

Whitchurch Weekly

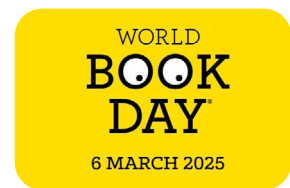
7th Mar
2025
Issue 23



Whitchurch Book Week and World Book Day

We had a fantastic time celebrating our annual Book Week with exciting activities for everyone! Following our visit from the author Gareth P. Jones last week - who shared his writing process and inspired many children to pick up his books at the book sale after school - families joined us for 'Stay and Read', sharing their favourite books together. It was a lovely way to connect over reading. Older pupils partnered with younger ones for a fun 'Buddy Reading' session. It was heartwarming to see them sharing stories and fostering a love of reading. Teachers swapped classes and read to different children, showing that reading is fun for everyone - even the grown-ups!

It was lovely to see the children celebrate World Book Day on Thursday by dressing up in their most comfortable pyjamas and bringing their favourite books to school, creating a cozy atmosphere filled with excitement for reading! Children created amazing art inspired by their class focus book, which we will display proudly throughout the school in the coming weeks. Thank you to everyone who made World Book Day so special! Let's keep reading!



Miss Goldsmith, English Co-ordinator



Enrichment Highlights



Whitchurch Book Week and World Book Day



Enrichment Highlights



3SM visit to Pizza Express in Stanmore

This week, 3SM visited Pizza Express to develop their Design and Technology skills. They have learnt many skills, such as cutting, rolling out the dough, spreading tomato sauce and arranging their chosen vegetables to create a delicious pizza. They also learnt about the history of pizza, including where it originated and how pizza is made!



Year 4 and 5 Girls Football Festival at Bannisters

Today some of our Year 4 and 5 girls took part in the 'Let Girls Play' football festival at Bannisters Sports Ground. The girls played alongside a variety of different Harrow schools in 6-a-side matches and showed brilliant team work! Well done girls!

#letgirlsplay

Miss Byrne



Whitchurch Woodland

Project
update



Woodland Update

Here is the third woodland update. We have been very busy and wanted to share the progress with you.

Here's what's new:

- A clubhouse!
- A sign post!
- Two of the donated canopies have gone up
- The den building area is ready: we have logs!
- The composting area has been cleared and we are ready for some composting bins
- The gardening and potting area is ready
- The living willow structures are in!



Teaching has started!

- Small groups and classes have started going in for lessons.
- Miss Tunstall, Mrs Bharadia, Mrs Chikhliya and Mrs Parthasarathy took small groups into the woodland and they enjoyed exploring the area and making mud pies in the kitchen.
- 4ND have been in to talk about bird feeders and make their own bird food necklaces.
- Some Year 5 children have been in for hot chocolate and lessons on making hanging wind chimes.
- The Year 6 woodland leadership group had a potting and sowing lesson with Mr Coutinho.

What else do we need?

Please see the Whitchurch Amazon Woodland Wish List for donations. Other donations we require: bricks, roof tiles, AstroTurf, tree stumps, old pots, pans and kitchen utensils, gardening plant pots, rocks, stones and shells.

Thank you!

Thank you for your kind donations to:

- Codruta and family for the hammers
- Jiya and Bella for the wool

View our
Whitchurch
Woodland
Amazon wish
list here

Whitchurch Woodland

Project
update

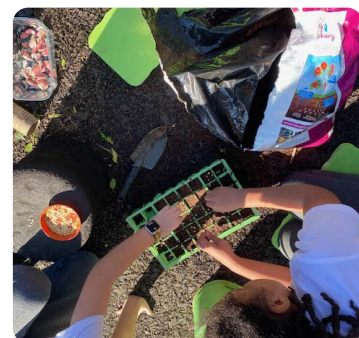


- Arya and family for the giant wheelbarrow
- Luca, Lara and family for the canopy
- Veer, Siya and family for the beautiful Indian streamers
- Shrien and family for the seeds
- Thank you to Mona and the class reps for sharing my endless photos and videos!
- Riya's Rainbows charity has sponsored the woodland and bought us a much-needed storage shed. Many thanks to Mukesh (Kookie), Geeta and Nikita for this generous donation.
- Thank you to everyone else for all your kind donations.

What's next?

Big plans are on the horizon! We will be looking at sustainability and biodiversity in the coming months and are due to implement changes to facilitate being a sustainable school.

Mrs Portou



General Notices and Highlights



World Book Day Donations - thank you

A special thank you to all who donated towards our future reading initiatives. We have raised **£346.87**. These funds will go towards buying books for our school and continuing to organise amazing reading-related celebrations.

£346.87
raised on
World Book
Day

Google Classroom Workshop for Year 4 Parents/Carers

Year 4 parents and carers are invited to a workshop about Google Classroom on **Monday 24th March at 2.30pm**. Find out about where we are with Google Classroom and how you can use it to support your children at home. We look forward to seeing you.

