

Headteacher's Blog – Another Action-Packed Week!

It's been a lively and purposeful start to June at Woodlands, full of opportunities for learning, growth and connection across our school community (not to mention Mrs Liversey, Miss Skillen and I have been consumed by recruitment, recruitment, recruitment for our ever-expanding school community and have successfully recruited 5 early years TAs just this afternoon!!!).

We began the week with a burst of colour and creativity as our Year 3 and 4 children took part in their long-awaited Art Morning. Dressed in their own 'mess-friendly' clothes, the children immersed themselves in expressive and imaginative activities. It was a joy to see such enthusiasm and pride in their work, we certainly have some budding artists in our midst, something that fills Mr Barnes with immense joy!

A special assembly on Monday focused on our KS2 Young Carers, offering support and recognition for the incredible resilience shown by pupils who take on additional responsibilities at home. As always, we are committed to making sure every child feels seen and supported.

This week also marked the arrival of several PGCE placement students from Chester University. As a large school, and one that is ALWAYS welcoming a range of students from lots of backgrounds, we welcomed 3 into to our KS1 classrooms in Years 1 and 2, along with a secondary trainee spending time with our Year 6 cohort. It's fantastic to play a part in shaping future teachers, and we know our children always benefit from the fresh energy and ideas they bring.

The Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check (MTC) is now in full swing and after a full week, we have heard nothing but success stories from Paul (our resident maths specialist). We will continue into next week and by Friday we will have squared it all away (see what I did there?). We are proud of how calmly and confidently the children have approached this, genuinely, tests where the response time is 6 seconds and the answers must be produced on the computer can cause huge anxiety for children – not least because when they make a typing error, they may not always have time to correct it and this means that whilst they may know the times table, they are marked 'wrong' which causes them huge distress... Several key meetings this week have also supported Year 6 transitions to secondary school, ensuring that all pupils have the smoothest possible pathway ahead.

Our school halls have been filled with song and celebration this week, with a range of singing assemblies across key stages and our regular celebration assembly recognising pupil achievements. Thursday brought a real highlight with the Mad Science United Utilities H₂O Assemblies, giving Years 2-6 an engaging look at water, sustainability, and science in action. I was interviewing in Mrs Liversey's office and heard a KS1 child exclaim excitedly, 'ITS MAD SCIENCE!!!' which made my day (as did appointing Mrs Davies as the new Hedgehogs room lead, Mrs Plage as the new Squirrels room lead, and Mrs Jones as the new deputy room lead across both nursery classes today!)

Alongside all of that, enrichment clubs (including Digital Wizards, Guitar Lessons, and the invitation-only Passion for Learning Club) offered additional excitement and enrichment after school.

Today was a particularly action-packed day, thanks to the visit from 'Steel' (AKA Zack George) from the Gladiators team, who brought challenge, fun, and a great dose of active learning to children across the school (not to mention a bit of hysteria to the staff room) – not sure what all the fuss was about, really, he took one look at my guns and went home at lunchtime.... That said, he focussed on topics close to my own heart with health and fitness and lifestyle and the children really bought into it. 2DR also took their learning outdoors, while other groups explored reading during library visits or worked on emotional wellbeing in Mind and Mood sessions.

Across the week, our leadership and pastoral teams were deeply engaged in shortlisting and interviewing for our EY positions, conducting SEND reviews, and holding meetings with professionals and families to ensure every child gets the support they need to thrive. The week closed with a celebration event at Forest Hills for our TILs, Mrs Morphet and Mrs Cotton - a wonderful way to recognise their efforts and achievements.

We were also fortunate to receive a 'Bleed control kit', to be accessed from our school, from some children from Whitby High in connection with Blades Down. These kits are designed to provide vital, life-saving equipment in the event of a catastrophic bleed and are intended to be accessible in emergencies while awaiting the arrival of emergency services. They are an important tool in improving community safety and preparedness, and their presence in schools can make a significant difference.

As we move further into the summer term, it's heartening to see so many examples of our school values in action, whether it's through creativity, resilience, care or celebration. Thank you to our staff for their continued dedication and to our families for their ongoing support.

Wishing everyone a restful and a good (even if not sunny, then a not-too-rainy) weekend 🌻
Dr Carr