

newsletter

June 2010 | Issue 18

'Why are we all here?' – that perennial existential question!

At Northwood College, over the last few months, we have been unpicking the answer, says **Head Mistress Jacquelyn Pain**, not so much the answer to the meaning of life, the universe and everything, but rather what we, as a school, are about. What is it that Northwood College aims to achieve?

Obviously, part of this is going to concern getting the best possible exam results for all our students: that's what all good schools want. This isn't the whole story, however. Good schools want more than this. It was Einstein who said that 'education is what is left, after you have forgotten everything you learned in class' and by pinning down our understanding of education, by distilling and articulating our core values, we can tell our whole story.

I don't claim, of course, that this is the first time that we, as a school, have undertaken this reflection on our aims. It is the task, if not the moral obligation, of every school generation to determine, agree and express its purpose, its values, its general vision. After all, the aims of our school exist not only as a statement of intent, but to provide a context for everything we do. They determine our educational direction and they inform how we all should behave and regard one another. Contemplation on our core values will have occurred many times since 1878. However, it was now our turn.

The process of coming to our conclusions involved representatives from our whole community: a cross section of staff, parents, governors and pupils engaged with the task and I am particularly grateful to the School Council for their involvement. Perhaps the most striking part of the whole exercise was the realisation that we did share a common understanding of ourselves. There was no disagreement about our core values. The only (slightly) contentious issue was around punctuation and sentence construction in formulating the written version of our aims!

My thanks go to everyone involved in this creative and dynamic process. My sincere hope is that when you read our generation's expression of what Northwood College is about, these words resonate for you, as much as they did for those of us who agreed them.

Aims of Northwood College

Excellence, courage and integrity: these are the three fundamental qualities that underpin a Northwood College education.

Through the dedicated support of teachers who are experts in their subjects, who hold very high academic expectations of their pupils and who care deeply about the wellbeing of each of our girls, Northwood College prides itself on being a nurturing environment which enables every girl to achieve her very best.

We believe education should be about developing a real thirst for learning. Our staff and pupils are ambitious and aspirational. Our groundbreaking and innovative thinking skills programme is part of our commitment to fostering success, endeavour, creativity, a spirit of enquiry and strength of mind.

Girls are provided with a wealth of opportunities to discover their varied and unique talents, be they academic, sporting or creative. Our girls become self-sufficient learners – autonomous, inquisitive and brave. We encourage them to be emotionally resilient, to learn from success and challenge and to communicate with clarity and assurance.

Our aim is that every day at school is a fulfilling, enriching experience, within a happy, considerate community. Staff and girls are passionate about their work and about helping each other to become decent, kind human beings, with a sense of responsibility and service and a clear moral compass.

Girls are well prepared for the challenges of 21st century life. Northwood College commits itself to every girl to enable her to 'discover, learn, succeed'.



Juniors with potential!

Education is not just about the 'here and now'. At Northwood College we are aiming to develop many of the skills and attributes that will equip the girls to function successfully as critical thinking, creative adults. Last term we focussed on our Sixth Form Scholars and in this edition it is the turn of the girls in the Junior School from Reception (4+) to Year 6 (10+) who are already showing potential or interest in a variety of fields of interest from anthropology to politics.

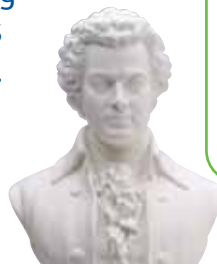
Mrs Janet Johnson
Head Mistress
Junior School



Emily Smith

Artist

Even at the young age of 4, Emily is showing artistic talents. She is particularly good at drawing detailed pictures of flowers, butterflies and hearts and loves to draw her family.



Dayna Tohidi

Fashion Designer

Dayna has a burning ambition to be a fashion designer. She enjoys designing and making a range of different clothes for herself, her family and her friends. The coat Dayna is wearing in the photograph is one of her own creations. She says that she finds inspiration in magazines and through her fashion drawings. Dayna buys her materials in shops or markets but also sometimes cuts up old clothes that she or her family no longer wear. She uses her grandmother's sewing machine but hopes to get her own machine soon. Dayna has been making clothes since the age of 8. Who knows, maybe in the future, we will all be seeing her designs on the catwalks!



