



Balfour Newsletter December 2013

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the December edition of the Balfour Newsletter!

The new school year started extremely well. You may well be aware of the excellent examination results achieved by last year's external examination candidates, but they are certainly worth highlighting.

GCSE results -

- 5A*-C including English and Maths was 66%. This is the third year of continuous improvement.
- 5A*-C moved sharply upwards to 83%. This is the best in the school's history.
- 18 students obtained at least 5 A*/A grades and 11 students obtained 8 A*/A grades.
- The average GCSE grade was a B.

A level -

- 99% pass rate.
- 44% of all A level grades were A or B.
- 95% of students who applied, managed to obtain a place at their first choice University.

Whilst these results are pleasing and are indicative of our commitment to keep the school moving forward, a school is about so much more than examination results.

Once again we have had a real community focus to our activities. We have supported local and national charities eg the Armed Forces charities by staging a 'Red, White and Blue day'; Children in Need by holding a non-uniform day and hosting a range of activities; conducting 'Operation Christmas Child' by collecting shoe boxes full of gifts for children in poor countries and taking part in a bag pack for Katharine House.

We are continually proud of the way our students are prepared to put themselves out for others and of the parents and carers who support them in their endeavours. Thank you all so much! Your efforts make a real difference to so many lives.

I do hope Christmas brings you and yours all you would wish for and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous, peaceful and safe New Year.

Mr D Wright - Headteacher

Cannock Chase Work Camp 2013

By Sophie York - Year 13

During the summer holidays I, along with 4 other young people from Staffordshire and 20 people from Germany, took part in a work camp with the German War Graves Commission (Bremen).

We stayed at Laches Wood and spent most of our time maintaining the graves at the German War Cemetery on Cannock Chase. Our jobs ranged from cleaning the graves to removing the old heather and other gardening activities. We also visited Coventry Cathedral and had visits from people from the Royal British Legion, took part in social activities, and hosted a German visitor at our home.

We also ran a friendship evening where everyone thanked each other for their help. In small groups we learned about the life of a German soldier buried at the cemetery and we presented our information to the other participants before laying flowers next to the grave.



I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the camp; I met some great people both from England and Germany, with whom I shall stay friends with for many years. The camp allowed me to improve my German skills and also my communication and confidence skills. Before, during and after the camp, the English participants completed some work for an international award which we have just been awarded.

On Remembrance Sunday I attended the remembrance service at the German cemetery along with 2 of the other English participants. As part of the wreath laying ceremony I laid a wreath on behalf of Staffordshire's Young People Services and the German War Graves Commission (Bremen), along with the German Ambassador and read a poem along with 3 other German people, this was followed by lunch at the county council offices.



Lisann Hansen, Sophie York and Andrea Siemen

Operation Christmas Child



This is the first year Sir Graham Balfour has supported the Operation Christmas Child campaign, which provides shoeboxes filled with gifts to children around the world, who are not as fortunate at Christmas as our children. What started out as a House time project with each House Group being challenged to fill one shoebox each (32), escalated, in total we filled 89 boxes all of which will be heading off to parts of Eastern Europe. Thank you to everyone who took part and well done!

SGB Big Tree Plant

During February 2014 Half Term - Tuesday 18th (10.00 am to 12.00 noon) Sir Graham Balfour and our community will be working in partnership with The Wildlife Trust on 'The Big Tree Plant' campaign. Shaun Rimmer from the Wildlife Trust has been successful in securing a number of trees for planting at Sir Graham Balfour School, they include rare fruit trees that have not been native to Staffordshire for a long while. All help is appreciated, so, calling all students, staff, parents and grandparents, primary school children, local residents, please come along, everyone is welcome and refreshments will be provided. A chance to breathe in some fresh air and do some worthwhile exercise during February Half Term!

If you would like to be part in this activity please either telephone or email the school to confirm your attendance. (01785 223490 or lgannon@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk). Leaflets promoting this event will be distributed in the new year.

