

## Chorley Hospital Art Exhibition

This year's focus for the Art and Photography department was to publicise artwork and to celebrate the artistic talents and creativity of our students. Currently we have students' work published online which can be found on Pinterest and on the school website. We have had artwork displayed in the local newspapers and have held a very successful Art and Photography exhibition in the Pavilion which celebrated the success of our GCSE students.

Year 10 students also entered an Art competition that was organised by the Rotary Club of Chorley, Astley. All the Chorley schools were encouraged to enter and the winning entries had their artwork publicly exhibited. Only 20 pieces of Art could be selected and were to be exhibited in the Physiotherapy Department at Chorley Hospital. Fortunately a number of our students managed to impress with their artistic talents and were chosen to have their work displayed. Colin Evans who helped to organise the exhibition said, "I have received very positive comments from not only the Physiotherapy Manager but from the nurses and patients as well. Your artwork looks very impressive, particularly now that it has been framed and hung on newly-decorated walls."

It goes to show that the Art and Photography department here at Parklands continues to impress with the outstanding talents and creativity on offer. Please take a look and enjoy these photographs taken from the Chorley Hospital exhibition.

*Mr Wood*



# PARKLANDS



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## Autumn Term Newsletter 2015

### Message from the Head

Welcome to our Autumn Term newsletter. We have a number of new appointments starting with us in September, you can find out about our new colleagues in this edition. We are extremely pleased with the outgoing GCSE results of last year's year 11 which we celebrated at Presentation Evening in November. It was lovely to catch up with our ex students and find out how they are getting on. They are an inspiration to our younger students of what can be achieved if you aspire. Year 7 have settled in well and are making the most of the many, varied extra-curricular activities available. They have also entered into the spirit of competitiveness between Houses with a view to securing the House Cup in July. We have had a very busy and productive term, details of which you can read about in this issue. Thank you for your continued support and I wish you all a safe, happy and enjoyable Christmas with your families and friends.

*Mrs C Hollister*



*Chile form with five beautiful Christmas hampers for the elderly - what a great effort!*

## Australasia House News

Gosh! It seems like only two minutes ago and we were welcoming all the new Y7's into school on their first day, back on the 1st September. Everyone seems to have settled in extremely well and I have met some lovely new people with some fabulous qualities. I would also like to officially welcome Australasia's new staff members who include: Ms Barwick, Miss Brooks, Mr Wright and Ms Kellett.

Australasia have been very busy as a house, we have been competing really well at the regular inter-house competitions on a Friday lunchtime and we are currently second overall. Special mention must go to the Y8 and Y9 girls football teams who gave very strong performances.

Staying on the Sports theme, I would like to send out my warmest congratulations and a big well done to Bradley Wade Y11 (School Sports Captain) who has secured a two year residential football scholarship at Rochdale A.F.C. I am sure you will join with me in wishing him every success with his future endeavours.

Australasia's Heads of House Lucy Bocker and Jordan Rushton along with Jasmine Temple and Charley Burke as House Captains are carrying out a marvellous job, as they support myself and team Australasia with daily house duties and responsibilities. They are fantastic role models who are there to assist all members of the house so please make use of their help and experience.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, have a safe and restful break.

*Mrs Dewhurst*



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*is proud to present  
their annual*

CHRISTMAS  
CONCERT

17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER  
FROM 7.30PM

*Also featuring*

CHORLEY SILVER BAND

## European Experience!

In July, a group of pupils from years 7 and 8 joined Miss Poole, Miss Cosgrove, Mr Conroy and Mr Wright on the European Experience. We enjoyed lots of fantastic activities in 3 different countries! Our trip began in France with an overnight stay where we were able to try traditional French food whilst practicing our language skills. We then headed on to Germany where we checked into our extremely friendly hotel and got settled in. We then had some free time for playing in the outdoor pool in the wonderful weather! During our week, we saw traditional Black Forest Gâteau being made in front of our eyes and then we got to sample some for ourselves - delicious! Our days were absolutely jam packed! Our next country was a day trip to Switzerland where we visited the Rhine Falls, we went right up to them and you could feel the spray from the waterfall. The beautiful scenery provided many a good photo opportunity. We spent the afternoon shopping in Switzerland where we heard Swiss German and French and English being spoken! Europa Park provided one of the best days of the trip, where the pupils had an unforgettable day on the rollercoasters with everyone enjoying themselves thoroughly - even the teachers! On our final night the hotel put on a disco with karaoke and dancing till midnight. It was fantastic and a perfect end to our exciting European Experience.

"I really liked the European Experience. The Black Forest Gâteau viewing was really interesting and the tasting of it was even better. My favourite part was Europa Park and the big rollercoasters" *Amber Scott, Year 8.*



## Law Trip to London

On Tuesday 3rd November, 28 pupils from the GCSE Law course made their way to London as part of a three day visit to enhance knowledge and understanding of the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales.

Day one included a guided tour of the Royal Courts of Justice and an opportunity to visit one of the Inns of Court en route to the Old Bailey. Pupils and staff were able to spend time in the public gallery of the Old Bailey and watched a terrorism trial and a gangland murder trial. This was followed by a delicious meal at the Hard Rock Café and then a Jack the Ripper walking tour of Whitechapel in the dark and fog of a cold London night.

On day two we were lucky enough to visit the Houses of Parliament and spend time with Lindsay Hoyle MP, who arranged a full tour of parliament, followed by a question and answer session in his office. Pupils asked some tough questions and we even managed to convince Lindsay to shout the famous "ORDER, ORDER", which certainly impressed the year 11 pupils who become huge Lindsay fans after the visit. This was followed by a visit to the Supreme Court and then an evening meal at Bella Italia and evening showing of the West End musical 'Les Miserables'.

After a busy two days, pupils had the opportunity to relax and enjoy the sights (and smells) of London on day three as they embarked on an afternoon of shopping on and around Oxford Street. After a busy train journey home, pupils were returned to parents with lots of stories to tell and far less energy than when they left!



## Africa House update!

Wow! What a busy term, we've welcomed two new Form Tutors - Mr Crampton (Madagascar) and Mr Martin (Religious Studies) and 45 Year 7s. I am happy to report that as I write this article we are in the lead in the House Competition with some stunning performances by the Year 7 girls and boys football teams! There have been some excellent trackers from Year 7 and Year 8, with positive improvements since the last BfL, Year 9 and 10 Trackers will be out before Christmas - here's hoping the upward trend continues!

Our Year 11s seem to be coping well with the demands of their final year, they have got the Christmas break to relax and start to prepare in earnest for their mocks in February. We wish them well as they enter the final months of their Parklands career.

Finally, I'd like to wish all pupils, parents and carers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you for your ongoing support and I look forward to an exciting and eventful 2016!