Charlotte Mascarenhas

Future Mastermind

Such enthusiasm for learning! Charlotte thrives on furthering her knowledge, stimulated by class topics. She retains what she sees and, 'keeping her eyes open', she sees a lot! She was brilliant with all her knowledge about the General Election and its leaders. She is up to date with current affairs, has already found the Japanese flag for the country she picked in the World Cup and visits numerous places with her parents related to school. She always enjoys talking to people and her thirst for knowledge is enhanced by the wealth of opportunities she has. She is a child who makes the most of every day. Carpe diem!



Athena Antoni

Inventor

Everyone spotted Athena Antoni's potential as a future inventor when she bravely stood up in front of an audience of two hundred people and pitched her idea for an invention to a panel of five formidable 'dragons'. Confident, thoughtful and determined, she had spent many weeks perfecting her 'Environmental Water Tank', a water and energy-saving device that impressed the judges so much that she went on to win first prize in the Junior section of our INVENT competition. And the story didn't stop there! Peter Jones, one of the real television show dragons, donated £500 to finance the creation of a prototype of her design. We can't wait to see how things develop and will be supporting Athena every step of the way. This really is a girl to watch.



Nikita Dhillon

Investigative Journalist



As soon as a new topic is announced in Year 2, Nikita is on the case! For example, Year 2 is currently studying the life and works of Claude Monet. Nikita decided to investigate Monet on the internet and visited her local library to find relevant books. She then proceeded to write pages of interesting facts and information about the Impressionist. Nikita used different coloured pens for each section, made her headings stand out by using larger letters and highlighted important words using bold type. Her classmates were amazed at the detail she had included and were in awe of how hard she had worked!



Alisha Arora

News Correspondent

Alisha has a very keen interest in the world around her. She is always enthusiastic to find out about what's going on and regularly informs her peers and teachers of the latest news stories. She told me about sextuplets that had been born before I had heard about it and before it was revealed on Google News! She gave the class a detailed description of the general election and showed photos of the party leaders. She also expresses views on different political leaders and describes Boris Johnson as too scruffy!

She also has a very good knowledge of countries and places and wants to impress this upon her peers when we play the 'Geography Game' – naming places around the world beginning with a particular letter. This interest and knowledge extends to all curriculum subjects as Alisha endeavours to find out more, be original and think for herself. Alisha has already said she would like to be a pilot or air hostess to allow her to travel the world, something she started to do as a very young child.



Elina Patel

A presenter in the making



During her time in Reception, Elina has never failed to show an active interest in all that goes on around her. Newly introduced concepts and topics have seen Elina's passion for knowledge come to life. She enjoys nothing better than discovering new information and explaining to an audience, whilst captivating them with her interesting vocabulary and passion.

She is always keen to share her enthusiasm about events in the real world and makes interesting links between events both in and outside school. Attention to detail is one of Elina's key strengths and this is particularly evident in her story-telling.

A presenter in the making...watch this space!



Rosh Hart

Mathematician

Rosh shows great enthusiasm for her Maths work, not just in school but at home as well. She is a Mathematics star, earning many certificates. She is always eager to build on her previous achievements, rather than resting on her laurels. Her enthusiasm and dedication are to be commended. Whether working with number facts, operations, shape and measure, data-handling, sequences or problem-solving, Rosh relishes every opportunity and shows a mature attitude to her work. Her developing enthusiasm to take on more challenging tasks (where she has the opportunity to stretch her skills, as opposed to taking the easier path where success is guaranteed) is gratifying to see and she is keen to ask questions to develop her understanding. As G.H. Hardy (a prominent English mathematician) said 'a mathematician, like a painter or poet, is a maker of patterns' and Rosh is always keen to explore these and make new connections.



Serena Hart

Future Prime Minister

During a class discussion on democracy and the voting system, Serena surprised her Form Teacher with her detailed and thorough understanding of politics! She showed an avid interest in the recent General Election and watched the news daily. At school she was keen to share her knowledge with her peers and explained complex concepts such as 'first past the post'; a coalition government; majority vote and a hung parliament. When given the title of 3DS's Political Correspondent, a fire was ignited! Her passion to investigate and report on the latest developments in the political world meant that the girls of 3DS were kept fully informed on Brown, Cameron and Clegg's battle to be the next Prime Minister. Serena's thirst for knowledge meant that she not only watched the news, but took up reading the paper and regularly engaged her parents and teachers in political discussions. A politician in the making.....we definitely think so!

