
Grey Coat

Number 136



THE PARENTS' NEWS LETTER OF THE GREY COAT HOSPITAL

OCTOBER 2007

Dear parents,

I was disappointed not to see more of you at the consultation event about where to site the new the Arts block that we are going to be able to build at St Andrew's under the government's Building Schools for the Future programme. This is particularly relevant to parents of students in Years 7 and 8, as your daughters will still be in the school when the new block is built. My preferred option is to build an extension onto the existing Arts block on the East side, extending it straight across to Horseferry Road. (**Option 4** on the architect's drawings.) This would provide all the space we need for drama, art and music, with state of the art facilities, while taking away as little as possible from our current amenities. The site is largely dead space, and the building would go against an ugly blank wall, and an area of unsightly dustbin stores. The governors also favour this option.

The Lower School Council raised some concerns, however. They were anxious about whether having the building near the road would be a health and safety problem. I don't think this would be an issue, as entry into the building would still be through the play ground. The gate would be moved a bit further down. A more serious regret would be the need to remove a large plane tree that grows there. This is also a major planning issue and threatens to prevent us from putting the extension in this position.



Option 4

The architect has suggested four other options for siting the new block, but all of them damage the school environment far more than this.

Option 2 is sited in the playground in front of the plane tree by the dustbin area. This option saves the plane tree by enclosing it in a small courtyard, but would entail the loss of the other huge plane tree growing at the edge of the playground by the wooden shelters. This option does not give us all the space we need for the arts subjects, nor does it help us improve the dining facilities as option 4 would do. Worst of all, it would make it impossible to provide adequate PE facilities in the playground. We want to put a full size netball court there when the building work is complete, but this

would not be able to fit in if the building was placed in front of the plane tree. There might be room for a small amount of parking in the courtyard, but there would still be a need to put a new entrance to the playground further down, and vehicles coming in and out could not be kept separate from the PE teaching area. This option would be a disaster.

The lower school council members liked the idea of building on the



Option 2

existing netball court and re-establishing the netball court on the roof. (Option 5) They liked the fact that this building would be lower – fewer stairs to go up and down - and thought doing PE on the roof would be fun. Unfortunately the difficulty of getting this option through planning would be even greater than the first option, and I think we would almost certainly lose two large plane trees instead of one, as building so close to them would fatally damage the roots. We would also lose part of the

garden to provide vehicle access from the road to the new building, and would have to do without the existing Arts block and café during the construction period, which could last for two years. I am not sure where more temporary classrooms could go. No extra temporary classrooms would be needed for option 4, as we would retain the use of the café and art room until the new building was almost complete. The final break-through to the extension



Option 5

would be done in the summer holidays.

Options 1 and 3 are both sited directly on the landscaped garden area at St Andrew's. Option 1 is sited on the grass in front of the hall windows, with a glassed-in atrium 6.5 metres wide between the two buildings. This would not require the removal

of any large plane trees, but we would lose a cherry tree, a red chestnut, a crab apple and an enormous old pear tree. Apart from the loss of the view of the garden from the hall and the chapel, one could also question the wisdom of putting potentially noisy activities like music and dining in a position which would be likely to disturb whatever was going on in the hall, chapel, staff room and maths corridor. The Lower School Council raised serious questions about



Option 1

whether enclosing the south facing maths classrooms and the hall in a large glass box would increase the over-heating and ventilation problems we already face in the summer.

Option 3 is on the West side of the existing arts block, where the fountain is, and extending forward over part of the lawn. This option would also require the removal of a number of trees, including the mulberry tree on the lawn in front of the café, two large plane trees and several other smaller trees in the fountain area. Members of the Lower School Council expressed dismay at the thought of losing this space which provides a valued area of calm.



Option 3

I would be extremely interested to hear your views on these five options for the new building. The plans produced for the consultation event are still on display in the foyer at St Andrew's and you are welcome to come in during or

after the school day to have a look and write down your views. Alternatively, do feel free to write to me to tell me what your preferences or concerns are. I am determined to get the best solution for the school, as this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve the teaching and learning environment for our students.

