



THE HOLMEWOOD SCHOOL



**National
Autistic
Society**

**Accredited
Advanced
2020**



World Autism Awareness Week Special Edition Newsletter

Friday 26th March 2021

Dear Families,

What a wonderful week we have had at Holmewood. If you haven't seen any of our previous communications, we have been celebrating World Autism Awareness Week a little bit early. The actual week falls in the Easter break but it's really important that we celebrate it in school and share the diversity of our little community.

We have had many delights to share this week including students leading food workshops at the Upper School, musical performances at the Lower School, two different speakers joining us to share their autism journey, and (probably most favourably) an 'escape project' designed to challenge those who are neurodiverse and think differently.

The latter was thoroughly enjoyed by all of our students, after a group in the Upper School took part in a research project working with the theatre company to design it!

This week, the Lower School also enjoyed an Easter egg hunt where older students supported and helped younger ones. It was very lovely to see and shows us how our oldest students are increasingly ready to transition to the Upper School in September.

It has been a strange few weeks since we all returned to school on 8th March....but also a wonderful few weeks! I have been so happy to see how everyone has pulled together

Over the holidays, please continue to use your self test kits to test for asymptomatic Covid-19 twice a week (3 days apart), ensuring that you test on Monday 19th April, before returning your child to school on Tuesday 20th.

Testing in school has now finished and all testing is to be completed at home. I'd like to finish with a huge thank you to all those in our testing team who have given their time to help; who have been flexible and supportive around their other commitments; who have been patiently supporting children and staff; and who have not complained but instead been little puffs of positivity and cheerfulness in this scary time. So thank you much to all the staff who were involved and also, our two parent volunteers Eliza and Bhupinder. You have all played such an essential part in keeping our little community safe and I will forever be truly grateful.

Wishing you all a happy holiday with much rest.

Ms Camilleri

Executive Head Teacher

Dates For Your Diary

- **Fri 26th Mar** - Last day of spring term
- **Mon 19th Apr** - Inset day
- **Tues 20th Apr** - Summer term (1st half) starts
- **Mon 3rd May** - Bank Holiday (School closed)
- **Mon 31st May to Fri 4th June** - Half term holiday
- **Mon 7th June** - Inset day
- **Tues 8th June** - Summer term (2nd half) starts
- **Wed 14th July** - End of term
- **Thurs 15th July** - Inset day

Every Week Is World Autism Awareness Week At Holmewood

As many of you are all too aware, it can be a fight to ensure autistic young people get the support they need to properly access education. For families, the road from an unsuccessful placement to a specialist provision like Holmewood can be long, and the journey exhausting and expensive. For some of you, the penultimate stop on this journey has been the Royal Courts of Justice.

Recently I attended a tribunal as a professional witness for a family who were fighting for

about a young person. What I usually get questioned on however are the particulars about the provision at Holmewood and how it will specifically meet the young person's needs.

Luckily this is one of my special interests.

The type of questions a judge will ask can be very unexpected. For example, at this particular tribunal, the opposing school was asked: 'do you celebrate World Autism Awareness Week?'. The representative assured the panel that yes, they have a special day during which an assembly is presented. I certainly wasn't reassured that this mainstream school was providing anything other than token inclusion of our young people, but that was for the judges to decide.

When the question was posed to me, I simply replied with a smile, 'every week is World Autism Awareness Week at Holmewood, sir.'

Of course, this isn't literally the case. Our Lead Autism Teacher organises a wonderful programme for WAAW that celebrates the diagnosis that all of our young people share. Ultimately my sentiment was proven though, because the family won that tribunal.

This week I would like to acknowledge the journey autistic people and their families must take in order to turn awareness into appropriate provision. I hope you agree that the destination is worth the travel time.

Have a wonderful Easter break.

Ms Young

Head of Upper School

World Autism Awareness Week In Pictures







Cooking workshop by Joshua L



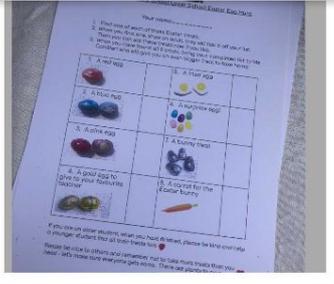
Cooking workshop by Iaian



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The Puzzle Box challenge







Kandinsky Artworks



More Kandinsky artworks

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WAAW Guest Speaker - Robyn Steward

A big thank you to Robyn Steward who during this week has given a variety of sessions to Holmewood students and staff.

