjoyable weekend of rehearsals.

The show will run from Tuesday 17 March to Saturday 21 March and everyone is welcome





Showjumping superstars

Woodkirk Academy is delighted to be able to showcase three highly talented students. Liam, Bethany and Nye are showjumping champions who dedicate their lives to their horses and ponies. Our gifted trio have competed against some of the most talented showjumpers in the region and have the rosettes, medals and trophies to prove it.

The training needed to discipline their horses takes immense patience and dedication. Nye explains that his pony, Kizzy, didn't respond to his authority at first, but after two years, she is fully co-operative and they make a great team: "You just need to persevere...it's not easy, but she's worth it!"

Kat – our black belt kickboxer!

Kat (Year 9) recently achieved her black belt in kickboxing. In order to achieve this she had to do four hours nonstop fitness amongst other tests.

Kat competes for Chuldow Martial Arts in Morley and last year successfully competed in the Chuldow championships and came second in the girls' category. In addition to this, she achieved 'Student of the Year' – a very prestigious award. Well done from everyone at Woodkirk Academy.



Our impressive primary leaders

This year the PE department have recruited the help of some of the Year 10 GCSE PE Students to help run competitions and events at the Academy.

In their first half term as sports leaders, they have helped run three events: Girl's Football tournament, Cross Country and Sports Hall Athletics for local primary schools. The leaders, at all three events, helped to organise teams, referee matches and activities and score the events. Primary school staff commented on how well the leaders had done at each event and had been impressed with their helpfulness with the primary school children.



Students up their cycle skills

In October, Year 7 and Year 8 students took part in our first Bikeability training programme at Woodkirk Academy. Students took to the streets to improve their cycle skills, practise new manoeuvres and, most importantly, learn how to stay safe on the increasingly busy roads. All students passed the course and were praised for their maturity and excellent behaviour. Further Bikeability training sessions will be available in April.