Ashley Hey

Philanthropist



On 23rd March Ashley was invited to a reception at the Houses of Parliament by the Speaker John Bercow. The reception brought together scientists, doctors, MPs and charities involved in the fight against childhood brain tumours. As well as John Bercow, Ashley also met Ed Balls, at that time Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. Ashley represented the charity Ali's Dream.



Sara Asghar

Diplomat

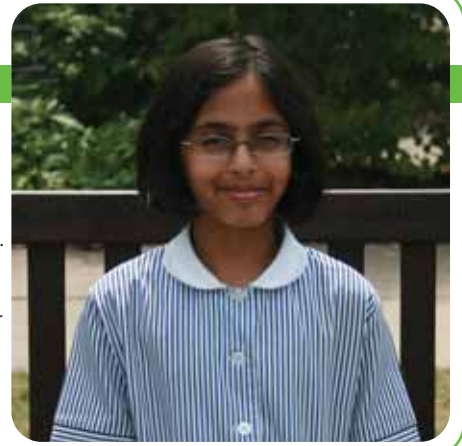
Sara is a great team player and ensures that her classmates feel valued. She is able to listen to all members of her team and take their thoughts and opinions into consideration. On our Thinking Skills Challenge Day she was able to motivate her group and praise their contributions. Sara was keen to try out new ideas even if they seemed strange at first. Her sense of purpose meant that the team stayed on task and all enjoyed working together. Sara is excellent at 'smoothing over troubled waters'. In the playground she is instinctively able to find the root of a problem and come to an amicable solution. This term we had a large number of parents volunteering to assist on our trip to Kew Gardens. The class were presented with the problem; it was Sara who thought that parents who had never assisted before on a school trip should be given first refusal. We think her tactful manner, truthfulness, empathy for others and her sense of direction stand her in good stead for being a future diplomat. Don't you?



Sheena Patel

An inspiring anthropologist

Following on from a Religious Studies lesson where we were examining the meaning of the word 'charity', Sheena was inspired to create a PowerPoint presentation focussing on the lives of the poor that she had seen and photographed when visiting Africa. She delivered a clear, succinct message to the class, after which the girls were able to prioritise the key elements that charities provide across the world. Her enthusiasm was infectious. She is already preparing a further PowerPoint on the Hindu Creation Story as she is so excited about learning and comparing different cultures.



Mia Grange

Philosopher

Mia thinks for herself. She has the confidence to voice her views in a polite, respectful and compassionate way. In a recent Philosophy 4 Children enquiry entitled 'How precious are your tears?' (an investigation which the class came up with by themselves!) Mia's contribution was, as usual, insightful and included suggestions as to the reasons behind tears as well as their rarity. She also offered an analysis of our enquiry, comparing it to earlier ones and highlighting its

successes. Mia thinks critically and creatively. She reflects on her work to analyse successes and searches for areas for improvement. She shows great empathy for others. She has the strength to voice what she believes to be right and wrong in a caring and courteous manner and the flexibility to change her mind when new information or arguments are presented. Aristotle, Plato and Socrates would be proud!



The Northwood College Dragons' Den event as reported in the Uxbridge Gazette

Northwood College Parents' Association

Another eventful and rewarding year for the NCPA is drawing to a close. With the NCPA under new management this year – Jayne Cooper (Senior Chair), Angela Gee (Junior Chair), Kamal Patel (Treasurer) and Safina Choudhury (Secretary), we have been conscious of continuing the high standards set by Catherine's team over the last few years. Thankfully we had great support from all of the Form Reps and all members of the Committee.

We set ourselves some key goals at the start of the year, some of these were: to continue to raise funds to support key activities at the school, to form closer ties with all the students by involving them directly in some of the activities that we organise and to do our part for the environment.