Sainsburys Bag Pack



On Saturday 23rd November a group of SGB students arrived on a chilly Saturday morning at Sainsbury's supermarket in Stafford to conduct our annual supermarket bag pack in aid of Katharine House Hospice. In total we raised £690.01!

Held on the same day as The Stafford Santa Parade, Sainsbury's were also fortunate to win 'The Best Float' competition, pictured with Sainsbury's Dame are Anya Elliman and Cara Hawkins.

Thank you to the following students and Mrs Debbie Hill who selflessly volunteered their time to support this very worthwhile cause: Anya Elliman, Sophie Gregory-Woolridge, Amber Hardwick, Cara Hawkins, Elitta Harris, Charlotte Jones, Amber Jordan, Angus Jordan, Abigail Jones, Abby Munroe, Lauren Poyser, Alex Sandford, Lucy Spencer, Pippa Spencer, Kara Tekan, Letitia Vassell and Sophie Wilson.

Pippa and Lucy Spencer returned to Sainsbury's on Tuesday 10th December to present the Sainsbury's cheque to Debbie Rushbrooke from Katharine House Hospice. Upon arrival we were



presented with six more collection boxes that had not been included in the original count! The final amount of money raised will be announced when these have been counted.

Onatti Theatre Company performs at Balfour

On the afternoon of 27th November and 3rd December, the MFL Department welcomed the Onatti Theatre Company to school to perform to Year 9. This theatre group specialises in performing plays in French, German and Spanish, and tours schools around the UK and Ireland.

The first play entitled "Mon père ne me comprend pas" was in French and the second, "La habitación de Mateo" was in Spanish. Both plays were highly amusing, and although some of the dialogue was challenging, all pupils agreed that they understood the storylines and enjoyed them, especially as the actors often included members of the audience within their performances.

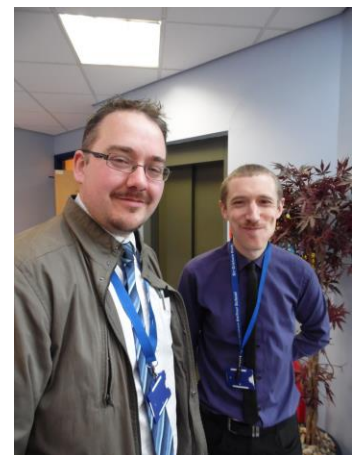


Well done to those who got involved, especially Will Bishop, who acted superbly as well as conversing in French and then in Spanish in the second performance. We look forward to the German performance in March entitled "Erster Eindruck". Start practising your German, Will!

November

November saw the onset of Movember! Prompted by Mr Ripplingham (Resistant Materials) the male contingency of SGB were encouraged to

cut back on the shaving, in support of this annual event involving the growing of moustaches during the month of November to raise awareness of men's health issues. Over 20 staff participated and in turn raised over £200 in sponsorship to support the campaign. Assemblies were also held to highlight health awareness to our male students.



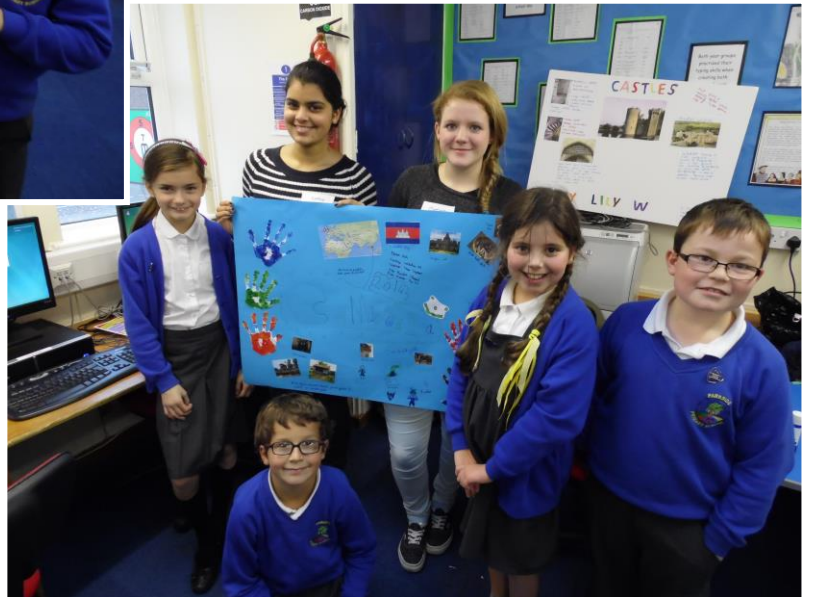
Parkside Primary School Helping Hands Project