*Mrs S Haslam*

## Astronomy Club

This year the Astronomy Club is reaching for the stars. Not content with organising stargazing evenings, our students are now working towards gaining their GCSE in Astronomy. This will give our pupils a great chance to get their skills recognised now and in later life.

Astronomy Club happens every Wednesday 3pm-4pm in E13. All pupils are welcome to join us in exploring our Universe.

Watch out for:

January will see lots of planets clearly visible in the early evening sky. Why not head outside after sunset to witness a quasi-conjunction of Venus and Mercury. You will also be able to see Mars and Jupiter (and, with a pair of binoculars, a bluish Neptune). For more information, see the [BBC Sky at Night](#) website.



*A very big thank you to everyone who donated items for the collection in the office, organised by Mrs Crow, for the Storehouse Foodbank at Living Waters. As you can see from the photo, her car boot was filled to the top with items to be made up into hampers for people who may otherwise go without this Christmas.*

## Work Experience Week for Health & Social Care

In July, our BTEC Health & Social Care pupils undertook a week's work experience, with either a nursery, primary school or elderly day care centre. As part of the experience, they had to telephone the setting beforehand to introduce themselves - quite a challenge for pupils more used to texting and tweeting! During the week, they had to complete a workbook, detailing what tasks they had done, and staff were asked to comment on their attitude, punctuality and effort. Parklands staff visited or telephoned the placements and were very pleased to hear some fantastic recommendations and observations about our pupils. Well done to everyone who took part - including one young lady who, through no fault of her own, missed the week and undertook her work experience in her half term October break.

## Dates for the Diary

13 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 7 Respect day
14 <sup>th</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 11 meningitis vaccinations
22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Year 7 MfL Spelling Bee
27 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 8 Respect day
29 <sup>th</sup> January	Careers Fair
5 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 7 to 11 BfL reports home
8 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 11 mock exams
12 <sup>th</sup> February	INSET day
24 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 11 Respect day
2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Year 11 trackers home and Year 11 Parents' Evening
7 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 8 Option Evening
9 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 9 Respect day
9 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> March	School production - Best of British
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 8 Parents' Evening
23 <sup>rd</sup> March	Year 10 Respect day and Year 7 and 8 trackers home
24 <sup>th</sup> March	Deadline for the return of Year 8 option choices
30 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 10 trackers home and Year 10 Parents' Evening
1 <sup>st</sup> April	Year 9 trackers home
6 <sup>th</sup> April	Year 9 Parents' Evening and Battlefields trip departs
8 <sup>th</sup> April	Year 8 reports home

Uruguay raised funds for World Aids Day as part of our form assembly last week for World AIDS Day. The total banked was £91.93. Pupils sold red ribbons around school and held collections. I am so very proud of my form!

*Ms K Gray*



We're all likely to be doing more online in the run-up to Christmas – there are presents to buy, parties to book and festive emails to send. But whatever you're doing, keep yourself safe online with our e-safety quick tips for Christmas.

#### **1. Get protected**

Don't get snowed under with viruses and malware – make sure you're protected. Your computer probably came with some security features built in, but it's well worth investing in additional protection from one of the big security providers like Norton or McAfee. They'll scan your email and websites for suspicious files which could infect your computer with dodgy software, and deal with any they find.

#### **2. Don't open suspicious emails**

Free! Exclusive! Last chance! They may sound sweet, but if those email headlines look too good to be true, they usually are. If you don't know who it's from or why you've received it, it's probably spam, and could contain a virus or malware – best not to open it in the first place.

#### **3. Watch what you say on Facebook over Christmas**

You may have a few tasty gossip titbits to share, but the internet never forgets, and what you post during or after a party might be copied, retweeted and dispersed before you have a chance to think better of it. Always be careful what you post.

#### **4. Don't reply to suspicious emails**

If you respond to a suspicious email, even to 'unsubscribe', you'll automatically confirm that your email address is valid – instead of canceling a subscription, you could invite more spam, and that's the kind of stocking filler nobody wants!

#### **5. Tell your children**

Remember the golden rule – if your children are old enough to surf, they're old enough to spread information you'd rather they didn't. Tell your kids about the need to be careful what they say online and the need to protect any passwords.

#### **6. Beware of shoulder surfers**

Just because you're accessing the net via your mobile doesn't mean you should let your guard down. When you're on the street, in the office or in a crowd, don't let anyone take a sneaky peak at any of your passwords.

#### **7. Beware of Wi-Fi hotspots**

Wi-Fi hotspots are for public use, some use encryption but some don't, and hackers with the right equipment can use them to monitor your internet use and copy your personal details. Don't use unencrypted Wi-Fi for shopping or to access your bank account.

#### **8. Look for the lock**

When you're buying online, look for the lock symbol next to the address bar. This means you're on a secure site and it's safe to enter your credit card details. If you don't see it, don't do it.

#### **9. Don't put personal information online where anyone can see it**

It's not just your friends who can see what you put online via social networks. Your email address, your physical address and other attributes could be used by thieves to help them steal your identity, so wrap them up, and only show them to people you trust.

Ref: [www.knowthenet.org.uk](http://www.knowthenet.org.uk)



## **Eco Ambassador News**

In September 2015 the option for pupils to apply to become Eco-Ambassadors was once again opened, however this time incorporating two year groups in year 9 and 10. The applications were of excellent standard and demonstrated a real desire to become an Eco-Ambassador.

Having completed a number of meetings so far the pupils are quickly underway with their first venture of re-designing the Eco-Ambassador board along the main corridor, and developing new ideas to install an Eco-Hub in the school, where pupils will be able to interact with the goings on with the Eco-Ambassadors and their projects.

The team have already started to lay out plans for the whole school in the coming terms and

the ideas look both adventurous and exciting, allowing all pupils to be able to get involved in the activities no matter how small or big a part they would like to play.

Final congratulations to all of the new Eco-Ambassadors this year on their success in becoming part of the team.

2016 is sure to be an exciting year for all of the Eco-team with the sensational plans coming to fruition.



## **Learning Challenge Week - Year 10**

The Year 10 pupils were tested on their entrepreneurial skills for a full week in a TV show 'Apprentice' style challenge. They were put in mixed teams and given the challenge of creating a business that could be developed on a plot of land in Buckshaw Village. It was entirely up to the pupils what they wanted to build and how they wanted their business to operate but it needed to be something that Buckshaw Village and the surrounding areas needed. After a lot of hard work marketing, creating websites and a brand, filming adverts and developing a full business plan we had some outstanding ideas and business pitches and a very deserving winning business at the end of a competitive week.