We received fantastic support towards these goals at our very first event. As part of the Christmas Bazaar, many of the girls got involved running stalls. This was thanks to the mums encouraging the girls and to our Head Girl Team (Nicole, Sophie and Helena) coming on board and helping involve the Senior School Council. The Year 6 girls ran a Teddy Bear Tombola, we had tasty Fruit Cocktails from the Year 7s, a very successful Money Christmas Tree run by the Year 8s and a Book Stall by the Year 9 girls. The Cool Science Stall run by Year 13 was very well received and, of course, who could ever forget The Stig! All of this was rounded off by our Year 12 fairy-styled 'Meeters and Greeters', who added a sprinkle of fairy dust to the day and made it a Magical Christmas Event.

The Disco was another successful occasion. It was great to see the Year 7 and 8 girls having a great time dancing the night away with the boys from The John Lyon School, St Martin's, Orley Farm and

St John's. It is a fantastic opportunity to link up with the boys' schools, especially our partner school, The John Lyon School. It was a very enjoyable evening with great music, singing and a dancing competition which was won by the girls!

As always, the Easter Bunny was a big success. It was great to see the delight on all of the girls' faces (or was it just the chocolate?) It was so nice for the Easter Bunny to take time out of his busy schedule to make a special visit to Northwood College!

The rhythm and beat of Africa most definitely roared loudly at the Drumjam African evening, with the Assembly Hall bursting to capacity with mums, dads, children and teachers all ready to party in Africa and to learn a new skill with the help of Somesh and the Drumjam Musical Team. I suppose it was a change, to be allowed to make as much noise as you liked, and everyone did and in tune! Special thanks to the catering staff who really excelled by putting on such a tasty African feast during the interval.

All of the support we receive at these events brings in valuable funds that we can use to be put towards the girls and the school, like the new curtains bought for the Assembly Hall recently and the final payment to be made for the new Mini Bus.



Easter Bunny with helpers!

Other events this term are Happy's Circus and the Annual Junior School Disco. As I write, I know that everybody is really looking forward to both of these events.

Huge thanks must also go to Sally Coop for all her hard work in running the Nearly New Uniform Sale which is something new that the NCPA has taken on this year to help out the School.

We have big plans for the future and hope to get our 'walking bus' started soon. This is going to be a great way for the Junior girls to do something for the environment and it will also be a great way to keep fit.

It goes without saying that none of this would happen without the support of Miss Pain and her wonderful staff, the Form Reps who give up so much of their time to attend the meetings and to arrange and run the stalls and you, the parents who unselfishly support and attend all our events. Without your support, we would not be able to achieve nearly as much as we do.

Mrs Jayne Cooper
NCPA (Senior Chair)

**Somesh leading the
Drumjam Workshop**





Carol Singing



Mr Brant with son Simon



Cool Science with Year 13!



The Famous 'Junior teachers' Cake Store



The 'Northwood College Stig'



Independent Thinking and Learning in the Senior School

'We are what we repeatedly do! Excellence is then, not an act, but a habit.' Aristotle may have said these words over 2000 years ago, but he knew what he was talking about. In the Senior School at Northwood College we actively encourage the girls to practise qualities that not only make the school community flourish and thrive, but also prepare our students for a successful future beyond school.

Here is a snapshot of how some of our Senior School students have skilfully embraced the habits of mind:



Jennifer Spencer in Year 7 had been home schooled since Year 1, but decided that the time had come to be a **RESPONSIBLE RISK TAKER**. 'The scariest part for me was taking the 11+ exam, as I had never been in an exam situation before and did not know what to expect.' Jennifer chose to come to Northwood College in September last year after researching which school she would like to attend. 'I loved the fact that I was shown around by a pupil, as it gave me a real insight into what school life could be like. It was a big decision coming to such a large school, but sometimes pushing yourself out of your comfort zone is the best thing: I'm so glad I did it.'



Imogen Emmett in Year 8 recently won our Dragons' Den Competition for the second year running! Her invention, the Teen Screen, demonstrated how she put her **CREATIVE INITIATIVE** into action. 'I came up with the idea after carrying my heavy school bag around with me all day. The Teen Screen would be a way of swapping a number of heavy text books for one simple electrical device.' It wowed the judges, who were all very impressed with Imogen's idea. I asked Imogen if she had any more brilliant ideas for us. 'Oh yes! I'm always trying to come up with new ideas.' It looks like we will have to watch this space...