**2KK and
5TG class
assemblies
next week**

Music Mark School Award

We are pleased to announce that Whitchurch has been awarded the Music Mark status for 2024-2025. This recognition celebrates our commitment to ensuring that pupils at our school have access to a high quality music education and our dedication to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.



SUPPORTING
CONNECTING
INFLUENCING



Spring Music Concert on Wednesday

A reminder that our Spring Music Concert will take place on Wednesday at 4pm to 5pm (invite only), featuring performances from our Whitchurch musicians.

Nursery Places

We have places available for our Nursery intake for September. Please contact the school office if you or someone you know is interested in applying.

Whitchurch Science Week

We shall be holding our Science Week from 31st March to 4th April. More details to follow soon.



Spotlight on Year 3

Year 3 are
learning about
pentatonic
scales in
Music



Whole Class Programme - Pentatonic Music

Year 3 pupils have started learning a pentatonic song this week, which means it is written on a music scale with five notes. During this half term, they are exploring the song's pitch movement using tuned classroom instruments and will further enhance their listening skills. They will develop an understanding of pitch and rhythmic notation while becoming familiar with key musical terms.

Mrs Leutfeld, Director of Music

Year 3 views

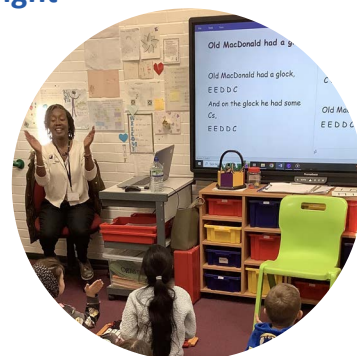
"This week, at the start of the lesson, we learned how to sing a new song and made sure the pitch was correct. Then, we learned how to find three notes on the glockenspiel and worked in pairs. At the end of the lesson, we played the song along with the backing track." Aarna

"In Music this week we sang Old MacDonald and we learned how to play the notes C, D, and E on the glockenspiels. We also read rhythms that were 8 beats long and in 2 bars." Aiswarya

"This week, we began the lesson by singing our solfa notes. We read rhythms using minims, crotchets, and quavers, and we played the glockenspiels." Daniel

"This week in Music, we learned how to clap rhythms at the right tempo and we sang Old MacDonald. We also played three notes on the glockenspiel while singing at the same time." Marian

"This week, we learned a new song and played three notes on the glockenspiels. We each used one beater and took turns when performing together." Aliza



Dates for your Diary

Spring
2nd



Tuesday 11th March	Year 3 VR Volcano Workshop
Wednesday 12th March	Year 3 Art trip to Canons Park Spring Music Concert (4pm)
Thursday 13th March	4PC and 4XL visit to The Science Museum
Friday 14th March	4BS and 4ND visit to The Science Museum 2SA visit to Florence Nightingale Museum
Tuesday 18th March	2DN visit to Florence Nightingale Museum
Wed 19th to Fri 21st March	Year 6 Residential Visit to Danbury
Thursday 20th March	2ST visit to Florence Nightingale Museum
Friday 21st March	2KK visit to Florence Nightingale Museum
Monday 24th March	Year 4 Parents/Carers Workshop - Introduction to Google Classroom (2.30pm-3.15pm)
Tuesday 25th March	Year 5 Ancient Greece Day (with Drama workshop)
Wednesday 26th March	HMS String Festival FoW Celebrate Your Female Hero (3.20pm)
Thursday 27th March	Year 4 and 5 Road Safety Show (2.15pm)
Mon 31st Mar to Fri 4th Apr	Science Week

Spring Class Assemblies

Tuesdays
Reception
to Year 3
(9.05am to
9.45am)

Tues 11th Mar 2KK
Tues 18th Mar 3SH*
Tues 25th Mar 1IN
*rescheduled

Thurs 13th Mar 5TG*
Thurs 20th Mar 4XL
Thurs 1st May 1PD*
*rescheduled

Thursdays
Years 4 to 6
(9.05am to
9.45am)

Whitchurch Star Pupils



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

Tigers Vladimir
Leopards Arya
Lions Navya
Jaguars Jasmine

1RA Saboor
1SM Khushi
1PD Esha
1IN Rohan

2ST Saajan
2KK Matei
2DN Raeya
2SA Austin

Respect
Responsibility
Resilience
Honesty
Generosity
Aspiration

3NL Aasiya
3SH Eliza
3LA Aiman
3SM Krushna

4BS Alessio
4XL Luis
4PC Yashvi
4ND Hasnat

5SK Leon
5SC Kian
5TG Dylan
5RC Melissa M

6HH Emily
6ET Kiana
6HA Prince
6CM Jinay

Attendance Stars

This week's
attendance
stars are 2KK
and 6HH
(100%)

Whole
School
96.4%



Did you know?

15 minutes late
each day equals
two full weeks of
school missed
every year.

