



Whiteshill Weekly News

We are curious, we are unique, we are together, we are Whiteshill!

www.whiteshillschool.co.uk

admin@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk

Tel: 01453 762 949

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Although we have already been back for a week, the children have already been so busy across the curriculum. We started the term as we always do with a science week answering the following enquiry questions:

Elm Class – Can you grow a plant anywhere?

Maple class – Can plants grow in the desert?

Oak class – Can I turn my toast back in to bread?

The children have been learning and applying new vocabulary, carrying out controlled experiments, making scientific observations, asking and answering questions and most importantly of course – being **curious!** Their writing in English over the next two weeks will be linked to this scientific learning as well, embedding and applying what they know to make their writing effective and ensure it is full of the new technical vocabulary they have learnt. Maple class are writing up their experiment in which they looked at whether temperature affects the rate of transpiration in plants, Elm class are writing up their experiment as well, planting in different places to see if this affects how plants grow. Oak class are writing a letter in character from one professor to another, explaining what they now know about reversible and irreversible changes!

To complement the work in Elm and Maple class on plant life, Mr Pritchard has started up gardening sessions this term as part of our science curriculum. This is something which we began doing pre-covid, but unfortunately it had to go on hold. We are keen to start it up again though and this term we will be clearing out the beds again ready for planting and Mr Pritchard has planned some preparatory activities and planting which can be done at this stage of the year, in line with the plans which were very kindly put in place by one of our parents, Mrs Blackhall, prior to the lockdowns. Each year group will have an afternoon of gardening with Mr Pritchard this half term to get the ball rolling again.

Our main theme this term is 'We are historians...' and the children in Elm, Maple and Oak will be finding out about different periods in history over the next few weeks. Elm class are focusing on 'Houses and Homes', particularly how they have developed over time and throughout history. Maple class are learning all about Britain's settlement by Anglo Saxons, Scots and Vikings and Oak class will be studying Greek life including their achievements and influence on the western world.

Willow class have had an exciting start to the spring term too, following the children's interests in their busy learning time. The children have really been intrigued to find out about birds at the moment so they have an area in the classroom all set up to explore birdwatching. They have been looking in detail at birds and hearing their different calls and have sketched some beautiful pictures too, really thinking about the detail they were including. They also had an exciting time at the start of term when they found some ice in their outdoor area which they loved exploring. They were excited to look at the patterns and see how cold it was! They talked about why the ice had formed and worked out that it had come from water. They also painted the ice and added glitter to make it really shiny and beautiful.

Author Visit – Lucy Hope

A reminder that on Monday 17th January I have arranged for a real life author to come and visit the school! Her name is Lucy Hope and her debut novel 'Fledgling' was released in November, published by Nosy Crow – you might have seen it in the shops! It is definitely for an older audience, so is aimed at children of 9+ and has some darker themes.

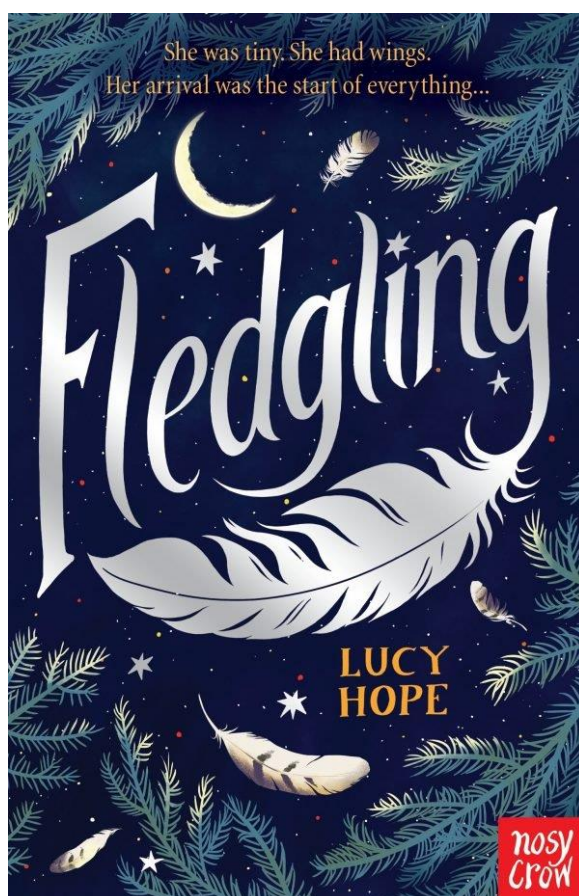
Lucy will be doing an assembly for the whole school, talking about being an author and writing and reading – we are hoping this will be inspirational for all the children and an exciting chance to meet someone who writes for a living and ask her questions!

