



THE HOLMEWOOD
SCHOOL



National
Autistic
Society

Accredited
Advanced
2020



Newsletter

Friday 02 July 2021

Dear Families,

This week at Holmewood has focused on transition preparation with students spending time with their new class teams and peers. This work will continue over the last few weeks and will include visits from the two new teachers joining the school in September. Thank you to Stephanie Wiltshire, our Lead Autism Teacher for ensuring students are as well prepared as possible and that all their questions are answered.

This week we also celebrated Pride and supported our LGBTQ+ community.

Student and staff allies learnt about LGBTQ+ history in assembly, shared stories of amazing trailblazers, wore rainbows, and shared some delicious cupcakes.

We have a wide LGBTQ+ community at our school and for us, showing solidarity and support is both special and important.



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time. Natty is a talented young artist and the portrait is a wonderful gift. Thank you Natty, I will treasure it always.

Wishing you all a happy weekend.

Ms Camilleri

Executive Head Teacher

Dates For Your Diary

- **Mon 12th July** - Student of the Year awards (whole school)
- **Wed 14th July** - Sports Day at Dwight School (9am - 12 noon)
- **Wed 14th July** - End of term
- **Thurs 15th July** - Inset day

The Final Frontier

Recently I met a prospective student who really likes space. Specifically, he is interested in planets and stars. He doesn't like rocketships and he's not interested in the history of space. I'm glad he told me about that when I first met him, because I was about to launch into a monologue about Neil Armstrong, who I personally really admire. Anyway, this young person thinks aliens exist, obviously.

Matching him with another learner who also likes space (there's a few of them at Holmewood of course) seems like an obvious and easy friendship match. Big mistake.

A current student also likes space. Specifically, the engineering of rockets. He doesn't believe in aliens because it's against his religion.

Both of these autistic young people are considered 'highly functioning', they are abstract interpreters with subtle but significant social difficulties. They both have a solid self-awareness - they know how they feel about something, like space, but they think others feel the same way as them. In other words, they lack the theory of mind to know that others have thoughts, opinions and feelings of their own.

They both show well above average cognitive abilities, but they have difficulty using language to connect with each other. When you stick these two in the playground together and hope for the best, one starts talking about rockets, the other about aliens. We shouldn't be surprised when we find them two minutes later pacing around the perimeter, or in crisis.

independent life. Unfortunately so many of our young people have had negative and ineffective social experiences which have led them to feel bullied, unheard and weird. Of course they will become socially anxious as a result.

The Social Thinking Framework tells us why and how we need to plug gaps in social competencies, so that these two young people can get along and become friends.

A trained member of staff can get these two young people together and start a conversation about space. The staff member connects the special interests of both students, lets them know when they are monologuing, prompts them to ask a question, and reminds them to be in the moment. All three have an enjoyable time and walk away uplifted.

It's most awkward when students start picking out gaps in staff conversational competence, but I suppose that's when we know we've made an impact. Now, back to Neil Armstrong, did you know...

Ms Young

Head of Upper School

The Appliance of Science - Circuits

Our Bakerloo and Northern classes this week were looking at, and building, series and parallel circuits. This is important in household wiring and electronic devices.

