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THE HOLMEWOOD
SCHOOL



National
Autistic
Society

Accredited
Advanced
2020



Newsletter

Friday 13th November 2020

Dear Families,

This week I was touched to hear, see and read some wonderful work and thoughts about Armistice Day, reflecting on the lives of those who lived through the terrible experience of war. I am never truly surprised by the empathy and understanding of our students, but I am always extremely moved.

In our remembrance, one student told us about his grandfather's participation in World War 2 and others were keen to listen and share poems.

Thank you to all those who shared their work and took the time to think about those who lost their lives or lost loved ones.



"It is important to remember those who have given their lives for us." Natty, Lower School.

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our 10th birthday. The deadline for entries is today so judging will begin over the next week. I have a feeling that this will be a very difficult job!

Next week starts with the first meeting of this year's student council. At the meeting Ms Young and I will be taking nominations for the Student Chairperson. This year, we have decided to have a Lower School Chair and an Upper School Chair. Nominees will be campaigning over the next two weeks and all the students will be invited to vote on Thursday 26th November. Our aim is to replicate our national process as far as possible so do encourage your children to listen to the candidates speeches, hear what they are passionate about, and vote accordingly.

Finally, I'd like to wish all those celebrating Diwali this weekend a wonderfully special time. It's sad that people can not be together to celebrate this year but I hope that your own private celebrations bring you joy and happiness.

Wishing you all a peaceful weekend safe in your homes.

Ms Camilleri
Head Teacher

Dates For Your Diary

- **Mon 30th Nov** - 10th Birthday fancy dress parties at Lower and Upper Schools
- **Wed 16th Dec** - Last day of Autumn term
- **Tues 5th & Wed 6th Jan** - Inset days
- **Thurs 7th Jan** - Spring term (1st half) starts

Sincere Compliments Are Gifts Of Praise

This half-term I will be drilling down on the aspects of the 'be yourself' part of the 'be yourself and be better' framework. Today's focus will be 'know yourself and your strengths'. You can read the original article [here](#).

In order to receive a diagnosis of Autism, our young people will have been through all manner of tests from a diverse range of professionals. Their needs will have been documented in black and white in an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and

Unfortunately, this journey may have resulted in a negative sense of self, as it may have resulted in an increased focus on deficits, despite the EHCP requiring an acknowledgment of strengths alongside needs. And even if there had been a focus on both strengths and needs, the brain has a built in bias that tends to make us focus on the negative. Unfortunately these negative perceptions of self may have also been reinforced by bullying and exclusion, which many of our young people have faced in previous settings and in the community.

At Holmewood our young people may feel more accepted because their peers all have a similar diagnosis and the focus of the staff is on understanding the needs of autistic people. Unfortunately they will not be in this sort of environment forever. While we must focus on meeting our young people's needs, we must not forget the importance of acknowledging specific strengths. This is so that when our young people are engaging with the wider world, they have the confidence to share their gifts while also advocating for increased accessibility.

It is therefore our responsibility to give sincere and specific praise so that our young people will understand their strengths better. Merely complimenting their 'intelligence' or 'creativity' or saying they are 'great at maths' for example will not support them in understanding their strengths. These sorts of comments are not clear or concrete enough, and may even have a detrimental effect because simply possessing creativity or intelligence won't equal success. Their strengths need to be honed and harnessed so that they will balance out the very real challenges that they may face in the future.

We should apply the neurodiversity support framework to giving sincere praise - say it explicitly and break it down, then explain the relevance. For example, recently I admired a beautiful piece of artwork one of our students had completed for the Holmewood 10th birthday celebrations. I acknowledged how hard he had worked to complete the piece, and explained that I particularly liked the colours and the perspective he used. I reiterated how important attention to detail is, as well as how important it is to be able to finish a project.



Artwork by Patrick Humphries

Sincere compliments are gifts because they show a person that they have been truly seen. For our young people, specific praise helps give them a better understanding of what they have to offer the world as well as the confidence to offer it.

