



**THE SCHOOLS OF
KING EDWARD VI
IN BIRMINGHAM**

In pursuit of educational excellence for all

Issue 3 - July 2015

Opening Doors

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US

I am delighted to write this short article for our third issue of Opening Doors 2015.

Opening Doors has been a major success story for us and we thank you for the part you have played. Last year we had 600 pupils attend our familiarisation sessions which were intended to open the doors of our five free grammar schools to all children of Birmingham. This year more schools have sent children; we believe we have seen around 750 children participate in educational, challenging and fun activities. Hopefully some of them will now have the confidence to apply to take the entrance tests for our selective schools, but I am sure whichever secondary school they attend their experience will have been of value.

In addition, we will shortly be refurbishing the facility at Birmingham Airport and rebranding it as The Learning Hub, and I would like to thank Birmingham Airport for their vision and partnership with us. The Learning Hub has already been used for events for both teachers and parents and we see it as a critical part in our "Opening Doors" strategy as we look to develop and continue our links with primary schools across the City.

I would also like to thank all pupils and staff at our 2 independent schools who are also engaging in considerable outreach work. These schools, which are able to offer free and assisted places to bright boys and girls via a means tested scheme, continue to offer their classrooms, sporting facilities and unique events to any school who wishes to engage.

Finally, could I wish you all an excellent summer. We look forward to building on the fabulous activities which are featured inside this issue.



John Collins,
*Secretary to the Governors
The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham*

In this issue:

- Big Hoot Winner
- Team T.R.E.E.
- "Forces" at The Learning Hub
- King Edward's Outreach Programme
- Primary Schools Conference at Camp Hill



For more information about Familiarisation 2016, our virtual learning programme or Forest School please contact openingdoors@ske.uk.net.

Update from Pete Slough, Director of Access



Our 'Opening Doors' strategy now has strong foundations across Birmingham and beyond and is significantly impacting on professional development for teachers, offering exciting and challenging learning activities for children and, most importantly, inspiring able and talented pupils from schools located in disadvantaged areas of our City.

Our Familiarisation programme this year has involved over 750 boys and girls from more than 80 primary schools. Hopefully, the majority of pupils who attended Familiarisation will take the Grammar Schools admission test in September. Whatever the outcomes of the test and despite some disappointments, these children will have been inspired to work hard and achieve their very best in whichever secondary school they eventually attend. With such demand from primary schools to participate in the Familiarisation sessions, I suggest you highlight May and June 2016 in your school diary!

During the autumn term of the next academic year, we will be launching a Forest School programme and Outdoor Adventurous days and residentials. Information on these opportunities will be emailed to all schools on our database early next term. If you wish to be included on this ever growing database please let us know via email at openingdoors@ske.uk.net

Great progress is being made with our FROG VLE and all pupils who attended Familiarisation have been given access to a host of resources to help and challenge them over the summer holidays. Once we feel confident that the VLE can provide high quality learning activities and resources, we will ask schools to pilot this on-line learning environment for us.

Finally, my thanks go to all the schools we have worked with this year for their encouragement of all that we are trying to do and, of course, to all our coordinators, colleagues who have been involved in delivering professional development and learning activities, and to all our partner organisations for their help, input and guidance.

My best wishes go to you all for a restful summer break.

Camp Hill Schools Primary Schools Conference

On Polling Day, 7 May, we welcomed teachers from schools all over the city to the Camp Hill site to provide information and support in helping higher ability students access schools within the Foundation. Fourteen teachers from nine different schools were able to attend, some of whom have worked closely with our schools before and others who are new and seeking to forge closer links.

The day started with a briefing about the role of Widening Access within the King Edward's Foundation and the process of familiarisation. This was followed by presentations about our online provision through FROG and the opportunities for environmental science learning through the new outdoor classroom and pond area on the Camp Hill site.

This was followed by workshops exploring mathematical provision to stretch and challenge able students from Andrew Rogers, Head of Mathematics at Camp Hill Boys and a session in our Library discussing reading and research skills with Aine Garvey, our librarian and Dan Wilkins, from the English Department.

The day was completed by meeting Year 7 pupils from both Camp Hill Boys and Girls who were able to display the range of work and activities that they had been involved in across subject areas, our guests were able to question the pupils on the transition to secondary school and what they enjoy about their education.

