

Autumn 2009

1st half-term



BEACON HILL COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE AND RURAL ACADEMY

Newsletter

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HEAD'S VIEW

Dear parents and friends of Beacon Hill

We are now officially the ninth most improved school in the country and we can all be very proud.

I would like to thank everyone for all the cards and kind messages about our examination success. The school's 2009 exam results at 63% 5A* to C grades are the highest achieved since the school opened in 1965.

It was great to hear that the school was mentioned in Parliament and that Mr Balls the Secretary of State for Children Schools and Families was quoted saying "*Beacon Hill in Cumbria is an inspiration to us all.*"

However there is more to school than just examination results. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new staff this year: Mrs McGeogh our new food technology teacher who is conjuring up culinary delights, whetting our appetites with delicious aromas. Mr Gee who has put a spark into History and Learn 2 learn; and Dr Graham and Miss White both working hard to answer all our complicated science conundrums! Mrs Young has also joined us as KS3 Learning Mentor to focus on raising student attainment and attendance.

Once again the newsletter is packed full of all the extra things we somehow find time to do when we are not studying for exams. They are the important things we all remember about school. So please enjoy!

HEADTEACHER

Promised Land



This year, Storytree, run by Theatre by the Lake, has been rehearsing for a performance that was like no other, one performed on the busy streets of Workington,

Four schools were involved in the Promised Land project: Beacon Hill (us), Netherhall, St. Josephs and Cockermouth, each played a different tribe, all with individual wishes for the Promised Land.

We rehearsed for a month, every Thursday for two hours; with each of the four groups producing their own dance & drama theatre piece which linked in with the three others and was complemented by a fifth piece performed by local arts professionals.

On the day, every tribe had a shop to get changed in, in different parts of Workington town centre. We warmed up, ate lunch, rehearsed, all in preparation for the big performance. When the signal came through the walkie talkie, we all marched to the hub in character, with our almighty icons towering above us in the hope of finding our promised land, a utopia of dreams fulfilled.

Ingrid Morris, Assistant Producer commented, "*The participants all worked very hard and were fabulous on the day, making Promised Land a great success.*"

The performance ended with the audience joining us in a gold old fashioned "knees up" in the street.

By Laura Foster-Devaney YR8

Governors

"The Governor Body are really pleased with the outstanding record breaking results produced by our pupils in the summer exams which continues the sustained improvement since 2003. This is mainly due to the hard work of the pupils themselves, the head teacher and her dedicated staff who constantly monitor the progress the pupils make enabling them to offer support and assistance if there is slippage. We are also grateful for the support of our parents. Beacon Hill is a school to be proud of and we congratulate you all."

Trevor Gear, Chair of Governors

We currently have a vacancy for a parent governor if you are interested please contact Mrs Hemingway, clerk to the governors, at the school.

Our Motto for 2009

'Success: Wish for it Work for it'



Down on the Farm



On the 7th October a group of Year 10 and 11 students went to Gibbs Hill Farm as guests of Val and Sarah Gibson for a chance to experience life on a working farm and plan out where they would be planting some 30 trees (a mixture of Rowan, Wild Cherry & Silver Birch) that they are expecting to be delivered later this month - kindly donated by the Woodland Trust.

As Stacey Miller explains about her day, "When we arrived at Gibbs Hill we interviewed Sarah and Val about their working life on the farm, we had prepared questions before the trip. We then went on a tour around the farm to see the sheep and the horses. Next the boys stacked some logs in the stables while the girls collected the horses to put them in another set of stables, feeding them. After we had our break for lunch the girls went to groom the horses. All too soon we had to go home!"

Chantelle Jackson's memories of the day included, "At Gibbs Hill farm we learnt about horses, we helped feed and groom them, we cleaned out their stables and changed their bedding putting fresh sawdust in for them. We also learnt a lot about the farm, how Sarah and Val run it and about the people who live there. We went around the farm, marking out where we are going to plant our trees - 5 places up near the fishing pond and we have 15 more to go. We went to Gibbs Hill as part of our ASDAN course to learn more about working outside in the country. The only thing I didn't enjoy was the cold weather but all in all it was a really good day, there was 14 students altogether that went on the trip but everybody enjoyed the experience. We also saw some amazing views and really nice land it's really a nice place to be."