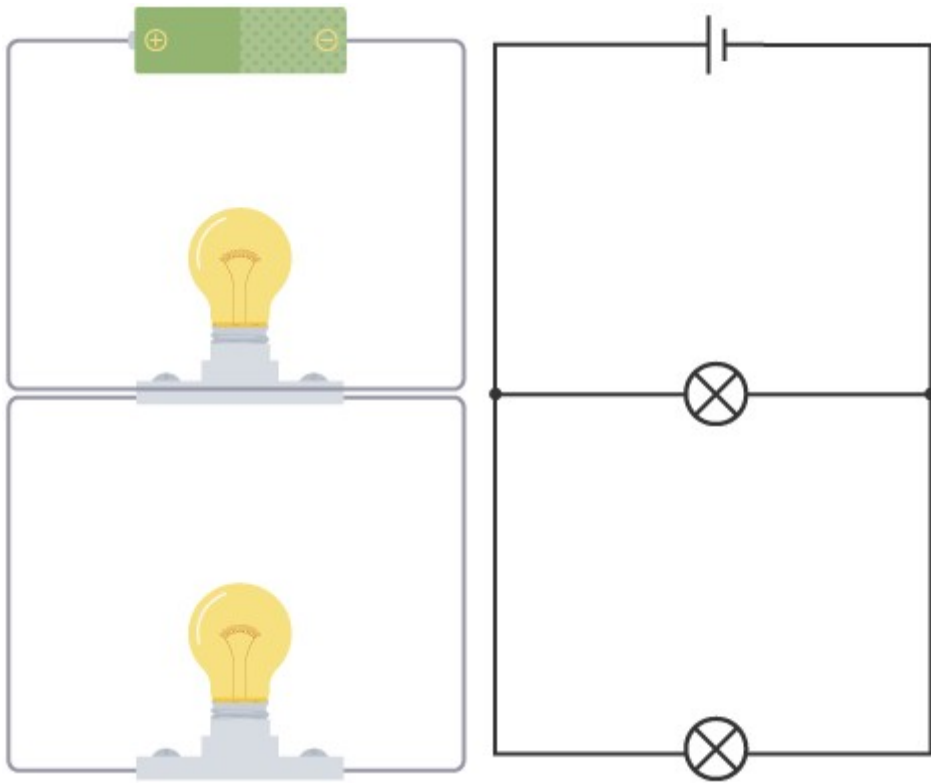
There are two types of circuits we can make, called series and parallel. The components in a circuit are joined by wires. If there are no branches then it's a series circuit. If there are branches it's a parallel circuit.

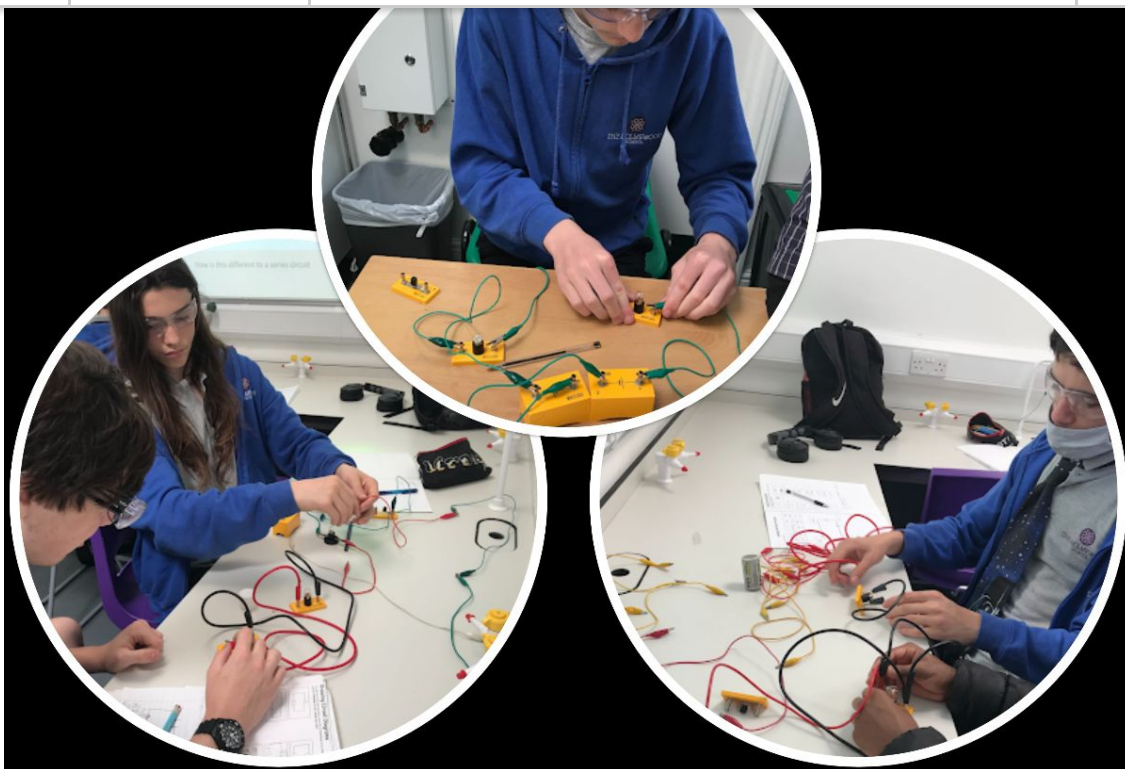
In a television series, you get several episodes, one after the other. A series circuit is similar. You get several components one after the other.