Robyn has 15 years experience as an autism trainer / workshop leader. She regularly works with local authorities, adult social care providers, schools, parents and autistic people (both children and adults) and also provides arts and media consultancy. Robyn is an ambassador for the National Autistic Society (NAS) and SNAP charity. She also hosts the autism journal podcast and BBC Sounds 1800 seconds on autism with Jamie Knight.



Sessions that Robyn has provided this week included: Proud to be me; Exam anxiety; Relaxed concerts; Life after school; Tips for everyday life; Girls on the autism spectrum; Live your dreams.

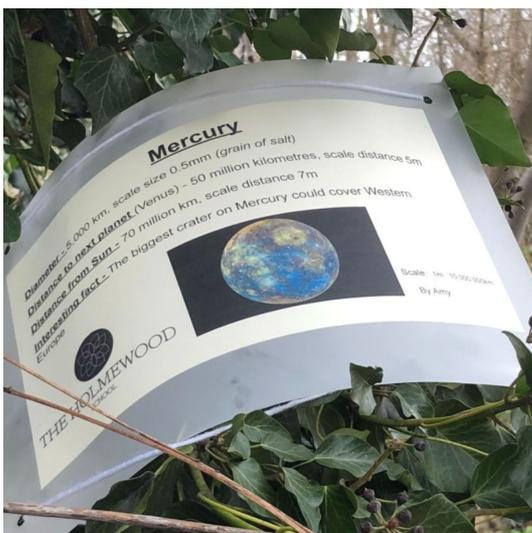
Thank you for a very informative week Robyn.

Amy's Local Solar System



As part of her Astronomy GCSE, Amy (Bakerloo Class) has made a scale model of the Solar System stretching from the Sun at the school entrance all the way to Neptune outside Oxfam at the top of Muswell Hill.

Each planet is on a laminated poster which she tied to lampposts, fences and even a security barrier.



The scale is 1m to 10,000,000 km, so the Sun is 14 cm across, but the Earth is only the size of a peppercorn, and 15 m from the Sun: Neptune is 450 m away!

An amazing project Amy! Well done!

Careers & Work Experience

Hello, I would like to introduce myself as the careers and work experience coordinator for the school.

Unfortunately, due to the restrictions that have been put in place this year, it has been hard to organise work experience for the students. However, I am hoping that with restrictions lifting I will be able to find placements for our students next term, or at least next year.

Over the past few months we have had The Holmewood School Independent Careers Advisor, Jo Rampling, give our students career interviews. The interview provides the opportunity for students to discuss where they are now, in terms of subjects they are studying and their interests, talk about what they would like to do in the future and then discuss the steps needed to achieve this. These have been done face to face or remotely. I have been present in the interviews and it has been lovely to hear their ideas for their future. I will be working very hard to provide work experience placements so our students can get a feel for working in different environments in a field that they have an interest in.

This week the student internships have been advertised. These are only for students who are 13 and above. In the past they have been very successful and the students have got a lot from them. All the positions will be based in school. Please encourage your young person to apply for these positions and have a look through the job descriptions with them. The deadline for the applications is 21st April.

After Easter, I will be looking for work experience placements for our students. Are there any parents who are able to offer our students the opportunity to gain some work experience? Our students are incredibly passionate and are very willing to learn about working in their chosen field. They just need someone to give them the chance to allow them to experience the world of work. It is vital that our students get to experience this, as it can help them decide which path they would like to take in their future.

If you feel that this is something that you would be interested in and can accommodate our students, then please email me vgunning@thsl.org.uk and we can discuss this further.

Have a lovely Easter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Ms Gunning

Careers and work Experience Coordinator

Joshua L's Super Model

built his own Lego F35 using custom software and bespoke pieces ordered from Lego directly. The model in actuality is a faithful, detailed scale model that shows the love and effort that went into creating it.



He has written a few words about his process in bringing the model to life...

“The F35 is a highly advanced fifth generation fighter jet developed by Lockheed Martin. It is known as the best and most advanced fighter to date and first flew in two thousand and five.

