



**THE WESTLEIGH SCHOOL**

Aspiring & Achieving Together

# THE WESTLEIGH WAY

ISSUE 11 SPRING EDITION • APRIL 2019





# HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

ON BEHALF OF THE STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE WESTLEIGH SCHOOL, IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO THE EASTER EDITION OF THE WESTLEIGH WAY.

This edition celebrates our students and what we, The Westleigh School, are doing to nurture each of them as individuals. Our Deputy Head, Mr Kearns, is resolute in his commitment that every student will experience a range of opportunities to grow holistically as well as academically. Take a look at his article on page 3 to see what he's doing to accomplish this.

It's vital in today's rapidly changing economic climate that The Westleigh School continues to evolve to ensure our students are educated in a way that befits the modern world. Our new curriculum for September 2019 reflects growing industries such as hair and beauty and shortage skills such as construction. Deputy Head Teacher, Mr Lamoury, describes on page 4 how we're championing a new and modern curriculum to meet the needs of today's shifting society.

As a secondary school, we are of course building on the valuable work done by our partner primary schools. Head of Year 7 Mrs Watling's mission extends to preparing a new generation of students for study at high school. Her primary reading programme (page 5) has seen great success in empowering our year 8 students to become Reading Ambassadors and inspire year 6 children to foster a love of literature. We know our students gain a great deal of confidence and well-being from helping others as leaders of learning. Maths teacher, Mrs Cull, has also been helping our Year 5 and 6 neighbours to get ready for high school life by introducing them to Key Stage 3 maths.

The grades our students achieve will always be of paramount importance to us. Securing a good set of qualifications is statistically the best way to ensure positive future outcomes for young people. We recognise that students learn best when skilled teaching practitioners make lessons stimulating. Turn to pages 6-13 for an insight into what our faculties are doing to inspire young learners every day at Westleigh.

There is no greater pleasure than to see our students grow academically as well as emotionally in their time here at Westleigh. Students never cease to astound me with their capacity for hardwork and ambition and their ability to care for others. Of course Easter is traditionally a time of renewal and hope for the future. I'm confident that as part of the Westleigh community we're helping nurture a new generation of academically prepared and emotionally resilient individuals who are ready to face whatever challenges that future brings.

Mr C Bramwell  
Headteacher

## THIS ISSUE'S FRONT COVER STAR

The cover art for this edition of The Westleigh Way is by Year 7 student Daria Anwar. Her art teacher, Miss Marsden, says, "Daria is a committed young artist who comes in early to help me prepare materials for the day's lessons. Even though she won't be selecting her options until Year 8, she's already determined to pursue art at GCSE and with her hardworking and conscientious attitude I'm sure she will excel in the subject." Well done Daria, what a beautiful image for our spring magazine!



# LEADERSHIP FOCUS

## A VISION FOR ENRICHMENT



*By Deputy Head Teacher, Mr Kearns.*

On a chilly February day we took thirty students to face the high ropes at Haigh Hall. At ten metres above the ground, for anybody not blessed with a head for heights the high ropes present something of a challenge. While it's true to say not all our students found the course easy, I can also say with certainty that by the end of the activity every one of them gained a sense of great pride and satisfaction. Sometimes we have to go beyond our comfort zone to understand what we are truly capable of.

## INSPIRING READERS

*School Business Manager, Mrs Reiersen, talks about inspiring a generation of readers.*

Westleigh has always had a strong ethos regarding the importance of reading and literacy. We're lucky to have an amazing and dedicated English department who put their knowledge and energy behind initiatives such as 'Drop Everything and Read' and our popular community reading sessions. However over the last two years, I've seen for myself how this focus has grown even more in momentum.

When English Teacher, Mrs Carr, asked me to read to a year 9 class during form time, I jumped at the chance. My daughter recommended one of her favourite authors, Michael Morpurgo, and I chose the book 'The Butterfly Lion'. It was clear to see how immersed the class was. I was delighted when one of the students wanted to know what happened next and borrowed the book; and even more delighted when she eagerly tracked me down the

One of the most heart-warming points of the day was when a member of our staff experienced a moment of overwhelming self doubt and almost gave up on the course. The support she got from the students was awesome. They all stopped what they were doing and cried out words of encouragement which, she admits, is what got her through to the end. Afterwards, students were waiting to greet her with pats on the back and kind words.

