



West Park

'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'

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Dear West Park Families

We are approaching the end of an action-packed year at West Park. It has been another year like no other, and now is a fantastic time to pause and reflect on what we have achieved over the last 10 ½ months.

On our return to school in September 2021 we had the on-going challenges of balancing school life against the pressures of Covid. Throughout this period, we have always had a clear focus on maximising pupils' time in school and I am hugely grateful for the efforts of our amazing staff team who have been exceptional throughout. As we battled through significant pupil and staff challenges, something that really impacted on our community prior to the Christmas break, we remained resolute and determined to focus on a return to 'normal' schooling throughout.

As we have moved into the Summer term we have been excited by the opportunities that we have been able to offer our pupils and look forward optimistically to the next academic year. However, we also need to be mindful that Covid is still around us and there may be a few more 'speed bumps' to navigate before we are truly on the smooth road to recovery.

School Events

It has been brilliant to see the return of whole school events. The last few weeks have been punctuated with brilliant activities for our pupils and opportunities to share new experiences. These include:

- ❖ The Carnegie Awards book event.
- ❖ A fantastic Careers Fair for Year 9 and Year 10.
- ❖ A Drumathon.
- ❖ Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.
- ❖ Mock interviews.
- ❖ A Peace Dove display.
- ❖ Eco-Week.
- ❖ A visiting artist exhibition.
- ❖ A range of STEM activities and visits.
- ❖ Year 11 leavers' assembly.
- ❖ The return of our whole school sports day.

All of these events focus on the joy of learning and the importance of aspiration and have been conducted in our own unique West Park way.

On Wednesday Miss Birkinshaw had the great pleasure of taking nine Year 8 pupils to Derby University to compete in a STEM challenge organised by Young Engineers and Scientists of Derby. The three teams were excellent and the teamwork, communication and creativity were fantastic. There were 8 other schools in attendance and our pupils did outstandingly well as you will see below:

This team won 'Runner Up' in the design challenge Yr7/8 category:

Holly F

Eliza B

Ella-Jade C

This team won first place in the design challenge Yr7/8 category:

Sam R

Evan C

Jayden P

Holly F won the Tony Claridge award for most enthusiastic pupil.

The third team: Daisy S, Emily M and Harry A also did incredibly well.

Our pupils came away with trophies and certificates galore as well as £150 for the technology department!

It always astounds me to see the talent that is evident across our school. This was very apparent on sports day as a number of pupils across all year groups excelled in a range of throwing, jumping and running events. Some of the performances were truly stunning and it is great to be part of a school where the pupils are so keen and vocal in supporting their own. In a proud moment for our school, Yaw A-M came 2nd in the 100m at the English Schools' Championships and will now represent England in a four nations event in Belfast. Yaw is seriously quick and now has a personal best of 10.8 seconds (it takes me longer than that to roll out of bed in the morning!).

Continuing with the sporting theme, Esme A-B took part in her gymnastic club's annual summer showcase. Out of over 1,000 members Esme was chosen to receive the Inspiration Award. She was praised for her attitude, her relationships with others and her contribution to the club. Well done Esme!

At the other end of the sporting spectrum, the pupils absolutely loved the staff egg and spoon race and legendary staff relay. After being unfairly disqualified from the egg and spoon race for kicking the egg (!) I am delighted to say that the leadership team made the podium again coming just behind the all-dominant PE team and science team. Unfortunately, recovery takes a bit longer as you get older and a few of us needed a rope to get up the T Block stairs for the subsequent few days!

The big events continue with our Year 11 Prom taking place on Friday 15th July. This is always a brilliant evening and gives us a great opportunity to say our goodbyes to this wonderful group of pupils.

The Final Week of Term

Next week is our final week of the school term with school closing for the Summer holidays. Please remember that the last day of term is Thursday 21st July for staff and pupils. Next week

looks interesting as we have some fairly unusual weather coming our way. Based on the current forecast this is our current plan.

