



Whiteshill Weekly News

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

Spring Term 1 2024

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What a Term!

Wow – what a term it was to welcome in 2024. I can't believe how much my wonderful staff have fit in to just 5 short weeks. When you put it all together for a newsletter it is so lovely to look back and see what the children have achieved in such a short time.

My apologies that the newsletter did not come out just before half term as it should have done. I had a rather intense end to the term with the Ofsted call coming at Longney, the other school which I look after as an Executive Headteacher, in the penultimate week. In the final week I then developed the flu which I'm sure many of you have experienced recently and it hit me for six – luckily, I was able to come back in time to enjoy the helper's tea on the last day of term which was a real treat, but it meant the newsletter had to be delayed on this occasion.

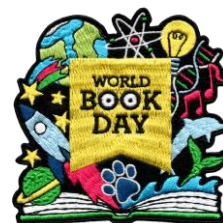
As you may or may not realise, we are due to be inspected by Ofsted soon at Whiteshill too. We were last judged to be a good school in May 2018 and therefore we are due at any day now to receive the phone call. As you can imagine, this is something which is on all of our minds and being ready for the inspection is important to us so that we can share with them everything we are proud of at Whiteshill. Experiencing the inspection at Longney so recently has of course been incredibly useful in preparing us as a school and couldn't have come at a better time for me as a leader at Whiteshill.

As a good school, we should receive a one-day inspection and we will not be told it is happening until the day before the inspectors arrive. We will let you know of course when this happens and at this point you will be given the opportunity to share your views about the school on the Ofsted Parent View website. We appreciate anyone taking the time to share positive comments and thoughts on the school in support of our efforts to retain a good judgement so that the school can get on with our job of continuing to grow and make progress as we have done in the last 6 years.

If you have any concerns about your child, you can of course talk to their teacher at any time – we are always keen to know about anything that is worrying you or on your mind so please do not save this up, get in touch at any point.

World Book Day

Tuesday 5th March is World Book Day at Whiteshill this year. This is always an absolute highlight of the year and we can't wait to spend the day with the children celebrating books and reading. Mrs Cripps, our English subject lead has been busy putting together the day for the children. We look forward to seeing their costumes! Thank you for your support with this. Click on the picture for some great ideas and resources to celebrate World Book Day at home, including MC Grammar's World Book Day rap for those who were at Young Voices!



London Marathon

I'm incredibly grateful and honoured to share that Rose Case, who is a parent of two children here at Whiteshill, will be running the London Marathon in April to fundraise for both the Friends of Whiteshill School and Randwick Scout Group. If you are able, please do support Rose with this incredible challenge by donating on her just giving page [here](#). Thank you so much to Rose for choosing to support us with her efforts – we wish her the best of luck with her preparations in the coming weeks.

Mobile phones in school

Just a reminder that mobile phones and devices are not allowed in school. In line with recent updated government guidance, our approach to mobile phones has now been added to our behaviour policy which can be found on the school website [here](#). You will see that this includes allowing Oak class children to bring a mobile phone to school if they need it for walking to and from school safely. If your child is going to do this, please make sure you let the school office know by email so that we have written permission for them to bring it in to school. It will be kept safe by Miss Middleton during the day and handed back to your child just before they leave each day. If your child is in Oak class, they can of course walk home on their own, but again you must give us written permission for this via email.

Blogs

This week our new learning blogs have now been set up on the school website. They are on the Elm, Maple and Oak class pages. Willow Class use Tapestry to share their learning throughout the year so will not have a blog. If you are not able to access Tapestry for any reason, please do talk to Mrs Clarke and she can help you out. From the end of next week, the blogs will be updated to share with you a small snapshot of what your children have been engaging with in their learning that week.

You can find the class blogs here for future reference – they will begin from next Friday:

www.whiteshillschool.co.uk/elm-class
www.whiteshillschool.co.uk/maple-class
www.whiteshillschool.co.uk/oak-class

Just scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on the link.

Speak Out, Stay Safe

Before half term, we planned an assembly to talk to the children in Elm, Maple and Oak about the NSPCC 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' initiative. Following this, volunteers from the NSPCC visited to complete a workshop with year 2 and Oak class. Speak out Stay safe is a safeguarding programme for children. It helps children understand that they have the right to be safe; where to get help and the sources of help available to them, including the NSPCC Childline service. If you want to talk to your children at home about any of these subjects, the NSPCC website has some excellent resources including the fantastic 'PANTS' resource which is a great way of approaching the subject with younger children. More information can be found [here](#).

Whiteshill Team News

Some of you will know that Mrs Fisher, who has been teaching two days a week in Willow class since September had the exciting news recently that her husband's job meant the family would be moving to Washington DC! What an adventure for them all! All the children said goodbye to Mrs Fisher at the end of last half term and I'm pleased to say that Mrs McClung will teach Willow Class with Mrs Clarke for the rest of the year.

