

Whitchurch Weekly



Message from the Headteacher

17th May
2024
Issue 31

Dear Parents, Carers and Pupils,

It is with a mixture of gratitude and sadness that the time has come for me to say goodbye to the Whitchurch Community. My last working day will be Thursday 23rd May.

Serving as the headteacher of this incredible school has been an extraordinary privilege and a deeply rewarding experience. This is a school where every child feels valued, supported and inspired to reach their full potential. I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me and for your support and partnership.

To the pupils, I want to express my deepest admiration for how well you live your lives with the Whitchurch Values at your core. Your enthusiasm for learning has been truly inspiring.

As I prepare to leave, I am confident that Whitchurch will continue to thrive under new leadership. The foundations built together are strong, and the future holds great promise for the school community.

Please know that this decision was not made lightly. I will always cherish the memories and relationships forged during my time here. Though I may be moving on, I will carry the spirit of Whitchurch with me. The time may have been short but the memories will be long-lasting. I wish each of you and your families continued success and happiness.

With warmest regards,

Joseph Pine
Headteacher



General Notices and Highlights



Events for the week ahead

- Nursery visit to Woodside Farm on Monday
- Year 5 residential visit to Woodrow High House on Monday and Tuesday
- Year 1 picnic at Canons Park (AM), Year 4 visit to London Zoo and Year 6 Play in a Day on Tuesday
- Year 2 visit to Harrow Central Mosque on Wednesday (PM)

Class Photographs

A reminder that class photographs are taking place on Thursday. Please ensure that your children are looking presentable in their school uniform!

Survey for Parents and Carers - Family School Partnership

Please complete the following survey relating to our partnership with families:

[Family School Partnership Award Survey](#)

Walk to School Week

Walk to School Week begins on Monday. We wish to encourage you and your child to walk most/all of the way to and from school during the week - and whenever you can!

Instagram

Please follow us on Instagram - **WhitchurchPS**

We look forward to sharing highlights including events with you here.



FoW Summer Fair

Friends of Whitchurch shall be holding the Summer Fair on Sunday 23rd June from 12pm-4pm. More details to follow soon!

Lions
Class Assembly
on Tuesday
at 9.05am



May Half
Term Break
27th to
31st May

Staff
Training Day
on Monday
3rd June

General Notices and Highlights



Whitchurch Playing Fields Car Park

On Monday we had to call an ambulance for a parent who was unwell. Unfortunately it was unable to access the school through the car park due to the blockage caused by double-parking in the coach bay and the illegal parking on double yellow lines on the roundabout. The car park does not belong to the school. It is owned by Harrow Council and due to the issues occurring in their car park, Harrow Council are now taking action to ensure we avoid a repeat of the incident in the future. The parking behaviour of some parents is also compromising the safety of our children. Parking Enforcement have the license plate numbers of those illegally parked on Monday (including those in the coach bay, those double parked and those on double yellow lines on the roundabout) and will be contacting drivers.

We have now been informed that the Parking Enforcement Team will be undertaking regular afternoon visits and either moving on illegally parked cars and/or issuing £55 fines. The team have also noticed that 50% of children are not wearing seatbelts and there have been multiple occasions of drivers using phones whilst driving. Fines will be issued for both these offences also.

Working together we can make sure that the car park becomes a much safer place where our children are not put at risk every day.



Dates for your Diary

Summer
1st



Monday 20th May

Nursery visit to Woodside Farm

Mon 20th to Tues 21st May

Year 5 Residential visit to Woodrow High House

Tuesday 21st May

Year 1 visit to Canons Park - picnic (AM)
Year 4 visit to London Zoo
Year 6 Play in a Day (Macbeth)

Wednesday 22nd May

Year 2 visit to Harrow Central Mosque (PM)

Thursday 23rd May

Class Photographs



Tuesday
21st May
Lions Class
Assembly
(9.05am)

Friends of Whitchurch



Save the
Date

Bags2School Donations
Thursday 6th June
8.40am-9.15am

Summer Fair
Sunday 23rd June
12pm-4pm

Special Male Gift Stall (Father's Day)
Thursday 13th June
3.15pm-4pm



Whitchurch Stars of the Week



Well done to our stars of the week, who have been selected for excellent work and demonstrating our school values