Devvon Wilson recalls, "When we interviewed Sarah and Val Gibson about life on the farm they told us what farm machinery they had and how old Gibbs Hill was and how long they had been farming there. For me the best part of the day was when we went on the tour of the farm this was my favourite part of the day because we got shown all of the animals on the farm."

Our thanks go to the Gibson family for their continued support and the interest shown in the work of the school. **Mrs Skillicorn & students**



Across the Border into Scotland's Capital City

When Mrs Clitheroe first mentioned the Edinburgh trip I didn't think the weekend would ever arrive. But a few months later there we were standing in the car park at Beacon Hill at the very early hour of half seven in the morning, waiting for the bus to arrive to take us to Edinburgh.

The journey didn't take that long especially considering we were stuck behind a tractor half of the way there. Connor playing a bagpipe tune on his phone kept us amused and helped to get us in the right mood.

Arriving at the Youth Hostel we discovered that it was modern and nice; we didn't stop, but ventured out into the city of Edinburgh. First stop was the castle, quite a trek up all the steps and hills, but it was all worth it for the stunning views! Afterwards we descended back down onto Princes Street, Edinburgh's famous shopping street, at this point everyone ventured into the familiar MacDonald's.

Later on, came our long-awaited Ghost Walk through the older streets of Edinburgh (*Auld Reekie*) surrounding the Royal Mile, more funny than scary really. We did have a little jump here and there, especially in the underground vaults, in the dark with only candlelight to guide us through the rooms! The tour was filled full of historical points as well as being fun.

The following morning another early start as we headed for Edinburgh Zoo, quite a challenge as we weren't sure which bus to catch. Quite a laugh until we discovered the correct one! Our day at the Zoo was quite energetic as most of the animals were located up on yet more steep hills, worth the trek as we were all fascinated, especially Mrs Bell who fell in love with a giant penguin.

How short our time in Edinburgh seemed, in no time at all we were back at the hostel packing our bags ready for the journey home. We all wished we could have stayed longer.

We would like to thank the teachers that went with us and to thank Mrs Clitheroe for organising such a fantastic trip for us. We were delighted and proud that the teachers commented on how we were such a lovely well-behaved group.

By Charlotte Pattinson Yr11



White Scar Cave Jewel of Nature

The geography trip was organized by Mrs Inkester for year 8's (now year 9) at the end of the summer term as part of our Enrichment week.

When we got off the bus we were met by the magnificent hillside. After Miss Inkester arranged the trip to visit the inside of the caves, we were given hard hats and taken inside the hillside into a cold and wet cave.

We first stopped at a statue of Christopher Long, a student, showing where he first crawled into the White Scar cave via a small tunnel in 1923, it was very tight and small and he found it while he was hiking along the hills.

We came by our first stunning waterfall inside the cave; Long was the first person to see this waterfall when he was crawling through the caves.

Then we saw the witches' fingers, a rock formation which looked as skinny and strange as the fingers of a witch followed by another formation aptly named the Judge's Head.

Shortly after we came across a narrow path, we had to change the way we walked; we couldn't walk upright, at some points we even had to crouch.

We also saw a few interesting stalactites like the sword of Damocles, Arum Lily, and the Devil's Tongue - folklore says that if you walk through the water that comes from it, you get seven years bad luck!

Finally we arrived in a gigantic cavern known as Battlefield Cavern, with both stalactites and stalagmites, the steps to go up were large and in parts quite steep, seeming as if we were inside a giant empty bubble of rock. There were U.V lights that showed off the stalagmites and stalactites in the cavern.



We stopped on the final bit of the tour, looking around the cavern from higher up, there were passage ways in the roof and floor. Returning back through the caves back outside, we had the pleasure of looking at all the wonders once again.

By Oliver Stewart YR9

Now onto our next reporter....

White Scar Cave The Scenery

After we went to the caves, we boarded the coach setting off into the town itself, stopping at a tourist information car park, near the waterfall walk. We set off down a long gravel track, following the river; it created a narrow winding path. There was a sheer rock face to one side and a steep drop into the river on the other. After half an hours walking the main group, consisting of Mrs Inkester and a few of the lads who were used to a lot of walking, stopped to let the stragglers catch up. There were lots trees hanging over the surprisingly calm water.

