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Leeds West Academy  
LEADING IN LEARNING



# Newsletter

## Best Results Ever!

The new Academy has got off to a terrific start as Intake bowed out on the best GCSE results ever achieved. Significant improvements include another major leap in the 5 A\*-C score, to 53%. This reflects over 20% improvement in the last two years. Congratulations came flooding in from Education Leeds, the DCSF and our sponsors as we met the 'National Challenge' target to become one of the most improved schools in Leeds.

Over the past two years the average points scores achieved by students has leapt too, from 250 points to 369. Staff and students have worked tremendously hard to achieve these great results, and I want to thank parents too for their support. We are now in a fantastic position to achieve brilliant results in the academy and are predicting even better outcomes for the current Year 11 students.

### Proposed front elevation



### Proposed rear elevation

There is great excitement about the developing plans for our £30m new building which will be completed in September 2011. The external plans have been finalised by architect Richard Shepley, who is now working with all staff on the internal arrangement of teaching spaces. Students have been asked to nominate representatives for the student commission on the new LWA building which will advise the architect from the learner's perspective.

The new building, which will be completed by 2011 within an overall project cost of almost £30m, will include £1.8m devoted to new technologies to support teaching and learning. The building will be designed around three hubs: Innovation, which will house Science, Technology, Maths and ICT; Diversity, which will house all Humanities, Modern Foreign Languages and PE; and a Communications Hub which will be home to English, Performing Arts and Creative Digital Media Arts.

Annette Hall, Principal

## Coaching

Our new Coaching system is up and running and is developing into a great way for students to start and end the week. Coaching ensures that students have quality time for mentoring, guidance and development activities to support their learning.

The new scheme means that staff, both teaching and non-teaching, meet with their designated coaching 'team' of 8/9 students twice a week to check on progress and keep them updated with what's happening in the Academy. The Leeds West Weekly, our in-house weekly magazine, is used for activities and discussion topics. This is what some of our Year 7 students have made of the coaching scheme so far:

**Hayden Campbell:** 'You get to know your Coach and friends, and the activities we do are good fun.'

**Sophie Staniland:** 'When you go in you can talk to people about your week and it makes me happy to end the week that way.'

**Daniel Siwiec:** 'On a Monday it's a good way to find out information for the week ahead. By working with new people we become part of a team and I enjoy that.'

**Julia Duriva:** 'I think coaching's a really good idea. On Fridays we can talk about how our week went and feed back to our Coaches.'



Students who have experienced the tutoring system in the past have noticed a huge difference. During an interview conducted by our sponsors, EACT, a Year 11 student said, 'because we are in smaller groups and spend longer periods of time with our coach, we have all got to know and respect each other. Our coach is a great role model and because he has such a healthy and active lifestyle we want to be like him.'

## Prestigious art placement for LWA student

Deanna Carey in Year 10 has been successful in securing a place in the prestigious National Art and Design Saturday Club. Deanna was one of only 25 young people chosen from almost a hundred hopeful applicants in the city of Leeds.

Deanna will learn new skills in printmaking, surface pattern and ceramics. The exciting nine-month programme includes a visit to London in November 2009; visits from professional artists and designers; and an opportunity to take part in and attend an exhibition of students' work from NADSC groups across the country in June 2010.

Deanna took part in her first Club session held at Leeds College of Art on Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup> and says of the experience, 'I was really excited; I found it really easy to make new friends. I used materials I hadn't used before which was hard but I enjoyed the challenge of drawing each other in 3 minutes with different media. The teachers were really nice too.'

Deanna is a very committed student studying for the First Diploma in Art and Design at LWA. She is aiming for a distinction in Year 11 which equates to four grade A GCSEs. We are very proud of Deanna and her positive contribution to art in lessons and as part of the wider LWA and National communities.

## Attendance up!

....the first 3 weeks of the academy year showed a 4% improvement on the same period the previous year.....this could be the record breaking year for our learning community.....Keep up the good work!

**You've got to attend to achieve**

## New uniform

The new uniform has been a massive success, receiving compliments from staff, students and neighbours. Our thanks go to all parents and carers who have ensured that students have been arriving every morning wearing the correct uniform. New staff have commented:

**Miss Sandham (English):** 'This is my first teaching position and am really enjoying working with the students here at LWA. Whilst the new uniform was a massive change from the previous one, they have all taken to it and look extremely smart!'

**Mr Hunt (ICT):** 'The new uniform has clearly made a difference within the Academy. Since the Academy launch our students have had to cope with a lot of changes, but the new uniform has given them a greater sense of belonging and something that they should be proud to wear and be seen in.'

The LWA jumpers are scheduled to be with us and ready to distribute to students after half term.



## EEP

The EEP programme is one of the many distinctive and innovative characteristics of LWA which provides a range of interesting, innovative and challenging courses after school on a Monday and Wednesday each week. Naturally, many courses fall within the remit of individual hubs such as astronomy, baking, tennis, debating, poetry slam, jamming and performing, football and rugby, and provide extension and enrichment opportunities for that particular subject area, or combination of subjects. However, some of the courses also reflect the expertise and experience of staff's own out of school interests which combine to provide a diverse and unique opportunity for pupils. Some of the more unusual subjects available include ballroom dancing, rock-climbing, table-tennis, gardening, flower-arranging, driving theory, first aid and chess. In addition, we have recruited teachers from specialist areas out of school to extend the provision further to include cheerleading, martial arts, the police service and holistic beauty.



It is intended that many students will use the programme as the basis for their work towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme which is to be launched after the half term holiday. The programme consists of three levels of bronze, silver and gold, dependent on age, and pupils will have the opportunity to use their EEP session to gain units for this award. Over the course of their time on the award, they will need to complete a service, skill, physical recreation, and expedition in the summer. This is a highly challenging but rewarding course and pupils will gain many transferable skills which will support them in higher and further education, and in the workplace. Indeed the highest level of the award, Gold, is so highly recognised amongst educational establishments and employers that students who complete it are invited to Buckingham or St James' Palace in London to receive their award personally from the Duke of Edinburgh.

## LWA launch event

October 1<sup>st</sup> was a day to remember for everyone in the Academy. We held our first Citizenship Theme Day, when everyone in the academy worked together on the common theme of building positive, respectful relationships. Coaches worked with their home team groups within the 3 schools within the academy in a very productive carousel of activities. The day culminated in a tremendous performance from some of our highly talented students who sang, danced and performed poetry for each 'school' in turn.

The Foundation School was joined by VIP visitors including the Chair of EACT, our sponsors. A visitor later wrote 'I was staggered by the quality of all the student performances.' Everyone enjoyed the event to mark the beginning of our new venture.



## Calling all parents: Our academy needs you!

Are you interested in shaping the strategy for achieving excellence in our academy?

Are you keen to have a say in how we design and build our new £30m building?

Could you spare a few evenings a term to be part of a highly committed set of local people from the business, education and university sectors?

....then put your name forward to be a parent governor for the two vacancies we currently have. Please see the attached letter for details on how to apply. For more information please ring the academy number and ask for Sharon Hinchcliffe. The application deadline is Monday 2nd November.

## What's new?

- Improvements to the current building
- Small Home-Team coaching groups
- Twice-weekly extension and enrichment programme
- Improved teaching and learning
- New code of conduct
- **Coming soon....£100k new ICT equipment next term....£30m new building 2011**