Ms Young

Head of Upper School

Happy Diwali

Lead me from darkness to light

Diwali is one of the most awaited festivals in India. However, it is celebrated across the world. Diwali or Deepavali, meaning a string of lights represents the victory of good versus evil, and light versus darkness. Having so many beautiful epic stories to signify Diwali, for me it is the realisation of the light within all of us which has the power to shine through the obstacles in life. Diwali's essence lies in the sloka (song), 'Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya' which means "Lead me from darkness to light."

Typically, Diwali is celebrated over 5 days and the dates are based on the Hindu calendar falling between October and November. Each day has its own significance and the elders in the family guide the younger generations to prepare for the 5 days of grand celebration.

many people turn to buying new things, mainly some form of metal such as gold and silver.

Day 2. Naraka Chaturdashi:

This day is celebrated for the victory of Lord Krishna's over the demon Narakasura, freeing 16,000 captive princesses. On this day, we would get up early in the morning, use scented oils to take a bath, dress up in new clothes and visit temples.

**Day 3: Lakshmi Pooja:**

On this day goddess Lakshmi is worshipped, she is thought to be the goddess of wealth and fortune. She symbolizes good luck and wellbeing for all. Traditional rituals are carried out, typically the whole house is lit with oil lamps, and lighting; the doors are left open to welcome goddess Lakshmi to give her blessing. Decorative coloured sand patterns are drawn at the entrance of the house to welcome prosperity and delicious Diwali sweets are offered to family and friends.

**Day 4: Govardhan Puja and Padwa:**

villagers by lifting the mighty Govardhan Hill and provided the villagers shelter from the thunderstorms and rains.



Day 5: Bhai Dooj:

The last day of Diwali is a special honour between siblings.

They get together to acknowledge the bond, exchange presents, prepare special delicacies and vow to look after each other at all times.



For me, the days leading up to Diwali have always been precious and most memorable. Because, I remember as a child my mum would set out an advanced two week plan for preparations before Diwali. These were fun times for the whole family coming together spending many afternoons making Diwali snacks and sweets, buying presents and fire crackers, and cleaning the whole house to welcome friends and family. We were quite cheeky because we looked forward to the part of getting money from our grandparents and other elders during Diwali, so that we could save up and buy things.

Diwali is the time to come together, forget differences, forgive and embrace the feeling of gratitude for what you have. It is acknowledging the light within all of us.

I wish you all a very Happy Diwali!

10th Birthday Merchandise

On the 30th of November Holmewood will celebrate its 10th birthday.

To mark this special achievement we have procured some special promotional merchandise which are available to purchase from the school office:



	Holmewood Supersoft Teddy Bear - Grey with red nose wearing a Holmewood t-shirt; 15cm	£10 each
	Hanging Calendar - A3; featuring student's art pieces from both Lower and Upper school	£7 each
	Celebratory Enamel Pin - 30mm diameter featuring the 10th Anniversary logo	£2.50 each
	Holmewood Pale Ale - 500ml bottle; 3.8% abv; vegan friendly; Produced by the IVO Brewery; Winning a silver award for Premium Pale Ale East 2020 and regional award winners in the Siba Digital beer awards and Gold for their dark beers	£5 each (or 4 bottles for £18)

The Appliance of Science: Chromatography

They investigated the different coloured pigments found in different flavours of Skittles and then applied their knowledge of chromatography to solve a crime.

Students found a ransom note from the evil Dr Colossus demanding a ransom of £1,000,000 otherwise he would deplete the Earth's ozone layer. Students had to compare chromatogram patterns from the ransom note against pens confiscated from four suspects accused of working for Dr Colossus.



Using their scientific investigative skills, students were able to match the pen to a suspect who led Springfield Police straight to Dr Colossus' laboratory where he was promptly apprehended, foiling his plans.

Well done Victoria Class for all your hard work.

Happy Diwali everyone!