We were right by the river's edge, having descended a hill to arrive there. We approached a forest where the trees became closer together and nearer to the main path; as we rested we saw a lot of other walkers and another school group that had been at the caves.

Once we started walking again we moved deeper into the forest, with lots of more forbidding trees on either side. Crossing the bridge over a river, we took turns looking at the waterfall which we could see further up the river. At this point Mrs Inkester had planned to make us turn around and go back, but because no one was tired we were able to push on and see the waterfall up close.

After 15 more minutes walking on the path we came to a large viewing area, where we were easily able to see the waterfall and small rapids. There were a lot of things to see; apart from the waterfall there was the mountain side, a wide and intricate spider's web and plants that were growing everywhere. From here we finally turned around and headed back. I think we walked about 2 miles - one there and one back.

Arriving back at the car park we were able to buy a welcome ice-cream from an old shop there, before we had to get on the coach and go back. Some pupils said it was educational, others said fantastic. All in all it had been a good day out and I would definitely recommend the trip for other years.

By Jack Askew YR9



Stunning Sunflowers

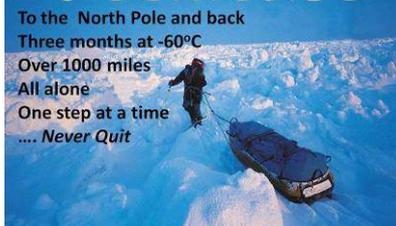
On the very first day back at school, Connor Abram Year 8 was thrown in at the deep end when he found himself being interviewed by Joan Armstrong from Radio Cumbria about the sunflowers he had planted in our new polytunnel. The sunflowers had grown amazingly reaching a fantastic height of over 3 meters with seed heads over 30 cm (they would have grown through the polytunnel roof if they could!).

Mrs Skillicorn (ASDAN Co-ordinator)

Resourcefulness



Resilience



Responsibility



Learning to Learn

L2L is a new lesson that started in 2008 initially only for year 7's, our year group being the first. L2L comes under the full name of Learning to Learn Humanities which covers History, Geography & RE. This new combined subject has helped us to understand how we learn and teaches us better ways to learn. Everyone is allocated a team role:

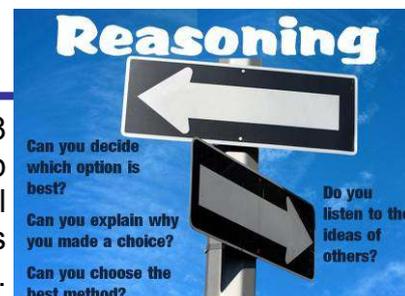
Co-ordinator who gets everyone involved, making sure they understand the task;

Charter who takes notes and writes down decisions;

Creator who comes up with useful ideas and keeps the team positive;

Clarifier who asks useful questions and makes sure the group carries out its plan;

Communicator who talks to other groups and presents back.



Just recently we have been introduced to a new idea called **C3B4ME** which means that we are encouraged to try and solve a problem 3 ways ourselves before we ask our teacher.

We also have the 5'R's to help us become independent learners, **Resourcefulness, Reflection, Responsibility, Reasoning** and **Resilience**, they are the learning attributes that we should aim for.

This term our theme has been the Risky World where we have completed a report on how risky our local area is, looking at flooding, safety and health.

We are now in our second year of L2L, it has helped us to work well both individually and as a team and we're sure that the current year 7's will benefit as much as we have.

By Sarah MacKereth & Rebecca Beattie YR8

Into the Wide, Wide World of Work

On the week of the 7th – 11th September, year 11 ventured out on their work experience. Work experience is the chance for students to pick an area of work they are interested in and get an insight into it for a week.

Our students chose a vast amount of different areas ranging from teaching, veterinary, construction through to childcare and nursing. Students really enjoyed the week and on a whole seemed to gain a lot from it.

Students will have gained different things from work experience, some of them will now know that the area of work they were interested in is now not an option or an area of work they were unsure of is now their main ambition, for me I think it is brilliant for any student to be able to pick a career path more clearly. Personally I also get a buzz when students come back off work experience having gained something extra, some were paid for their work experience, whilst others gained a chance of employment when they leave school. Thank you very much too all staff who helped with the organisation of work experience especially Miss Thornton in the office and also to all the students who worked hard and were brilliant ambassadors of Beacon Hill.

