

World Autism Acceptance Week 28 March – 3 April.

Standing with Autistic Children and Young People.

In previous years, the week has been known as World Autism Awareness Week. This year, it has changed to World Autism Acceptance Week which aligns with our vision of nurturing inclusive communities.



Autism Awareness – Kerry Goldthorpe’s Journey.

You may or not know that the week of 28th March is Autism Acceptance Week and I for one am VERY aware that every day is an Autism day. Some of you may know that my daughter, Purdey, is Autistic.

Purdey presented with signs from a very early age (2) which is very unusual for girls. She ran from one corner of the room to another, usually after watching Peter Rabbit or eating something particularly delicious - so we knew that it was a happy run. Very similar to a cat having a 'mad half hour'. Her language was advanced so much that the phonics teacher at nursery said that they had never met a child with such a vocabulary. She spoke in an American accent (too much Dora the Explorer I thought) and was very sociable.

Changes and signs appeared when she went to the 'big room' in nursery and was displaying what I was told 'naughty' behaviour. In actual fact, she was not coping with the size of the room, noise and change - she was only 4 years old.

To cut a long Autism diagnosis story shortand it was a long process, with the support and care from Purdey's school and a referral to Speech and Language, CAMHS, GP, Private Child Psychologist appointments and then an almost 2 years wait, my lovely girl was diagnosed as 'High Functioning Autistic'. The document covers the 'Triad of Impairments' that listed all the things my Purdey cannot/will not be able to do socially/emotionally and is the most awful assessment I have ever had to read. I was handed this and sent on my merry way. You are left to your own devices.

Purdey has proven since her diagnosis, at the age of 6, that she has contradicted those Triad Of Impairments.

She still runs (stimming) but now this is a 'bleep test up and down my hallway (every night)- thank goodness for the Victorians and their designs.

I thought it would be good to share this as Autism is such a varied and complex condition (certainly not a Disorder) which I live with and one when told of her diagnosis Purdey said "I knew that I was different, I knew that I was special". She also said "so if I have Autism and I am Autistic what does the 'stic' bit mean?"

Please feel free to ask me anything - I can usually put a comedic spin on my life with Autism but I am very aware that it is difficult and that Purds will have obstacles that she will struggle with. However, I also know that she will go far in life.



During Personal Development, group 3 students watched Chris G Packham's 'Investigating His Autistic Mind' to raise awareness and help celebrate our differences. Students were empathetic and showed maturity with their approach.

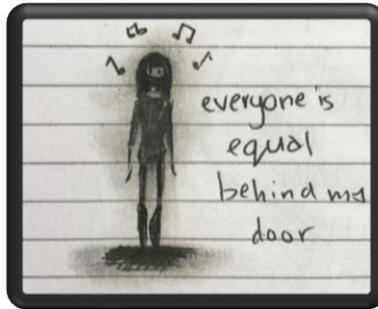


'Embrace those of us who are different and special' - Purdey

Children's Laureate for Wales, Connor Allen, Visits Ethos College

Knock Knock...What's Behind Your Door?

On our return to school, after the Easter break, we were lucky enough to be joined by Connor Allen, who is the current Children's Laureate for Wales. Connor ran a poetry and empowerment workshop based around his poem 'Knock Knock;' the students and staff alike thoroughly enjoyed the interactive session.



Our Stories Matter!

'Really enjoyed listening to the poetry, I could relate to some of it, it was very interesting and a deep session'

'I found the session really intriguing and deep. It resonated with many things Connor expressed and it inspired me to look at my past issues differently and more positively'

'I found this session very helpful because we got to know each other better, listen to some poetry and find someone else's story through a poem.'

Knock Knock

I wonder

What's behind this door?

I hope it's not remnants of a time before.

Times that moved so fast

And fragments of the past

That's rooted in pain

Histories of Shame

when I travel down memory lane.

Imagine

If behind this door

There's potential

Not purpose

And that's what's essential.

Because

Each and every one of us has magic

Contained within us

To hope and dream of a better future is a must.

Turn the handle

unlock the door and travel through

and look upon

all the different variations of you.

Strength

Dreams

Creativity

and more

**Are all waiting for you
behind the door.**

Connor Allen, Children's Laureate Wales 2019-2023



Mental Health Awareness

Holly Meets Kim Leadbeater MP of Batley and Spen!



People who will listen!

On Friday 25th March, I was invited to a meeting with the MP of Batley and Spen, Kim Leadbeater, at her office in Ponderosa. The meeting covered the underfunding and poor structure of CAMHS in the area. CAMHS has been greatly underfunded by millions of pounds, over the past few years, resulting in many children being put on large waiting lists and having to endure severe mental health problems and only getting the help they deserve once they've hit rock bottom or have ended up in hospital.

