

Newsletter Date: 1/4/ 11

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Newsletter

It's Official: the Ofsted verdict on our academy is GOOD!

It has been a very busy time for students and staff at the academy during the last term, as you will see from the attached news. Although we are still in the buildings of our predecessor school, we continue to work hard at implementing the new approaches to the curriculum, at improving the quality of teaching, and raising standards of behaviour throughout the academy. We were delighted therefore to welcome Ofsted a couple of weeks ago so that we could show Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools just how well we are doing. We were even more delighted to receive a letter from HMI outlining their views on our progress. Here are some highlights:

'The academy's first published performance data show a considerable improvement in GCSE results. statistical analysis shows that students' progress is much better than in the predecessor School and now compares favourably with similar schools. The quality of teaching has improved. Students' behaviour has improved. They have much better relationships with staff and most behave well both in and out of lessons. Attendance has improved this year.'

'The quality of care, guidance and support has considerably improved. Students say the introduction of small coaching groups makes them feel well supported and increases their feeling of belonging. Students' enjoyment of learning is supported very well through very high levels of participation in enrichment activities, clubs and visits. Students are very positive about the opportunities offered by the academy and take increasing pleasure in its growing reputation.'

'The Principal provides very dynamic and highly effective leadership and is supported very well by a team of talented and energetic senior leaders. They are very ambitious for the academy and relentless in their drive for improvement. The governing body has an impressive range of skills and knows the academy very well. The academy has moved from a position of seeking out good practice in other institutions to offering help and sharing good practice with others.'

At LWA though we are conscious that not every area of our work has improved at the rate of the best, and we had already identified the key areas for development. It was good to see that HMI agreed with our priorities for improvement, which are to increase the progress that students make in mathematics and to improve the quality of teaching in lessons which are satisfactory, ensuring that they are good.

This report is a fantastic endorsement of all of the hard work put in by staff, students and parents to make Leeds West Academy a success story for the local community and worth the huge investment that is being made in our new buildings, which will give us the platform to become the outstanding academy which we all know we can be.

With many thanks to all parents and carers for your continued support,



Annette Hall
Principal

Diary Dates

Tuesday 10th May

Year 11 BTEC final major performance

Thursday 26th May

Foundation School Performing Arts showcase

Saturday 30th May

Year 12 BTEC performance workshop

Easter Holiday April 2011

LWA will be open as normal for lessons on the following dates in April:

Monday 18 – Thursday 21

Tuesday 26 – Thursday 28 (Friday 29 is now a bank holiday due to the royal wedding)

The Spring term will begin on **Tuesday 3 May**.

Please ensure your son/daughter attends during these dates in April, normal timetable and truancy sanctions will be in operation.

'Enterprise' ICE Week - February 2011

LWA was held in ICE week fever during the last week before half term! The Immersion Curriculum Experience week is held once a term and sees students sample, experience, participate in and learn about new skills and activities that the majority of which will not have done before. The theme of the week was 'enterprise' – below are a few examples of what took place:

Year 7 had the fantastic opportunity of going on a residential at Bramhope Scout Camp. Staying overnight for 2 days, the students participated in many activities including rock climbing, orienteering, mountain biking and a night time walk in the dark through the forest at Otley Chevin! Over the duration of the trip all students helped with preparing meals and the general upkeep of the facilities. On hand to ensure everything ran smoothly were many members of staff and also a cohort of BTEC PE students who led many of the activities to gain credits in sports leadership as part of their course. When it came to feeding time all in attendance were treated to spaghetti bolognese, chicken casserole and enough hot chocolate and cookies to feed an army! Luckily the weather stayed (mostly) dry, enthusiasm was high throughout the activities and a great time was had by all!

For those Year 7's who were not on the residential worked with Year 8 on a programme called Flash! (Photoshop in a flash). By the end of the week the students had learned how to create a photomontage and manipulate photos using Adobe Photoshop CS5. To show off their newly acquired skills, the students then showed some Year 6 students from our neighbouring primary schools how to make their own designs. Some outstanding and innovative work was produced and all involved came away with helpful skills to aid them in many subjects across the curriculum. Work from the sessions can be viewed online in the 'Gallery' sections of the workshop blog at: www.lwaice.wordpress.com

Year 9 spent the week completing their GCSE Citizenship Controlled Assessment task, an extremely important piece of work as it was worth 60% of their final grade! Their aim was to increase awareness of racial harmony within the academy and beyond through a variety of activities. Magazines, posters and displays were made, as well as racial equality-themed songs that were composed and performed to younger students and staff. All students put forth a great effort to complete the tasks and created some amazing work. Well done Year 9!