During the month of November our Cambodia 2014 team spent three consecutive Wednesday afternoons working on a new project with Parkside Primary School Pupil Voice.

Each team were set the task of researching Cambodian culture, writing letters to pupils in Cambodia and painting their handprints in order to produce a school display. The finished results were brilliant (see below) and all of the letters and handprints were copied so they can be taken to Cambodia in February. The same project will be part of the Cambodia 2014 trip with our Cambodian counterparts writing letters and printing handprints, these will be brought back to England to finish the colourful display at Parkside Primary School.



Parkside Pupil Voice and the Cambodia 2014 Team.





SGB Cambodia 2014 Team

Abigail Baskerville
 Lottie Birch
 Sophie Bloomer
 William Foulks
 Imogen Graham
 Charlotte Hall
 Catherine Johnson
 Sarina Patel
 Annalise Richards
 Annabel Ryell
 Ben Walsh
 Alice Withers



Parkside Pupil Voice



Year 6 - 2 Pupils

Year 5 - 2 Pupils

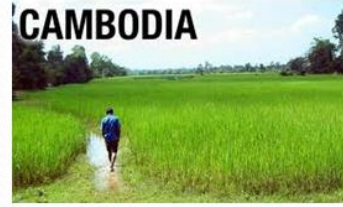
Year 4 - 2 Pupils

Year 3 - 2 Pupils

Year 2 - 2 Pupils

Year 1 - 2 Pupils

Reception - 2 Pupils



Sir Graham Balfour
 &
 Parkside Primary

Helping Hands
 Cambodia Project



Sir Graham Balfour School & Parkside Primary School Pupil Voice Helping Hands Cambodia Project



Dear Pupil Voice

Sir Graham Balfour School is so pleased you would like to work with our students and learn more about Cambodia and our trip due to take place during February half term.

During November we will be coming to visit you to take part in some activities. These will include using computers to research Cambodian culture, writing letters to pupils at Sir Graham Balfour School Cambodia and lastly producing some hand prints.

Both the letters and the handprints will be taken to the school when we visit in February. We are then hoping to bring back letters, pictures and hand prints from the Cambodian pupils. These will be displayed at your school, along with all the other work you have done.



What and When?
(2.00 pm — 3.00 pm)

- Wednesday 13th November
Cambodia culture research
- Wednesday 20th November
Letters and pictures
- Wednesday 27th November
Make a display
- March 2014
Cambodia 2014 Team presentation and update of Cambodia display with the exchanged information

Sir Graham Balfour School Cambodia — Facts

- Sir Graham Balfour Cambodia was completed in June 2004
- It cost £12 000 to build
- SGB Stafford raised this money in just 18 months
- The school is situated at Chhat Commune, Thmar Bang in the district of Koh Kong.
- The opening ceremony took place on 11th February 2005, during their dry season.
- Every year we fund an English teacher (£1 500) and provide £500 for basic equipment
- We have already built two extra classrooms.

Our school community did not just build a school, we have given Sir Graham Balfour Cambodia students the opportunity to build a future and to help them achieve their goals. We see our support as 'Lending a Helping Hand'.

We hope you are looking forward to working on our new project and have lots of ideas you would like to include. See you in November!