RRA Tigers Adam
RNW Leopards Khushi
RRV Lions Daniel
RPS Jaguars Aziza

1ST Abigail
1BP Diyan
1SM Austin
1CL Arya

2HD Mattia
2KB Prince
2SA Elias
2AR Michele

3NL Akshyan
3MS Viha and Maycon
3LA Azlaan
3SM Daksh

Respect
Responsibility
Resilience
Honesty
Generosity
Aspiration

4BS Whole Class
4CM Filip
4XL Maya
4SF Ankush

5PA Whole Class
5SK Mbarak
5SC Surina
5ET Aadhya

6HH Whole Class
6MO Adam and Laetia
6AS Muhssen
6EH Whole Class

Attendance Stars

Did you know?
Our attendance
expectation is 96%
for the whole school.

This week's
attendance
stars are
6MO (100%)

Most
improved
attendance
RRV

Year 2 Reading Corner

Year 2's
focus text
is 'Fox' by
Margaret
Wild



'Fox' by Margaret Wild

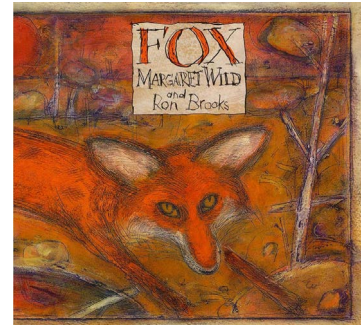
"We really liked how the story teaches you to be grateful of what you have and to stay truthful to you friends and never trust you enemy." **Ayvaan and Eloise**

"Magpie teaches us to never give up and be kind." **Ariana**

"I thought the story was beautiful because we learn the importance of showing kindness, being loyal and generous." **Tily**

"I think the story is really sweet because Magpie is determined to find dog even though Fox left her in the desert and she doesn't want him to be alone." **Emma**

"I thought that the storyline was interesting because we got to explore words that were linked to the describing the desert and understand how it feels to be left alone. 'Fox' taught me that animals can assist other animals when in need and they can show kindness as well. The ending, when Fox left Magpie in the desert, was quite sad because Magpie was left all alone due to Fox's jealousy and lack of kindness." **Elias**



"Fox by Margret Wild is a story set in a forest and a desert. This has linked nicely with our topic, Creatures and Climate, as we have been able to explore what animals need to survive and the climates in which they live. Additionally, the story is about friendship and betrayal, which relate really well to our PSHE unit on Relationships, as it has helped with our discussions of the importance of friendship and trust."

Miss Nickson

"A story
of trust,
friendship
and betrayal"

Year 2 Reading Corner



"I like reading because it is fun." Rebecca, 2KB
Favourite book:
Alice in Wonderland

"I like reading because it is interesting, and helps my knowledge grow."
Darius, 2AR
Favourite book:
Diary of a Wimpy Kid

"I like reading because it makes me learn more facts and improves my vocabulary." Ariana, 2HD
Favourite book:
The Lion King

"I like reading because I like learning new things." Isla, 2SA
Favourite book:
The Dog of Truth

Year 2
share their
experiences
of reading

"I like reading because it tells me more information about the world"
Idris, 2HD
Favourite book:
Periodic Table Flap Book (non-fiction)

"I like reading because I can get good knowledge from books and improve my vocabulary." Aarshay, 2AR
Favourite book: Space (non-fiction)



Spotlight on Enrichment

Music



Choral Day at NLCS

Year 4 members of our Junior Choir were excited to attend the Choral Day at NLCS this week alongside two other Harrow schools. The workshop event was led by the school's choral leader Miss James and the piano accompanist Ms Osedo. After some vocal warm-ups and short three-part rounds, children sang the two-part song 'I See a Star', focusing on their vocal sound, diction and expression. Later on they rehearsed the song 'Fire!' with beautifully choreographed actions and performed to parents. Well done to our musical children!