This sort of teamwork and the ability to empathise with others are just two of the skills students can learn from experiences like the high ropes. A classroom environment can only teach young people so much in preparing for the real world. Some people would argue that a school's place is to concentrate on academic attainment but what we now recognise is that, while important, this can only take you so far. In other words, qualifications will get you the interview but it's who you are that gets you the job. We're giving students the opportunities to make sure they have the qualities and experiences that employers are looking for.

Our new Westleigh Charter states our commitment to ensure that all students take part in a minimum of ten enrichment experiences in their high school careers. These will facilitate personal development as well as careers focused interactions.



following week to tell me she hadn't been able to put it down and had read the whole thing!

It's good to know that if even one child is inspired by us to pick up a book and read, then it was time well spent indeed!



# LEADERSHIP FOCUS

## LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE

September 2019 will see some significant changes to the curriculum students study at GCSE level. Deputy Head Teacher, Mr Lamoury, explains why he feels the revitalised curriculum will bring renewed energy to learning at Westleigh.

“A school’s curriculum should allow students to enjoy and achieve but also tie in nicely with progression post-16. Vocational routes such as Hair & Beauty and Construction are popular choices post-16. From September 2019, Westleigh School will reflect this trend by offering both subjects at GCSE level. We believe this will give our students an added advantage in fulfilling their future aspirations.

“The Westleigh School will, of course, continue supporting students who choose to study academic subjects such as geography, history, sciences and languages at GCSE. We are pleased to now be able to offer additional pathways in vocational subjects to better meet the needs of all our students.”



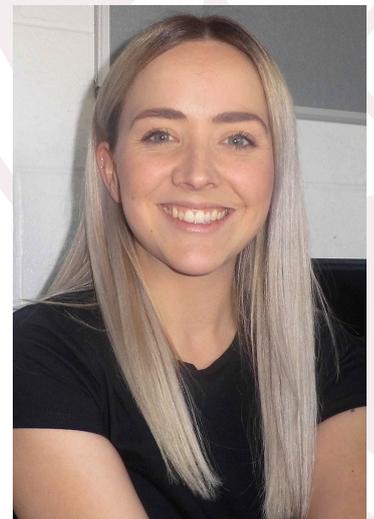
## OPTIONS 2019

Choosing which subjects to study at GCSE can be a challenging undertaking for Year 8 students. This year, to ensure students were fully informed and to assist them to make the right choices, a number of initiatives were put in place.

On Tuesday 19th March, students took part in a college taster day to give them an insight into where their GCSE choices might lead them post-16. Thanks to Leigh College, Bolton Sixth Form College, Winstanley College, PROCOT, FIXIT, Alliance Learning, Joan Courtney (Careers advisor) and Willmott Dixon for providing sessions on the day.

## MEET MRS MALONE - HEAD OF RE/PSHE

In addition to the new vocational courses in Hair and Beauty and Construction, Westleigh will also be offering GCSE RE from September 2019. As part of their studies, students will develop transferrable skills in reasoning and debate. Head of RE, Mrs Malone, is excited about the new opportunities the subject will bring to the school. She says, “RE not only exposes students to different cultures but empowers them to develop their own considered opinions on often controversial subjects.”



# THE NEXT GENERATION

## RISING STARS

Students from Hindley Green CP School were invited by Mrs Watling to perform in Westleigh's annual dance show. Mrs Watling, Head of Year 7, is a specialist dance teacher. She visited the primary school for a number of weeks to help them prepare for the big night. She said, "The children showed amazing maturity and professionalism, well beyond their years. They were a big hit on the night."



## MATHS MASTERCLASS

Maths teacher, Mrs Cull, has been helping pupils from Meadowbank and Parklee primary schools to prepare for high school by introducing them to Key Stage 3 maths.

"Having the students come in and work in a secondary environment completing different maths tasks is definitely helping to build their confidence. They have enjoyed looking at bar models for ratio and have loved the introductory algebra games that have helped them to have a full understanding of why we use letters in maths and what they actually mean."

## READING AMBASSADORS

The Westleigh School has a long and proud tradition of community engagement. We also have a keen emphasis on promoting reading, not only for the personal pleasure of our students but as a tool to enhance further learning. That's why Mrs Watling, Head of Year 7, decided to share the Westleigh love of reading with our neighbouring primary schools.