Cambodia 2014 Team

Stafford Borough Council

Green Awards and Eco Grant

Debbie Hill is continuing to run SGB ECO Club on a Wednesday after school. With the onset of winter Debbie will be concentrating on recycling and indoor activities that will not be affected by the weather, she is also hoping to have a more active partnership with some of our Feeder Primary Schools during the winter months, which is still in the planning stages.

We are also pleased to announce we have been successful in securing a Stafford Borough Council Eco Grant to the sum of £450.00. Last year's grant proved invaluable and helped to support our Eco Club, purchasing valuable gardening equipment. This year our aim is to rejuvenate the raised flower beds at the rear of the school. Each raised bed has been allocated to a set group and name plaques have been produced by Mr Rippingham in Resistant Materials. Each of the following groups will be responsible for designing, planting and maintaining their flower/plant bed throughout the year and rewards will be given for the best kept and most original designs:

Weston House	Chetwynd House	Sandon House	Tixall House
School Parliament x 2	Sixth Form	Eco Club x 2	Inclusion Unit x 2



Switch Off Fortnight

Sir Graham Balfour has recently joined in the National Switch Off Fortnight campaign, which highlights saving energy. Each house group was tasked with producing a poster promoting energy saving ideas and completing a quiz. Well done to S5 for their winning entry!

Morrisons Vouchers

Thank you to everyone who has collected Morrisons Let's Grow vouchers. In total we had over 1000 vouchers which have been used to order 'paint your own birdhouses' and various seeds and equipment.

Would you like to put together a piece of poetry, artwork, sculpture, photograph, display, song or music for a local competition?

Get your thinking caps on. It's time to celebrate our planet and all its wonders and remind ourselves and others that it's the only one we've got.

See Mrs Hill if you are interested - let's get involved!!!!



Stafford Green Arts Festival

'There is No Planet B!'
Environmental Art Exhibition

15th - 22nd February 2014 10am - 4pm
St Chad's Church and No. 15 Cafe,
Stafford Town Centre

Opening Day Saturday 15th February 11am - 4pm
With local performance artists, musicians,
free face painting and art and craft activities.
Closing ceremony and presentation of awards
Saturday 22nd February 2pm

We welcome art, poetry, song, music and drama
to communicate the message: 'There is No Planet B!'
Prizes to children, adults and school, college and university groups
for artwork, photography, poetry, sculpture, pottery
or entries in any other media.

Free Entry!
All ages and groups welcome to exhibit, perform and visit!

For further details please contact:
Netta Cartwright (Visual Art) 01785 613585 netta.cartwright@ntlworld.com
Marie Procter (Poetry) 01785 254936 brian.marieprocter@hotmail.co.uk
Nicky Barron (Performances) 07832 133844 nickybarron@googlemail.com
Karen Davies (Schools, Colleges and Universities) 01785 619408
kdavies@staffordbc.gov.uk



Danielle Hope Concert



On Friday 22nd November six of our students were fortunate to be selected to attend an afternoon singing with West End star and winner of BBC television's "Over the Rainbow, Danielle Hope. The day culminated in a concert at Stafford Grammar School with our students performing as part of the chorus, which was made up of students from six other secondary schools in the district.



Pictured: Cara Hawkins, Danielle Hope and Anya Elliman

Parkside Y2 Class visits SGB

For the first time this year our Big Walk for Cambodia was supported by our neighbouring primary school, Parkside. Years 5 and 6 came along to SGB to join in the event, whilst the younger years walked around their school field. Overall we were astounded to accept sponsorship money totaling £600.00, as a thank you to Year 2, who raised the most money as a class, we invited them to visit SGB for the afternoon. As well as watching a video on Cambodia they joined in games and activities before heading back to school.