U-Space

U-Space is a safe social club learning about LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) history as well as genders, identities and sexualities.

I created this club to ensure there is a safe space for students who want to learn more about these topics, share ideas and also have a space to express themselves and their feelings.

The aim of the club is to help students have their questions answered and to also have a place to feel comfortable enough to ask questions and discuss with staff and other peers about thoughts they are having and to have a better understanding.

At Holmewood we pride ourselves on the diversity and inclusivity we have here and this club is a great place to build more on that and to help students understand the differences we all have and acceptance of each individual.

Mr Ashdown

Teaching Assistant

My Top 10 - Mr Podichetty

To celebrate Diwali, our very own Science Teacher, Mr Podichetty, lists his all time Top 10 Indian heroes.

As you will see the people listed by Mr Podichetty are worthy choices.



10. Amitabh Bachchan - Bollywood actor

9. A.R. Rahman - Composer; awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award

8. Lata Mangeshkar - Vocalist; recorded songs in over a thousand Hindi films

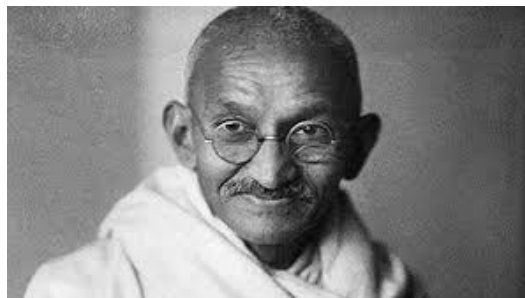
7. Sachin Tendulkar - Cricketer; highest run scorer of all time in International cricket

6. J.R.D. Tata - Indian aviator; entrepreneur; chairman of Tata Group.

5. Mother Teresa - Charity worker; nun & missionary, Nobel Peace Prize winner

4. Jawaharlal Nehru – First Prime Minister of India

1. Mahatma Gandhi – Indian independence leader



A big hello from Victoria.

We have been hard at work in all our subjects this year with special mentions for Huxley in Science, Jonathan in English and Natty for his independence in life skills since returning from half term.

However, the big talking point in the class this month has been Isaac's Bar Mitzvah.

Due to the current situation with COVID, Isaac's ceremony was transferred to an online setting. This meant that he was unable to celebrate in the traditional manner with his family and friends.

Thanks to Matt and Eliza and the quick thinking of Ms Lempaszek we were able to hold a celebration at school in the form of a silent disco.

The celebration was held for the entire Lower School, with social distance regulations adhered to and was accompanied by a lovely presentation by the birthday boy talking all about the history and importance of Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

interesting and we all had a fun time at the silent disco afterwards.



I must also give a special mention to Natty, Isaac, Jack and Ekin, who all took part in the first THSL TED talks just before half term. Jack completed a talk on stoats, Natty educated us on the evolution of the phone, Isaac took us on an adventure around Europe's train lines and Ekin gave us a lesson in Turkish culture. I was really proud of all of those that took part and I know that Jonathan is very keen to present his hard work at the next talk.

From everyone here in Victoria we wish you all a fun and relaxing weekend.

Mr Gibbs

Victoria Class



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Abde has been working hard at college, completing assignments for his Childcare course and working on his Maths and English lessons both in college and remotely.

Michael has adapted well to yet more changes to his timetable and has been studying Maths, Building Production, Mechanical processes and CAD.

In History students have been learning about Henry VIII and his ministers, particularly Thomas Cromwell.