Year 8 students have been working with pupils at Hindley Green CP while Year 10s have been 'one to one' reading with pupils from Hindley J & I. Mrs Watling says, "The project has been immensely beneficial for all the students concerned. The older children are excellent reading role-models for their younger peers. They also gain a great sense of personal satisfaction from helping others while developing their leadership skills."





RECLAIM is a youth leadership and social change organisation which aims to amplify the voices of working class young people. They run intensive, high impact leadership programmes for 12-15 year olds from working class communities to develop their skills and potential and to build their pathway to make the world a better place for all.

*Pictured right:* Recently our Year 8 boys have embarked on the Reclaim Project. They spent a week attending workshops at Leigh Sports Village where they created their manifesto for change. They will now continue to attend sessions where they will be supported by Reclaim to turn their vision into reality.



*Pictured left:* Our Year 8 girls recently graduated from their own Reclaim experience. Here they are enjoying the ceremony where they were joined by the Mayor of Wigan Borough.

## Measuring the impact of extra-curricular activities - what are the long term benefits for students?

### CASE STUDY - RHIANNON MARTIN

Year 8 Rhiannon Martin was one of the first cohort of students identified by Reclaim as possessing leadership potential. Since completing her training, she has gone on to inspire others at Wigan Young Makers.

Rhiannon is a keen artist; a talent that did not go unnoticed in her work with Reclaim. She was invited to attend Wigan Young Makers at STEAM in Wigan. Rhiannon says, "Not only did I find out about this opportunity through Reclaim, the project also gave me the confidence to go for new things."

The Young Makers group allows young people to share their skills and knowledge by peer-leading sessions. Rhiannon spread her passion for Manga and Anime art and felt empowered by helping others understand a subject she loves. In turn, Rhiannon has also been inspired by other young artists who attend the group.

Rhiannon says, "Even though we've officially completed Reclaim, we still have regular meetings. I like it when people get together to do something productive. I have met so many great people I would never had had the opportunity to get to know. Everybody should get involved with projects like Reclaim and Steam. They will learn, grow and develop as a result."

**Wigan Young Makers is open to all young people aged 12-17 years. For more information, email them on [hello@wigansteam.co.uk](mailto:hello@wigansteam.co.uk) or visit their website [www.wigansteam.com](http://www.wigansteam.com)**



# GROWING THROUGH LEARNING - ICT

The Westleigh School offers a wide range of enriched learning opportunities. Activities such as those covered over the next few pages take place in addition to the regular curriculum and are a way to consolidate students' understanding while reinvigorating their interest in the subject. Students have a range of learning styles and providing a variety of educational opportunities ensures that all students are engaged with their learning. Perhaps most importantly of all, such activities introduce students to an experience of the world they may never previously have encountered and engender a profound passion for learning.



## ICT

Did you know only 10% of students studying computers at Wigan and Leigh College are girls? That's despite the fact that girls find the course easier, get better results and go on to better jobs than their male counterparts!

In March, some of our Year 8 girls attended the 'Digital Her' roadshow which aims to inspire girls to consider futures in the tech industry. Our girls tried out new digital skills and met female role models who all work with computers. Year 8 student Luana, commented that, 'I thought you had to be good at maths to work with computers but now I see that there are many different roles to suit people with all different talents.'

## DIGITAL HER

By student reporter Scarlett Sharples

***'When we first arrived, I didn't think I wanted to work in media or with technology however, after this workshop it may be something I consider.'*** – Skye Crook, Year 8.

There are many separate aspects of technology that students like us are unaware of; from being an online police officer, to developing the latest Artificial Intelligence. These are all different paths you can take, and for our generation, some of them have definitely become more enticing over the past few years. When searching for a job or deciding the correct career path for yourself, many options lead to some area of computing whether that is coding a website or just updating a business' social media platform.

Thanks to our visit to the Digital Her Roadshow in Wigan, my friends and I are much better informed on the subject of technology and the employment opportunities associated with it.

For instance, did you know that Wigan and Leigh College have their very own technology course? I hadn't really given it much thought previously, but now I can see how helpful this could be in whichever profession somebody like me might choose to pursue in the future.



Throughout our visit to Digital Her, we learnt many different skills that we would need to prepare ourselves for a possible career in technology. During our second activity, GCHQ (this is the Government Communication Headquarters, a security organisation like online police officers) had planned a task to give us a taster of what they do every day! It turns out computers are not just for watching YouTube videos after all!



