

MEADOWPARK – NEWSLETTER – WEEK 32 – 23.03.18

World Autism Awareness Week starts on Monday in preparation for April Autism Awareness month, and in assembly this morning I asked pupils what really matters to them and what we as adults and the wider Knox Academy community can offer and show support.

We want to not only raise awareness of the challenges that young people with autism face but work with our communities to provide a safe and nurturing environment to enable opportunities for further integration and inclusion.

One of the challenges we have at a school level is ensuring that we have an effective, challenging and meaningful curriculum that will encourage and develop communication and health and well-being in order that Meadowpark pupils are able to express themselves and identify positive pathways.

I have been able to reflect this week on some of the myriad challenges that some autistic people face and marvel at the resilience and determination to succeed in a world that will so often turn a blind eye and walk away. Sensory overload caused by noise, lights, smells in supermarkets, on public transport, in cafes and restaurants. Clothes can be a source of acute pain and distress depending on the fabric and an overload of information in class in the street in shops can have a devastating impact on a person's ability to manage their increased stress levels.

Collaboration with Knox Academy continues to grow as our mural is taking shape, drawn and painted by S6 and Meadowpark pupils; 2 pupils regularly access mainstream classes while others make full use of the HE department, the library, Food Court and music rooms.

On Thursday 29th March we will be enticing and encouraging pupils and staff from the wider school community to buy a cake, join in activities including Boccia, giant Jenga, outdoor dominoes, using our bikes scooters and playing football. How can we expect to be included unless we adopt inclusive practice too?

We are all hoping that the weather continues to stay warmer from this weekend so that we can plan our outdoor learning activities and build on collaborative partnerships.

C. Prime DHT 23.03.18