

Abbey Hill School & Technology College Newsletter

Summer 2006

DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR ABBEY HILL SCHOOL

On a wet Monday 22nd of May the latest phase of the development of Abbey Hill School & Technology College in Stockton was officially opened by guest of honour David Bellamy OBE. The event will also be attended by the Mayor of Stockton-on-Tees, Councillor Susanne Fletcher and The Director Children, Education and Social Care, Anne Baxter.



David Bellamy OBE and Mike Vening

The Sheraton Building is our new extended education facility for young people with special educational needs aged 16-19. They were formerly accommodated in a collection of old huts and demountable classrooms in Norton, the students now enjoy the benefits of a £2m state-of-the-art building which is designed to meet their specific needs.

Of particular interest is the emphasis on developing the vocational curriculum. The new building contains a fully equipped hairdressing salon, a large polytunnel for horticulture studies, a modern design technology workshop and a drop-in café run by the students.

Head Teacher, Mike Vening commented: "We are delighted to be in this lovely building. After years of working in cramped, unsuitable conditions, with very few facilities for our disabled students, this is a dream come true. The opportunities this presents for extending our curriculum and raising standards are endless"



David Bellamy meets Sheraton students

The project was partly funded by DfES, Stockton Borough Children's Services and the fund raising efforts of the school itself. A group of parents raised a staggering £29,000 over a period of 14 months. The result is a facility in which the staff and students can genuinely take pride.

On the same day we celebrated the presentation of a new 17-seat minibus with wheelchair facilities thanks to the generosity of the Variety Club Childrens Charity. Their fundraising efforts met over half of the cost of the coach and ensure that all of the students who attend the school will have the opportunity to go on trips and visits as part of their curriculum. David Bellamy handed over the keys accompanied by Bob Gladwin, Richard Varley and Catherine Middleton from Variety Club, Northern Region.

Edwin Thorman

European visitors

From Sunday 14th May to Friday 19th Abbey Hill hosted some teachers and students from our partner schools in Europe. This is through our involvement as the lead school in the European Comenius project, which aims to develop better links and produce joint educational projects. We had visitors from Denmark, Romania, France and Germany. They spent most of their time at Stainsacre residential centre near Whitby but they did also visit Abbey Hill.

Drama option groups produce the "Lion King" at school

On the 15th May 2006 the drama, art and music option students prepared to show for the second time their interpretation of the Lion King story. This was in front of an invited audience of parents/ guardians; school governors and we also welcomed our European visitors. They were from Denmark and Germany.



Drama and art students in the production

Abbey Hill achieves the Sports Mark for the second time.



In March the school was informed that we had been awarded the Sports Mark Award for the second time. This is testament to the hard work by staff and students.

Abbey Hill wins Communication Award

Abbey Hill School recently became the one of 200 winners chosen from over 750 entries in the BT School Awards. Through our ability to demonstrate a commitment to putting speaking and listening at the heart of education and promoting excellent communication skills within the classroom the school have been given £1,000 in cash, a treasure chest including a DVD player, a full set of communication skills resources and a BT drama workshop.



Rebecca Jenkins- head of English and Communication at Abbey Hill, said; "We were delighted to get an award. We don't know yet

what we will spend the money on, but it will enhance the communication faculty for the students".

Members of the Abbey Hill Communication Faculty have had several discussions since winning the award and many projects have already taken place. For instance, several groups of students have recently visited the Arc Theatre in Stockton where they were able to take part in a theatre performance alongside professional actors. There are several more trips planned that encourage our students to develop their communication skills.

For more information and a chance to see Abbey Hill's application for the award visit

www.bteducation.org

Dates for your diary

June 21st Year 9 parents morning 10.45 – 11.30

To talk about the changes for your child as they move from Year 9 to Year 10 (KS3 to KS4)

If you wish to contribute anything for the next Newsletter then email.

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Federation

We are please to announce that after a lengthy consultation process the governors of Abbey Hill and Westlands agreed to federate their governing bodies at Easter 2006.

The federation that is titled: Abbey Hill School and Technology College and Westlands School Federation, provides a wonderful opportunity for us to collaborate and cooperate further to improve the quality of the education we provide at both schools. It also allows us to proactively address the Every Child Matters agenda and the agenda for extended schools. As one of the first federation of schools nationally and the first in Stockton we are delighted to be working closely with the Local Authority and with the Innovations Unit of the DfES.

The Federation Governors have appointed Mike Vening as the Executive Head Teacher for both schools. They have also created two Heads of School posts, one at Abbey Hill and one at Westlands that are responsible for all the day to day running of the two schools. Clare Devine has been appointed as Head of School at Abbey Hill. The Head of School post at Westlands has been advertised and interviews will take place on 6th July 2006. When this appointment has been made we will have our full Leadership Team for the Federation in place.