If you follow the circuit diagram from one side of the cell to the other, you should pass through all the different components, one after the other, without any branches.

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In parallel circuits different components are connected on different branches of the wire. If you follow the circuit diagram from one side of the cell to the other, you can only pass through all the different components if you follow all the branches.





Have a great weekend everyone!

Mr Podichetty

Science Teacher

Indian Miniature Art

Ekin (Victoria Class) has been inspired to paint this beautiful art work from an art lesson on Indian Miniatures with Mr Tonkin.

Ekin is a very talented young man and it is not a long time ago Ekin told us he ordered paint so he could start working on his own art work at home. And here we have such a beautiful piece of art that he has been working on after school.



Ekin commented *"It is a painting of Indian Miniature that I found on Google and I decided to paint it because I love the colours and the details. After an art lesson with Mr Tonkin on Indian Miniature I felt inspired to google them and paint my own Indian miniature and I chose this beautiful piece to draw and paint. It took me one week to complete this painting because it is very long and has a lot of detail"*.

During PSHE with Mr Gibbs, Ekin has also been working on ideas for business plans and

of artwork for a week after school.

Well done Ekin on producing such wonderful artwork!

Ms Moeller

Victoria Class Teaching Assistant

Cats Careers Talk... Meeeowww

Yesterday we were lucky enough to have a remote session with Cats Protection, the biggest cat charity in the UK.

They contacted us to offer education sessions around understanding the behaviour of cats and careers with cats - which links to our careers education programme and is based on the interests of many of our students.

The talk was very interesting and informative for all who joined (staff included!).

They very kindly shared follow up links and resources with us, to support anymore learning the students would like to do:

You can find more ideas and learning resources on their website:

www.cats.org.uk/education. You may also enjoy their brand new education Facebook group, which regularly features cat facts, videos, crafts and lots of other fun things too: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/catsprotecteducation>

Other useful links include:

- Our feline focus downloadable activity packs: <https://education.cats.org.uk/feline-focus/>
- Our "Careers with cats" pages: <https://education.cats.org.uk/for-kids/careers-with-cats/>
- Our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/catsprotection>

Tomisin... The Real Karate Kid

Congratulations to Tomisin (Circle Class), who achieved a Karate yellow belt grading.

Tomisin attends Karate classes outside of school and practiced really hard to pass

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Tomisin will now be working towards his orange belt. We look forward to Tomisin becoming a black belt one day!

Well done Tomisin!

We are very proud of you.



Things in DLR have been busy. In fact, things have been so incredibly busy that Ms Gunning has had no time at all to write this week's newsletter article. Instead, DLR Class have enlisted Nicky, one of DLR Class student to write our article. We hope you enjoy it. Thank you Nicky...

Where to begin? Well, we're planning to visit Thorpe Park on Monday as our main end-of-year trip. It'll be well-deserved too, as all of my students (especially me), have been working thoroughly over these past few months towards achieving their best at their A-levels, diplomas and GCSEs whilst also dealing with the challenges and curveballs brought up by the ongoing pandemic.