Year 9 tackled the 'enterprise' theme head-on, by using a £10 'bank loan' to create a business and make products and develop services to sell to over 300 of our neighbouring primary school students.

Each individual 'company' had to assign job roles to suit individual skills and then brand, promote and market their ideas using fliers, business cards and posters. Students also had the opportunity to attend a range of business seminars e.g. 'how to lead a team', 'the importance of innovation' and 'marketing to primary students,' to help them with their tasks

On the day our visitors (from Raynville, Bramley, Valley View, Whitecote and Summerfield) were presented with a hot dog stand, and ice cream parlour, a dance mat challenge, nail art and face painting stalls plus much more! Over £400 was taken in the two days, with 9ALN being the most profitable, bringing in £75 over the two days!

The purpose of ICE week from a High School perspective was to allow the students an insight into preparation for the workplace, and the variety of jobs and career opportunities they may find themselves in, in the future. The main task focussed on designing and marketing a product - the target audience being the general public at a leading shopping venue in Leeds.

Students attended sessions on marketing, interview protocols, budgeting and many other topics. The culmination of the week was the student teams going to Leeds city centre and the White Rose Centre and 'selling' their products (including chocolate chilli peppers and bird boxes). Later they pitched their ideas to a Dragon's Den style panel of local business 'dragons'. All the students did a fantastic job and gave great presentations. Well done all!

Visit www.leedswestacademy.org.uk for a more comprehensive report of the ICE Week activities!



A big thank you to all parents and carers who attended Meet the Coach Day on Wednesday 16th March. These days are crucial in updating you on your child's progress and commending their achievements / informing you about any areas for concern. They are a good opportunity for you to air any queries you may have and really do help to strengthen the home-academy relationship. If you missed an appointment with your child's Coach please contact the academy to arrange an appointment at your convenience, either in person or on the telephone.

New building news

Despite the terrible weather in December work on our new building has progressed!

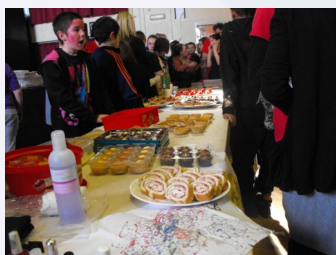
As you can see in the images below, most of the outer shell facing Intake Lane is nearing completion and internally most of the structure has been done. Ventilation ductwork, wiring and plumbing are all making progress, plus the installation for the £2m worth of ICT equipment has now started. The incoming electricity supply and gas pipe have also been fitted.



To see more images of the new build progress please visit www.leedswestacademy.org.uk



Comic Relief - Friday 18 March 2011



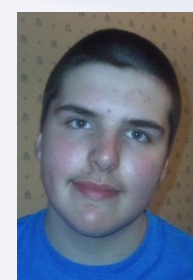
The student council requested that LWA celebrated red nose day in style this year! Staff and students were asked to wear their best red outfit or accessory, for a small donation to comic relief. Everyone made a real effort and looked fantastic. The Year Heads got a taste of their own medicine and came to school in full academy uniform, making sure they wore their blazers and ties!

The student council were also keen to get the whole academy involved in fundraising this year and organised a 'red nose day market place' during coaching on the Friday afternoon.

Each coaching group was given the task of thinking of a way of raising money for comic relief. There were some fantastic ideas, such as guess the teacher from baby pictures, sponsored silence, luxury hot chocolate, penalty shoot out, bun sales and many more. We even had a visit from Mr Blobby, who came out of retirement and managed to raise a fair amount of money. The students and coaches did a fantastic job, particularly those in foundation school, where every single coaching group took part!

Josh (9CWT) went a step further meanwhile and shaved his hair off - as you can see in the pictures it was quite a dramatic change!

A massive well done to all those who helped raised money for a fantastic cause – together LWA raised over £500, which is great result!



Charlie Clark - LWA's TV star!

Charlie Clark (12KPa) was recently seen starring in *South Riding* on BBC One. A major Sunday evening production, Charlie played the lead child role of Lydia, starring alongside an impressive cast including Anna Maxwell Martin, David Morrissey, Douglas Henshall and Penelope Wilton.