Staff

Snapshot



Name: Sunita Hassassing
Role: Admissions and Attendance Administrator



All about me

I was born in Saigon, Vietnam (now known as Ho Chi Minh City). Some might find that exotic, but when I was born, the country was in turmoil. The American occupation and the civil unrest between North and South Vietnam made it a challenging time. My father and his brother ran a textile business there, but when I was seven, we were uprooted - forced to abandon both the business and our beautiful home. We traveled across different parts of Asia in search of a new home. It was a terrifying experience but at that age I was mostly excited about being on a plane!

I was fortunate to travel to many countries with my parents and enjoyed the thrill of staying in hotels and ordering room service - those were the highlights of my trips! Life in the Far East was incredible and the food was absolutely outstanding. In 1979, my father made the decision to settle in London, and once again, we packed up and moved. I have lived here ever since, continuing my education and earning a BTEC in Business, an Honours Degree in Business Studies and part qualification in CIMA (Accounting).

Hobbies and interests

I love travelling and exploring different cuisines. I enjoy listening to music, going to concerts and the theatre. I also love watching thrillers and courtroom dramas. Lately, I've been obsessed with medical dramas! Spending time with family and friends is very important to me and I adore my three 'grand' nieces and nephew. I have a strong passion for fitness and enjoy going to the gym regularly - it helps me stay active and clear my mind.

Best part of my role

No two days are ever the same! I get to meet so many parents and children and help them settle into school life. It's incredibly rewarding to know that I can make a difference, even in small ways. I also love being part of such a supportive and hardworking team - there's never a dull moment!

Support for Families



Using Technology to Boost Reading Skills

World Book Day this week has offered a perfect time to celebrate the joy of reading and explore how technology can support literacy. The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy.

To help struggling readers, many digital platforms offer tools that enhance readability by making text more accessible and engaging.

Please refer to the poster attached to this newsletter for ten top tips on how they can help young readers engage in text and foster a love for reading.



Hope Harrow Online Workshops

- Parenting for Separated Parents - Tuesdays, 18th March to 6th May
- Living with Teens - Wednesday 19th and 26th March
- Gaining Family Cooperation - Monday 28th April
- Setting Limits Defining Boundaries - Monday 12th May

[View leaflets here](#)

Harrow Parent Carer Forum EHCP Coffee Morning
Friday 14th March, 10am-12pm
Old Lyonians Sports and Social Club, 74 Pinner View, North Harrow, HA1 4QF

This is a great opportunity for parents and carers to find out about the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) process.

Support for Families



Schools
Counselling
Partnership



Children and Anxiety

All children feel anxious and worried at times. This is a normal part of their development, as they learn to develop survival strategies when faced with challenges. They are often more likely to show you their anxiety in different ways: tummy aches, needing lots of cuddles and reassurance, struggling to go to sleep, loss of appetite, fidgety/finding it hard to settle, are some examples. Anxiety in children tends to be more prevalent around night time, changes/transitions/separation from you or around exam time in school.

Talk to your child about anxiety and help them understand what is happening in their body. 'Hey Warrior' is a wonderful picture book that can help you with this. Help them recognise the signs so they can tell when they are feeling anxious and can ask for help.

Explain that this feeling will pass, like a wave that peaks before it gets smaller. When their worries creep up, help them take deep breaths and do this together. Sometimes a cuddle can also help to soothe. Invite them to find a safe, happy place in their mind they can go to when feeling anxious. Your child can either keep a Worry Book where they can write or draw anxious thoughts or put them into a Worry Box. Exercise and movement, as well as a healthy diet, will help to reduce the stress hormones in their bodies. It is also important to keep your child away from violent or scary content on screens. Finally, work on developing positive thinking together and think of what they can DO when they feel anxious. Make a list and hang it up on the fridge!

Reach Out - Schools Counselling Partnership

Sometimes we could all do with someone to talk to. If you would like to meet Tom for a confidential and non-judgemental chat about you, your child, or any other worries, he is available on **Wednesdays at 9-10am**.

You can call/text Tom on **07799 028 461** or email him at **tom@schoolscounsellingpartnership.co.uk**



Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absences

2024
updates:
what you
need to
know

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for unauthorised absences that occur after 19th August 2024.

5 consecutive days of Term Time Leave

Fines
will be
issued
for:

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days *(or for fewer days where this has happened before)*.

10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10 week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered where there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10 week period.

Fines
will be
issued
to:

Each parent/carer - for each child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent/carer, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent/carer receiving 3 separate fines.



First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

**£160 per parent/carer,
per child when paid
within 28 days.**

***(reduced to £80 per
parent/carer, per child
if paid within 21 days)***

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

**£160 per parent/carer,
per child when paid
within 28 days.**

***(no option to pay
at £80 level)***

Third Offence (and any further offences within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. the case will proceed to the Magistrates' court.

***Magistrate's fines can
be up to £2,500 per
parent/carer, per child.***

Please refer to our **Attendance and Punctuality Policy** and speak with the school if you are thinking of taking your child out of school during term time. You will need to make a written request to take your child out of school and any leave of absence will need to be agreed by the Headteacher before it is given.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practices are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Iowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, Neuroteachers, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



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