Instrumental Demonstrations

In music assemblies we had the pleasure of watching instrumental demonstrations by HMS teachers. Miss Naddermier and Mr Hedley introduced children to the flute, clarinet and oboe; Mr Lynch played the cello and Mr Reiband demonstrated the trumpet. They all discussed the structure of their instruments and the way sound is produced; they also enthused the children by playing familiar tunes as well as technically challenging pieces.

Mrs Leutfeld
Director of Music



Instrumental Lessons

Music



Instrumental Lessons - Places Available

Thank you to so many parents who have signed up for lessons across a wide range of instruments and throughout the school. Although the application period for next year's instrumental lessons is now closed, there are limited spaces left for a few instruments only. For further details, please email Mrs Leutfeld: eleutfeld@whitchurchprimary.harrow.sch.uk.

Alongside paired or small group tuition, we offer participation to more experienced players free of charge in the school's music ensembles. The selection process takes place at the beginning of each term and an invite is sent out to the parents of selected pupils.

Instrumental Exam Results

Many congratulations to the following children for passing their piano exams recently:

Rithivi (3NL) - Initial Grade piano
Maya (4XL) - Grade 1 piano
Aaron (5PA) - Grade 2 piano
Anisha (5PA) - Grade 2 piano

Shaurya (4BS) - Initial Grade piano
Thomasina (5SK) - Grade 1 piano
Saara (5PA) - Grade 2 piano

Mrs Leutfeld
Director of Music



Life Skills

Inclusion

Feelings

This half term in Life Skills we have focused on our feelings and all the things that make us happy. We explored expressive dance and used emotive language to name lots of activities we enjoy in and out of school. We also enjoyed role play and charades to guess different feelings.

Miss Tunstall



Support for Families

Wellbeing



Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Statistics from the Children's Commissioner found that in the 2022/23 academic year, 22.3% of all pupils were persistently absent - a significant increase from 2018/19, when that figure was 10.9%. This lost time can have a notable impact on children's development, learning and overall wellbeing.

The specific reasons for school avoidance are sometimes hard to pin down - and it can be even harder to know how best to help absent children return to education.

Please refer to the poster attached to this newsletter for more information on the causes and effects of school avoidance and advice on how you can help children to overcome this potentially damaging cycle.



#WakeUpWednesday

Holidays Activities

Half Term Holiday Activities

The Elms Holiday Activity Camp
Tuesday 28th to Friday 31st May at Whitchurch (9am-4pm)

The Elms are offering holiday activities including art, sports and games for children aged 5-12 years old. The cost is **£34** per day. Children should wear comfortable sports clothing and bring a healthy snack, packed lunch and drink in a refillable container.

For more information on this event and other half term holiday camps and activities, please see the **Support for Families** page of our website.



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

Emotionally Based School Avoidance is a term used to refer to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. It's often rooted in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. The rate of children who miss school more than 10% of the time in England has more than doubled since before the pandemic: rising from 10.9% in 2018-19, to 22.3% in 2022-23.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors rather than one single cause. This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, for instance, or a change in family dynamics; bullying and friendship difficulties at school; pressure to achieve in schoolwork and exams; or moving from primary school to secondary school.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for the development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days). If a child or young person is neurodiverse, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include complaining of a tummy ache, headache, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

CYCLE OF ABSENCE

Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity which is making them anxious – increasing their desire to stay at home.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WORK TOGETHER

If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

MANAGING OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

While there may be times you feel frustrated or angry, try to stay calm; acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss a range of coping strategies together to help them face the discomfort and overwhelming feelings. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk and practice the strategies in less overwhelming situations first.

FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES

Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and limited time on screens can also give children much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetabled routine for the child's school day, if required.

REDUCE STIMULATING ACTIVITIES AT HOME

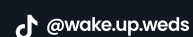
If a child is avoiding school, reduce their access to more stimulating activities (such as watching television, playing games and spending time with friends) during school hours, where possible. This reduces the potential for the child having rewarding experiences at home, which could be interpreted as a positive aspect of avoiding school.

Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: nationalcollege.com/guides/school-avoidance



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