## Product Design - STEM trip to UCLAN

On the 5th October 2015 I lead a trip of 21 Year 8 pupils to UCLAN in Preston. It was a STEM workshop called "Life on Mars". The workshop was funded by the UK Space Agency to link with the ESA Ex-Mars Mission (due to land on Mars in 2016). The session was held at the new Young Scientist Centre at UCLAN. This state of the art mission control lab was our base for the day. The scene was set by the UCLAN leaders and our pupils showed outstanding team spirit and determination to carry out the mission that had been set. The pupils learnt how to program LEGO Mindstorm robotic rovers in order to search for signs of life in the model Mars landscape. They worked in teams to program their rovers to gather data and the whole class then worked together in mission control to analyse and interpret their findings. The workshop provided the pupils with a challenge to use their scientific enquiry and investigative skills to conclude that in fact there really could be LIFE ON MARS!!!!!!

I would like to thank our colleagues at UCLAN for their hospitality and enthusiasm during the day. It was a great experience for all of us. Watch this space for future trips.

Mrs C Critchlow



During the Learning Challenge Week, a group of Year 8 and Year 9 students were given the opportunity to become a Steel Band. Both Mrs Wilkinson and Miss Cosgrove used to play in a Steel Band at High School themselves and wanted to share this unique instrument with others.



The pans were borrowed from Corpus Christi High School in Preston and arrived in Parklands after long and arduous hours of man (and woman!) power. The pans differ in size with the smallest being the top quarter of an oil drum and the largest being a set of 5 full sized oil drums! The smallest pans hold the melody whilst the remaining drums hold the harmony and rhythm. Pupils had opportunities to play on all the different types before really settling in to one or two.

Over the course of the week, the band learned a repertoire of 4 songs - Under the Sea, from The Little Mermaid, Chariots of Fire, Lazy Coconut Tree and Skye Boat Song. The end goal was to perform on Festival Day.

Pupils performed on a half hourly schedule to big crowds drawn by the exotic tones of the steel pans and our extensive marketing material. Here is what a couple of the pupils from Steely Good had to say,

*"Steel Band was amazing. I learned new skills that I never thought I would and interacted with new people."* Owen Pheasant, Year 9

*"Steel Band was a great experience and one of the best things I have done at Parklands. Learning a new skill was good but the fun we had along the way enhanced my experience. I went into the week with a negative mind set but I came out with new friends, a new skill and a great memory. The teaching quality made me even more eager to practice and improve. The teachers made it a comfortable environment by giving us the choice of which drum we wanted to play. This made it even more enjoyable because we were treated fairly. Overall it was a great memory that I will never forget."*

Jenny Liptrott, Year 9



However, the pupils that were in this group were not the only ones to have a go on the drums. We also held workshops for all KS3 years which were incredibly successful with the group being able to master and perform Yellow Submarine in an hour!

## When you've done something worth praise P-P-P-Pick up a P Point!

### P Points – Our new rewards system in 2016

When we return after the Christmas break we will be launching our new rewards system - P Points.

You may recall that, to coincide with the introduction of Behaviour for Learning reports last year, we also set out our core expectations. They are known as the Parklands 5 Ps a day.



Students will be able to earn points for displaying any, or hopefully, all aspects of the 5 Ps. We believe that these core values are the guiding principles for responsible, well rounded and successful young people and equally valuable in adulthood.

All staff will be able to recognise and reward any of the qualities from the 5Ps and these will be shared and celebrated within forms and Houses on a regular basis. So, whether it is a polite 'thank you', helpfulness in form, a compliment for a tasty school lunch or an exceptional effort in a piece of work - your child may find they earn a P Point.



*Members of Euxton Methodist Scouts and Intrepid Explorer Group representing all the uniformed organisations at our annual Remembrance Day ceremony, seen here by the poppy wreath in our memorial garden.*



### Twist & Pulse

On Thursday 19th November we were very excited to have Britain's Got Talent runners up (2010) Twist and Pulse in school. The dancers delivered two streetomegy workshops to over sixty pupils in school. Each workshop was for two hours and also allowed pupils the opportunity to ask questions about the dancers and learn more about their dance background and experiences.

The workshops were enjoyed by all pupils who attended and many also purchased Twist and Pulse T-shirts as a reminder of their day.



*Miss G Marr*



*Ace of Cakes - just two of the many beautifully decorated cakes in the Ace of Cakes Learning Challenge event, run by Mrs M Berry*

## Asia House News

My name is Mr Pilling and I am pleased to announce that I'm the new house achievement leader for ASIA. From the information I have already managed to gain from the pupils and staff alike, my predecessor (Mr Metcalf) was a very popular and respected member of the school community. With this in mind, I am keen to ensure that the high standards of behaviour, attainment and team cohesion are maintained and developed further over the next academic year.

The students in ASIA House have made a good start to the year so far which is mirrored by the pleasing Behaviour for Learning data gleaned from our subject teachers. I trust that we will continue to see this high standard of behaviour for the duration of the year. Concurrently, the year 7 students have made a very positive start to their academic life at Parklands which has been exhibited by their very encouraging displays of teamwork in the house competitions. ASIA are currently tied in second position in all house competitions so with a bit more drive and determination we can convert our current position to first!

Continuing on with the theme of competition and sporting honours I would like to congratulate Caitlin Caldwell in year 7 for a truly momentous achievement. Caitlin has been selected to represent the UK at the World Championships in Florida in June 2016 for gymnastics. I'm sure we will all (as a school) show her the support and encouragement she clearly deserves having achieved such an amazing accomplishment. Secondly, congratulations to Luke Chambers who has been selected to play for Liverpool Football Club, we will watch your career with a keen interest!

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to welcome three fantastic new additions to the ASIA House staff. Mr Miller is the form tutor for United Arab Emirates, Miss Taylor-Reeve for Malaysia and the unmistakable Mr Metcalf for China.

Have a great Christmas break Asia house.

The girls pictured here were successful in gaining a place in the Lancashire Young Coaches Academy; they will be gaining vital coaching qualifications and expected to use their new found knowledge with community clubs. Well done girls! Parklands had the most successful applicants!

*Miss N Greaves*



GCSE Pod is a website containing thousands of podcasts all related to the GCSE exams taken at Parklands. All pupils are registered with the website so that on the approach to exams, pupils can use the podcasts as a revision tool. All Year 9, 10 and 11 pupils have been introduced to GCSE Pod this half term, and have all been asked to create their username and password details. Once they have created their login details on the website, they can easily access short 3-5 minute videos, all related by subject and topic, anytime and anywhere. Pupils can either download the app to their phones or tablets, or, access the website directly and stream the podcasts.

Last year was the first year where pupils at Parklands used GCSE Pod to revise for their GCSE exams and the results speak for themselves. Last year 68.6% achieved 5 A\*- C with English and Maths, 84% achieved A\*- C in English Language and 77% achieved A\*- C in Maths. Many pupils who had accessed podcasts during revision, had achieved their target, and in some cases 2 grades above their target for the subject where they accessed videos.

GCSE Pod can be an extremely useful revision tool for pupils who learn best through audio or just for those wanting to make the most of time spent travelling to and from school. If there are any enquiries regarding GCSE Pod, pupils can email their questions to [support@gcsepod.com](mailto:support@gcsepod.com), the team there are extremely helpful and reply to student issues within the same day.