# GROWING THROUGH LEARNING - ENGLISH

## WORLD BOOK DAY

World Book Day is a much loved tradition at The Westleigh School. But for English teacher and Head of Literacy, Mrs Carr, the day is about so much more than donning your best fancy dress outfit. Reading is the foundation of learning and a life-long pleasure for all those who learn to love books.



Year 7 students were taken off timetable to become immersed in the theme of the day; Charles Dickens! Mrs Carr says, "It was a memorable, impactful day of learning to create positive reading experiences and engender a reading culture."

With staff as well as Year 7 students dressing up for the day, there's a real sense of the school community celebrating their love of books together.



Students focused on a thematic approach to learning the English Curriculum:

**Reading** – Students learned about the character Magwitch from *Great Expectations*. Could they use their inference skills to 'read between the lines' and discover his true background?

**Speaking and Listening** – Students stood in a circle to act out a story scene by scene in a 'Whoosh!' activity.

**Writing** – 'The Big Stink' – a creative writing exercise to imagine what it might have been like to live in Dickensian London.

*Pictured left: Mrs Carr, aka 'Marley' from A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.*



## LUNCHTIME IN THE LIBRARY

The Westleigh School is proud of its school library; a great resource that students can use every day to broaden their minds and support their learning. Being a student librarian also gives students a useful set of transferable skills.

I asked Year 9 students Jonah Clare and Daniel Jones about their experiences.

**Q. What's the best thing about being a student librarian?**

A. It's fun! We get to see lots of different books that we may never have noticed. There are between twelve and thirteen thousand in total!

**Q. What does your work in the library entail?**

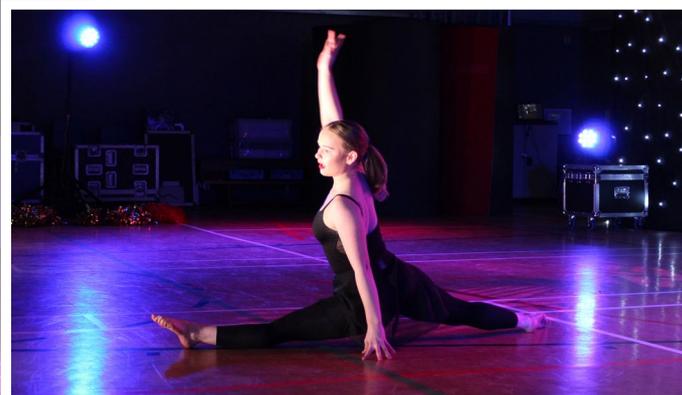
A. We have to stamp books when students want to borrow them. This meant learning how to use the library computer software called 'Eclipse'. There's quite a lot of responsibility too such as keeping the area tidy, looking after the books and making sure people return them on time and things like that. We also helped judge the short story competition.

**Q. What skills have you learned that might be useful in the future?**

A. We had to learn to overcome a few problems to begin with. There are ten student librarians in all so we came up with a rota to make sure the library desk was manned all the time. Not everybody liked fitting around the rota which caused some issues. We took a vote so that everybody could have their say and it was decided to keep the rota system by 9 votes to 1. Everything works really well now.

*School librarian, Miss Earith, is delighted with her team of dedicated librarians. She says, "They are really helpful and free up my time so I can manage other aspects of the library. Their customer service skills are second to none!"*

# GROWING THROUGH LEARNING - DANCE



The Westleigh Dance show is one of the annual highlight's of the school calendar. Dance teacher, Mrs Watling, says of the show, "It's a great aid to learning and gives the students a focus to work towards. My students are always hard-working but I have really seen them go up a gear in their efforts to prepare for the show. There's such camaraderie and support among the students which drives them to do the best they can, not only for themselves but for each other too. I think they grow so much from the experience, not only in what they can achieve with hard work and perseverance but also in self-confidence, team work and resilience."

The show was a true community effort including performances from past pupils as well as a special guest appearance by Hindley Green CP School (see page 5).



