

Ms Rahimi named in New Year Honours for services to Education

Westminster Academy is delighted to announce that our very own Ms Rahimi has been awarded the British Empire Medal for services to Education in the Queen's 2015 New Year Honours.

The New Year Honours list recognises the achievements of a wide range of extraordinary people across the UK. The British Empire Medal specifically rewards those who are engaged in charitable, voluntary and high impact work in the local community.

Ms Rahimi has supported hundreds of children and their families in every possible way since Westminster Academy opened in 2006. She said *"When I received the letter in November informing me of the nomination, I was completely shocked and I had to read it several times. I was unsure as to why I had been nominated for such a prestigious award. When the New Year's Honours List was published in December and I found out that I had been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM), I was overwhelmed and extremely proud to receive this honour."*



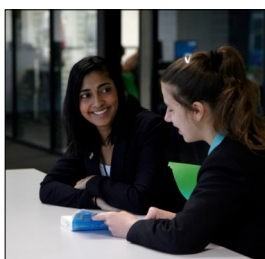
"Education has meant a lot to me and I always wanted to work in the education sector. After completing a degree in computing in London, I started working at the City of Westminster Education Department. I then joined Westminster Academy when it first opened in 2006, and it has been my dream job. I am grateful to have been part of the Academy's journey to becoming one of the best schools in the country. I thoroughly enjoy working with the students, as it gives me great pleasure to watch them grow in confidence and achieve their full potential. I am excited to continue working here and I know that the students will continue to achieve great things in the coming years."

Ms Bora said: *"The recognition given to Ms Rahimi in the New Year's Honours list demonstrates how valuable support staff are in looking after children and their families within a school setting. Some parents think I joke when I say that Ms Rahimi runs the school and not me! I hope that this recognition will lead to a greater understanding of how staff such as Ms Rahimi have gone beyond the call of duty to make Westminster Academy the school that it is today."*

Ms Rahimi reflected on her experiences and motivation and added *"Have a dream but make it your goal and work honestly and whole heartedly towards achieving it. You might ask how or where to start; the answer is: acquire a sound education, then you will succeed, you will achieve that goal."*

Message from the Principal, Ms Bora

Happy New Year! I hope you had a good mix of rest and **reading, revision and practising questions**. The priorities for this year are as follows:



- ALL students to engage actively in **volunteering** and/or an internship
- Students to help ALL classes follow Westminster Academy **routines** by helping staff evaluate this through "spot surveys" in lessons and Tutor Touch Base (TTB)
- No student to spread a rumour and ALL students to **report any rumours** to a member of staff
- ALL students to be **realistic** about the **ranking, reading and revision** required to achieve their career of the future
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar (**SPAG**)

Grammar Objective of the Week

What's the difference between a semi-colon and a comma?

As we've seen in previous newsletters, accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar is going to be essential in all subjects: marks will be lost and grades will suffer if students make errors in these important areas. At WA we are continuing our focus on improving the spelling, punctuation and grammar of the whole school community through paying rigorous, cross-curricular attention to the precision of our students' writing.

So without further ado, welcome to 2015 and our first grammar objective of the new term. This week we shall be exploring the difference between a semi-colon and a comma. Both of these punctuation marks are crucial in structuring sentences coherently and logically. In brief, a comma can be used to separate two clauses as in this example: *Having had lunch, we returned to work.* The first part of the sentence (*Having had lunch*) is a subordinate clause and introduces the main element (or the main clause) of the sentence (*we returned to work*). A semi-colon, on the other hand, can be used to connect two ideas: *The students revised for the exam; the teacher marked the papers.* The semi-colon here marks a break that is stronger than a comma but not as final as a full stop. It implies a link between two independent ideas and can therefore be very useful when you're building an argument in writing.

There are of course further differences and your child will be encountering these during the first two weeks of term. Do look out for our upcoming objectives, which include the use of question marks, full stops and apostrophes. Remember: students who use punctuation effectively invariably have a secure knowledge of English grammar generally.