The meeting discussed how unacceptable this treatment was and how, even when you get past the waiting list, the support you get from CAHMS is not nearly as good as it should be. Young children miss out on the proper diagnosis, medication, and school support. Lots more have been left to feel confused and dehumanised by what others thought of them and what our 'mental health professionals' refused to treat or acknowledge.

The purpose of this meeting was for Kim to gather other people's experiences to try to improve the obvious mental health crisis and poor school facilities in our area. I have never met a person more understanding, willing to help, kind and supportive as Kim Leadbeater. She truly sparks new hope in our mental health and mainstream school facilities. She kindly agreed to do everything she can to raise awareness and use her authority to help in every way that she can. At the moment, it seems that medications like SSRI's will only be given to children who hit rock bottom and have basically zero functionality due to their overwhelming mental health issues, which, as the people who are meant to care for our mental health, that should be the last thing that they want. Schools like Ethos College are a true godsend and should be a standard for so many other schools where children are missed. I have felt more care and support from my teachers at Ethos, than I ever had at CAHMS. They have shown me such kindness and understanding and helped me not to feel so dehumanised, from my lack of ability to do things, as a result of my mental health. I have had the chance to work with so many amazing teachers whom without, I would never have been as comfortable to return to school.

I am sure Kim would love to come here and meet the teachers that every school deserves and I hope that this meeting proves helpful for all of the children in the system who are struggling. The meeting resulted in the opportunity to go to more meetings like this and talk to other children about improving the facilities in Batley and Spen.

- Holly Oxley, year 10 medical learner (hoping to attend full time year 11)

The Mix
Text THEMIX to 85258
For a quick chat to a trained team for focused support!

Mermaids
Call 0808 801 0400
Helpline and webchat service aimed at supporting transgender and gender diverse people!

Muslim Youth Helpline
Call 0808 808 2008
Phone and live chat around faith and culturally sensitive support

Samaritans
Call 116 123
They will listen, they won't judge, whatever your going through they will listen!

Shout
Text Shout to 85258
A free, confidential and anonymous text support service if your struggling to cope!

Autism Reading Resources

Different Like Me - My Autism Heroes - Jennifer Elder

Our brains are like computers! - Joel Shaul

The Ice Cream Sundae Guide to Autism - Debby Elder

The Autism Guide to Periods (written by an Autistic woman) - Robyn Steward

Fifteen things they forgot to tell you about Autism (for parents) - Debby Elder

Sports Day!

On Friday the 29th of April, the students of Ethos College took part in a Sports day at St Marys Athletics Stadium. Students and staff were split into four teams, representing Commonwealth countries for the upcoming Commonwealth Games: Bermuda, Jamaica, Barbados and Cameroon. During the morning, participants competed to achieve as many points as they could, for their team, in the long jump, discus, shot put and wellie wang. Meanwhile, back at school, the spectators were busy creating banners and flags for their countries, as well as painting their faces and getting together musical instruments in preparation for joining the afternoon track events.

In the afternoon, spectators cheered on their teams whilst they took part in the obstacle course, 100m, 200m, 400m, relay race, egg and spoon race, sack race and the tug of war. They shone brightly and the smiles upon faces shone even brighter. Everyone played their part in various ways; participant, spectator, photographer or results keeper. There was a real feeling of 'togetherness'. Well done team Ethos!!

Huddersfield University Tour

Some of our year 11 students went to an insightful trip to Huddersfield University. They met other young people who shared their educational journeys to higher education.



These stories inspired some of our young people, making them believe in themselves, that their hard work can lead them to university life and go on to be successful in their dream career.

Fanwood Residential

On the 5th and 6th May, Ethos College held its very first residential at Fanwood Activity Centre.

The two days were a great success and all the young people thoroughly enjoyed all the activities offered to them. They all showed exemplary behaviour.



Fanwood Residential

The young people challenged themselves by being pushed out of their comfort zones, showing amazing resilience.

The activities offered were caving, forestry skills, air rifling and low ropes.



Fanwood Residential

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I have read and agree.....

With young people becoming more concerned with privacy, what companies are doing with their data and more, it's important we share the facts with them in order that they can make informed choices. "I have read and agree to the terms and conditions" is something we all tick but rarely action; it's a minefield of legal jargon.

TOSDR (Terms of Service, Didn't Read) is a website that gives clarity to the terms and conditions, it tells you what the company is actually doing with your personal information. I would say this resource could be used with KS3 and above, either to let them know (so they can explore on their own) or preferably as a resource to have open conversations. For example, do a search on TikTok and see what they are doing with data: Do our young people know? Do they think it's ethical? Please see link for more info

<https://tosdr.org/en/frontpage>

E-Safety