## Accelerated Reader

This year Parklands has seen a considerable increase in the use of Accelerated Reader across years 7, 8 and 9. This program can be accessed from school or home through the "Students" section of the Parklands webpage. It allows for active support of pupils' reading and encourages them to read books that are challenging but still accessible.

Reading is becoming increasingly important as exam boards across the curriculum are expecting higher levels of understanding and interpretation. It is a vital part of learning and those who read for pleasure are likely to do significantly better than their peers.

Reading suitably challenging books for at least fifteen minutes a day is shown to have a substantial impact on pupils' academic growth. We would invite all parents to join us in promoting a love of reading by encouraging their child to read every day.

I am hoping to be contacting many parents to let them know where pupils are showing exceptional commitment or making great progress in their reading.

*Mrs Rhodes-Leader*



My name is Mr Crampton and I joined Parklands in July 2015. I graduated from The University of Manchester in 2013 with a degree in Mathematics and became a Teaching Assistant shortly thereafter; I then had short spells teaching at both St Michael's C.E High School and Westleigh High School.

When I'm not teaching it might be surprising to some people that I don't actually continue thinking about Maths, at the weekend I always take the time to watch my favourite football team, Liverpool, bitterly disappoint me in some way. I also play 7-a-side football every Thursday as often as I can so that if teaching doesn't go to plan then I'll fall back on my second option of becoming a professional footballer in the Premier League. I also love Lord of the Rings and Oasis (the band, not the drink).

Hello, I'm Miss Taylor-Reeve and I teach Maths at Parklands. In my spare time (when I'm not doing lots of fun Maths activities!) I like to watch films and seek out activities to get my adrenaline pumping! During the holidays I often go camping to different places in the UK, one of my favourite places to visit is the Lake District.



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*One of our parents has started a new venture in Chorley - the introduction of Spanish cooking is something quite different!*

*We would like to thank Mrs Ribeiro for all her help in the past with various projects in the Food Tech department and wish the family every success.*

*Why not check it out?*



## Silent Stars

As part of a 5 week mentoring programme, four pupils from each house have been selected to stretch and challenge themselves so that they can achieve greater personal attributes that will further enhance their ability to take chances and trust in their resourcefulness.

The first event the pupils have taken part in was an activity afternoon at Rock and River in Mawdesley.

They completed an indoor Rock Climbing Challenge, aiming to climb as high as possible free handed before they were put into groups, harnessed up and were shown how to support another whilst climbing.

They then moved on to the Crate Challenge - the pupils had to work in teams, stacking crates as high as they could whilst two team members were harnessed and supported as they climbed higher and higher.

Finally they ended on Archery and again it was boys vs girls. Lewis Trafford outshone all the boys hitting very close to the bullseye - well done Lewis!

We still have a number of activities planned and hope the pupils will continue to bring the same amount of enthusiasm that they showed on this trip.

HALS



## Mock Interview Day

All the pupils in Year 11 took part in a Mock Interview Day on Thursday November 12th, following their revision and study skill sessions the day before. At the end of the previous half term, they had been given a 'jobs' magazine and asked to complete and submit an application for the job of their choice.

On the day, pupils arrived at their interviews in the Pavilion, smartly dressed and more than a little nervous, ready to shine! A number of pupils turned up on both days in very businesslike outfits - well done to all who made that extra effort.

The day was a resounding success - with excellent feedback from both pupils and interviewers. We are very grateful for the support offered by local colleges, employers and our school governors.



## Mock Trial

During Learning Challenge week pupils created, rehearsed and delivered a mock court trial based on a real-life murder case. Pupils were each allocated roles ranging from the suspect, witness to Judge and the jury! Pupils also visited Lancaster Castle and had the opportunity to investigate the old court rooms and prison to help inspire their own case. On the final day of Learning Challenge week the trial was showcased to parents, staff and other pupils, the cases were heard by the jury, and the Judge's ruling was made. A very successful week enjoyed very much by pupils!



*A small selection of the Christmas Hampers collected by every form in school, to be distributed to elderly people in the local area.*



As well as PGL netball, we also took the boys for a football weekend where they worked with football coaches and developed their confidence and team work skills on PGL activities.

"PGL Football was just fabulous (not even the abhorrent weather could spoil it!). There was brilliant coaching that still managed to be really enjoyable, even the night time entertainment was fantastic! It was a brilliant weekend that I would hope to go on once again next year".

*A. Banks*



**Aquatopia** - winners of the year 7 Island Challenge. Organised and run by Miss Burrill and Mrs de Bruyne, pupils worked hard to give their island an identity. They are seen here on Festival Day, demonstrating to members of the public just why their island concept was so successful! Below you can see pupils creating shelters - part of the challenge of island life!



September saw the delivery of our brand new mini buses in shiny silver, fully kitted out with the school logo and contact information. I think you will agree they are a wonderful asset to the school and give even more pupils the opportunity to attend sporting and out of school activities.



## Let's Get Cooking!

Year 7 pupils have really got involved in joining the first 'Let's Get Cooking' Club of the school year. They've become very confident and independent in the kitchen, cooking a variety of dishes that they have taken home to their families. They have also had guidance from some older pupils who are regular cooking club members. Some of the dishes that have been made include: home-made pizzas, chocolate brownies, chilli con carne with rice, Pudsey Bear cakes (which were interesting...), chicken Rogan Josh and Christmas themed gingerbread biscuits.

From January we will be having a themed cooking club which may be based on international cuisine, a cooking skill or specific food. If this is something you'd like to get involved in or you have any suggestions please get in touch.

*Miss E Flight*





## Useful Information about making payments to school

Dinner money payments can be made online. For further information about online accounts please email [accounts@parklandsacademy.co.uk](mailto:accounts@parklandsacademy.co.uk)

Dinner money accounts can also be credited by pupils using the cash loaders located on the concourse please be aware that these machines do not give change and we are unable to provide change at the school office.

Payments for some trips, events and music tuition fees can also be made online. If you are not using the online facilities, payments must be in a sealed envelope marked with the following information on the outside:

Child's Name

Form

Trip/Event/Item

Amount Enclosed

Cheque or Cash

Please ensure that you enclose the relevant paper work and the exact money as we are unable to provide change at the school office. Cheques should be made payable to Parklands High School and your child's name and form should be written on the back of the cheque, together with what the payment is for.

The sealed envelopes are then posted by pupils in the box located by the school office. The envelopes are opened by the finance team under dual control and monies credited to pupils' accounts. Pre-printed envelopes are available from school.

There is a payphone located on the concourse by PE if your child wishes to telephone home, the minimum charge is 20p, please ensure your child has a 20p to use the telephone should they want to call home as the office telephones are only available to call parents should an emergency arise.