By Mr Harris, Assistant Senior Leader KS4 English

Primary school students experiment with life at secondary school

Recently WA has been delighted to host visits from Ark Academy and Edward Wilson primary schools. There has been a total of six classes from Years 2 and 3 visit the Academy. Edward Wilson conducted choice chamber experiments in the science lab, after they had hunted for woodlice in the WA garden. The children from Ark Academy were treated to a hands on science lab experience, where they could use the equipment for an experiment. This was followed by a science spectacular led by Miss Davis and Mrs King, concluding with a grand finale where the primary teachers were set on fire!

By Mrs King, Teacher of Science

Science opportunities at WA: Science Club Carousel

This year there are lots of exciting extra curricular activities in the Science Department and we want you to try them all! There will be a carousel of clubs so each term you can try something new!

STEM Club

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths! Carry out exciting experiments and investigations and develop skills that are required for careers in this area.

Eco Club

In Eco club, we will be getting our hands dirty in the school garden and learning about conservation and recycling! We will be putting together a poster campaign for recycling more of our plastic bottles and limiting paper waste in the school!

BECOME AN ECO WARRIOR!

Medicine Club

This is an exciting opportunity to develop skills that doctors need and to learn about how to become a doctor!

We will be dissecting hearts and rats, creating our own health profile and having visits from different health professionals!

Philosophy of Science

Have you ever wondered what makes science tick? Why has science been so successful in describing the natural world and producing technologies that changed the way humans live?

In philosophy of science we will look at what science is, how it changes over time, how we reason, and what it means to be REAL or UNREAL!

Creative Science

Creative Science is a fun and exciting club where we will turn what you have learnt in lesson on paper into an exciting 3D form.

We will be creating some giant 3D animal and plant cells that will be put on display in the science classrooms for all to see.



Further projects include creating a model of the solar system using UV paint and creating a life size digestive system.

If you are in Years 7 or 8 and are interested in taking part in any of these clubs, please see Miss Dwyer.

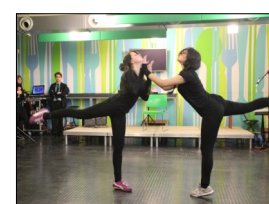
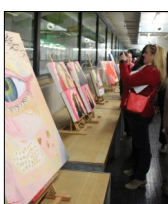
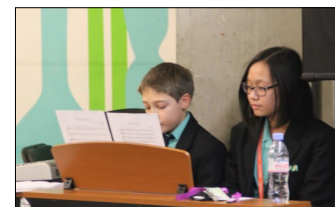
Shining bright: WA's stars perform at the Expressive Arts Christmas Show

At the end of term, WA Expressive Arts department put on its annual Christmas Show, which was packed with music, dance and drama performances.

I danced in the 'Jingle Bell Rock' and the 'Step into Dance' pieces that were performed at the Christmas show. I have been rehearsing since October with my friends and during period 5 lessons, mainly Girls Aloud Club on Mondays. This is my first year at the school so I didn't really know what to expect when my Dance teacher, Miss Green, asked me to audition. It was great to get out of lessons to rehearse and the performance has given me the confidence to do it again. I never before had the confidence to perform on stage but now I know that I can.

In the show we had Drama and Music pieces as well. My favourite Music piece was the 'Scarborough Fair' duet with Cooper and Stina and my favourite Drama piece was 'Damsel in Distress part 1' because when Jhay laughed it was really funny. At the end the food that the Year 7s had made was delicious; the biscuits were the best. I have also made some new friends in the process and will definitely be auditioning next year!