Filmed in Leeds, Bradford and the Skipsea cliffs, this was Charlie's biggest role to date: "When I first saw myself on television it was really weird and all of my friends are impressed. People even come up to me and say lines from the show."

Charlie has already starred in the 2008 film *Clubbed* and appeared as an extra on Yorkshire soap *Emmerdale*. She recently auditioned for a role in *Shameless* but narrowly missed out on the part because she was too young. However Charlie has taken it all in her stride and hopes that the future is set to be bright: "It was a great experience to audition for *Shameless* but you can't get them all can you? Working in film and television is definitely something I want to do more of in the future. I learned a lot a while filming with *South Riding* and it has helped to give me the confidence to go further."



Everyone at LWA would like to say a big 'congratulations' to Charlie for such a great performance and being such an endorsement for our performing arts specialism!

Congratulations to Bex Basirov (10DSO) who recently became ranked second for his age group in the UK in Judo!

Mark Law CBE

Mark Law, a former member of the LWA Governing Board, has been awarded a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) in recognition of his services for the disadvantaged people of Leeds.

Mark is Chief Executive Officer of Barca-Leeds, a charity which provides children/youth services and specialises in drug information and treatment, as well as running residentials at a centre in the Lake District.

Mark was a Governor at Intake / LWA for over 18 years, including stints as Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors. He is also a parent to Nathaniel and Siona who currently attend LWA.

Mark is proud to accept the honour and also of the progress made here at LWA: "I received a letter on behalf of the Prime Minister in November informing me that I was to be nominated to the Queen. I am very proud of the achievements to date here at LWA. Results have improved, the reputation in the community is growing and I cannot wait until the new building is complete."

Parents tell us like it is...

At LWA we are committed to making improvements in everything we do. We work with students constantly to find out what they think we can do better and to involve them in major decisions about all sorts of aspects of our work, including the appointment of new staff. We want to know more about what parents think too, and have started a new forum to canvas views about aspects of our work and how it can be improved from the perspective of parents.

To take this further than the usual surveys, last term we held our first 'Parent Panel'. This involved a wide invitation to a large number of parents to come along to a session with myself and one of the parent governors, Chris Carey, to discuss Assessment and Reporting to parents, as well as anything else which people wanted to raise.

The Panel gave us lots of feedback on specific areas that we can improve on, as well as telling us what we are doing well. It was a very productive discussion and we plan to hold the next one on the theme of behaviour. For more details and contacts to help you get involved, please see our academy website.

LWA's 'Teach First' teachers try politics and go travelling!

Two teachers taking part in the 'Teach First' training scheme at LWA have been involved in unique events recently:

Mr Rand, Humanities teacher, had a visit from Leeds West MP and Shadow Cabinet Minister Rachel Reeves on Friday 11th March. Miss Reeves went 'back to school' - but this time it was as a teacher! Rachel shared her expert knowledge on party politics with the LWA's Year 10 History students in a session that covered contentious current issues like how to reduce the budget deficit and benefit fraud. The high achieving class also used Miss Reeve's presence to conduct a debate about the rising cost of university tuition fees. The class, all of whom aspire to a university education, were resolutely against the notion that they might be saddled with £30,000 of tuition fee debt in an uncertain economic climate. Miss Reeves, also staunchly against the planned increases, wholeheartedly agreed. The students involved were articulate and engaging and put forth some very credible arguments!

Mr Rand was delighted with the success of the session: "This was a superb opportunity for the students to learn directly from a person who has access to the heart of British government. I was impressed with the arguments and opinions held by the students, and also by the way Rachel responded to them."



In January LWA Languages teacher Miss Lloyd had the exciting opportunity in January to travel to Mumbai, India. Teach First is part of 'Teach for All,' a global network of organisations with the unifying mission to address and promote educational achievement. An annual workshop was held in Mumbai, hosted by Teach for India, with the theme of 'Change Begins Within.'

Miss Lloyd had an incredible experience in Mumbai and has quite a story to tell!
To read the diary of her trip visit:
www.leedswestacademy.org.uk



London theatre trip

In early March Year 11 and 13 GCSE and BTEC Performing Arts students participated in a trip to London that involved experiencing theatre in the West End.