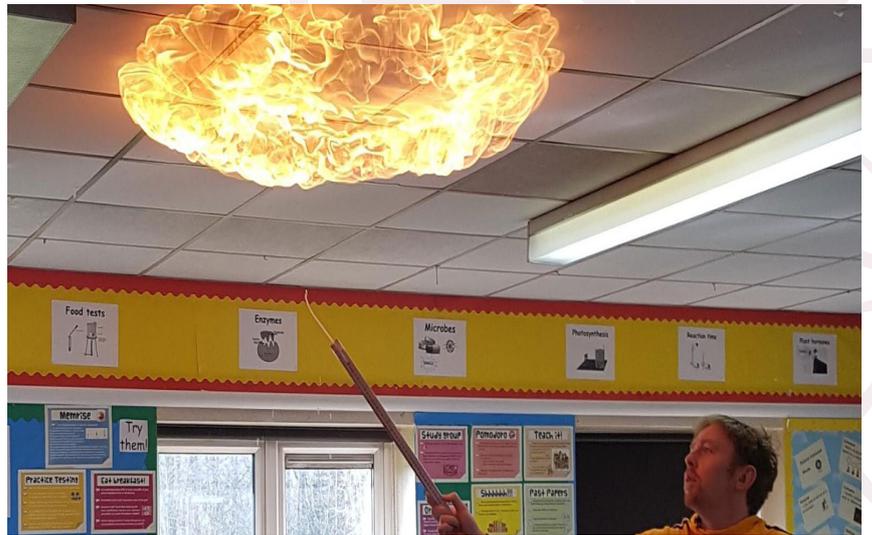


# GROWING THROUGH LEARNING - SCIENCE



## SCIENCE WEEK

British Science Week in March was a chance for students to discover sensational science in a host of weird and wonderful events and activities. A visit by 'Curious Critters' afforded students the opportunity to learn about a menagerie of exotic creatures, their habitats and characteristics. Meanwhile, students made their own slime and science teacher Mr Stott exploded methane bubbles!



# GROWING THROUGH LEARNING - HUMANITIES

## HISTORY DETECTIVES

Year 8 students became history detectives in March. A tip-off from a member of the public had led them to the story of Flora Macdonald, who had travelled with an organisation called ENSA (Entertainment National Service Association) to entertain the troops during WWII. But like all good historians, our students wanted to find the evidence to prove what they had been told. Thank you to Hannah Turner, from Leigh Archives and Local Studies, who invited them to use historic records held at Leigh Library for them to conduct their research.



## REWARD TRIP TO LIVERPOOL

Students from Year 8 - 10 were rewarded for their hard work in humanities with a trip to Liverpool's museums. It was a great opportunity for students to broaden their knowledge on a subject that inspires them.



## THE DOCTOR'S SHOW

History students travelled to The Waterside Theatre in Sale for a performance of 'The Doctors Show', a light-hearted play which tells the story of Health and Medicine in Britain since the Middle Ages. It was an exciting way to revisit and consolidate their GCSE studies and the fabulous actors brought history to life. The play led into a workshop session which examined how the events of the play relate to the GCSE course, and offered advice to students about how to improve their performance in their final exam.



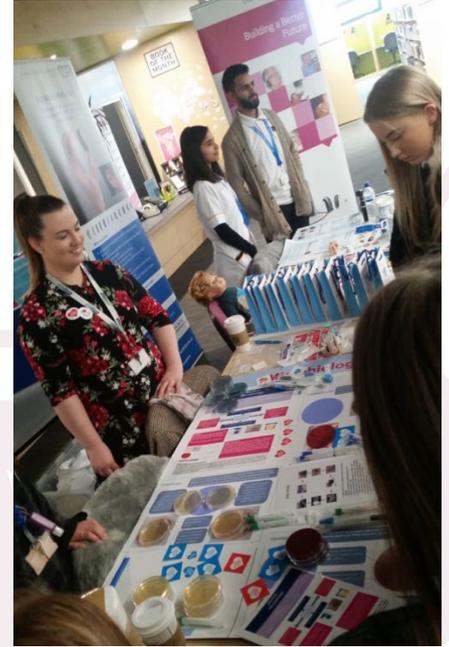


# GROWING THROUGH LEARNING

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The Healthcare Science Skills Show took place at St Helen's College in partnership with the NHS. It was a fantastic way to introduce Year 10 Health and Social Care students to some of the new technology being utilised in the healthcare industry. Students were given the opportunity to experience for themselves the latest innovations in key-hole surgery and heart monitoring. They measured their own bone density and practised the skills needed to take blood!