By Toni Natta, Year 8



Further Additional students test chemistry at Imperial's Reach Out

Imperial College London

At the end of Term 2 Year 11 went to Imperial College to do Further Additional Chemistry experiments. The first experiment that we did was a Titration experiment where we mixed hydrochloric acid and sodium hydroxide. The purpose was to work out exactly how much hydrochloric acid was needed to neutralise an alkali which changed the colour of the mixture to pink. The second experiment was investigating what a mixture of alcohols smelt like so we mixed alcohol such as ethanol, propanol and butanol to identify the smell.

The entire day was a great experience for us all and we would like to thank the Dangoor family for providing us with this opportunity. We look forward to more opportunities in the future.

By Saiful Hoque, Year 11

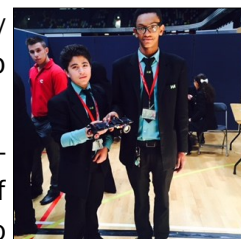
Scientists and engineers of the future prepare at Teen Tech City



On Friday 5th December Miss Dwyer and Miss Jumpp took 9zSc1 to Teen Tech City at the Copperbox Arena in Stratford. There were over 200 scientists, engineers and technologists present who had organised a range of experiments and challenges for the pupils to take part in. Jaffa and Kirubel made the fastest solar powered car of the day and the groups gave impressive presentations about inventions for the future. They also worked with designers to come up with an idea for their own video game.

Students spent the day talking to various professionals at the forefront of their industry. This allowed them to gain an insight into what is involved and what skills are needed to become scientists and engineers of the future.

By Ms Dwyer, Teacher of Science



Teaching and learning

English update

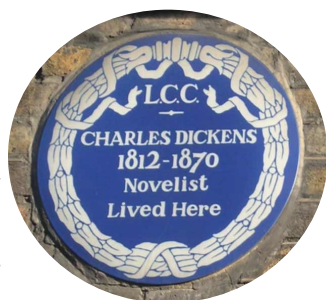
This term, Year 7 have shown a huge amount of zest and grit whilst studying *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman. This book deals with some serious themes such as racism, and teachers have been really impressed by students' maturity when reading and analysing the text.



A group of Year 7 students also got into the Christmas spirit early when they went to watch a performance of the traditional pantomime, *Dick Whittington*, at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith.

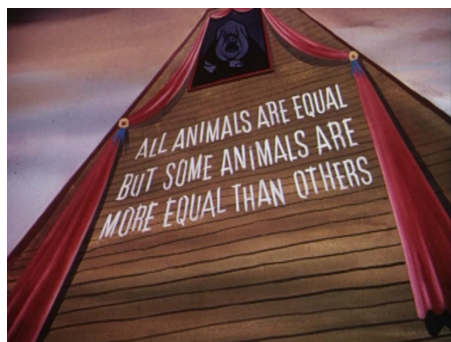
Year 8 have spent the term studying the gothic horror genre, reading classic texts such as *The Tell Tale Heart* and *Frankenstein*. Students also had the opportunity to show off their creative talents, when they wrote their own spooky short stories.

Year 9 teachers have been very impressed with students' hard work when studying *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens this term. Some students were also lucky enough to be given



the opportunity to visit Charles Dickens' house in Holborn where they visited the room where Dickens wrote his masterpieces.

Year 10 have continued to show dedication to their GCSEs, completing another one of their Controlled Assessments. They all enjoyed discussing the themes and social context surrounding the play, 'A View From the Bridge.'



In Year 11 we continue to prepare for the GCCEs, studying 'Animal Farm'. We have seen great progress in our students' language analysis and wish

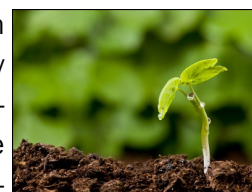
them good luck for their mocks in January.

By Ms Dunn and Ms King, Teachers of English

Key Stage 3 Science

Year 7 students have been learning about cells and their structure in biology and the particulate nature of matter in chemistry. This has opened their eyes to a world much smaller than anything you can see with your eyes. One student said "I enjoyed drawing the animal cells and plant cells, it helps me to remember the information".