Further information is available on the school website or by emailing: [accounts@parklandsacademy.co.uk](mailto:accounts@parklandsacademy.co.uk)

## GCSE Results 2015

This summer's results were some of the best ever in Parklands' history. Some of our fantastic headline figures are as follows:

- 67% of pupils achieved 5 A\* - C grades including English & maths, which is 11% better than the national average
- 84% of pupils achieved A\* - C in English, which is 17% better than the national average
- 75% of pupils achieved A\* - C in maths, which is 8% better than the national average
- 11 subjects achieved over 90% A\* - C grades
- 21 subjects achieved over 80% A\* - C grades
- 26 subjects achieved over 70% A\* - C grades
- 25% of all grades awarded were A\* or A

We are really proud of these outstanding results from a truly comprehensive intake, and we can rest assured that the overwhelming majority of our former Year 11 pupils are now well prepared to start their next phase of education or training. It just goes to show what can happen when you combine excellent teaching with excellent pupil and parental support and a can-do attitude! So the next time you're being nagged to re-do a piece of work or re-take a test, think about why we're asking you to do it! At some point, you will be part of our whole-school statistics, like those above. How will you play your part? Will you rise to the challenge? Are you willing to develop the growth mindset and see where it takes you?



## Europe House News

Well it's been another very busy start to the year for Europe House. I am very pleased to see how well the year 7 have settled into Parklands life. They are full of enthusiasm for both their lessons and extra curricular activities, tackling House Competitions head on.

I would also like to welcome Mr Wood who is our new Form Tutor for Hungary form. They hold the record for the best attending form in our House and I'm confident they will continue to do so.

Interform competition is still fierce, with both Norway and Portugal sharing the Interform cup last half term. Well done to both of you. Come on the rest of you, let's see you give them a run for their money this term.

I am very proud to say that Europe House hold the overall position of 1st place in the attendance league, so a massive thank you to everyone for their efforts. Miss McConnie and Netherlands have been the only form this term to have achieved 100% attendance, for a full week, and were rewarded with a tub of chocolates to share. Well done Netherlands.

It is very exciting to see that we are currently 2nd place in the House cup - COME ON EUROPE!

May I take this opportunity to wish all my House, their parents/carers and families a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.☺

*Mrs Fox, Europe House*



Make  
Your Mark

## Make Your Mark

Every year pupils at Parklands have the opportunity to take part in the *Make Your Mark* campaign which is led by the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP). The UKYP provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. Here at Parklands we believe in supporting the work of the UKYP by allowing all of our pupils to take part in an election to influence the priorities of these elected representatives.

In January this year, over 850 pupils voted in a cross-school election in order to send a clear mandate to the UKYP about the opinions of our pupils. Pupils voted overwhelmingly at Parklands in support of the living wage, with other issues gaining a considerable amount of support from pupils. These included a curriculum for life, improved transport and increased focus on mental health. When compared with the national results, pupils at Parklands voted exactly in line with the issues identified within other schools and the national priorities of the UKYP have been announced as:

- 1. A living wage:** Everyone should be able to live comfortably. Everyone aged 16 or over should be paid at least the Living Wage of £7.85 per hour (£9.15 in London).
- 2. A curriculum to prepare us for life:** Schools should cover topics including finance, sex and relationships and politics in the curriculum.
- 3. Transport:** Make public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all.
- 4. Mental health:** Services should be improved with young people's help and mental health education should be compulsory and challenge stereotypes.

The Day of the Dead ... A spooky exploration into the Mexican celebration of life  
Pupils found out the meaning of the celebrations and worked in teams to create masks and costumes that are traditionally worn for the event.

After working with balloons, papier-mâché, sewing machines and paints, S02 became a flash of pattern and colour towards the end of the week, as the pupils exhibited their garments, masks and artwork.

A fun time was had by all involved in the challenge.

## Attendance

We have always stressed the importance of attending school every day, even when sometimes this has been difficult due to illness, appointments and other things that are often beyond our control.

This is now something that the government has reflected in their expectations of what the minimum a child's school attendance should be, and has set this at 90%.

In light of this Parklands have introduced a new form group to support those pupils with low attendance.

Congratulations to all 294 pupils who have attended school every day since the start of term in September. These pupils are well on their way to achieving their 100% attendance badges - well done!

The top five forms with the best attendance will enjoy a celebratory breakfast on the last day of term.

Keep up the hard work, and maybe your form will be rewarded next term...

*Miss Burrill*

Over the summer break additional pupil seating was added to the grassed areas around the Pavilion and in front of the music department. The position of the seats complements the new building and offers great views across the playing fields and the new All Weather Facility.

*Mr A Hopkins*



In Learning Challenge week, we were chosen for the Soap Box Derby challenge, where we were asked to make a soap box (a racing cart that uses gravity) and take it down to race on festival day. This was made affordable by sponsors, and we were all split in teams for each one. The sponsor for my team was Deakin's Plumbing. We decided to design a cart that looked like a bathtub in order to promote the company. Over the next 3 days we assembled the basic frame of the cart and added all the fancy bits, we went with a classic bathroom colour scheme to continue the trend. We went on test runs on the 4th day, and we were very pleased by our results. I personally couldn't make it to the race but I was told we won the race! Overall the event was amazing and I would definitely do it again!

*By Moad*





## Year 7 Learning Challenge Week - The Island Project

Year 7 had an exciting and challenging week working in house teams and battling to be crowned the Island Challenge winners.

A new volcanic island in the Pacific had emerged some years ago and was now ready to be colonised. Parklands' Year 7 pupils were invited in house teams to pitch their ideas to be the winning team. Their week long journey saw the teams using existing skills, and developing lots of new ones, as well as forging strong and highly competitive teams; all determined to win.

Lots of artistic skill was needed to design and make national costumes, flags, posters and banners. New outdoor settlement skills were fostered when they turned their hands to den making in Astley Park (eat your heart out Bear Grylls!). The budding Saatchi advertising executives in each team used their talents to create printed and digital advertising. The next generation of animators followed in the footsteps of Lancashire's own Nick Parks to make and film fantastic animations about the islands. Parklands' own Jamie's and Nigella's took to the kitchens to make a national drink for the island. The David Bellamy's were focused on developing the geography of the island whilst the Tony Robinson's were developing its constitution and laws. Followers in the footsteps of JK Rowling created island tales & folklore; whilst dancers choreographed routines that would have rivalled 'Strictly'. The sportspeople emulated Usain Bolt and Jessica Ennis as they created and demonstrated new island sporting activities.

Throughout the week, students gained even more skills as they learnt the art of Chinese Dragon dancing and Japanese Drumming. They even found a bit of time to get physical and engage in the Island Olympics in which their sporting prowess was tested and an outdoor Zumba session which certainly called for lots of stamina.