Mrs Coleman, who accompanied them on the trip, said, "It was wonderful to see the students so engaged with learning; a real first-hand insight into science and technology. Students also got to meet health care professionals and learn what it is like to work in the industry."



## LANGUAGES

Madam Michalakakos has those top grades in sight for her GCSE French students. Prior to sitting their mock exams, Year 11 students received a boost to their studies with a visit to a PiXL event at the King's Conference Centre in Manchester. She says, "The day was designed to motivate and inspire students and give them tips for exam success."

Now they have completed their mock exams, students are taking part in a follow-up visit to Winstanley College to build on their results and develop strategies for improvement. "Winstanley is the pre-eminent college for languages in the area so I hope students will be energised in their learning. As part of the visit, they will not only get a taste of college life but will meet students who have already been through GCSEs and can share their knowledge and experience."



# GROWING THROUGH LEARNING - ART

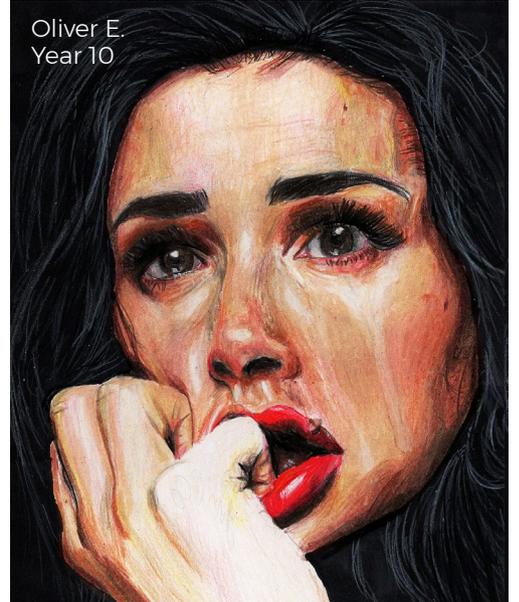
In the art department, our students are encouraged to grow not only in their technical skills as artists but also socially and emotionally. The work our students produce reflects their appreciation of the natural and made world as well as allowing personal expression and encouraging emotional intelligence.



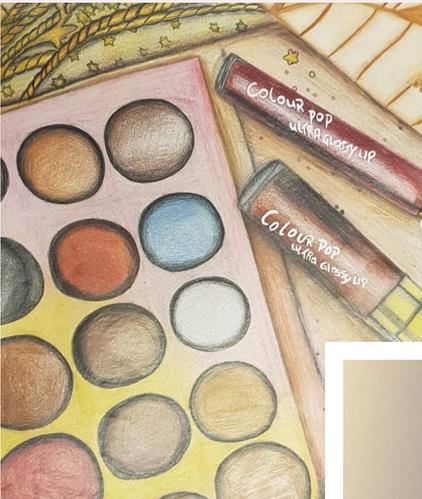
Mia A. Year 9



Courtney K. Year 9



Oliver E. Year 10



Oana H. Year 9



Demi L. Year 7



Harvey S. Year 7



Nicol S. Year 10



Ross V. Year 8



Matthew B. Year 9



Ceejay H. Year 9



Tillie C. Year 7



# FUTURE-PROOFING OUR STUDENTS

The Westleigh School undertakes a number of measures to ensure our students are ready for life post-16. This gathers momentum for our Year 10 and 11 students as they prepare to continue their education at college or in the workplace. Here is a sample of some of the 'Future-Proofing' activities we've arranged this term:

## PEACE CENTRE

Year 11 students enjoyed booster trips to the Peace Centre in Warrington. The trips were designed to inspire and motivate students to reach their full potential at GCSE. Mr Lamoury, who ran the first of the trips said, "We took around thirty hard-working students who we thought would benefit from developing revision strategies that would maximise their ability. The trip took place over two days and students engaged in a number of activities such as revision skills and stress management including mindfulness and meditation."

A science booster also took place at the centre. Head of Science, Mrs Priest, said, "It was a fantastic opportunity for us to work intensively with small groups of students. The change of scenery really helped them to focus and was great for team building and morale. As a reward for all their



hard work, students were taken bowling before returning home. I was delighted when they came up with scientific names for their teams such as 'Chloroplast'; it showed just what an impact the visit had."