Year 8 students have been investigating and learning about photosynthesis and respiration in biology and the Earth in chemistry. Have you ever wondered why plants are green or why we need plants in order to survive? Ask a Year 8: they should have the answer. Many students have also found the structure of the Earth fascinating. Another student commented on their favourite topic: "I really enjoyed burning the crisps and finding out how much fat was in different types of crisp. It has made me think twice about the snacks I eat."



These year groups have also had the opportunity to develop their curiosity at the end of each term. This has included building and racing mini cars from scratch with limited resources. Students have had to think about the forces in action and how to work with these as well as possible. This has been a general theme of these lessons, promoting curiosity within science and developing thinking skills.

By Ms Cole, Teacher of Science

Physics and Numeracy

This year we have introduced a team taught lesson between maths and science, focusing on numeracy and, in the first two terms, physics. Two Year 7 students shared their thoughts on these classes:



Jasmine Mahmoud Ahmed: "Personally, I really enjoyed studying sound because we found out that although sound seems like something normal, it is more complicated than

you think. It was also interesting to find out that animals have different audible ranges to us."

Maram Al Dandal: "In general, I like physics because what we learn is really relevant to everyday life, for example friction."

By Mr Goodman, Teacher of Physics

Pearson Prize for Pupil Impact awarded to Mr Harris

In 2012 I was lucky enough to be selected for Teaching Leaders, an intensive two-year leadership development programme. The graduation ceremony took place on 27 November last year in the exclusive surroundings of Haberdashers' Hall, where David Laws MP delivered the keynote speech and awarded prizes. I am proud to say that the WA English Department and our students were awarded the Pearson Prize for Pupil Impact in recognition of the outstanding GCSE results achieved in 2014. As the person responsible for coordinating this work, it was quite a feeling to walk up on stage to receive both this prize and my graduation certificate.

The Teaching Leaders Programme is structured around a two-year Impact Initiative and involves frequent evening seminars, termly weekend events, regular coaching sessions from an experienced school leader and a week-long summer residential at the University of Warwick. Several teachers from WA have taken part in this programme in recent years: it has become an important developmental step for teachers keen to advance their leadership skills.

In 2012-13 my Impact Initiative focused on improving the writing ability of a cohort of approximately 60 Year 10 students, who were struggling with basic literacy and therefore received extra English lessons every week. With my small team of teachers I devised a series of writing lessons for the whole year that supported students in developing their vocabulary, sentence structure and planning skills. We focused above all on responding very closely in our planning to the requirements of the exam. In the second year of the course I became Curriculum Leader for KS4 English – a significantly wider responsibility. With the help of my coach, I widened the scope of my Impact Initiative while retaining its close focus on teaching to the requirements of the exams and monitoring the progress of the cohort, who were now in Year 11, very closely.

I would say that the impact on students, WA generally and my own development as a result of my partici-



pation in Teaching Leaders has been significant. For example, my ability to analyse pupil data and to monitor and support others' teaching have improved dramatically, resulting in students across the cohort benefitting. Similarly, my coach introduced me to many strategies and insights that led to enhancements in the experience of our students and the practice of our teachers, while also (at times) providing a supportive ear when worries about the cohort and their prospects – and therefore my own ability as a leader – threatened to become predominant. A further central aspect of the programme was its focus on leading and persuading teachers across the school, and I was able to put this learning into practice through several whole-school training sessions. Finally, for me Teaching Leaders has been a turning point in my career: I now think not only about my class as a teacher but about whole cohorts of students and their teachers. To have successfully completed the course has also had a dramatic positive impact on my own confidence.

I am now Assistant Senior Leader for KS4 English, a role I could only have achieved with the support of both Teaching Leaders and WA. I'm looking forward to continuing this journey and ensuring our students receive the very best possible English lessons in KS4 and achieve the highest possible results.

