



Whiteshill Weekly News

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

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21/01/22

Lunchtime Clubs

Last week, our wonderful group of year 6 children began running lunchtime clubs. They offer a range of clubs across the week available to all the children in the school who can just go along and join on the day if they would like to. The clubs have proved extremely popular and it has been so lovely to see children across the school playing and learning together, led by our very capable and responsible year 6 children. I could not be prouder of how seriously they have taken the task and how much effort they have put in to planning each club, for the benefit of the other children in school. They have even made individualised certificates for each club which will be presented in celebration assembly each week – you might have seen one coming home for your child already to reward for their effort and enthusiasm during the sessions. The clubs on offer are as follows:

Monday – Football and Drawing

Tuesday – Yo-Yo and Dance

Wednesday – Lego

Thursday – Scoop (a fun ball game)

Friday – Skipping

Thank you year 6 for giving your time and infectious enthusiasm to this task. There are lots of photos on the school website gallery and at the end of the newsletter where you can see what fun the children have been having together.

School Council

I was lucky enough to run our first school council meeting last week. They will be taking place every half term in the afternoon. In between, the children will have tasks to carry out either at home or in lunch or break times to work towards their objectives. I was really pleased with their approach to the opportunity and I'm sure they are going to have a real impact on the school. The two key areas that that council wanted to influence this year are how the school can become eco-friendlier and to have some input into after school and lunchtime clubs going forwards. We voted in co-chairs and a secretary to run the meetings and they did a fantastic job of assigning everyone with tasks to complete before the next meeting in order to further their mission! You may have noticed some shiny badges coming home if your child is in school council. They can wear these each day in to school so that the other children know who their representatives are. I look forward to meeting with them again soon.

Lucy Hope – Author Visit

It was a real treat on Monday to have an author come and speak to all the children. I hope that they found the experience interesting and inspirational. She led an assembly where she talked through the process of writing a book from idea to finish – it was fascinating to hear all about the research and the sketching and note-taking which brings the story, settings and characters together to form a book!

After break, Lucy ran a creative writing workshop for Oak class where they talked about creating atmosphere and wrote their own spooky stories. There are some extracts from some of their stories below...I think you'll agree they have definitely got the idea of using language and sentence structure to create atmosphere. Well done Oak class.

'I felt the cold, wet fog touch my skin. I stepped in further, the floor boards creaked. The hairs on my skin shot up.'

'I stepped in to the cold, narrow corridor and heard nothing but the heartbeat of the Grandfather clock.'

'I ran my hand over one of the old oak cabinets and a thick layer of dust transfers on to my fingers.'

'My breath caught in my throat; something in the shadowy corner had moved. I froze.'

'I whistled a tune. A low howl answered back, deeper and sorrier than distant thunder.'

'My fingers shivered like the water around me, my breath lingered in front of me.'

I know that many of the children purchased Lucy's book before the visit, but if you did not have chance and your child would like to get a signed copy (please be aware the book is recommended for children aged 9 and above) then you can order one from the office and Lucy will sign one for your child through school. You will just need to bring £7.99 cash to the school office and fill out an order form which will be out in reception for you to collect. Lucy will sign the book to whoever you name on the form.

Finally, Lucy has given us the opportunity to name one of her owls! Owls play a really important role in her book *Fledgling* and as it is her debut novel, she has one owl in particular that she uses in a lot in her online presence on Instagram etc. You can see him or her in the photo below! Sadly, the owl doesn't have a name yet so she has asked the children of Whiteshill to name him! The winner will receive a signed copy of *Fledgling*. We will do this in school with the children in Oak class next week and if anyone else would like to take part, there will be a sheet on the table in the reception area so your child can come up at any time to add their idea for an owl name and enter the competition. One entry per child please. Oak class children, get thinking over the weekend!



Skip Trip

We have some items in school which are broken and need to be disposed of! Two tables and two chairs. It is not enough to justify a skip, but at the same time we need to get them off school property! We just wondered if there is anybody who has a van or pick-up of any kind that would be happy to take them to the skip for us?! Let us know in the school office if you can help. Thank you.

PGL Deadline

Our next suggested deadline for Oak class' PGL payment is £75 before the 31st January. Please see original letter for details of how to pay. If you are not sure, please do talk to Mrs Angove who will be able to help you.

School Development

It has been a busy start to the term for staff working on our school development plan for the year and I wanted to share with you what they have all been up to.

Mrs Cripps, our English subject lead went to visit another school in DGAT who have an exciting new spelling scheme they are trialling at the moment. We are looking at how we teach spelling across the school and it was great to get some ideas and feedback on their system so that this can feedback in to the development of our own teaching in this area.

Mrs Porter, our History subject lead and Mrs Clarke, our Design and Technology subject lead, have had time out of class recently to monitor their subjects and find out about all the fantastic work that is going on each class, planning next steps and checking that the children are remembering in the long term what we have taught them. Mrs McKay has supported the teachers with their planning in her role as Science subject lead and will be carrying out monitoring of this subject in the coming weeks.