## CAREERS FAIR

We all know ambition is important. If students have dream jobs or college courses to aspire to, they are more likely to apply themselves to achieve the grades they need to get there. This term, our Year 10 students took part in a visit to the Skills Northwest Careers Fair at Event City. Students interacted with a number of employers and further education providers including universities, the NHS, Police and armed forces through a variety of hands-on activities. Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, was also there to deliver a speech about opportunities for young people.



Year 10 students participate in master classes at Leigh College



Student meets Andy Burnham



## FURTHER EDUCATION LINKS

Our local colleges offer a number of sessions to inspire young learners and introduce them to learning at a post-16 level. This term our students have taken part in Masterclasses at Leigh College on Printmaking, Robotics and Engineering. On 4th April, a group of students will visit Winstanley College as part of their Associate Student Programme. They will stretch their ability to the limit with lessons in Sociology, Philosophy and Psychology.

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## YEAR 11 HEROES

Young people don't always get the credit they deserve. But occasionally something occurs that reminds us of just how caring and responsible the younger generation can be.

When a group of Year 11 students witnessed a younger student fall to the ground in the midst of an epileptic episode, they were quick to act. Owen said of the incident, "It happened before the start of school on Boston Grove in Westleigh. We saw the student fall to the ground but didn't realise it was anything more serious until we got closer. She was unconscious and shaking. I felt scared but luckily one of my friends, Shelby, had experience of this sort of thing and knew what to do. She put the student into the recovery position while another of our friends, Tia, phoned for an ambulance."

The concerned students stayed with their patient, comforting her and keeping her warm with their coats until school staff arrived to take over.

Ms Glover, who was one of the first staff to arrive said:

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**"I WAS REALLY PROUD OF THE STUDENTS AND HOW THEY ACTED IN AN EMERGENCY. THEY SHOWED REAL COMPASSION AND MATURITY, ESPECIALLY SHELBY WHOSE QUICK THINKING WAS A REAL HELP."**

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## FUTURE-PROOF STUDENTS

The Westleigh School provides impartial careers guidance through its careers officer, Joan Courtney.

"I love supporting young people to help them make the right decisions for their futures. I encourage them to think outside the box and challenge their perceptions of jobs. Sometimes I see students making fun of girls interested in mechanics or boys who'd like to become nurses. I'm quick to challenge stereotypes with real life examples of men and women who've been successful in those roles.

"Westleigh has some really talented students who I know have the ability to be successful in the future. Sometimes they may have more practical skills, like students who already have their own motorbikes and can strip down an engine. I believe the vocational courses of construction and hair and beauty that Westleigh is offering from September will be a good way to engage these sort of learners. When young people experience success in something, be that at school or in an out of school activity, they naturally want to achieve more so we need to find ways to inspire them.

"One of the most important messages I can give to young people is that you need more than good grades when applying for work or college. Employers and colleges are looking for other qualities such as attendance, punctuality and attitude to learning. I explain to students that, unlike schools, colleges have no legal obligation to accept you on a course. When they have twenty places to fill and fifty people interested, why would they give a place to a student who has poor attendance and might not turn up for lessons? "

Joan Courtney is based in JBlock on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. She is available to advise students from year 8 upwards about all aspects of careers including y8 options, CV writing, apprenticeships, trial interviews and college applications.



**THE WESTLEIGH SCHOOL**

Aspiring & Achieving Together



## WE ASKED PARENTS WHAT WESTLEIGH IS DOING WELL. HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID...

"Taking children's mental health and well-being into consideration."

"Keeping parents up to date on their child's progress regularly. Informative options evening recently."

"Providing a range of opportunities outside of the school curriculum."

"Excellent SEN department. Helping my son LOTS at the moment. So much more than the one he was in previously. I really like this school."

"My daughter has progressed well at Westleigh, both academically and socially. She has gained self confidence and feels that she can contribute to lessons more effectively. Her teachers are happy to go above and beyond to ensure she progresses well. She doesn't mind making mistakes as much now because she knows that learning occurs by pushing yourself into unknown territory."

(Surveys results from March 2019)



## EVERY DAY IS OPEN DAY AT THE WESTLEIGH SCHOOL

Prospective students and their parents or carers are always welcome to make an appointment for a tour of the school. Phone **01942 202580** or email [enquiries@admin.westleigh.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@admin.westleigh.wigan.sch.uk) to arrange.

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