Rebecca White and Lucy Clague are Year 9 Buddies. This means they have been trained to **LISTEN WITH EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING** and support Year 7s who may be finding the transition to Senior School a little more challenging. 'We have learnt how important it is to listen first and not jump straight in, but rather help the girls try and fix things themselves. As the year has progressed, we have also noticed how they are now more able to deal with their problems and rely much less on us. It has been such a rewarding year knowing that we have helped some Year 7s become more independent.'



Bethan Fraser, Stephanie Milne and Gloria Odeyemi in Year 10 are all doing the Junior Sports Leaders Award. They have spent the past year working with some of our Junior students, **CHALLENGING** and **COACHING** them in sport. 'The best part about working with younger children is seeing the smiles on their faces after we have taken their lesson; it makes you feel good about yourself! The girls have all increased their confidence and learnt valuable lessons in **MOTIVATION** and **POSITIVE THINKING**.'



Amy Harris and Priyanka Kotecha, two Charity Reps in Year 11, demonstrated excellent **LEADERSHIP** and **COLLABORATION SKILLS** by raising money for the Rays of Sunshine Charity (who help terminally ill children have their wishes fulfilled). 'We knew we had to come up with a creative idea, so we bounced ideas off each other until we found our best one, selling good and bad sweets! The next task was to convince the rest of our form to agree with us, so we pitched and sold our idea to the class.' As good leaders, the girls knew all about delegation, ensuring that their event was marketed in a **CREATIVE** and **CURIOUS** way. 'By working together, we knew we could make it really successful.' Amy and Priyanka raised over £75 from one sweet sale at lunch time.



Malak Fouda in Year 12 was recently elected by her peers and teachers to the post of White House Captain. 'When I was writing my speech, I knew I had to use **CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION** as I was speaking to such a broad range of people. I didn't want them to be bored or to make empty promises.' Malak's speech was delivered in a calm and confident manner. 'Making sure I was clear about what I was trying to put across helped me to understand my audience.' We are sure that Malak will be an exceptional House Captain and look forward to what she has to offer White House in Year 13.



Alexa Fitzpatrick, a **CRITICAL AND LOGICAL THINKER** in Year 13, used these skills when deciding what course to study after her A Levels; she chose to read English Literature at Newcastle University. 'My passion for the subject came from the enjoyment I gained from critically **ANALYSING** individual characters in order to understand why they act in certain ways and unravelling the multiple layers of meaning that each text holds. My other subjects, Philosophy and Psychology, have also helped me to practise **REASONING** and **LOGICAL THINKING**, which will also be very useful in the future. I chose Newcastle University because it is a vibrant and very friendly city and, although it is far away, I feel that this will only help increase my independence.' We all wish Alexa every success with her future studies!

And so you have it ... a glimpse into the lives of some of our Senior School students. By focusing on these behaviours we can all improve our potential and prepare for a future that is just around the corner.

Mrs Tara Smith
Deputy Director
Cognitive Development Programme
Head of Year 8

Year 5 PGL Residential Trip, Windmill Hill, East Sussex

This year, Year 5 took part in a Multi Activity course at a brand new PGL centre in Sussex.

It was a perfect location set in 21 acres of grounds on the Sussex Downs with amazing views across the countryside.

The girls took part in an exciting and challenging set of activities, including raft-building, climbing, abseiling, rifle shooting, sensory trail and other similar activities. They also enjoyed singing around a camp-fire where they learnt a number of new songs and jokes. The girls were given the opportunity to develop new and transferrable skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving.

The instructors were full of praise for the co-operation and enthusiasm demonstrated by our girls and also commented on how caring and encouraging they were towards each other.

'On Jacob's Ladder when I was looking at it I thought I can't do that, it is too high for me, but when it was my turn I got halfway through and I was so pleased that I took a risk. Afterwards I was so happy with myself,' said **Sara Grant**.