Mr Young (WRL and enterprise co-ordinator)



West Cumbria Active Girls' day

On Tuesday 22nd September, nine girls from year 10 travelled to Workington Leisure Centre to take part in an active girls' day. The day was organised to show the girls the sporting opportunities available to them when they leave school. The girls participated in 7 different activities: Spinning, Golf, Rugby, Boxercise, Karate, Cricket & Dance

The girls put 100% effort into every activity they participated in and were even commended on their effort in the spinning, apparently they were the only group who tried to sustain the sprint section. The girls were fantastic ambassadors for the school and hopefully this will inspire the girls to have life long commitment to sport. **Mr Young (Head of PE)**

Sports Day

Yet again Sports Day (held last term) was a massive success, the weather was lovely and the pupils were ready to battle it out for the honour of be-



coming Sports Day champions. After the morning field events Lawson were streets ahead but everything was left to play for. Following all the track events Lawson were still ahead with Brayton nipping closely at their heels ... it was all down to the relays. Once years 7 – 10 had completed their relays, Brayton had caught up even more, narrowing Lawson's lead. The pressure was on the year 11 relay - a close event with Lawson piping Brayton at the post. Although Lawson won on Sports Day, overall throughout the year Brayton picked up the house cup.

The house matches start again next half term so let's begin with a good effort from all houses and see who is going to win this year. Good luck to all!

Mr Young (Head of PE)

KS3 Learning Mentor Attainment & Attendance

Mrs Young

Working with students in KS3 to support and improve their attainment levels and school attendance.



Based in Room R18 (Opposite S5)
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

Attendance System

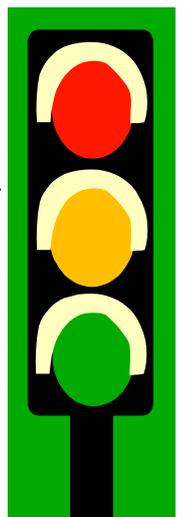
We use the **RED**, **AMBER**, **GREEN** method of tracking and monitoring attendance. Each of the three colours identifies where each student is in relation to attendance and every half term parents will receive a letter informing them of their child's attendance percentage.

RED Attendance below 84%

AMBER 84% - 93% Attendance

GREEN 93% - 100% Attendance

We are committed to raising attendance at Beacon Hill Community School and will work with every child to help them achieve the best from their education through good attendance.



Sports Desk

Sports Clubs

Sports this year have started stronger than ever before with a large amount of students turning up to clubs before school, lunchtime and after school. The clubs we have on will change every half term so if there is a club you want to see on and we have not mentioned it come and speak to any of the PE staff and there is a good chance it



will be on. This half term we have held a range of different sports, having a good response to all especially the girl's only rugby which has been taken by Joanne, a community rugby coach.

Thank you to all those students who have attended clubs, KEEP up the attendance and we will put on more and widen the variety of activities. See the PE notice boards to keep up to date.

Sports Personality of the Year Awards

Unfortunately last years Sports Personality of the Year Awards had to be cancelled. It has now been rearranged for Friday 23rd October (**TONIGHT**) at the Lakeside, good luck to all nominated pupils. I'm sure it will be an excellent evening as usual.

Diary Dates

[See our full calendar on the school website](#)

23 October 2009	Sports Personality Awards Evening @ Lakeside, Aspatria 6pm
26-30 October 2009	Half-term
5 & 10 November 2009	Maths GCSE Exams
9 & 12 November 2009	English GCSE Exams
10 November 2009	Operation Christmas Child shoe box collection
10 November 2009	Leavers of 2009 Awards Evening
19 November 2009	Science GCSE modular exams YR10 & some YR11
20 November 2009	YR10 & YR11 Aimhigher study skills & revision workshops
4 December 2009	YR9 Skills Fair @ Sellafield AM
7-11 December 2009	YR11 Mock exams
8 December 2009	Senior Citizens' Christmas Lunch
14-18 December 2009	Work Life Balance week no after school clubs or detentions
15 December 2009	Richmond Hill Primary School Christmas Production @ 6pm
18 December 2009	End of Term
5 January 2010	School returns - start of Spring Term