Year 8 SGB Selection Heat - Wednesday 11th December 2013

Our Year 8 selection heat took place on Wednesday 11th December with six Year 8 students taking part, yet again the students were tasked with producing a two course meal, costing no more than £10.00. Mrs Beck was set the difficult task of judging the entries, all of which were excellent. The overall winner was Serefina Evans who will be representing SGB in January at Stafford College, with her main course of Five Spice Beef with Pakchoi and Noodles, followed by Mint Meringues and Cream. All of the entries were of an extremely high standard and so joint second prize was awarded to all of the other five candidates.



Red White and Blue Day



On Friday 11th October Sir Graham Balfour School hosted Red White and Blue day for the 2nd year running. Students were joined by members of The Royal Air Force who had been invited to come 'Back to School' for a day. Four serving personnel from Tactical Supply Wing, MOD Stafford experienced school lessons, assembly and school dinners, taking time to interact with students and support the

school's input to this very worthwhile campaign.

All students were encouraged to wear Red, White and Blue and junior members of the Armed Forces attended school in their military uniform. In total, the school raised over £750.00 which will be split between The ABF The Soldiers' Charity, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. Each of these three charities is responsible for the welfare of soldiers, sailors and airmen and their families.



Pictured below with students from Sir Graham Balfour (L to R): Acting Sergeant Eirion Jones, Corporal Dan Barnes, Corporal Steve Buffy and Senior Aircraftsman Laura McCloud.



Open Evening

Tuesday 8th October saw our annual Open Evening for prospective new students and parents. The evening was extremely popular with a large amount of families visiting from Primary Schools not in our catchment area. A huge thank you goes to all of the staff who coordinated activities throughout the evening, all of which were rewarded with extremely positive comments from our visitors.



Clothes Show Live 2013

On Friday 6th December, Year 10 Textiles visited the Clothes Show Live at the NEC in Birmingham. The day was a fantastic experience for our students, one which they all thoroughly enjoyed. Students watched an awe-inspiring fashion show in the great theatre. The show exhibited next year's trend forecast and demonstrated a broad range of fantastic fashion garments. Leading college and university stands also showcased their graduate collections and our students took photos and picked up information from these to support their GCSE projects. Sample materials were also collected to help further student's future careers in the Fashion and Textiles industry. The whole Clothes Show experience was incredibly valuable to every student taking part.

Miss Deaville

Textiles Technology



College/University graduate show

In the Fashion Theatre 2013

Technology Craft Club

The Technology Craft Club runs on a Tuesday lunchtime and has made a variety of products this term ranging from simple boxes, complex die cut packages, crackers, badges and key rings and decoupage Christmas cards and envelopes. The club is attended by a variety of students in KS3 and is currently full but if you would like to join, let Mrs Massey know and she will put you on the waiting list.



Jessica's got talent!

Whilst on holiday in the summer, Jessica Wheatley - Year 8 decided to enter the holiday talent show. After choreographing her own routine, pulling together an outfit and deciding on her overall look, she went on to win the local heat and was put through to the Finals Talent Contest at Park Resorts in Barmston. Jessica yet again won 1st prize, which is a huge achievement due to the competition including entrants aged from 12 -17! Well done Jessica!



Police Cadets support The British Police Symphony Orchestra



On Saturday 7th December, seven members of Year 11, as part of the Staffordshire Police Cadets took part in The British Police Symphony Orchestra's Christmas Concert in Symphony Hall, Birmingham. They joined Mrs Owen (Cello) and Mr Critchlow (Trumpet) on stage for the afternoon matinee in order to help a crowd of over 1200 Primary School children, 'mend the orchestra' via sign language and song. Thankfully, all went well and they even managed to 'repair the organ'!

In the evening, they provided valuable uniformed presence at the front of house and then went on to enjoy the evening concert from up in the gods where they were treated to a fantastic night of French orchestral music combined with all the Pomp and Circumstance of the last night of the Proms!

The students did a tremendous job all day and were a fantastic credit to school. The Orchestra were equally impressed by their maturity and the time they devoted to ensure the whole day was a success.