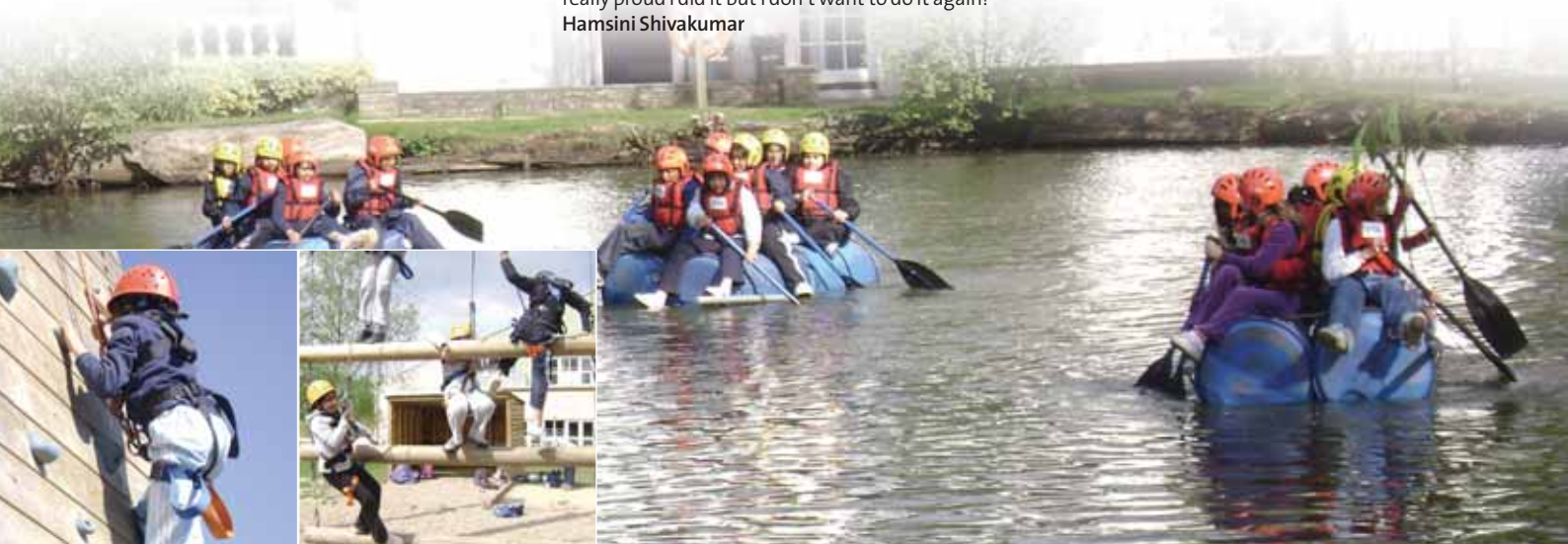
'The bravest thing I did was the abseiling (the scariest bit was actually going over the top). I'm really proud I did it but I don't want to do it again!' **Hamsini Shivakumar**

'Jacob's Ladder is all about team work – in order for me to get up to the 4th step I had to stand on my friend's knee!' **Anjali Trivedi**

'Although I didn't get to the top it was really good. I thought I was really brave and everyone was proud of me.' **Lettie Sullivan**

We had a fantastic week and all the girls gained a great deal from the experience.

Mrs Caroline McMahon
Junior School



What made Woodrow High House a Fun Trip ?

I think what made it a good trip was the fact that we could express ourselves in many different ways when we did our activities. We were able to give our own opinion in group discussions or apply many different thinking skills in the activities such as The Human See-Saw. In this, we could express our ideas of how it can be balanced.

What also made the visit fun was that you could show your creativity. Once you have creativity, you can express yourself in different ways. In Raft Building, we thought of so many different ideas for designing the raft. In fact it took quite some time just to choose one! When we did our race, we called ourselves The Speedy Sharks. We chose that name because we were speedy like sharks when they hunt their prey, but our prey was winning, which we achieved!

Woodrow was an amazing experience for us. Some people are scared of getting lost and I am one of them. The Blindfold Trail made me overcome this fear. When the activity started, I was scared I would lose my partner in the woods, but I trusted her and then I felt it wasn't hard after all. I think that I am a braver girl now, being able to sleep away from home and have lots of fun.

How has Woodrow Changed Me?

Woodrow has changed us in lots of different ways.

We have now learnt how to make our beds using flat not fitted sheets. We can keep our bedrooms quite tidy, but please don't tell our mums.

