

## 'Super Size Me Science' highlights the facts behind fat

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Students at a Midlands secondary school will be trying to answer weighty questions this week as part of a unique project funded by the Wellcome Trust and run by scientists at the University of Birmingham and the Jestaminute Theatre Company.

150 Year 8 pupils at Woodfield Middle School in Redditch will take part in "Super Size Me Science" - a week of theatre and performance focusing on understanding the science behind obesity.

The project will encourage students to discuss issues like body image, media attitudes to obesity and the reasons behind the rapidly increasing rates of obesity in the UK.

"Super Size Me Science" is jointly run by Dr Suzanne Higgs of the School of Psychology, whose research focuses on eating behaviour, the Redditch based Jestaminute Theatre Company run by Andy and Jan Higgitt, and staff at Woodfield Middle School.

The week of work will culminate with a performance on Friday May 23rd looking at the scientific messages about obesity and body image. The students will have freedom to decide what form the final production will take.

As well as putting on a performance, the week long project will give students an opportunity to research the science behind obesity and to find ways to incorporate that into the play.

Dr Suzanne Higgs comments: "We are delighted that the students and staff here have embraced the ideas behind Super Size Me Science so enthusiastically.

It is extremely important that these issues are discussed and understood as obesity is a serious and growing problem amongst Britain's teenagers.

We hope that the week of events will encourage students to think about the scientific background to obesity and bigger questions about what a healthy body shape is, or where the blame for the obesity epidemic actually lies."

Jodie McQuillan of Woodfield Middle School said "This is a fantastic opportunity to engage both keen scientists and talented dramatists in a cross curricular workshop. By addressing a relevant topic which is closely related to the curriculum, it is an excellent way to extend learning."

### ENDS

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### NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Wellcome Trust Arts Awards support imaginative and experimental arts projects that investigate biomedical science
- Jestaminute work in educational and community settings utilising interactive drama techniques to offer workshops during or after school or in school holiday schemes ([Jestaminute@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Jestaminute@blueyonder.co.uk)).
- Woodfield Middle school gained healthy school status in 2007.