I am a big fan of Lego and wanted to recreate the plane as a Lego model. The one that I designed took me about four months including shipping time for other pieces that I would need. The model includes retractable wheels that come up and go down in unison as you turn the engine, the engine can swivel downward to replicate vertical takeoff like the actual F35 B can, an opening cockpit, a removable pilot seat, an opening fan hatch that works together with the back engine to provide vertical lift and ailerons and elevators. It has a display stand that can be attached to the bottom of the plane via two pins and holes and the stand permits slight movement of the model. The experience of designing it has taught me so much about Lego designing and I have enjoyed the process of the project.”

Well done Joshua on a fantastic piece of work!

Mr Podichetty
Science Teacher

Poetry In Motion

Dear Families,

celebrating Wordsworth's The Daffodils before looking at Seamus Heaney and Maya Angelou. Girls Club also explored 'And Still I Rise!' - a beautiful poem that celebrates individuality and resilience.

I am a keen lover of poetry and poetry books are the ones that I most cherish and read over and over again.

It has been a really busy half term with World Book Day, Red Nose Day, World Autism Awareness Week as well as returning to school from lockdown. I did not wish to overwhelm students by adding another event so I encouraged writing poetry in lessons and at home. Please read some of their wonderful poems below.

I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did. We are ever so proud of the work our students do and I am constantly awed by their creativity, honesty, perceptiveness and perspectives of the world around them.

Wishing you all a wonderful Easter break.

Ms Lyons

English Teacher & Curriculum Coordinator



WAR by Joshua L

Barbed wire fences, Gas destroying their lungs, Bullets and trenches, the clapping of guns.

The shouting and crying of terror and dread on the treacherous soil of war that they tread.

The filth and starvation our soldiers endured, to satisfy hunger they could not afford.

The lies of their glory had been a fraud but our people were fighting much of their accord.

Shell shock, trench foot, fighting and tears, our soldiers fought on through four filthy years.

The glory of dying for country endears but the horrors of war show terrors and fears.

Thirty countries, 60 million men all went to war not to see them again.

Many of these died on mountain and glen, to remember these soldiers we gave our amen.

SUNFLOWERS by Ekin

Oh these sunflowers are beautiful
 They are making me relaxed
 They are relaxing as a swaying hammock
 It makes me think of a beautiful beach
 I have a feeling that I am swimming in the nice blue
 beach.

The beach is nice and sunny
 The sky is completely blue
 This is the best sunflowers ever
 Oh these sunflowers are beautiful
 The sunflowers smell really good.

**JOURNEY by Amy**

Coughing, sneezing, wobbling, wheezing,
 Disease machines fluffy like rats,
 Lowering spirits;
 Stomachs crying for fuel
 And minds for home.

Trudging through sludge,
 Oh what we would give for a morsel,
 A crumb, a slice, a snack.

Darkness and candlelights give a flicker of hope,
 Yet, sickening feelings of dread arise,
 For attacks come often in the dark.

The sun provides some warmth,
 Yet fear rips that away,
 Repetitiveness of a day can not cure an anxious mind.

Bang! An occasional gun screams,
 Causing the trenches to tremble with fear;
 Shouting occurs yet soon all settles.

Fear rises within when going over the top,
 Boots squelch pushing their way upwards,
 Men struggling mentally and physically.

For a few seconds grass provides a welcome change,

Becoming engulfed.

Horses spines pierced with metal, creating eyesores.
Navigating the spikes whilst your heart beats out
Of your chest was not an easy task.
Aarghh! Painful shouts of those who had
Been impaled were excruciating to hear.

Grenades leave lasting craters for the dead to gather in;
Causing a stench almost as bad as the sight
Of them.
You have to ask yourself, could this be me?
Enemy lines approach.
White sand and clean grass mark the way.
Fear is all you can feel, not adrenaline, just fear.

Closer and closer and closer and BAM!
Nothing.
Germans had retreated, cowardly or smart?

Forcing the body downwards the trenches
Cushioned the landing.
Wooden boards lined the walls and bags
Of sand protect all within.

Inside the earth beds line the walls
And muslin bags the ceiling.
A lone rat wonders, nibbling on the
Bags above.

Muslin falls to the floor and BANG!
Grenade!
Earth caves inwards and dust drowns out
Candlelight.

Coughing, sneezing, wobbling, wheezing.
Light floods eyeballs as soldiers are freed.