It has shown us how to achieve perseverance when we almost failed a task. We were pushed to try our hardest, working as a team, and then we would all succeed.

We have also learnt to be risk takers in our Ship Wreck game on the Low Rope Activity. I took a risk to lean forward and get the rope which hung some distance away over the sea. If we stepped into the sea, then we had to start again which was very tiring!

On the Low Ropes Course, some of us were a little bit worried as we were afraid of heights. But I decided to be first so I could get the experience over quickly. As soon as I got on to the rope bridge, I completely forgot my phobia as I was having so much fun.

We learnt a lot about team work and realised how everyone has an important part to play.

Finally we learnt to sleep away from our families which was the toughest challenge of all.

by **Wunmi Olatidoye, Esha Dabas, Ritika Roy Chowdhury (4M)**



Learnatics: Teachers as Learners



Name: Celia Mitchell and Chelvi Arunagiri
Position: Lab Technicians

We started learning Ancient Greek about a term and a half ago because neither of us had studied it before and we thought it would be fun to get back into the classroom and **learn something new**.

One of the hardest things for us is that we tend to forget quite a bit between lessons and during the holidays. It is **three steps forward and one step back** each week. We have started doing a bit of homework so there is a little competition sneaking in!

It has helped that we are doing the course together. **Working collaboratively** has been the most **effective learning strategy** for us. We both remember

different information from the lesson so there is a lot of **crosschecking** and **cross-referencing**. There is some **transference of knowledge** from our work in school as well – a lot of scientific words have Greek origins and the Greek alphabet is used across the sciences. Our lessons also bring a lot of **humour** to our working lives. We laugh all the time about our Greek lessons, our progress and our mistakes. Finally, we have been **taking risks**, having a go at something new which is complicated and where there is no guarantee of success.

We are hoping to do a GCSE if and when Miss Parnaby thinks we are ready. It may take some time, so **perseverance** will be a very useful disposition.

Our learning hero is Αρχιμήδης, or Archimedes in English. He was **inventive**, a brilliant scientist and mathematician and his work is still important today.

Name: Navahra Lindsay
Position: English Teacher

One lunchtime in the staffroom I voiced my longstanding desire to learn to knit and was overwhelmed with offers from staff members **willing to help** out. I discovered that, co-incidentally, some Year 9 students were also learning as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award. So one Wednesday lunchtime in March I took myself off to Colette Quirk's knitting club and I haven't looked back since. I have made a scarf, a hat, gloves, tea-cosy, a cardigan for myself and for my daughter.

When I first started I had no needles so Colette taught me using pencils! The girls thought it **very funny** and my Year 10 students were queuing up outside the classroom to witness this unseemly spectacle! The club has grown in popularity and over the weeks it was lovely to see Year 11 girls joining us – just for the fun of it and because they too wanted to broaden their skills.

It was quite **humbling** for me at the start; I had to **become a learner at the most basic level** and I **struggled** as much as the girls. I dropped stitches and picked up stitches in all the wrong places, starting with thirty stitches in a row and ending up with forty-five. Row after row had to be unravelled and **worked again**, much to my **initial frustration**. But I **persevered** and very quickly **improved**.

Over the cold Easter holiday I knitted daily, **setting aside time each day** to work on my latest project. I borrowed books on knitting from my local library in order to practise a range of stitches and learn the terminology of knitting and abbreviations used in patterns. My daughter was fascinated and wanted to learn too. I have been teaching her and she has learned the stitches using **her own**

method of remembering: 'In the house, round the house, in the cellar, over the house, go next door to the neighbours.' Trying to teach another person has **made me think about my own practice** and realise that instructions and guidance may be delivered in **many different ways** although the outcomes may be the same.

I have been able to learn knitting quickly because I am persistent; I remain focused on the task at hand and **see it through** to completion. It has been very **satisfying** to see the knitting grow and this has **spurred me on**. I have also had to demonstrate **resilience** – I had to unravel one buttonhole several times before I finally achieved a satisfactory result. As an experienced stitcher (I've done cross-stitch and tapestry for years), I have been able to **apply past knowledge** about crafting.