By Mr Harris, Assistant Senior Leader KS4 English

Music event management success for Year 10s



Lewis Kennedy, Year 10 and Farzad Movahed, Year 10, organised an evening, string quartet recital at 'SCHOTT'S MUSIC' on Friday December 12th. They man-

aged the ticket office and front of house before the concert, helped to set up stands, seating and recording

equipment on stage and also provided refreshments for the audience and performers during the interval and after the concert. Thanks to Lewis and Farzad's excellent management and public relations skills, the concert made a profit and 'The Islington Camerata' string quartet have invited them to organise another concert in 2015.

By Ms Reid, Teacher of Music

Year 7 take on the Dragons



On Friday 12th December, all of the Year 7s were lucky enough to experience a great opportunity to gain business experience by creating our own apps,

thanks to Bain and Company.

We were put into groups and had a fun morning designing our own games or educational apps and then pitching them to the Bain Dragons in our classrooms.

After the excitement of the morning we all met up in the Green Room and showed our ideas to the whole year, with a fantastic prize up for grabs for the best team. Some of the ideas were: 'Where's My Pet?', 'Brain Input' and some really imaginative ideas like 'Lil' World'



It was a fantastic opportunity and I'm sure all of us loved it!

By Jamie Druce, Year 7 (a member of Lil' World!)

Medicine Club lecture at Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists



The Medicine Club had a wonderful trip to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' annual Christmas lecture. Although WA was the only other school aside from the organisers that brought students from not only the Sixth Form, but also Key Stages 3 and 4 we managed to win the runners up prize in the poster competition. Our poster beat off competition from over twenty other entrants! Composed entirely by Key Stage 3 students, our poster showed that WA students took the challenging ideas posed by the college seriously; they produced some amazing work.

The students from Medicine Club (and other Sixth Formers) demonstrated that the interest in medicine runs through the school and is far from an afterthought in the minds of our students. After watching a compelling lecture by Dr Sophia Webster, students responded with inspiration and intrigue.

As always the students showed the upmost decorum with a group of peers that, for the most part, were their senior. Students' reflections on the trip have also been extremely positive: the speaker and the healthcare professionals we spoke to helped students focus ideas for the future and exposed career routes in healthcare that students didn't know existed.

By Mr Brodie, Teacher of Science

Creative Media BTEC students explore careers on offer at Sky

On Thursday 11th December, the Year 12 Creative Media BTEC students were given the opportunity to visit the Sky Academy and take part in a full day of activities based on their future career options.



In the morning they posed questions on career pathways to the Managing Director of Sky Sports' Digital Marketing and received valuable advice on how to progress within media industries as well as how to improve their employability skills in general. On a behind the scenes tour of Sky Studios, the students were able to see the equipment used to film, edit and broadcast on Sky TV, and even got to watch a live recording of presenters on Sky Sports. After learning about how Sky target their various products at an audience, the students were given the opportunity to show off their own Media planning skills and worked in groups to complete a challenge based on scheduling, pre and post production or editing. The members of the Sky Team were impressed with the students' maturity, enthusiasm and confidence when presenting.

The students were in awe of the opportunities to work within Sky and will be applying for work experience placements, which are reserved especially for students who have attended the Sky Skills workshops.

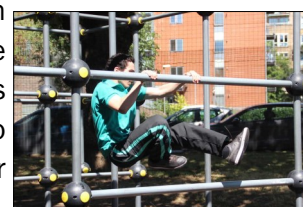


Lubna Hussain said "I felt inspired by the people working at Sky and motivated to apply for work experience."

By Ms Leadley-Watkins,
Media and Film Department

Extra-curricular opportunities

Terms 1 and 2 saw the kick off of over 50 period 5 clubs and interventions at WA. This term students will still have the opportunity to join new clubs if they are free during period 5. From boxing to politics to glee club to UKMT, there is something for everyone so check the list and ask your tutor to sign you up!