The students were fortunate enough to see the amazing musical *Billy Elliot* and were involved in a once in a lifetime opportunity to do a workshop at Pineapple Studios with some of the cast that they had seen in the show the night before. Students were able to learn some of the repertoire from the finale and had the chance to chat to the actors to find out what it's like to be part of such a popular stage show! They also saw *The Lion King* and had a chance to see live street performers in Covent Garden. The trip was a huge success highlighting just how inspiring watching live theatre can be.

The students were a real credit to LWA and the trip will be open to Year 11 /13 again next year – watch this space!



Abseil for World Challenge

On Saturday 3rd March, Nathan (11NEX) and Kirsty (11JGU) took part in an abseil off Manchester Velodrome. They were doing this to raise funds for their World Challenge Namibia trip and both students raised a substantial amount of money. Well done both!



Easter revision

Easter revision sessions will be taking place during the holidays in April from Monday 4th – Friday 8th and Monday 11th / Tuesday 12th

Please visit www.leedswestacademy.org.uk to see the full timetable

Attendance

Sept 2010 - March 2011 attendance figures:

Foundation school 95.0%

Intermediate school 91.5%

High school 89.0%

Year 7 95.1%

Year 8 94.8%

Year 9 91.7%

Whole school attendance to date is 92.4%
Attendance the same time last year was 89.9%

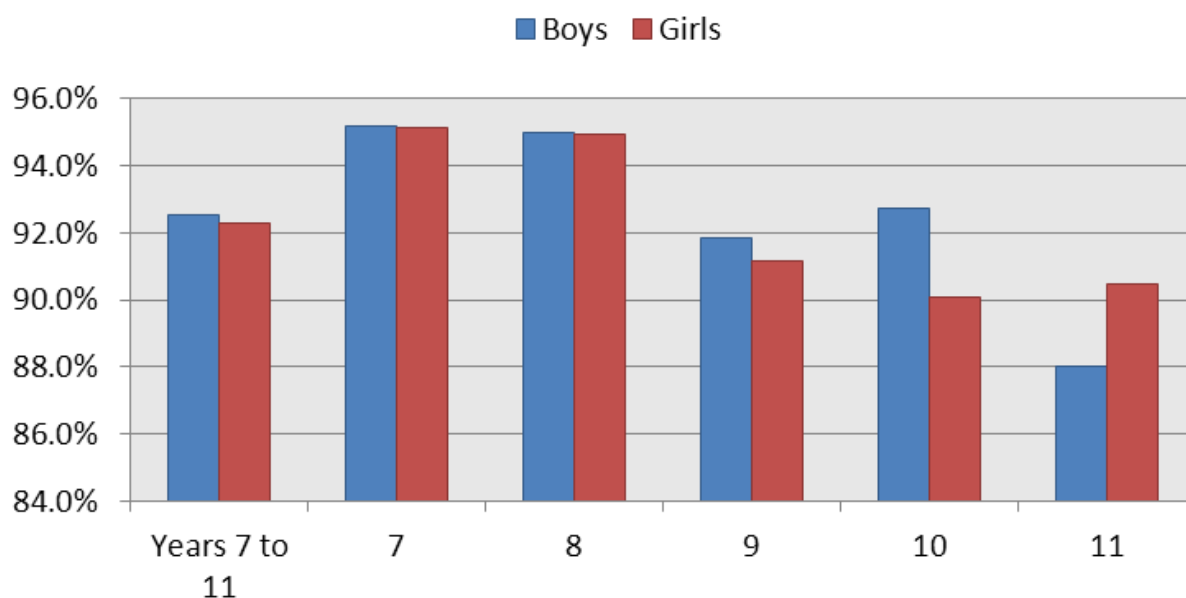
**Keep up the good work towards our
academy target of 93%!**

Year 10 91.3%

Year 11 89.0%

Total: 92.4%

2010-11 Half-Term 1-3 attendance



- **During coaching plot your attendance to see if you are rising - try to get into the 'Green zone' - above 95%**
- **Remember every day counts - missing odd off days off school mean lower grades in your GCSE's**
- **Punctuality counts - employers or colleagues look at your punctuality as well as your attendance and if either of these are poor they can have an effect on whether you are offered jobs or places on courses**
- **Remember 100% weekly attendance enters you into the £5 weekly draw - be in it to win it!**
- **Try make your dental/medical appointments early in the morning or late in the day - there should be no need to take a full day off for medicals (unless discussed with the attendance team prior)**
- **Leeds West Academy prosecutions in court recently have resulted in a range of fines from £450.00 to £1,700 for non or poor attendance**