I grew up believing I would never be good with my hands; at school in the eighties, we were categorised as 'intellectual,' 'sporty' and 'good with her hands.' As an 'intellectual,' it would never have occurred to me that I could **straddle two camps**. I have learnt to **think flexibly** and knitting has very much helped me to do that.

I have learnt that progress can appear slow. It is not until I piece together all sections of the garment that the piece of work can be **valued as a whole** – and that can't happen until the end, a metaphor for teaching in general, I think!

My aim is to be able to knit myself an Aran Jumper; when I can do that unaided, I know I shall have finally succeeded as a knitter.

My learning hero is probably my father. He left school with no qualifications, yet over the decades he has **taught himself** many skills. When I was four he brought home an old Victorian sewing machine, operated by foot-pedals, and learned to sew with it. He has also taught himself horticulture,

baking, Spanish, plumbing, woodwork and painting and decorating as well as qualifying as a mechanic. He instilled in me a love of literature, despite finding it hard himself. He has taught me the qualities of **perseverance, commitment and a desire for success** and shown me that learning is a **life-long experience**.



PRESS RELEASE: Northwood College teacher has second book published



In 'The Bright Stuff' (Pearson: 2009), leading child education expert C.J. Simister reveals 16 secrets to a successful life and then gives parents a set of easy-to-use games, activities and exercises they can use with their children to invigorate, engage and encourage them to achieve their full potential.

'What is becoming increasingly clear is that nurturing 'future-smart' qualities such as persistence, initiative, risk-taking and an innovative spirit is vital if the next generation is to flourish and succeed in an exciting, but unpredictable and very competitive world', says the book's author. 'At Northwood College, we place these high on the agenda. Great examination results are obviously important, but they're not the whole story.'

C. J. Simister, Director of the Cognitive Development Programme at Northwood College, shows parents how to make sure their children learn those vital life skills that will help them stand out from the crowd and give them the brightest possible future.

Head Mistress Jacquelyn Pain says, 'We are all extremely proud of Jane Simister's work at the College and her achievements and were delighted that she has dedicated her book to the children of Northwood College.'

'If my parents had had this goldmine of a book, I'd be a brighter and happier person. Buy it, read it and sprinkle your child's life with its wisdom.'

Professor Guy Claxton, Co-Director of the Centre for Real-World Learning and Professor of the Learning Sciences, University of Winchester, and author of 'What's the Point of School?'

'Many of those I most admire have few formal qualifications, but do exhibit all the qualities that are the focus of C.J. Simister's book. As a parent and a risk-taker, I applaud her work.'

Luke Johnson, entrepreneur and Financial Times columnist, Chairman of Channel 4 and the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce

'A really excellent resource for parents looking for imaginative ways to illuminate young minds... I will be using it with my own children.'

Dr Stephen Law, author and editor of 'THINK', the journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy



More information about C.J. Simister can be found at www.future-smart.com

Meet the Bursar



As Bursar I'm responsible for most of the non-academic aspects of running Northwood

College: that means dealing with finance, employment matters, human resources, catering, buildings, grounds, health and safety, insurances, transport, local authorities, government departments, lawyers, architects, neighbours and 101 other things!

There's no such thing as a typical day and I like the unpredictability of the job. The school is an educational community of nearly 1,000 people. We are a Registered Charity but also a company with an annual turnover approaching £10 million, which takes quite a lot of managing. If things go wrong, and they can, it is very often the Bursar who has to deal with it.

My favourite bit of the job is the enormous satisfaction of having a key role in the running of a wonderful enterprise. The dynamics of a school and the distinctive rhythm of the school year make for a very special working environment. Making things happen for the benefit of the young people in our care is a rare treat.

The girls make me very proud. When I travel by tube from my home in Harrow on the Hill, I am frequently struck by how well they conduct themselves, often in contrast with others in a variety of different uniforms – and adult commuters as well!

Before coming to Northwood College a year ago I was Bursar of King's College, a lovely boarding school for boys and girls in Taunton, Somerset. Many of the pupils there have parents in the armed forces, some of them on active service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Outside school, I enjoy cooking, art and music – both classical and modern. I'm as likely to listen to Mozart as Van Morrison. I also play guitar and piano very badly indeed.

John Boal