

It has been another action-packed week here at Woodlands, full of exciting learning opportunities, specialist support, and staff development. As always, I'm struck by the balance between the serious work we do to safeguard and support children, the learning, the training and the joyful experiences that make school life so memorable.

### **Enrichment and extra-curricular life**

The week began with our before school Archery Club - a brilliant way for juniors to start their day focused and energised. Academic clubs have also been in full swing, with reading, writing, phonics, maths, and times tables running across all year groups. The success of these last year was unprecedented and we are delighted to invest in them again this year. Year 6 pupils have shown particular commitment, arriving early for additional maths and English practice before the bell! Who doesn't love maths and English???

Year 3 continued with their judo sessions midweek, which are proving a big hit, and after-school clubs have been buzzing with activities like table tennis, tag rugby, football, and even guitar lessons. These opportunities help children discover new passions and develop valuable skills beyond the classroom.

'Mystery Reader' returned to Year 2, much to the delight of the children - thank you to all who have supported, continue to support, and plan on supporting this wonderful initiative. Year 5 were off on their library visits, another cornerstone of our commitment to building confident, enthusiastic readers, and swimming also continues to ensure our children are water-competent.

### **Specialist support and inclusion**

Throughout the week, we welcomed several external professionals into school. Speech and language therapists worked with children across different year groups, an amazing service that really helps us support our children who need a little extra help with communication. Year 1 pupils had their hearing tested – when my own daughter was in the infants and they tested hearing it was discovered that she had a small issue with hers so these screening sessions are invaluable. Staff also engaged in epilepsy training and paediatric first aid, ensuring that we remain well-prepared to support children's health and wellbeing and make the home-school transitions seamless.

Today, colleagues from across our early years team came together to review and plan for our newest room, our baby room, Hedgehogs! Although we have spent time with them 'settling in', and our LA early years advisor was literally blown away by our setting, we now need to use the knowledge we have of them as individuals and make provision for that individualised experience. Progression, building on super strong foundations and making school a wonderful environment for children to develop (and subsequently learn!) is what we are in the business of. Welcoming babies into our school family is such a special part of our journey, and theirs, and it was wonderful to see so much care and thought given to supporting them and all of this led by our Early Years Assistant Head, Miss Skillen, and the room lead, Mrs Davies.

### **Staff development and leadership**

Professional development has remained strong this week, with staff training in areas such as safeguarding, science leadership, and subject leadership time focused on action planning and ensuring our website stays up to date for you to access and engage with. We also joined Ofsted webinars to stay ahead of national developments, a parent-friendly version of which I will share in the coming week, and some colleagues attended the Cultural Learning Exchange at Theatre Porto to strengthen our creative partnerships. Mrs Liversey, Mrs Morphet, Miss Gittins and I met with the Resourced Provision team on Wednesday after school and planned for a great deal of work across the classes there, also – the RP is an incredibly rewarding aspect of our school and we all take a keen interest in supporting the staff who work with our most vulnerable learners. I am

grateful to Miss O'Hara for leading the provision so well and for mentoring our newly qualified teaching staff, who are absolutely passionate about special educational needs and simply love their roles in the RP.

### **A reminder about filming on school grounds**

I must also remind parents and carers that filming on school grounds when children are present is not permitted. We all have a duty to protect children, and that includes ensuring they are not filmed or photographed without their parents' or carers' permission, and definitely NOT shared outside of school. For their protection and safety, please respect this important safeguarding measure - it's about keeping all children safe, and this is something we should be proactively supporting as a community.

### **Vandalism on the junior site**

Sadly, I need to address something that is both disappointing and frustrating. Within just a few days of being back at school, we are already dealing with broken toilets and taps on the junior site. I know that not one parent ever thinks their child is capable of such behaviour, and many would defend them to the hilt, but the truth is there is at least one child actively breaking school property. That child could be yours. Seats have been pulled off, taps wrenched out, and, most shockingly, excrement smeared on walls. This is not only unhygienic but deeply disrespectful to the whole school community, and also diverts funds that could be spent elsewhere on our children.

David, one half of our hardworking site team, is currently on his own until Pete returns and is struggling to manage even routine jobs because of the constant call-outs to vandalism. This must stop - our school belongs to all of us, and children need to learn that damaging it only affects themselves and their peers. Can I please ask you all to reinforce the fact that children can use the toilet, it is a human right, but they should only be using it, washing their hands and returning to lessons. We do not have spare staff to monitor corridors or police toilets – they are teaching and working with children. We rely on home and school messaging to children being consistent and expectations being clear and this is something we need your help with.

### **Parking – again!**

Finally, a word about parking. I know this is tedious, and I also know that many parents will roll their eyes and say “it's only for a minute,” but the reality is that parking across junctions, on double yellow lines, on the zig-zags outside school, across our entrance, or over residents' driveways is antisocial, inconsiderate, and, frankly, unacceptable. It is both lazy and it is dangerous. Please take a few extra minutes to park safely and walk - it really is not too much to ask, and it sets the right example for our children. It also means we won't get an inordinate amount of emails and complaints from residents and fellow parents, taking up valuable admin time, and it won't put your children, and those of other people, at risk.

### **Closing thoughts**

All in all, this has been a week of real breadth and balance - academic rigour, creative enrichment, external expertise, and professional growth all woven together to make Woodlands the thriving, caring place it is. But safeguarding, respect for one another, and care for our environment remain at the core of everything we do. Thank you, as always, for your support in making our school such a special community.

Warm regards,  
Dr Victoria Carr  
Headteacher