We even managed to fit in enough time to rehearse and deliver a 'Take That' based musical farewell to Mr Conroy, our Deputy Headteacher who was leaving us for promotion in Stockport; it was Mr Conroy who had developed the island project concept and who had masterminded it for the past 5 years. That was indeed an emotional morning.

The climax of the week was Friday which was Festival Day. The school was open to members of the public and invited guests and our students were very keen to showcase everything that they had done. All of the teams' hard work resulted in trade stands in the outside marquee where team members pitched their ideas to the judging panel hoping to get points for the island and as a more formal stage presentation in the hall.

Competition between houses was fierce and house leaders were rallying their teams each day to get points. The overall winner of the competition was South America and a jubilant Mr Betney thanked his house team for their efforts.



## Parklands welcomes their VIPPs

We are very happy to welcome to the Parklands family, our very own VIPP's (Very Important Parklands Pensioners). We recognised the need and the importance of our students working alongside and supporting the aged within the Chorley area, and so have decided to create our very own community support group. Since word got out about this initiative, requests for support have flooded in.

Recently, Miss Marr and Mrs Fox along with a few members of the Senior Leadership team went along to Ravensthorpe Residents Home to assist them in putting up their Christmas decorations. We all had such a good time and the residents even supplied the students with refreshments.

Our very first event will be held on Wednesday 16th December in our brand new Pavilion. Our VIPP's will be collected in the school mini bus and treated to a wonderful afternoon tea, prepared by Miss Flight's year 10 and year 11 students, followed by entertainment from Mr Penketh and the student choir, some wonderful dancing and a good old fashioned Sing-a-Long. Read all about it in the next newsletter!

We hope this will be the first of many collaborations, and Parklands would like to wish all our VIPPs a very Merry Christmas!

*Mrs Fox, Miss Marr, Mr Rimmer and the Senior Leadership Team*





Hello Parklands!

I am Mrs Gray, new Drama teacher here at Parklands. I have been a teacher for six years and this is the second school I've worked at. Before I became a teacher I worked in the Radio Industry for about ten years doing everything from making the adverts to presenting shows.

I love the Performing Arts, they're a way of life for me. Outside of school I sing in various settings and I am also in a dance group.

I'm looking forward to putting on my first Parklands show now that I've seen the amazing talent we have here.

## A very warm welcome to all our new staff here at Parklands! Find their profiles throughout this newsletter....

Hello! My name is Miss Brooks and I started at Parklands in March 2015. I graduated from the University of Central Lancashire in 2011 after completing a degree in Forensic Science and Criminal Investigation. I spent a short time in retail management before returning to University to complete my teaching degree.



When outside of school, I am actually really boring! I enjoy spending time with my family and dog Alfie. I also help out with a dance school close to where I live, usually driving them round for competitions and doing their hair and make-up. Random facts about me are: I have a (not-so) secret love for Harry Potter and enjoy marathon weekends watching all 8 films and my favourite place on Earth is Disneyland (the one in Paris, haven't got to America yet!).



Hello, my name is Ms Kellett and I'm new to the English Department. I live in N16 and I lead the fabulous English Leaders team (if you are interested, we are always after new members, but you will have to be a massive fan of biscuits if you want to join us.)

I have many hobbies. I love sport and I am usually very competitive. Some of you may have noticed me shouting at/ offering my support/ helping to coach the Year 7 netball team. Outside of school, I love running, football (PNE til I die), drinking more coffee than is good for me, as well as reading, of course (usually both at the same time.) My main aim in life is to stick as close to Shakespeare's mantra as possible: "Love all, trust a few and do wrong to none." I think if everybody followed this advice we would all be far better off. I am most looking forward to seeing all the pupils I teach reaching their full potential during their time at Parklands.



Hi, I'm Mr Martin and I'm the newest member of the RE Department. Some of you may know me already as I worked at Parklands for part of last year. In my spare time I enjoy running, cycling and supporting Liverpool FC. I have really enjoyed my first term at Parklands and I look forward to getting to know more of you throughout the rest of the year.

My name's Mr Miller and I'm a teacher of Computing and I.T. Thank you for the warm welcome so many of you have already offered and I'm glad to be here at Parklands High School. Being an I.T teacher, a lot of my interests lie in technology and I love gadgets, but being a scouser I'm also an ardent Liverpool fan. I'm a lover of films, which comes in handy as I also teach Creative Media, so if you fancy a chat about films or football, pop along to W12 to say hello.



My name is Mrs Day and I am the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. I have previously worked as a teacher of History and also as a specialist teacher in an independent special school.

When not working in schools I have also worked in a supportive capacity for the Local Authority working in liaison with some 36 secondary schools and over 200 primary schools across the Lancashire area.

I am mum to two young children and at present cannot claim to have any formal hobbies other than cook, cleaner, and taxi driver etc.

Prior to having a family I trained as an Opera Singer and have performed as a soloist locally and nationally. Although I have not performed in public for many years now due to my own family commitments I still enjoy music and musical performance.

I absolutely love to travel and will spend most holidays jetting off somewhere seeking the sun. In 2010 I took a break in my career, bought a one way ticket to St Petersburg and spent a year backpacking around the world. The primary focus was trekking in Nepal, New Zealand and the Andes but other highlights were scuba diving in Bali and swimming with turtles in the Galapagos.

It was whilst volunteering at an animal sanctuary in Bolivia that my partner and I discovered we would become parents and had to cut the trip short by a month.

Love - teaching and am passionate about education.

Hate - flying!



Ms Barwick, Senior Assistant Head

## Behaviour for Learning - Autumn Term 1

We were delighted to see such positive behaviour for learning in the first half term of the year. This is an indicator of our students' positive attitude to learning, something we believe is the foundation to success in and out of the classroom.

Shown below is an overview of how each year group approached their learning and it is clear that the majority of the school have an attitude to learning that is excellent and one which we would expect. A reminder of the grade criteria is also shown. It is important to note that we include the attitude to homework as part of our expectations

- Year 7 = 93%
- Year 8 = 90%
- Year 9 = 78%
- Year 10 = 81%
- Year 11 = 76%

- Year 7 = 7%
- Year 8 = 10%
- Year 9 = 20%
- Year 10 = 18.5%
- Year 11 = 23%

- Year 7 = 0%
- Year 8 = 0%
- Year 9 = 2%
- Year 10 = 0.5%
- Year 11 = 1%

**Green** = **consistently** meets teacher expectations and **consistently** displays a positive attitude to learning and behaviour

**Amber** = **sometimes** meets teacher expectations and **sometimes** displays a positive attitude to learning and behaviour

**Red** = **rarely** meets teacher expectations and **rarely** displays a positive attitude to learning and behaviour

We encourage the growth mindset in Parklands and part of that means our students need a 'can do' attitude, resilience and positive attitude to learning. While the majority of our students are demonstrating this, we will be pushing those with an average profile of amber or red to develop these skills. After all, with BfL we are focusing on attitude not attainment and that is achievable by all.