Grass land ahead means hope,
Striding along, the sun shines bright.

A wooden structure approaches,
Beasts of white and black surrounding it.
Cool white liquid sits within,
Almost asking to quench my thirst.

Whirring bodys of metal fill the sky,

Crashing, falling, burning,
Humanity overrules loyalty,
Dragging bodies from burning birds.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!
One dead, one barely alive.
A brother's blood trickles to the floor,
Staining the earth.
Lights out.

Darkness fills the mind,
Two lives lost, enemy and friend.
Death was not an option for a lone soldier.

Onward feet move,
Dragging themselves across the grassland, mud and sand.
Arriving at their final destination, the journey is not complete.

Bombs blast in the distance,
Was it too late?
A paper holding the fate of 1600 seemed ridiculous.

The only way was over,
Over the top.
Pushing upwards, war greeted the lone soldier.
He could not save them all as lives had already
Been lost.

Arriving at the end point the paper was handed in,
reluctantly, men spared men.

Lives were lost, but only a few. The injured were
Healed and the men made their way back.
Coughing, sneezing, wobbling, wheezing.



We would not be here to live on this day if it weren't for our men who fought Jerry away. There is no debt that we can not alay except to our troopers who we leave without pay. With Jerry defeated the war had been won, with that final retreat of the Germans, the Hun.

Time for carousing there was to be none for in 21 years was one more to be done. Our heroes now rest In a field of red, the colour of blood, of the blood that they shed. You walk on that field, on the land they now tread, among flowers of life, to remember the dead.



Happy Friday from Victoria class.

It has been lovely to have the students back in school for the last three weeks. We have missed having the hustle and bustle of the classroom and I have certainly enjoyed sampling all of the food being made in OT sessions. A special mention at this point to Natty for his delightful fishcakes and Isaac for his huge and delicious chocolate cake.

This week Victoria have been taking part in some excellent activities and talks for World Autism Awareness Week. These have included a very insightful talk delivered by Robyn Steward. We have also taken part in a food carving session, with several students overcoming their sensory issues to take part.

Finally, the students have had the opportunity to take part in a puzzle box 'escape the room' type game. This involved them working really well as a team to solve the mystery of alien life on earth.

Thank you to Miss Wiltshire for setting up these activities for us to enjoy over the week and thank you to Miss Camilleri who has arranged an Easter egg hunt for us before the Easter break.

From everyone here in Victoria, we hope you all have a fantastic Easter break. Stay safe and we look forward to seeing you after the holidays.

Mr Gibbs

Victoria Class Teacher

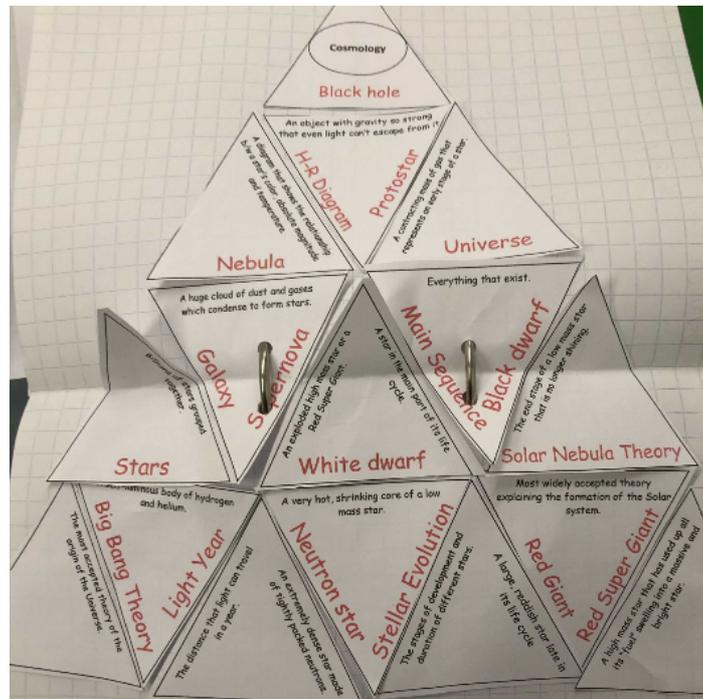


DLR have had a busy few weeks back in school but have settled back into their lessons well. In the last few weeks the students have been busy with A Level assignments and GCSE work as well as college assignments and exams.