Visit to Rose Villa Nursing Home

Twenty of our 6th Formers and Mrs Gannon, School and Community Liaison Officer, visited Rose Villa Nursing Home on Wednesday 11th December to spread some Christmas cheer and give out some gifts. Students sang Christmas songs in the Day Room which was extremely appreciated and visited residents who were bed bound and unable to join in the festivities. Thank you to all of the students who took time to visit Rose Villa and give some joy to others less able than ourselves.



Children in Need

Our grand total of fundraising for Children in Need this year was £1253.70! Students wore non uniform for the day, the 6th form held a coffee morning and students sold cakes in order to raise money. Mrs Walker on reception kindly donated a full size cut out of Justin Bieber, which was raffled and won by House Group S1 who had generously bought raffle tickets in order to hide him away and not subject anyone to a life size Justin!



House Group S3 with their Pudsey cakes!

Sacred Space

For the second year running Mrs March's classroom was transformed into a Sacred Space on Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th December. Students were given the opportunity to experience and explore a more spiritual environment within a space that helped them engage in matters of faith and belief. Students could enter the room in a number of ways, be that spiritual, religious or atheist and once in the room there were a number of stations which students were free to interact with.



The results last year showed that 93% of the 234 students that entered the room experienced a feeling of peace, so we wanted to give them the opportunity again to take time out of their normal day to spend time reflecting and thinking, things which they do not often get the chance to do! Initial feedback was once again very positive from the students and we are already looking forward to next year's visit!

News from PE

Balfour Basketball: The Basketball season is beginning and our Year 11 team, who were county runners up last season, have started their national conference campaign with a 34-6 victory against King Edwards. All of the team managed to score points with Tom Kenny achieving the MVP award with 10 points and 3 assists. Let's hope that the boys can go one further this season and achieve the award of county champions.

Football: Both our Year 8 and Year 10 boy's football teams have had success so far this season. Our Year 10 team managed to have a successful run in the English School's Cup competition, progressing through to the last 64 before losing 2-1 against St Peters Catholic College of Solihull, after conceding a last minute goal. In the County Cup, our Year 8 boys are doing extremely well as they are currently unbeaten and are due to play against Walton High School in the quarter finals this week. A particular 'congratulations' must go to Lenny Baker who has scored 7 goals in his last 2 games.

The Rise of Rugby: A special congratulations must go to our under 12's and 13's Rugby team who have had an outstanding run of games thanks to the leadership of England International Miss Hunt.

Legendary Leaders: Each Monday, we host an extra-curricular, primary school sports club which provides students from our cluster of primary schools with an opportunity to experience and learn about a variety of sports. Specific activities have included Basketball, Rugby, Football, Handball and Athletics. The students that have attended each week have developed their knowledge and understanding of the sports and activities and they have clearly enhanced their technical competency. In addition, a number of our Year 9 students have assisted in the leading of each activity and they have demonstrated outstanding leadership characteristics. This has resulted in them all receiving Sporting excellence t-shirts from the PE department. The students that have worked as leaders include Tommy Kiesslinger, Henna Patel, Alice Tiso, Ria Williamson-Smith, Zoe Hall and Mollie Cager.

Sports Hall Athletics: Congratulations to both our Year 7 and Year 8 girls' sports hall Athletics teams who progressed through to the district finals. Both teams performed magnificently in a variety of events and the Year 8 team should be particularly proud of their achievements as they finished the competition in second place. Well done girls!

Congratulations to all of the students that have represented a sports team at Balfour during the first term! We will look forward to 2014 which will hopefully be another successful year of sport with a variety of competitions to look forward to. Thank you, The PE department

Parent and Teacher Association



Sir Graham Balfour School

'New Year' Bingo

7.00 pm

Friday 31st January 2014

School Dining Room

EVERYONE WELCOME. BRING THE FAMILY! £1.00 PER STRIP
REFRESHMENTS & HOT FOOD AVAILABLE



**On behalf of Sir Graham Balfour School
have a great Christmas break
and
we look forward
to welcoming students back on
Monday 6th January 2014.**