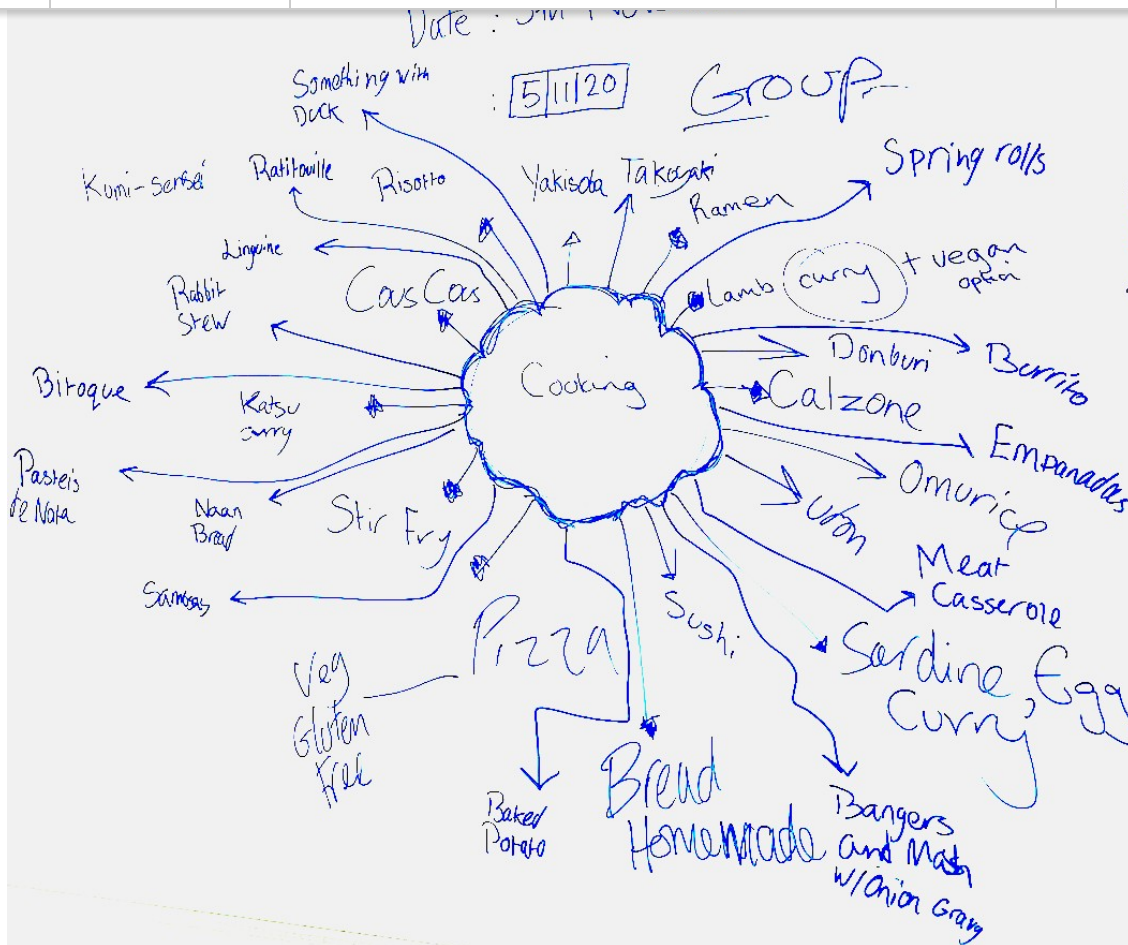
Rafael and Dov have been extra helpful recently and have been helping Mr Tysman and Ms Gunning update student timetables as well as tidy up the DLR form room. A big thank you to them both.

Max and Nicky are working on evolution of English language and have both been working on presentations to the rest of the class.

In Astronomy the students have been learning about planetary systems, how planets form, the variety of planets and arrangement in our solar system. Next will be exoplanets and SETI (Search for ExtraTerrestrial Intelligence).

Meanwhile in Plumbing, Dario passed one of his test papers on Health and Safety last week. Well done Dario.

In life skills this half term we will be cooking foods from other countries. When the students were asked what they would like to do they came up with many dishes from around the world.



The students will be voting so we can decide which dishes we are going to cook up until Christmas. It was so lovely that they were so enthusiastic and came up with so many ideas for dishes. Maybe they could try out some of these over the holidays.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please make sure that school and college emails are checked regularly, including over the weekend in case any unexpected changes happen, particularly at college.

