

# News Release

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Thursday, 15 February 2007

## Up, up and away at Saturday school

Experimenting with hot air balloons, making mini-parachutes and investigating the magnetism of electricity were among the activities at a local Saturday school, which is helping to raise children's achievement by providing an exciting range of extra classes and activities.

Pupils from H&F primary schools are improving their knowledge of subjects ranging from physics, chemistry, maths and English to computer animation, drama and cookery with the help of Serious Fun on Saturdays, which is run with the help of two independent schools.

Serious Fun on Saturdays, which is targeting pupils from 16 borough primary schools, takes place at two leading independent schools - Latymer Upper School, in Hammersmith, and St Paul's School, across Hammersmith Bridge, in Barnes.

The programme is funded by the educational charity SHINE: Support and Help in Education, the two independent schools and H&F Council.

The Saturday school classes are fun, practical and give children the chance to explore subjects in more depth, helping to prepare them for the move to secondary school. The sessions are led by teachers from Latymer Upper School and St Paul's School, with the support of student mentors from those two schools.

Serious Fun on Saturdays is run by H&F Council's attitudes to learning project co-ordinator Michelle Burke.

The programme, now in its fourth year, gives pupils five weeks at Latymer Upper School and five weeks at St Paul's School, allowing children to take advantage of the high quality facilities at both schools.

Michelle Burke, project co-ordinator for Serious Fun on Saturdays, said: "The Saturday school has been extremely successful since it started in 2004. The pupil turnout has been brilliant and they have done some really inspirational and challenging work, which has raised achievement levels and given year six primary school children some valuable additional preparation for the move up to secondary school."

Children who take part in the weekly sessions, which began last month, will be invited back to Latymer Upper School and St Paul's School in the summer for two special days of activities when they will all receive certificates of achievement for taking part in the programme.

Cllr Antony Lillis, cabinet member for children's services, visited the sessions at Latymer Upper School on Saturday (10 February). He said: "This challenging and

imaginative programme stretches our most able pupils and gives extra support to children who need to raise their levels of achievement.

The independent school teachers who lead these wonderfully engaging classes, with the help of student mentors, have shown fantastic commitment to the programme, which has given local children some really exciting educational experiences to help prepare them for the move to secondary school.

The SHINE charity, the two local independent schools and the council are working together to raise the aspirations of local primary pupils.”

Stephen Shields, SHINE chief executive, said: “We are absolutely delighted with the continued success of this programme, now in its fourth year, and we are grateful to the project and school staff, as well as the student mentors, for their hard work and commitment to this success. We are also pleased to report that SHINE is now supporting a number of Serious Fun on Saturdays independent-state school programmes, which followed on from this first one at St Paul's and Latymer Upper.”

**Notes to the editor:**

- All the children who attend the Saturday school have been identified as needing extra challenges or help through the ‘gifted & talented’ and ‘widening participation’ schemes run by H&F Council’s attitudes to learning team.
- Gifted & talented and widening participation activities also take place in the borough’s schools and at other centres - including the Kingwood City Learning Centre, in Fulham.
- For more details about out-of-school classes and activities provided by the council visit:  
[http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/Directory/Education\\_and\\_Learning/Extra-curricular\\_activities/](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/Directory/Education_and_Learning/Extra-curricular_activities/)
- For more details about SHINE: Support and Help in Education visit:  
<http://www.shinetrust.org.uk/index2.htm>