We celebrated success in a series of assemblies, something which will be repeated as we finish for the Christmas break. All students with a green qualified for an entry into a prize draw for an iPad. The more greens a student had the more entries they gained - therefore, a greater chance of winning.

*Pictured here are our lucky winners. First prize: Alice Kirkham Y8 (Ipad) Second prize: Adam Baker Y8 (£20 High street vouchers) Third prize: Lara Moyana- Taylor Y7 (£10 High street vouchers)*

As we go to press the latest trackers and BfL reports for all years are being produced. We will report on those in our next newsletter.



A massive thank you to all parents, students and staff who contributed to the Macmillan Coffee Morning in September. It was a huge success, with the fabulous homemade contributions being the most popular. We will be making the event bigger and better next year and will look to top the £390 raised. Again thank you so much.

*Mrs Dewhurst & the Coffee Morning Team*



I was fortunate to be offered the opportunity to send six girls to a Racketball course at Leyland Leisure Centre as part of the Sportivate funding. These girls have shown massive progress and are hoping to join a local league and continue playing. We will be looking for new girls to trial the sport next year!



This year has been another fantastic year for Girls Football, having entered many competitions and matches and come out successful! Both our year 8/9 team and 10/11 team are through to the quarter finals of the Lancashire Cup - a fantastic achievement for all involved. Especially for many of the year 11 girls who are representing school for the first time in football! Well done girls!



Our year 9 and 10 football girls were selected for the second year running now to represent Preston North End in a football tournament. The girls were undefeated for the entire tournament. Well done girls!

INSTEAD OF...	TRY THINKING...
I'm not good at this	What am I missing
I give up	I'll use a different strategy
It's my best work	Is this really my best work?
I can't make this any better	I can always improve
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake – I give up	Mistakes help me to learn
I just can't do this	I'm going to train my brain
I will never be that clever	I will learn how to do this

## Growth Mind-set

Earlier in the academic year, all boys across school took part in a growth mind-set assembly, aimed at tackling the national issue of boys' underachievement. The assembly aimed to set out the national picture and demonstrated how a change in mind-set can lead to academic success. Outlined below are examples between the difference in a fixed mind-set and a growth mind-set.

**Fixed Mind-set**

I'm either good at it, or I'm not.  
When I'm frustrated I give up.  
I don't like to be challenged.  
When I fail, I'm no good.  
How clever I am determines everything.

**Growth Mind-set**

I can learn anything I want to.  
When I'm frustrated I persevere.  
I want to challenge myself.  
When I fail, I learn.  
My effort and attitude determine everything.

**We all need to change our mind-set!**

## Careers Update

Careers advice and guidance is something we take very seriously here at Parklands - we are preparing our young people for the future. Along with excellent GCSE grades, they need to have all the information necessary to make the right choices for their next steps. To this end, our Year 11s have had lunchtime drop in sessions from Runshaw, Cardinal Newman, Wigan & Leigh and Winstanley Colleges, plus a session from the Army, as well as full year assemblies from Runshaw, Newman, Wigan & Leigh and Bolton Colleges, with much more to follow in the New Year, including a visit from the National Citizenship Service - 'The Challenge' and David Campbell Soccer.

Also on the calendar for after Christmas is the annual Careers Fair, attended by all our Year 9, 10 and 11 pupils. This will take place on Friday 29th January 2016 and will feature a large variety of colleges, universities, training and apprenticeship providers and employers. A booklet will be given to pupils beforehand with a list of the exhibitors attending and a brief description of what they offer, so pupils can choose who to see and the kind of questions they need to ask.

Year 11s are currently having 1-1 careers interviews, with many more to follow, before we move on to the other year groups. There has been a new careers newsletter issued to Year 11 (initially) and also available as a PDF via the website. This will be published regularly - look out for the next issue soon!

The mock interview day was a great success, with some excellent feedback from pupils and interviewers alike - thanks to all the interviewers who spent the day with us.

Year 10 (now 11) visited Runshaw College, Cardinal Newman College and Blackburn College during the summer term for their Taster Days, where they experienced college life and sampled lessons. A small number also visited Winstanley College. This will be repeated next summer, and will include Wigan & Leigh College, to give pupils an even greater choice.

We have invested in New Kudos, an online careers facility that every pupil in school, from Year 7 - 11, can access, both in school and at home, with parents. There are separate packages for different ages/key stages - more details to follow in the next newsletter.

Year 10 and 11 pupils (and parents) are sent regular emails, reminding them of upcoming events (open nights, deadlines, roadshows, college applications, advice, etc). Pupils should check their school emails regularly so as not to miss their interview date/time or any useful events/advice!

There will soon be a 'live jobs board' outside the Top Office (Careers Office) - featuring weekly updates of available apprenticeships, in collaboration with Chorley Job Centre. Current vacancies include opportunities in catering, business admin, nursery care, hair and beauty and IT - check it out! (See Miss Berry for any further details).

Finally, in the New Year, Year 11 will have sessions on effective CV and Personal Statement writing - vital skills for the future. Interviews for colleges will be held (Runshaw and Wigan & Leigh will interview at Parklands - pupils will be sent their date/time a week or so beforehand). For all other colleges, pupils need to go online, submit an application form and go along to their evening interviews. Remember, at least two college choices! Mock exams will give a good idea of the work still to do - but do not rely on these results alone - make sure you have a back up option!



We have been very fortunate to have Preston North End coach Melissa Brown come in and work with year 11 girls in their PE lessons. This has been a huge success with many girls now involved in football for school and playing in matches. Melissa will be with us next term working with a different year group and our after school club on Fridays so if you're interested in improving your football skills girls, come on down after Christmas!

On the 7<sup>th</sup> November I took two netball teams to the PGL competition in Liddington. As always the girls were a credit to the school, coming home with medals and a trophy.

The year 8 girls lost all their games on the first day but on the second day got through to a semi-final game and won after extra time. With a golden goal from Charli Smith they then beat the favourites in a nail biter of a final, winning gold and becoming Year 8 champions!

In the same PGL competition where our Year 8 girls won gold, the Year 9 girls were undefeated and played very good netball all weekend but unfortunately met a very strong team from Croydon in the semis. Unfortunately, they missed out on a final spot so were left battling for bronze position.



Our year 7 Netballers have had a great start to their netball careers at Parklands, numbers are still very high at training with all girls showing great commitment and being rewarded with 3<sup>rd</sup> place at their first tournament! There is plenty more to come, keep up the good work girls!



Christmas Party - Year 7 & 8  
- looks like fun!



The PE department organised and took part in the Global Goals Penalty Challenge earlier this term. There was some very dubious counting of spins with Mr Metcalf the only participant able to find the back of the net. Eat your heart out Gareth Bale!