Rachel Allard

Attendance & Punctuality

If your child is absent for any reason, please remember to phone the school between 8 and 9am to let us know. The phone number for reporting absences is 0207 969 1998. For years 7-9, please press option 1 and for years 10-13 please press Option 2.



Please make sure we are notified in writing as far in advance as possible of any medical appointments. Please make sure the letter clearly states the time the students need to leave and the time and type of appointment.

Your daughter's full name and Form should be on the note. Attendance and Punctuality is taken into account in all aspects of school life.



*Angela Trainor & Vivien Moore
Attendance and Punctuality Officers*

Attendance & Punctuality Years 7, 8 and 9

Attendance

Attendance has been good so far although we are now going into the winter term where we might possibly have adverse weather conditions. Please make sure you eat healthily and wrap up warmly. Winter coats may be worn over blazers after half term. Please try where possible to make Medical appointments outside of school hours to cause minimum disruption to your learning.

Punctuality

Punctuality has been disappointing this term and I hope there will be a significant improvement during the next term. Trips are now being advertised and participation may depend on Attendance and Punctuality if the trip is oversubscribed, so it is in your best interest to arrive every day on time. *Angela Trainor, Attendance and Punctuality Officer, St Andrew's*

Years 10 & 11

Attendance

A big "THANK YOU" to parents/carers who follow the procedure when their daughter is absent from school, which is telephoning the school as early as possible each day to inform the school that your daughter is not well enough to attend, giving a reason and providing a note on their return to school.

Punctuality

Punctuality is of the utmost importance at Grey Coat and it is taken into account in all aspects of school life. Please allow plenty of time when travelling by London Transport to arrive in school before 8.30am.

Vivien Moore, Attendance & Punctuality Officer, St. Michael's



9Y Wins Best Form for Attendance & Punctuality

*Photos: Students from 9Y having a fantastic time
at their Pizza Express lunch. Well Done Girls!*

Video Conference with Germany

Since 2001 the European Union has celebrated the European Day of Languages on 26th September. This year some Grey Coat students were able to mark the day by taking part in a video conference with students at our partner school, the Annette-von-Droste-Hülshoff School in Münster, Germany. With the help of Roger Bloxham, the Westminster coordinator, the link was set up in the preceding week and two "rehearsals" took place. On the day five girls in Year 9 and two in Year 11, who are taking part in the German exchange, were able to "meet" and talk to their partners. Despite a certain amount of shyness on both sides, the girls all enjoyed the experience and managed to use both German and English in their discussion. Now this link has been established we hope to enable more students to have this experience in future. Sixth formers should be able to discuss issues with their peers in Germany and Year 8 students may be able to try out what they have already learnt before considering an exchange themselves next year.

Lesley Dean



Photos: Conference views from London and Münster.



8T's Incredible Science Lesson

On Monday 17th September, Period 6, 8T had a science lesson that was utterly unforgettable. Lee, from TheBigBugShow.com, came in and showed us huge cockroaches that scrambled all over our hands, wriggly millipedes (many of us decided to only stroke them!) and two tarantulas! Though we were told not to scream, I don't doubt that the classes opposite were slightly disturbed by the many squeals from A43!

Poisonous millipedes and hairy-legged tarantulas may be one thing, but dead mealy worms are another. Brave Imogen and Athalia were given them, and asked to eat them!

"It tastes like popcorn," Imogen quoted. Soon enough, almost everyone was crunching bugs on the way out of the lesson! I'd like to say thank you very much to Lee, and I am proud to be part of such an incredible science lesson! *Anna Lezard in 8T*



... and Teachers Got Involved too!



Success in the work place

Following the success of the OCR qualification 'Preparation for Work Experience' Level 2 last year (equivalent to half a GCSE), Ms Kaur and Mrs O'Sullivan again entered students for this accreditation. In total eleven students were entered of whom four were GNVQ Year 12 students and seven were Year 11 students. All the students this year passed all four units and achieved full accreditation. The feedback we received from the external moderator was very positive, congratulating the girls on the high standard of their portfolios.

