Friends for Life

As part of our Learning for Life (L4L) programme, Year 7 follow a unit of work called ‘Friends for Life’. This culminated with an L4L day looking at issues of friendship. The account below was written by two of our Year 7 pupils.

On L4L day we did educational yet fun and entertaining activities exploring the term friendship. When our teacher first introduced friendship we thought that there wasn’t much more to know as we have successful friendships already with many people, but we were quite surprised to find that there was actually lots more to know which we eventually learnt from the activities we did.

We did lots of activities that gave us opportunities to look at friendship in different ways, ranging from making friendship bracelets to acting out short scenes we had written. My favourite activity was sending a postcard to a friend. For me it gave me joy knowing that I have a fantastic friend and letting her know that I appreciate her and her friendship. Not only this but I started reflecting upon my own behaviour and actions as well as my own feelings towards my friends. I started wondering how my friends felt about me; am I a good friend or a bad friend and whether I could be an even better friend.

A week later, I was surprised to find a postcard waiting for me from a friend complimenting me. The postcard gave me such a lovely feeling of being appreciated and it went towards answering those questions I asked myself before.

Next we were told that we were having a theatre company perform a theatrical performance Aladdin. Everyone was really excited we were all looking forward to it. It was full of humour which made everyone laugh. This performance was very imaginative and entertaining

In conclusion, the day was jam packed with laughter, excitement and friendship.

By Sana Sadiq 7T and Maraam Mahyoub 7R

Dementia

Many of our families have to live with friends or relatives with dementia, and yet it is something rarely addressed in schools. Swanshurst however has been trailblazing a series of lessons and workshops on dementia, led by Doug Smith and a group of Year 9 pupils, which has been recognised as best practice in Europe!

The lessons involved the students sharing their experiences of dementia, learning how to recognise it and cope with the stress it can put on a family, and then spending a lesson meeting carers of those with dementia, specialists from organisations who can offer advice and support and some adults with dementia. A group of Year 9 students will be visiting London to share what we are doing at the ‘Dementia Friendly Communities’ conference this month.

A Book with a Hook

Research shows that children who are read to, and who are encouraged to read at home, often do better in English at school. You will all be used to the book bag that used to come home from Primary school, but sometimes reading for pleasure falls by the wayside in Secondary school.

To counter this, the library have produced some brilliant resources to encourage girls to read by selecting books they know are proving popular, and by doing the hard work and listing them by theme, genre, length etc. There are also online resources to support you as a parent to get the most out of reading opportunities. All of these can be found on the school website under the library tab, then in the section ‘Booklists’. 
Parent Feedback

Over the last few months we have been gathering your views on how well we communicate as a school. We asked for feedback in the last newsletter about whether you would be interested in a Facebook page; we also asked Friends of Swanshurst and the Parent Governors what we could do to improve. Here’s the feedback!

The majority of you said you were happy with the content and layout of the website, but would like some more parent info and perhaps easier access to information about homework. To move this forward, we are going to be producing a new ‘Working at Home’ leaflet for parents in KS3, which you should receive soon.

The majority of you said you wouldn’t use a school Facebook account, as this was more for socialising, so we’ve put this idea on hold!

Most of you preferred to be contacted by texts, so we are trying to make sure as many messages as possible are communicated this way. To further improve, we are currently asking girls to ensure they collect your most relevant telephone numbers.

Future developments:

We will be trialling the option of having this newsletter emailed in future to the new Year 7. If we manage to get enough emails, we will try more email communication like this.

Please email me (or write, call or pop in!) if you have any further ideas about how we can improve how we communicate.

Thank you! Mrs Tigue (Rebecca.tigue@swanshurst.org)

Fame!

Only three weeks to go until this year’s school production of Fame! The girls and staff have worked for months to ensure brilliant choreography, amazing singing and fantastic acting so don’t miss out!

Tickets are available soon for the 27th and 28th March. Performance start at 6.30.

Green Garden

After studying music here at Swanshurst, followed with a place at the Conservatoire, ex pupil Laura Mvula has just released a single called ‘Green Garden’ based on her time here in Kings Heath. She sang live on the Graham Norton show last week and was nominated as Critics Choice for the Brit awards! You can hear her single by following her channel on YouTube.

Local Residents ask for help

Every newsletter we ask for your support in making the area around the school better for our neighbours by being considerate when parking, but things are getting worse. We have had five complaints in the last few weeks about parents parking across residents’ driveways, stopping at the roundabout and allowing girls to get out and even parking IN driveways whilst waiting for the girls. The police do regular checks at the front and back of school and will give an on the spot fine if they see any of this happening. Please think of the safety of your child and be considerate to our local neighbours and park safely, even if it means a bit more of a walk for your daughter!!