Miss Davis is busy completing her Early Career Teacher training programme which she completes each Monday afternoon, working online and in person to develop her knowledge and pedagogy. This is a course that all teachers new to the job complete in their first year.

Mrs Colman started her very exciting SEND qualification last week. This is a qualification which all SEN coordinators have to complete in the first three years of taking on the role. It is a professional qualification which she will do through the University of Gloucestershire. In order for her to concentrate on this, I will be taking over the day to running of the SENCo role for the spring and summer term. This will be a lot of hard work for Mrs Colman but she is really excited to develop her knowledge and skills even further which will of course benefit all of the children back at Whiteshill.

I'm also excited to share that Mrs Whalley has begun her qualification to become an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant). This involves training which she will complete across the year and which will allow her to be qualified to support children in school who have social, emotional and mental health needs. It is a nationally recognised qualification and is something we have been wanting to do for some time, but unfortunately the training was not available due to COVID-19. We look forward to developing this area of our SEND provision further as she moves through the course.

Important Parking Information

A message from local residents:

It has been established that the lay-by just up the road from the school is private land owned by the adjacent property. Over the Christmas break, a single parking bay has been marked out on the road surface. This is reserved private parking and NOT for public use, so please do not park there. A single vehicle parked does not block the sight lines of vehicles leaving the property, and the empty space created across the driveway provides an additional passing space for vehicles using the road, both of which are important safety improvements to this busy section of road. Thank you.

FoWS Working Party – Whitestock

The Friends of Whiteshill School are already thinking ahead for the summer term! In previous years, FoWS have held a large fundraising event in the summer term known as 'Whitestock'. It involved music, entertainment, food, drink and fun! Many of you will remember the event from previous years. As you can imagine, this is a huge event to put on and it takes a lot of hard work and time behind the scenes. So far, with our new Friends of Whiteshill School team, they have had to work hard to run events with a small group of people and it will simply not be possible to run Whitestock with just the core group involved.

Therefore, the Friends would like to ask you to get on board if you would like Whitestock to go ahead this coming summer. If you want to be part of organising this event, please email friendsofwhiteshillschool@outlook.com to let them know that you are happy to be part of a working party who will work together to organise and put together Whitestock both in the coming months and on the day of the event. At February half term, the Friends will make a decision about whether the event can go ahead or not, depending on how much support there is and how many people are available to help.

If Whitestock does end up not taking place, don't worry, they have lots of other exciting ideas for how we can fundraise and get together as a community in the summer months which you will be able to get involved with.

Forest School volunteers

Thank you very much for everyone who has given their time so far this term to visit forest school with the children each week. We cannot run these sessions without parent volunteers as the safety ratios for adults to children are of course very important, particular as we are walking along a road and up in the woods with the children. In the last few weeks, for Willow class in particular, we have been low on volunteers so if you are able to, please do put your name down in the lobby for any weeks that you can do. Even if it is the odd week or a one-off, it all helps! Thank you.

COVID-19 Update

I'm pleased to say that we have no further cases of COVID-19 in school since I last updated you earlier in the week. We send our very best wishes to those who have been affected. You'll be pleased to hear that luckily, there symptoms so far have been mild.

I wanted to make you aware of recent updates to COVID-19 guidance from the government:

Pause on Confirmatory PCR Tests

As I mentioned last week, the government has 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.

Changes to the self-isolation period for those who test positive for COVID-19

Since Monday 17 January, people who are self-isolating with COVID-19 now have the option to reduce their isolation period after 5 full days if they test negative with a lateral flow device (LFD) tests on both day 5 and day 6 and they do not have a temperature. For example, if they test negative on the morning of day 5 and the morning of day 6, they can return to their education or childcare setting immediately on day 6.

The first test must be taken no earlier than day 5 of the self-isolation period, and the second must be taken the following day. All test results should be [reported to NHS Test and Trace](#).

If the result of either of their tests is positive, they should continue to self-isolate until they get negative results from two LFD tests on consecutive days or until they have completed 10 full days of self-isolation, whichever is earliest.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests or anyone who continues to have a temperature will need to complete the full 10-day period of self-isolation.

Further [information on self-isolation for those with COVID-19](#) is available.

Yoga Bugs Free Online Offer

Gloucestershire County Council have an offer for families who can claim a FREE eCode to access YogaBugs Virtual - Healthy Screen time for the whole family throughout January & February 2022.

What is it?

YogaBugs virtual gives online access to hundreds of yoga & well-being videos for the whole family to take part in from the comfort of your own home! <https://yogabugs.com/parent-form/> to watch a short video to find out why it's a great option for families!

Why sign up?

- It is FREE!
- It takes less than 60 seconds to sign up.
- Help families feel calm, increase your child's confidence & help get your family active over the cold winter months.
- Suitable for children with SEND.

How to gain access?

Visit: <https://yogabugsvirtual.com/my-account/>

Click on parents, enter the unique eCode **gloucestershire-1361** and follow the simple registration (it takes less than 60 seconds!) Enjoy YogaBugs at home!



Lunchtime Club Fun! More photos at www.whiteshillschool.co.uk/gallery