Black History Month Competition

To commemorate Black History Month, our Cultural Awareness Prefects have launched a competition which is open to all students.

There are two categories for entry according to if you are in lower or upper school, with two sets of prizes. Prizes are as follows:

- Two 1st prizes of an iPod nano
- Two 2nd prizes - £50 HMV voucher
- Two 3rd prizes - £25 HMV voucher

Question:

Write a 500-750 word essay about a person (man/woman) of African/ African-American/Caribbean origin who has inspired you.

The closing date for entry is Friday 9th November 2007.

Work Experience

Last July the current Year 11 had 9 days work experience in a variety of placements.

In last month's Newsletter we told you all about the girls' experiences so this month we thought we'd show you a couple of photos of them in their workplaces
Ms O' Sullivan, work experience co-ordinator



Shireen Ognjenovic at Alfred Salter School



Louise Apatira and Abigail Udoyen at Nat West bank

Science News

- A big thanks to all those year 8s that helped during the Year 6 parents' evenings and who didn't blow up the science labs but wowed the parents.
- Science HW club for year 10 and 11's is on in M34 on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 5pm with Mrs Harvey.
- The Garden & Environment Club is now running with the fantastic Ms Jodelka and meets every Thursday at St Andrew's foyer at 3:45pm. Amongst other things the group will be growing fruit and veg to take home (watch out Tesco!). Lastly

It's 50 years since man first sent an object into space!

Sputnik was the world's first artificial satellite, launched by the USSR on 4 October 1957.



It was a major technical achievement and propaganda coup for the Soviets. The event marked the beginning of the space age and also the space race between the US and the USSR.

Library Corner

Year Seven are reading for Readathon, the National Sponsored Read started by Roald Dahl. Please support your daughter in this by encouraging her to read and by sponsoring her. The money will go to charities working with children with epilepsy, brain injuries and leukaemia. If any siblings want to join in too please ask your daughter to collect an extra Readathon form from the Library at St Andrew's.



Students Win Exhibition Awards

The school is delighted to announce that two Year 13 students Robyn Hoedemaker and Perry Mabbutt have been awarded a Forrest and Grinsell Exhibition award.

The Forrest & Grinsell Foundation is a part of the United Westminster Almshouses Foundation. It is intended to help Westminster residents and the funds provide university exhibitions for Westminster school leavers whose families are long term Westminster residents. The level of the exhibition is set at £4,000 above which, the Government would start to take the award into account and in effect penalise the recipient. Awards are made at interview on the recommendation of the State school teacher/Governor. A record of continuous attendance and good behaviour is a pre-requisite.

Of the eleven students who were interviewed, representing five Westminster school, six were awarded full exhibitions, three were awarded £1500 and one £500.

Robyn and Perry have both been awarded a full Exhibition of £4,000 each.

We are confident that this will help both students as they begin their university careers at the University of Cambridge and St. Mary's, Surrey respectively.

**WELL DONE
TO BOTH
STUDENTS!**

The Grey Coat Hospital Guild

an association for Parents and Staff



Dear Parents & Carers,

The Guild Committee warmly welcomes you to attend the next General Annual Meeting (AGM), which will be held at the chapel in the St Andrew's Building at 6:30p on the **7th November 2007**.

The Guild committee is a parent, carer and teacher group which meets every quarter to discuss and arrange fund-raising events to support the work of our marvellous school.

We would be delighted to see some of the new year 7 parents and carers attend this meeting. Meetings are open to anyone who performs a parenting or caring role for a child who attends the school.

Future Guild Meeting Dates:

16th January 2007

5th March 2008

30th April 2008

And a final meeting in June 2008

200 Club

The next 200 club draw will be held at the Annual General Meeting on the 11th of November, and all the lucky winners will be contacted shortly afterwards.

If you are interested in knowing more about the guild please contact Sam Fores via info@gch.org.uk, or send a letter to the free post address, which is: "Freepost RRAK-AGBC-CGYZ, The Guild, The Grey Coat Hospital, Greycoat Place, LONDON SW1P 2DY.