The upcoming trip next week won't be the only final term activity. Myself and my fellow DLR students will have the pleasure of looking back on in the future. Last week, some of DLR went kayaking, meanwhile Mr. Ali, Ms Gunning, Abde and I enjoyed a delicious lunch at a local Japanese restaurant. To be clear, this was completely my brilliant idea and wasn't at all planned in advance by Ms Gunning!

In other news, the next pathway steps for those in my class have become more apparent, with both Raf and Abde having recently performed brilliantly at college interviews. The former will be studying computer animation, and the latter, hasn't yet decided on a subject, though has successfully secured a placement. Additionally, Dov will continue to learn music production, Michael plans to complete his level 3 engineering course, Dario will be doing Level 3 in plumbing and Max has been offered an internship placement at the NHS.

from the London Metropolitan University. I will be undertaking a degree in Journalism from September. Ms Gunning told me she was immensely proud of me and that she will miss me greatly along with my ability to quickly write unbiased school magazine features at short notice on her behalf! Actually, losing that might just be what Ms Gunning is most saddened about by my departure!

Nicky

DLR Student

Speech And Language Therapy News

This week we are introducing the Social Thinking core concept 3:



Teaching Social Competencies—More Than Social Skills

The Group Plan

The 'Group Plan' means understanding group dynamics. For example: being in the classroom (and expected to work quietly), or working in pairs, playing a game, hanging out socially with friends and so on. Understanding that there is a group plan supports students to think outside of 'self' and into 'group thinking'; what it means to be part of a group and part of something bigger than themselves.



By learning how to cooperate, collaborate and be a teamplayer we strengthen our knowledge of the social world and our place within it.

Being a part of a group is different from following your own 'plan'

It involves sharing thoughts and understanding that other people's thoughts and feelings might be different from your own. We have been working on these strategies with students. We have encouraged them to notice when they have a different thought or idea to somebody else. When you 'read' somebody else's plan (including the teacher's!) you might need to alter your own.

Understanding the 'group plan' (and one's role in it) is a skill that requires social attention, social interpretation and problem solving. Talking about the group plan helps children know what is expected, and what they think about and do when they are part of a group. When everyone is following the group plan, we are thinking about each other

hard to predict what they may do next.

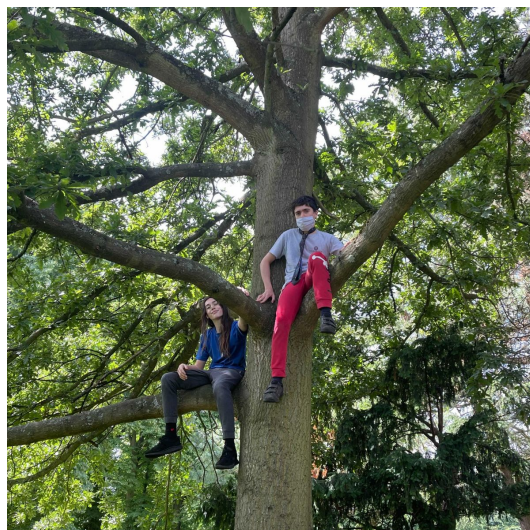
Take-away strategies:

- Students need to become aware that they are part of a group, whether this is a social playground group, their class or a different group. The role of the adult is to label and identify the group plan (and to contrast that with following your own plan).
- Support your children to think about what others are doing in the group. Encourage them to observe both the language being used and help them to think about how they could respond. Prompt them to think of a follow up question.
- Encourage your children to read the non-verbal communication of others (e.g. eye gaze, facial expressions, body language and gesture). Prompt them to think about what others might be thinking or how they might be feeling based on their verbal and non-verbal clues (particularly in a group setting).

Ms Wallis Jones and Ms Nash

Speech & Language Therapists

The Holmewood Gallery















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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 who can help. You can also talk to us if you are worried that another student is at risk of harm.

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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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