WA experiences Equine Assisted Learning

Westminster Academy's visits to the horse ring in Hyde Park were a triumph. Initial fear of the horses quickly turned into respect for these creatures who live their lives according to very different rules. We are not all the same, and in order to function as a proper group, we need to understand other people's perspectives. It was clear that some students had more horse experience than others, so we asked them to instruct their friends - real



peer learning. Patience and silence paid off, as towards the end of the session, the horses joined the human group and we became a safe herd for the first time. An amazing feeling!

The second session presented more challenges. New horses: a pair of shires, even bigger. And the instruction to build a corridor and move the horses through it - how is this possible? A careful analysis of the available resources brought solutions, and once the team started working together, the job got done. Another well-deserved achievement!

The final day we grappled with that difficult concept of trust. How can we trust? Who can we trust? What can we achieve together when we trust? We introduced a competitive element into the group, which was hard initially. Each struggled with the task



- moving the horses without touching them or speaking to them. And again, team work was the answer.

By Dr Andreas Liefoghe, Operation Centaur and Clare Bowen, Royal Parks Foundation

Thank you to Dr Andreas and Clare for this article and for providing this fascinating experience!

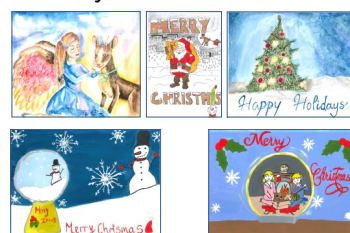
Making the Christmas season bright at WA

WA have many people to thank for helping us hold a fun festive season in December.

Our glittering tree (right) was kindly donated by our local food supplier, Tony Glasgow and decorated by Student Services. Our Sky Dining tree came from Councillor Taylor's social enterprise.

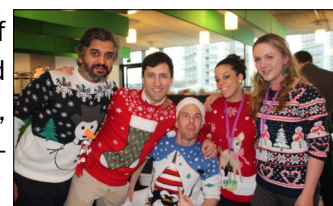


Our beautiful Christmas cards were created by Year 10 students Eman Al Tememi, Vivi Klave, Siana Zhekova, Lilia Deiri and Trevon Crooks. We owe a huge thank you to British Land for sponsoring these popular cards and for their continued generous support



of the art programme at WA.

Finally, thank you to all staff and students who got involved with Christmas Jumper Day, looking divine and raising money for Save the Children!



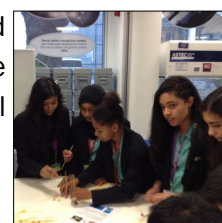
Science secrets on show at Imperial College



Last term I took 9 students to the Creative Quarter event at Imperial College. We heard two engaging lectures that the students were extremely positive about. The first was on Materials Engineering, where students got to watch a graphene knife cut through ice live on stage. The second was on the science behind dangerous things. Among other things, a student from the audience made gunpowder on stage and we were taken through the chemistry involved as it all unfolded.

In between the two lectures we participated in a Science drop-in in the Reach Out lab where Hala Mohamed, Awa Ndiaye and Uma Talluir used inertia to take the tablecloth from under Imperial's finest china and get eggs to land in wine glasses. This one is hard to explain so I hope Uma will show everyone one day!

By Ms Langdon-Davies, Teacher of Science



Term 3: What's On?

Free workshops for parents

HAVE HAPPIER, MORE CONFIDENT KIDS
 • GET YOUR KIDS TO OPEN UP AND TALK TO YOU
 • FEEL CALM MORE OF THE TIME
 • MAKE FAMILY LIFE MORE FUN

*"I am calm... the family is happier... It is amazing how a course can change your life."
 Parent, Morningside Children's Centre*

Sessions - overview

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
Get you and your kid talking in a positive way, every day.	Show your kids you care, in the right way.	Bring order to your house with rules and routines that really work.	Keep yourself and your family happy and healthy.	Help your little one learn, grow, and achieve their dreams.	Keep your family rock solid and help your kid to make friends.