## Yr8 Connect

As part of a long term project to promote new skills and self-sufficiency at Parklands, our Year 8 Connect group is researching where our food comes from. At the end of November, pupils visited the working hill farm at Cobble Hey near Garstang to learn about the life of a farmer and to explore which animals and plants we could grow here at Parklands.

Pupils learnt about the farming year and the natural seasons that farmers have to work alongside. Following the visit, pupils are now looking into the practicalities of starting a small holding here at Parklands to produce food and eggs for pupils.





## Parklands High School Summer 2015 Expedition to Kenya

Way back in 2012, Camps International approached Parklands High School and asked us if we'd be interested in sending some of our pupils off to Kenya on the trip of a lifetime. Over the following two years, Ellis Hawkins, Emily McKenzie, Alastair McKay, Ethan Reynolds, Toni Hajdukiewicz, Olivia Price and Katie Dixon raised a phenomenal amount of money, ensuring that their dream of going to Kenya came true. The pupils demonstrated an exceptional amount of determination and endeavour to raise the money. From concerts to car washes, non-uniform days to 'name the bear'... our pupils arranged and took part in everything they could to fundraise!

Departure day crept up on us only a few short weeks after the final Year 11 exams were over. The pupils were extremely excited but very nervous. For some, this was their first trip abroad! For all, it was their first trip away without their parents. As we waved goodbye to school, Chorley and our families and friends, we felt a real sense of purpose and adventure. We knew that Kenya was going to be life-changing, but it hadn't happened yet, so we didn't know just how much of an impact it would have on us all.

I won't bore you with the details of the traffic-rich motorway on the way down to Heathrow airport but we made it there (just) on time!

After a long nine hour flight and a two day road journey, we arrived at our destination; Camp Tsavo, Kenya. Words cannot do justice to the view we woke up to every day for three weeks. It was beyond incredible.

Our camp leader was Sammy K. He was a tall, proud Kenyan man who never stopped smiling the whole time we were there. He was a real help and an inspiration to us all. "You need help? Come to Sammy K!" he told us. And we did!

The ultimate aim of our expedition was to take part in project work in Kenya. During our three weeks in Camp Tsavo we were involved in a wide range of different work to help the local community. Every day was filled with activities and projects. We de-wormed goats, painted and levelled floors in classrooms, dug the foundations of a classroom, dug the foundations and levelled the floor of a community centre, planted seeds, dug trenches, put up elephant deterrents...I could go on! Our biggest achievement, however, was that we dug the foundations, made the bricks and constructed a house for a widow, her children and the orphans she was taking in. This was really special for us as we could see who our work was benefiting and how much it would enhance their lives.

The work was, at times, back breaking! Lifting huge loads of cement and sand for kilometres and pushing wheel barrows full of rocks through sand really took a toll on all of us. This was not an easy month! There were plenty of aches, pains, bumps, bruises, bites, sore feet and toes...not to mention the sickness bugs! I repeat; this was not an easy month for anyone!





Although the work was tough and tiring, our pupils put in a phenomenal amount of effort and never stopped working. Throughout the trip they demonstrated leadership, empathy and an incredible work ethic which genuinely set them apart from the crowd. As the travelling teacher with the group, I cannot begin to tell you how proud I was of each and every one of them for the way they conducted themselves whilst on project work.

At this point, it's only right for me to balance out my report on the expedition. As tough as it was, it wasn't *all* hard work! We had plenty of fun too...swimming, sunbathing, mountain trekking and lizard chasing (you read it correctly!) were all part of our agenda as well as spending lots of time with new (and old) friends!

If you've never been on safari in Kenya, we would all highly recommend it. It was one of the most incredible experiences of our lives. We saw everything! Elephants roamed the plains and were nearly as common as rabbits are over here! Although they were so common, seeing a new herd or a single male was always exciting and interesting. Baboons clung to the tree tops to get a good look at us as we drove by. Ostriches raced the safari truck...and won! All different species of antelope were on show as well as two different (one very rare) species of zebra! As well as these, we also saw lots of huge birds of prey and buffalo. The highlight of the trip for many people however, was when we came face to face with three fully grown lions. They stared at us for more than ten minutes before retreating behind a bush for shade. We never truly thought we'd be lucky enough to see lions in the wild and it's something that none of us will ever forget.



Three weeks after our arrival in Kenya, our contribution to the project work was over. We'd made an incredible difference. The house, the schools, the local people with the goats, the community centre, the nursery...we'd contributed to so many amazing projects, it was sad to leave it all behind but we left safe in the knowledge we'd helped the community.

Three weeks after our arrival in Kenya, our contribution to the project work was over. We'd made an incredible difference. The house, the schools, the local people with the goats, the community centre, the nursery...we'd contributed to so many amazing projects, it was sad to leave it all behind but we left safe in the knowledge we'd helped the community.



As we said our goodbyes to Kenya, we still had a week of our expedition left. We crossed the border and began the next chapter of the adventure in Tanzania.

Tanzania was a very different-looking country to Kenya. It seemed a lot more 'green'. Plants were slightly more abundant and the evidence of more rainfall in this particular area was clear. Our long journey to Tanga, Tanzania involved passing Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. I can tell you, this mountain was incredible. It was so high, even from a distance we couldn't see the top of it! Some of our new friends went off to climb another huge mountain, Mount Meru.

I have to say; personally I was quite glad we weren't mountain climbing after our gruelling three weeks in Kenya! Instead, we made our way to the beach at Tanga. There we learned to scuba dive! Our instructors were patient, knowledgeable and talented. It was certainly an unusual experience for me to be on the other side of the desk in the classroom!

After we all passed our PADI scuba diving test, we were let loose in the Indian Ocean! Scuba diving was a real highlight of the trip. The underwater landscapes, flora and fauna easily rivalled anything we saw on land! All of our pupils demonstrated their trademark Parklands resilience and overcame fears, phobias and even injuries to get into the water and showcase the skills they'd learned.

Alastair, a seasoned diver, took to the water like, well...a fish! Ethan had a scrape with the smallest squid ever seen (think a 2p coin!) but overcame the odds to make it back to the boat. Toni overcame her fears and dived into the water each day and passed the PADI course with flying colours. Emily, Ellis, Olivia, Katie and myself gave it our all and made excellent divers too!



Tanga was amazing and we'll never forget our time there. The experience of visiting Kenya and Tanzania will stay with us forever. We met so many people and got to see things we'd only ever really seen on TV. Our pupils saw real poverty. Real people with no water; real people who live in mud huts; real people with no family...



I'm so proud of, not only the contribution Parklands pupils made in Kenya and Tanzania, but the manner in which they made it. Without exception, every one of our pupils showed themselves to be kind, mature, genuine and humble people. This, to me, is what my job is all about and what Parklands is all about. Ensuring our pupils are ready for life outside the classroom is essential. I couldn't have wished to spend my summer anywhere else, with anyone else.



*Mr Banks*