Life Skills lessons are going really well. The students have been pushing their culinary skills and making some more complicated dishes of late. These have been very much appreciated by staff and students within their bubble. It would be really nice for students to try out these dishes at home so that their families can appreciate their cooking.

Nicky was asked to create a press release for a charity he volunteers for remotely and worked on this in his spare time.

In Astronomy, Rafael created this Astronomy Tarsia.



Chicks visit DLR

DLR enjoyed looking after the chicks this week and the staff were very happy to take them home for the evening. Abde had a great idea of where to keep the chicks while the students cleaned them out.

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College News

Dario has been busy at college taking more plumbing and electrical exams and working on practical assessments. Abde has completed some mock exams in English at college and is going in during the holidays too for another exam. Well done Abde for such commitment.

Max has been working hard, keeping up with his assignments which is great to see. He is also working really well with Ms. Perera in his Maths lessons.

Once lockdown restrictions begin to be lifted, we hope to be able to take the students out to places where they can do activities and socialise with each other. We have also begun planning for the Sixth Form prom and the students have come up with some great ideas.



Nicky's vegetarian risotto



Chicken stir fry by DLR students

Thank you to all DLR students and staff team for their hard work this term.

I look forward to seeing you all after Easter!



Hello, Parents and Carers.

I hope you are well and keeping safe.

WOW! I can't believe we have come to the end of another term. Time is really flying. It has been an eventful and jam packed term and I know I speak for the whole Metropolitan team when I say that we are tremendously proud of all the students.

Coming back three weeks ago was difficult for all, after being at home for so long. The school looked different, new rules were put in place and testing commenced at school. The students have made the school and their families proud with how they have coped with all of the changes.

This week has (in the words of Clara) 'Roarsome'. Everyone has completed their end of term assessments and completed another section of their exams.

This week's gardening session took part at the pond and what a delight it was. It was wonderful to see the students engaging, discussing and laughing together, all whilst the sun was shining on us all. What better way to end the term!

Thank you to Guy, Chisom and Ediz for helping clear out the pond area and for treating creatures with respect. I would like to thank Clara especially for her amazing efforts and for catching the biggest newt and dragonfly! She has now been given a new nickname in the class.... Cap Catcher!

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I would like to finish by thanking Metropolitan for the understanding in these difficult times, their patience with testing and for their resilience with all work given to them. You are amazing human beings.

Lastly, I would like to thank my amazing Metropolitan staff team for continuing to go above and beyond to ensure the students are safe, but most importantly, happy. So thank you, Mr Murphy, Ms Eva and Ms Khalil. You are all greatly appreciated!

On behalf of myself and the rest of the Metropolitan team, we would like to thank you for your continued support and wish you and your families a wonderful Easter break.

Best wishes,

Ms Perera

Metropolitan Class Teacher

Drama News

I would like to say how extremely proud I am of all our students who have returned to the classroom learning environment so well. It has been lovely to be back together and do practical drama. I would like to share a selection of images taken in our drama lessons.

Piccadilly and District classes have made new sock puppets and after listening to a workshop on how to be a Ventriloquist, performed some great duets.

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Piccadilly Class students exploring the movement of a slimy grumpy snake!

Circle and Victoria classes have been exploring how to build the tension in a scene. Working on a scripted extract with an improvisation ending

Elizabeth Class have been rehearsing a short play set on Christmas Eve during WW11 in the trenches. It is a revived script pre covid that the students have developed. This week we finally managed to film their work, catching a moment when the playground was free.

Students from Northern, Bakerloo and Central have all been working hard on an element for their Silver Arts Award, Interviewing an Artist and writing a review.

Thank you all so much for your support and the respect you have shown me and your peers during our lessons. I have had a really good half term, hope you have enjoyed it as much as me.

Ms Axetorn

Drama Teacher

Red Nose Day Onesies!







Designated Team For Child Protection And Safeguarding

If you are a student and have been harmed, or are at risk of harm, these are the people

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Lower School			
			
Ms D'Silva (Assistant Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Lemposzek (Head of Welfare & Behaviour, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Mr Gibbs (Humanities & PSHE Teacher, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)
Upper School			
			
Mr Lamb (Deputy Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Upper School, Level 3)	Ms Young (Head of School and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Young (Assistant Head and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)

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