- ❖ Monday 18th July Normal school day. Pupils can wear PE Kit if they wish.
Please note 3:00 p.m. finish for all.
- ❖ Tuesday 19th July Day 1 of West Fest. Non-uniform day.
Please note 3:00 p.m. finish for all.
- ❖ Wednesday 20th July Day 2 of West Fest. Non-uniform day.
- ❖ Thursday 21st July Final day of term. Pupils can wear PE Kit if they wish.

Due to the exceptionally high temperatures, please consider the information below when sending your child/children into school:

- ❖ Pupils should wear sunscreen and have a suitable hat to put on when they are outside.
- ❖ Pupils should bring a water bottle to school and drink water throughout the day.
- ❖ The field will be closed and pupils should remain indoors as much as possible.
- ❖ Pupils should leave the site promptly at 3:00 p.m. and return home.

It is great that West Fest is making a return after 3 long years! Please see the information below from the performing arts team.

West Fest, our in-school music festival, will be running on Tuesday and Wednesday throughout both breaks, with some festival-themed stalls and live music from our fantastic pupils. Please can you ensure your child is sent with an appropriate amount of cash (ideally in as much small change as possible) to take part in activities and buy treats throughout the day. Most stalls range from 20p - 50p per activity or item so we suggest no more than £3. On Wednesday after school, we will be extending the festival further with hot food available to purchase on a first come, first served basis, as well as an ice cream van and a free yoga session.

We will be running a raffle across the two days of West Fest with prizes kindly donated from local businesses including: The Clock Bistro, Stable View, Born to Perform Academy, Vernon Arms, Taylor's Discounts and Beauty Boutique. Please encourage your children to buy a ticket as all proceeds from the raffle will go towards a Ukrainian Crisis fund.

We have adapted our plans for West Fest based on the predicted weather. Performances on Tuesday will be inside. We are hopeful that we may be able to squeeze in some live outdoor music on our custom-built stage on Wednesday, depending on the weather conditions.

Catering and Site Enhancement

We continue to develop our catering and site offer to further enhance the service that we offer to staff, pupils and Westpark families. We are very excited about working with our new catering providers, Aspens. This work will involve the launch of a brand-new menu in September and the re-branding of different service areas. The service areas will have a modern, high street style look and be themed to showcase different meal options.

Alongside this work we are investing significantly in upgrading our IT facilities across the school and we are commencing the process of building a new changing room facility and a large, covered eating area for pupils to utilise at break and lunch.

Attendance

Attendance to school is absolutely crucial and every day of education that is missed can have a detrimental effect on a child's future. There is a renewed national focus on school attendance next year and we will be pushing this from September at West Park. A new attendance policy will be in place and there will be close monitoring and swift communication if pupils are absent from school. This process will also link to support and/or warning letters and fines where necessary. Holidays during term time are not authorised. I will release further information about this over the summer.

Rewards

Alongside a renewed focus on attendance we will also have a significant push on how we reward and recognise all the amazing pupils who attend our school. We have developed a new platform called Epraise which will link to Firefly in September. This will allow staff to regularly reward pupils and will enable all pupils and families to see their reward profile build up over time. Rewards will be able to be 'cashed in' at our West Park rewards shop and be used to access a range of unique experiences. We will release an Epraise guide at the start of the academic year.

I have been delighted to see so many pupils receiving outstanding end of term reports. We will be holding a special ceremony to recognise this early in September and also look forward to the return of our Prize Presentation awards evening at Pride Park, late in November.

Transition

Last week we had 300 Year 6 pupils attend the school for 3 days as part of our transition process. The new recruits took part in a range of lessons over the 3 days and we also had the pleasure of meeting their families at our transition evening. We have all been hugely impressed by how these pupils have settled in and love the energy and enthusiasm that they have for their new school. Roll on September when we can offer them the full West Park experience.

And finally

Brian's funeral provided the perfect tribute to a man who gave so much to the West Park community. His legacy will carry on with our on-going desire to do the absolute best for every pupil in our care.

Take care of yourselves over the Summer break and enjoy time to rest, relax and enjoy. I have no doubt that come next Thursday 'normal' Summer will resume and it will be 11 degrees with heavy rain!

All the best for the next 6 weeks.

Kind Regards



Scott McGregor
Head