In more exciting news, during half term, Mr Coysh and his wife, welcomed their second child, a baby boy called Riley. Mum and baby are doing well and Mr Coysh will be returning from his paternity leave on Monday so I'm sure you will have chance to send them all congratulations alongside all of us here. What a beautiful addition to their family!



Online Safety – Stay Safe Workshops Visit

We are so lucky that as part of our computing curriculum, every year we are visited by Stay Safe Workshops who work with all the children across the school to teach them how to stay safe online. Richard Pomfrett from Stay Safe talks with such insight and inspiration, it really helps the children to understand the importance of this subject. Following the sessions, Richard wanted to share with you some ways that you can support your child to stay safe online at home.



Social Media



The older children mentioned connecting with others and having accounts on WhatsApp (16+), TikTok (13+), SnapChat (13+), and some on Instagram (13+) and Discord (13+), many of whom didn't know if their settings were public or private. Richard encourages you to have open discussions with your children about using social media and emphasises the importance for young children of maintaining private social media accounts. Starting by checking if your child's social media is private or public is of course the first step if you are not sure.

Online Gaming

Gamers across all year groups talked about playing and chatting with people they don't know during online games. A list of the warning signs of grooming which were discussed with the children during the session, can be found below:

- **Someone saying they share a hobby or interest with your child – this could lead to them sharing personal details.**
- **Offering gifts – children should never accept in-game currency or online gifts from someone they met online.**
- **Asking to make private connections e.g. through private platforms like WhatsApp or Snapchat.**
- **Asking for a meet up in real life.**

Action Steps for Parents:

The most important thing you can do is take the time to fully understand what your children are doing online and the functions available on the apps and games they use – take a look and ask yourself:

Can they chat with others?

Can they connect with people they don't know?

What kind of content can they be exposed to?

What are the age ratings of the games and apps they use?

What settings are available to limit risk and encourage a more positive environment?

Sit down with your children and explore privacy settings in the games and apps your children use.

Ask your children to show them how they BLOCK & REPORT people in the games and apps they use.

If any of you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Richard directly through the Stay Safe Workshops website [here](#) mentioning Whiteshill Primary School. He is more than happy to offer guidance and support.

There is a fantastic resource [here](#) the 'Parenting in the Digital World' information leaflet with even more

Communication

Just to let you know the best people for you to email or contact if you have a query in school, to help you get the information you need as efficiently as possible.

If you want to ask about your child's learning, friendships or any day to day queries about their time in school please always talk first to your child's teacher as they know them best of all. You can request to talk to them through the admin@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk email address or by phoning the school or talking to them on the gate at the end of the school day.

If you would like to talk about an event that is coming up, behaviour, support for your child or anything to do with the day-to-day running of the school, please contact Miss Middleton our Deputy Head Teacher through the school office or on jmiddleton@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk remember that Miss Middleton teaches during the week so is not able to reply to her emails daily.

If you need to contact me directly, please do so at any time on head@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk however, if you need an immediate response or if it is something to do with your child on that day e.g. absence, pick-up arrangements, please always go through the school office on admin@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk as this is the only school email address that is checked every day by Mrs Angove. Thank you.

We are active...

Thanks to Miss Middleton who organises all of our sporting events in school and Mrs Edmonds and Mrs Goodfield who almost always accompany the children off-site, alongside other staff members, we have been able to take part in a number of Atlas Sports events again across the term.

One of the real highlights was another very successful tag rugby competition, where the children were coached by the brilliant Tom Nurse, a former parent who runs our tag rugby club each week. The team came in a very impressive fourth place out of very large field of teams, following up from our silver medal last year to demonstrate the impact of Tom's work with the school since he started his sessions.

The Oak class children will have chance to work with Gloucester Rugby again after Easter in their weekly PE sessions to follow up the progress we have making with this really inclusive and fun sport.

Maple class children took part in the gymnastics competition down at Stratford Park, stepping up with confidence to complete a floor and horse routine in front of a pair of judges – we were so proud of them!

Finally, we ended this month with such a wonderful moment as the Maple Class netball team returned to school with silver medals – making it all the way to a nail-biting final which they lost by only one goal!

It was so wonderful to see their beaming faces on their return with their medals around their necks – such an achievement at an event where we are always one of the smallest schools.

You can find more photographs of these events on our school sports page [here](#).

Well done and thank you to all of the children who took part.



We are curious...

We started the term with our we are scientist weeks, answering the following 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 into bread?

As you can see, the children discovered the answers to these questions, using their scientific enquiry skills to investigate.



Willow class have made full use of their wonderful learning environment this term, exploring all the different areas of the provision. Their learning has included making the most of the cold weather to excavate animals from ice, retelling one of their favourite Jill Murphy stories (can you guess which one it is?!) and finding out about Chinese New Year amongst so much more! Mrs Clarke has been investing her time and efforts recently in reinvigorating our outdoor area too. In her role as EYFS lead, she is endlessly thinking about every element of your children's learning and progress to ensure they make the most of every learning opportunity.