HOW TO SIGN UP:

Speak to Alan Gothard or call 020 7121 0600

Sessions will be running on Wednesdays at 1pm at WA

From 21st January 2015 (taster session: 14th January)

Classes Available for 19+
 Priority for Westminster Residents

Free Winter Classes

*Why not try something new this New Year?
 Make your resolutions a reality in 2015*

Enrolment times are at:

- WECH, 6th January from 1pm-3pm
 416 Harrow Rd, London W9 2JX
- Stowe Centre, 7th, 14th January from 1pm-3pm
 259 Harrow Rd, London W9 2RS
- Beethoven Centre, 12th January from 1pm-3pm
 Beethoven Centre, 3rd Ave, London W10 4LL
- Church Street, 8th January from 1pm-3pm
 88 Church Street, London, NW8 8ET

Bring one of the documents below:

- British Passport Number
- EU ID card Numbers
- Asylum Card
- Spouse Visa

For more information, contact Getha or Ife at
getha@ndt.org.uk ~ or ~ ife@ndt.org.uk
 Call: 0203 603 2301

More classes coming soon...

Funded by: **Delivered by:**

Back to Fitness
 19th, 26th Jan, 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd Feb
 11am-12pm
 Stowe Centre

Rights At Work
 20th, 27th Jan
 10am-12pm
 Neighbourhood Enterprise Centre

In-work Benefits
 22nd Jan
 2.30pm-4.30pm
 Westminster Adult Education Centre, Lisson Grove

Intro to Citizenship
 23rd Jan
 10am-12pm
 Neighbourhood Enterprise Centre

Intro to Yoga
 29th Jan, 5th, 12th Feb
 12pm-1.30pm
 Cockpit Theatre

Money Management
 12th, 19th February
 10am-12pm
 Stowe Centre

Build Your Confidence
 3rd March
 10.30am-12.30pm
 Stowe Centre

FREE IT classes for parents Thursdays 4 -6 pm

FREE Art classes for parents and community

FREE 'Parent Gym' - Wednesday 14th January 2015 (taster)

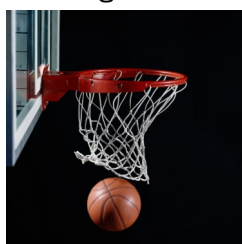
FREE Adult English classes - every Wednesday

To express interest in any of the above, please email Mr Gothard: AGothard@westminsteracademy.biz

Year 10 Parents' Evening - Thursday 29 January

Basketball innovation success

Year 11 students Abubaker Bashir, Junayd Abdel-Rahman, Mustafa Salem, Mohammed Abdi and Mhd Mamoun (Year 10) have recently been involved in a basketball project called Athens 31. Each of them went to City Hall to present to a panel a proposal for some funding (£1000) which would go towards a basketball camp that they intend to run

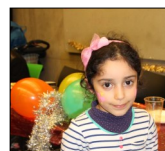


in the school holidays in Academy Sport for the community. The boys were successful and received the full £1000! Congratulations and good luck with the project!

By Ms Gold, Teacher of PE

WA Parent Council hosts Christmas party

WA celebrated the end of 2014 with a Christmas party organised by the Parent Council. It was great to see so many families come along and enjoy the various festive treats, including music and drama performances, freshly squeezed juice, culinary delights from all



over the world, face painting, a raffle and even karaoke! Particularly popular was the henna art, and of course no Christmas party would be complete without a visit from father Christmas!

A huge thank you to the various local businesses who sponsored our raffle prizes, in particular the star prize of £180 worth of spa vouchers won by lucky Ms O'Neil! We would also like to thank the Parent Council and Mrs King for their hard work arranging this, as well as the numerous staff and students who helped on the day. We look forward to more Parent Council events in 2015!

