

We're in the home stretch of the academic year now - and my goodness, what a busy, brilliant week it's been! As we tumble towards the final few weeks of term, the school is alive with transition events, joyful outdoor learning, teddy bear picnics (some very soggy, well-loved teddies might have arrived home!) and a flurry of final preparations, including annual reports, which Mrs Liversey has been proof reading off site.

On a personal level, I remain so grateful for the continued outpouring of support following my son's diagnosis - your kindness continues to lift me daily and as he heads towards surgery and chemotherapy it will matter even more. It's in moments like these that I am most aware of the extraordinary strength of our school community. Thank you.

🧸 Teddy Bears, Storytime and Sunshine (almost!)

Our youngest learners have had the most magical week. Foxes and Squirrels enjoyed a delightful (and dry, thankfully!) Teddy Bear Picnic, while Reception children were whisked away into the world of storytelling with their own teddy-themed sessions. These memory-making moments are so precious - they build a love of school, a love of stories, and a sense of joy that carries children into the summer holidays with hearts full of happiness, eager to return to us in September.

🌻 Celebrating Staff Success and Professional Growth

One of the absolute joys of headship is championing the professional growth of staff, something I have enjoyed now in 2 schools over 13 years. At Woodlands, we believe wholeheartedly in being a learning organisation - one where continuous development is valued just as highly for adults as it is for children. I am immensely proud of every team member who commits time, energy and passion into furthering their skills - often while juggling the demands of daily school life. This week, we are thrilled to celebrate Mr Bowles, who has officially achieved his Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) qualification. This is a huge achievement and a testament to his dedication, talent, and the vital role he plays across our school. Mr Bowles, we are so proud of you - thank you for all that you do for our children and staff every single day. He joins a fabulous team of HLTAs and we could not manage without them.

🧸 Squirrels Shine in ITERS Inspection

Earlier this week, we welcomed inspectors from the Local Authority for an ITERS assessment of our Squirrels room - an internationally recognised tool originating in the United States, used to evaluate the quality of provision in early years settings. The team were simply outstanding. Our LA inspectors, who visited as part of Cheshire West's quality assurance cycle, were so absorbed and delighted by what they saw that they lost track of time - a rare and glowing endorsement in itself! The warmth, engagement and richness of the learning environment left a lasting impression, and we were incredibly proud to hear we had scored extremely highly overall. With just a few minor tweaks - adding a few more multicultural resources (we had 6 or 7, but needed 10), ensuring musical instruments are available both indoors and outdoors, and bringing a little more indoor nature (think plants or living creatures!) into the room - we would have been on track for full marks. Huge congratulations to our amazing Early Years team - your passion, planning and love for our little learners shines through in all you do and we cannot wait to extend this to our babies next term in Hedgehogs.

🔄 Transitions Begin

This week marked the start of our whole-school transition programme. Over two days, pupils from Foxes to Year 5 spent time in their new classes, meeting teachers and beginning to build familiarity with the spaces and routines they'll step into in September. Because of the way we routinely work, children will have visited many of the places they formally saw over the course of the year anyway, but it was nice to mark the event! Alongside this, our new to Acorns, Squirrels and Foxes families joined us for settling-in sessions - thank you to all who came with warmth and enthusiasm. We're so excited to welcome you properly in the autumn.

Our Y2 pupils also continued their library visits and joined KS2 celebration assemblies (they came over to visit me in my office on Tuesday afternoon just to see where all my 'busy work' happens!) - small but significant rites of passage that help prepare them for their next chapter on the junior site.

For our Year 6 children, the journey to secondary school is well underway too - many attended transition days at Whitby High School, and a few had additional bespoke visits earlier in the week. During a visit to Whitby High School on Thursday morning, Mrs Liversey saw our Y6 children lining up in their new Y7 forms and they all shared that they were having a great day and were, in fact, loving it! These are big moments, and we're here every step of the way to guide and encourage. As a parent of young adults, I have been there, I know how challenging transitions can be, across all aspects of life, but when your children are with us, we can ensure they are emotionally secure as they undertake these transitions, ready for the time they go to secondary school and that is no longer a part of the school day for them, as they may well expect full independence.

Hot Chocolate Friday - A Sweet Ending

This morning saw me catching up with our fabulous pupils across the junior site for our final Hot Chocolate Friday of the year - often a highlight in my week. I was delighted to hear that we have pupils going to England netball finals, dancing competitions, football competitions, sleepovers (or, as I like to call them, 'no sleep overs'), birthday parties and the school fair. The children were surprised I was actually planning to have a day off on Sunday, the first in months, and told me it was due to rain when I said I planned some gardening... It was the perfect way to end the academic year, full of smiles, celebration, and proud moments. To every child who's joined me or Mrs Liversey for hot chocolate over the year - thank you for being wonderful, and for reminding us of all the reasons we love doing this job. Fear not, Mrs Liversey will catch up with KS1 hot chocolate winners next week!

A Week of Report Writing Ahead

Next week, talking about all the reasons why I love doing this job, with the exception of Tuesday, when we have our governor meeting and annual review, I'll be working from home for much of the time as I dive into reading, reviewing and commenting on every single annual report! It's one of the most important and enjoyable tasks of my year - a chance to reflect on each child's journey, celebrate their progress, and ensure that families receive reports that truly capture their child and the magic and hard work of this school year.

Outdoor Adventures

1LW, 1AA and 2PB all enjoyed dedicated outdoor learning sessions this week, the sense of freedom, teamwork and exploration has been a joy to witness. Our outdoor curriculum continues to be a cornerstone of what makes learning here so rich and diverse and I was on the infant site this morning looking at how we can further develop the site for our key stage one learners in the coming year.

Welcome to the Team: PGCEs and Work Experience

We welcomed into school our newest teacher for the growing RP, Miss Williams, and also had the pleasure of welcoming Mr Price, a new teacher joining us in Y5. Additionally, some younger work experience students have also brought fresh energy into our classrooms this week. We love hosting the next generation of educators and showing them what a vibrant school community can look like in practice!

Works in Progress...

The site is still abuzz with building activity as works continue on both the Resourced Provision and Hedgehogs' interior and exterior spaces – the teams we work with are exceptional and SO creative. These improvements will play a vital role in providing calm, sensory-friendly environments for some of our most vulnerable pupils - and we are so excited to share the finished product soon. It also gives me inspiration for the next project...

Systems and Safety

Behind the scenes, our admin and leadership teams have been deep into the ongoing cybersecurity overhaul and continued preparations for nursery registration. It's complex, time-consuming, and (if we're honest) not always glamorous work, true of much of what our office team and I do - but it's absolutely essential stuff. Thank you to the team for staying patient and persistent in the face of red tape and ever-evolving guidance, and for managing my high expectations, and exceeding them, so diligently.

Communication Reminder

As ever, a gentle reminder that this is a demanding time of year for all staff. We appreciate every kind word and thoughtful message, but do ask that families keep communication appropriate and manageable. Staff are working tirelessly to ensure a smooth end to term - your understanding and kindness is, as always, hugely appreciated.

Don't Forget: Summer Fair This Saturday!

A final drum roll... our PTA Summer Fair is TOMORROW! From 11am to 2pm, the school site will be transformed into a hub of fun, stalls, laughter, and (hopefully) sunshine. It's a highlight of the calendar and a fabulous way to celebrate the year with friends and family. We can't wait to see you there - with your pennies ready, and your best summer smiles on (despite any minor weather issues we may encounter)!

Thank you for being part of our wonderful school community. Let's keep riding the wave towards the finish line - we're all nearly there.

Warm wishes,
Dr Carr