It was a successful first conference and feedback from the delegates was extremely positive, particularly opportunities to meet together and share good practice and to take away ideas which can be implemented in the classroom. We hope to repeat the event during the next school year.

Environmental Action - A Primary School Project



Since September 2014, King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls year 12 students have been involved with the Community Apprentice project that is being run nationally by the Envision organisation. Team T.R.E.E. (Taking Responsibility for Environmental Evolution) have utilised this opportunity to impact on primary school children across the city in order to enrich young children's learning experiences in Geography and teach pupils how they can become active members of their own environments.

Team T.R.E.E. have been successfully delivering learning sessions that focus on inspiring young people to recognise how they can take positive action to prevent global warming within their daily lives at school and home. These sessions have been tailored to each school and have included teaching children how they can improve their own carbon footprints by surveying transport methods and addressing how changes can be made as a class effort.

At Welford Primary School, T.R.E.E. delivered a workshop which centred on two key questions; "What is Global Warming?" and "What can we do to help?" The children worked as a class to identify the key issues and then split into smaller focus groups of six, where they received individual guidance and support to enhance their lessons and have the chance to express their views and beliefs to peers. In these smaller groups the children created posters on one of the key issues and what can be done to tackle this issue. The pupils really enjoyed creating the posters, developing their creativity and teamwork skills, "I've never made such a poster like this before. It has all my learning and pictures on it and we did it together!" (Ria, aged 9).

At Benson Community School, the team worked with the newly formed eco-squad, encouraging them to highlight environmental problem areas in their school and what

they can do to change this, working towards an Eco Schools award. The eco-squad were split into smaller groups containing a mix of age groups and received guidance on creating a school-wide campaign, including one group who were tasked with creating a campaign to persuade their head teacher to hold an Eco Day.

An essential part of each session is the plenary, in which pupils can reflect upon their learning experience and highlight what they want to take away from the course. Each class is able to record their environmental aims and collaborate to create a climate change pledge tree which they have contributed to using leaf post-it notes. The overall product serves the purpose of reminding each pupil that their individual efforts are something to be proud of as making a difference to the environment is a fun and important activity for every child.

Team T.R.E.E. has been praised for their workshops, with Welford's Deputy Head Mrs Foster commenting that "Ms Powell was very impressed with the delivery of the sessions, the thought that had gone into the activities, the resources used and your positivity..." T.R.E.E. were invited back to Welford Primary for their Eco Day which included using no lights or computers and designing an eco-mascot, and were also involved in the Welford Community Fete, with games designed to make young children more aware of the environment.

The team exceeded all expectations and had such a positive impact in their local community, carrying out further workshops with Girl Guides. They received a Diana Active Campaigner award for young people who inspire others, a nationally recognised award. They are through to the Envision semi-finals at KPMG and hope to continue their success.

Team T.R.E.E. do not want their project to end here. Following successful workshops enjoyed by the team and pupils, they hope to continue their work with more primary schools in Birmingham. If any school is interested in being part of the project please email Cara Harris at 3887harr@kingedwardvi.bham.sch.uk for more information.

Cara Harris and Kirmjeet Kaur Ghag
(Team T.R.E.E.)



Primary Schools Maths Team Tournament

On 15 April, 12 teams of four students from seven different schools across the city converged on the main hall at Camp Hill Boys to take part in a team tournament organised by the UK Maths Trust. It complements the individual challenges which take place in the autumn term. The tournament allowed students to show off their mathematical flexibility through a series of challenges which required speed, accuracy and teamwork. The first round was a group round in which teams had to decide on strategies of how to answer the questions - work on them together or split them up - in order to get the most points. This was followed by a speed round in which teams would struggle to get all the questions done and, finally, a relay round where pupils had to run around to pick up new clues once they had answered the questions. In what proved to be a hectic and enjoyable afternoon, Hillstone Primary and Severne Team A emerged as the joint winners. Congratulations to them and we hope they can come and defend their crown next year.



Plans for further Biology "Discovery" Sessions at Camp Hill Girls' school

Pupils, staff and parents have enjoyed getting up close to nature during the sessions that we held in the Spring Term and we would like to extend the programme into the 2015/2016 academic year.

Following the very successful Biology "Discovery" Sessions during March and April, where Year 4 pupils engaged in fun and informative activities with their parents on Saturday mornings, further sessions are planned at Camp Hill School for Girls. Details will be sent out to schools early in the Autumn term. We are currently considering dates in October and April.