Wishing you all a Happy Diwali and a restful weekend.

Ms Gunning & Mr Tysman
DLR Class

British Dyslexia Association: Free Webinar For Parents

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children

Date: Thursday 19th November 2020

Time: 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Too often we hear children say "I hate Maths" or parents say "I couldn't do maths at school"?

This brief talk will look at how children acquire maths skills and what are the sort of influences and experiences that impair progress in learning maths. The talk will also address lots of practical ways that parents can encourage and help their child to develop positive enjoyment and success in learning maths.

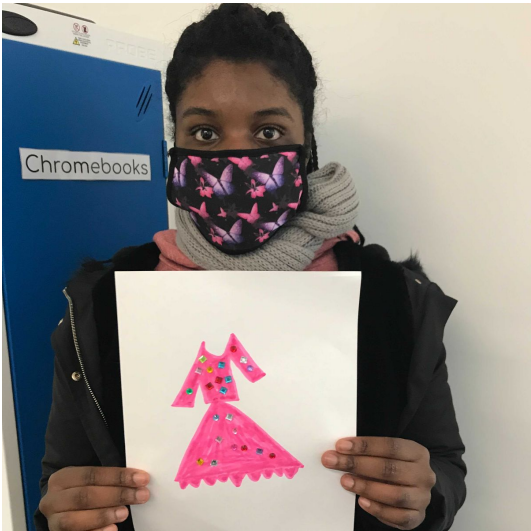
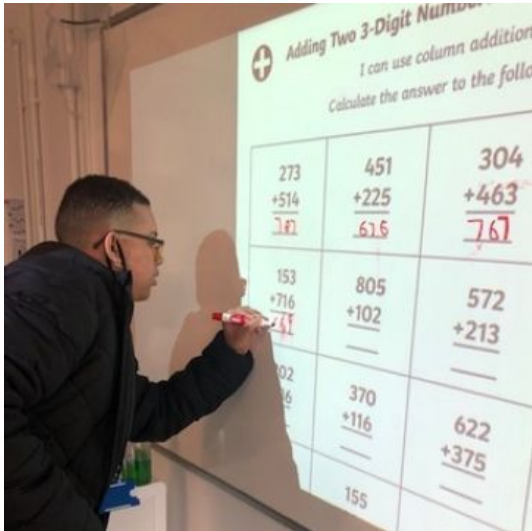
To book your place click [here](#).

Ms Gallagher

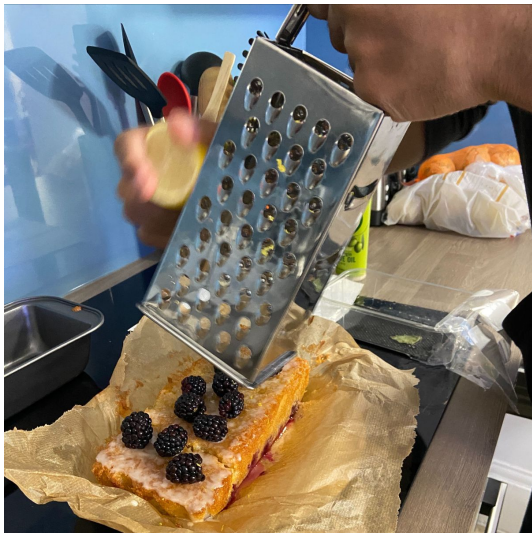
Specialist Teacher & Assessor

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.



Mr Lamb
(Deputy Head and
Lead Designated
Safeguarding
Officer for Upper
School
(DSO, Level 3)



Ms D'Silva
(Assistant Head
and Lead
Designated
Safeguarding
Officer for Lower
School, Level 3)



Ms Camilleri
(Executive Head
Teacher, CEOP
Ambassador and
Deputy DSO,
Level 3)



Ms Young
(Head of School
and Deputy DSO,
Level 3)



Ms Young
(Assistant Head
and Deputy DSO,
Level 3)

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