After break, Lucy will then hold a creative writing workshop with Oak Class and they will have chance to talk in more detail to her about her book and what it is like to be an author. They can also bring in their book to get it signed if they have a copy. I have also bought some copies for the Oak class classroom so don't worry if you are not able to purchase one.

Her novel, Fledgling, is a gothic adventure set deep in a Bavarian forest, with angels and owls and magic and a boy who isn't all that he seems to be...

It can be brought from Amazon and local bookshops too – Yellow Lighted Bookshop in Nailsworth have been stocking copies as Lucy is a local author.

Here is a link to the Nosy Crow website with more information about the story and a link to buy if you would like to: <https://nosycrow.com/product/fledgling/>



E-safety Day

You may have seen on Facebook some photographs of our fantastic e-safety day last week. Stay Safe Workshops came and worked with all the children in school. The teachers also carried on the theme in Elm, Maple and Oak class throughout the day, really refreshing their knowledge of how to stay safe online. Richard from Stay Safe Workshops was, as always, incredibly complimentary about our children and their approach to the learning and he was really impressed with how much they have learnt and retained. It is so important that we keep it at the forefront of their minds as they grow and refresh these messages each year.

Useful information from Stay Safe for parents about how to keep your children safe online can be found [here](#).

Website Gallery

I have added some photographs to the school website of the Elm and Maple class' wonderful Design and Technology projects from before Christmas. Elm class made their own vehicles, learning how to use tools safely and how to make a basic mechanism for a moving vehicle. You can see from the photographs how careful and sensible they are being with the saws – such an important skill. Maple class designed night lights with the children in Willow Class as their audience. They interviewed Willow class first to find out what they would like in the designs. They put a huge amount of care and attention in to the designing and making of their night lights and they really are so fantastic – you can see the effort they have put in shining through. Having a real audience for their work really seemed to focus them on making a top quality final product. On top of this, Mr Wilson, one of our grandparents in school who already gives his time to run coding club each week, came in and supported Miss Davis by teaching the children about Microbits so that they could control their nightlights through computer programming! It was a very special project and we are sure the children have learnt an awful lot by working through the process and solving their own problems. We can't send these home but if you would like to see your child's nightlight up close, please do ask and you can pop up to the classroom at the end of the school day at some point. In Oak class, the children's D&T project was designing prototypes for a bird hide that they could build up in forest school. They learnt all about safe and strong structures and how they could scale up their models to real-life! The life size bird hides they built in their forest school sessions were fantastic by the end of the project and again, they learnt a lot from problem solving and working together to think their ideas through.

Clubs

Club letters will go out early next week for this term so please make sure you return them as soon as possible to ensure your child gets a place in the club that they are keen to join. Clubs will start up again in the week commencing Monday 24th January.

Wellbeing Monday!

A reminder that this coming Monday, 17th January, we will be asking the children to come in to school wearing whatever makes them happy!! (See last week's newsletter for more detail). They are welcome to wear whatever they like (as long as it is appropriate and practical!). It could just be comfy jeans and their favourite jumper or maybe they had a new dress or a sports kit for Christmas they want to show off, or perhaps dressing up as Spiderman is the thing that makes them happy. Bright colours, hats, bells, hairbands with wiggly things on (!) whatever brings them joy!

COVID-19 Change of Guidance

On Tuesday, the government put a temporary pause on confirmatory PCR tests. As a reminder, you are only asked to take a follow up PCR test after a positive LFD test if you:

- wish to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment
- have been advised to take a PCR test because you are in a clinically vulnerable group
- have been advised to do so as part of a research or surveillance programme
- have received a positive day 2 LFD after arriving into the UK

If anyone has any of the main symptoms of COVID-19, they are strongly advised to take a PCR test, not an LFD test. If someone with symptoms has already taken an LFD test for any reason and the result is positive, they do not need to take a follow-up PCR test.

This week in assembly...

This week we have read some more stories which relate to our school values, 'We are curious, we are unique, we are together, we are Whiteshill'.

For We are curious, we read 'Ada Twist, Scientist' by Andrea Beaty which is all about a very curious little girl who wants to become a scientist.

We are unique was a book called 'Shine' by Sarah Asuquo which showed us the importance of celebrating what makes us all different to each other as well as the power of saying sorry and forgiveness.

We are together was one of my favourites, 'The Smeds and The Smoos' by Julia Donaldson which has a fantastic message about coming together and listening to and appreciating each other, no matter where we come from.

You can listen to all three stories with your children by clicking on the links below if you would like to share them together, however, please do be aware that these videos are on YouTube.