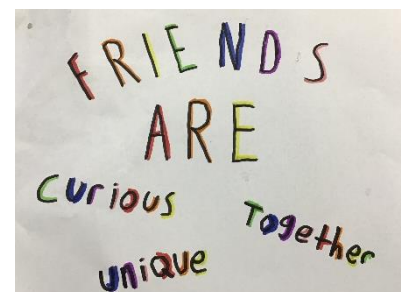
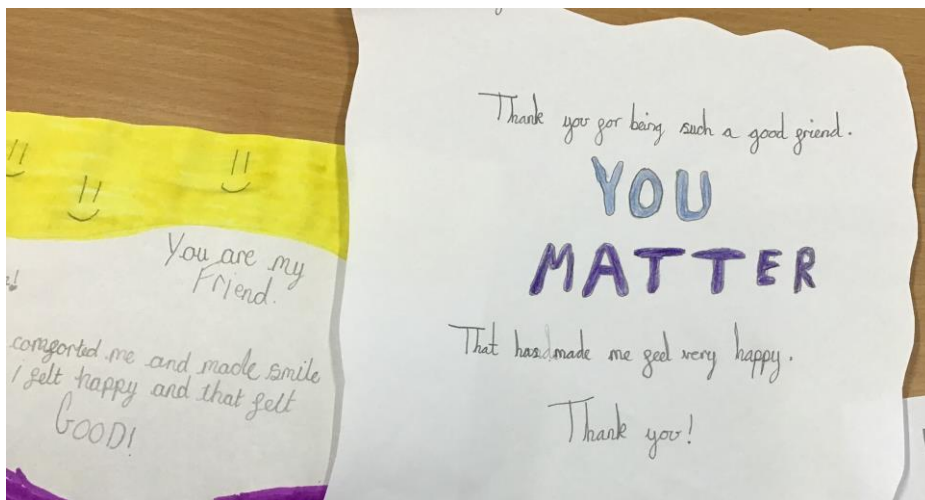
We are curious...

This term, Maple Class took part in the Stemworks KNEX Challenge for the first time. This is a Gloucestershire wide competition run by a not for profit company who aim to generate excitement and interest in the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and maths. The children took part in a half day workshop where they were given a challenge which they had to solve by building with KNEX. They were invited to present their ideas to the judges who were looking at their ability to work together, solve problems, produce a working model, and communicate their ideas effectively. I'm pleased to share that our winning team – Nora and Noah have been invited to the upcoming Gloucestershire K'Nex final! Well done to both of them. Lots more photos from the day can be found on the school website gallery [here](#).



We are unique...

Before she left, Mrs Fisher, our RSHE subject lead arranged for all the children to have chance to celebrate Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week. They took part in a range of activities across the classes focussing on supporting their own and other's mental wellbeing. This year's theme was 'My Voice Matters' and as part of their work, Oak class wrote supportive messages to each other explaining how they had made each other feel good.



For activities and resources to follow this up at home and to support you as parents click [here](#).

We are together...

One of the absolute highlights of this term was of course Young Voices at the Birmingham NEC. It was our first time at this event as a school, one which I have attended as a parent myself and been desperate to take the children along to ever since! As soon as I left the arena on my first visit, my first thought was that our children at Whiteshill would absolutely relish such an experience and make the most of every second!

We took a huge group of children from year 3 to year 6 and they were just phenomenal, sitting sensibly, enjoying each other's company and lapping it all up! For those of you who have not been or don't know what this event involves, it is the world's largest children's choir. The children learn all the songs in the run-up and then they are joined by thousands of children from schools all over the country to perform together. Accompanying them is a full live band, backing singers and an internationally acclaimed Conductor, David Lawrence. The songs were fantastic this year, with a Moana mash-up, Matilda medley and a walking medley that included songs like 'These boots were made for walking' and 'Walking on sunshine' just some of the highlights! Mrs Edmonds and the children have been enjoying practising all these songs across the term (some of you will have seen a sneak preview of the Matilda Medley at the Festival of Light and Colour in December) and as a result they were absolutely raring to go and sang their hearts out! Doing all of the actions and dancing and swaying away throughout!

They loved waving to their parents in the audience and especially enjoyed the parents v children dance-off and the Mexican wave all the way around the stadium. Once the lights went out for the concert, it was truly breath-taking and experiencing it with our Whiteshill children is something I'm sure none of the staff members who attended will ever forget. The children were also treated to some incredible and inspiring performances, including MC Grammar, Urban Strides dance troupe and to top it all off, the ridiculously talented Nandi Bushell – a 13-year-old drummer who has performed at the Platinum Jubilee and on stage with the Foo Fighters. She was phenomenal and it was really inspiring for the children to see another child performing so confidently on stage. We hope that the children enjoyed the event as much as we did!! If you haven't already, it is well worth checking out the videos of the concert on our School Facebook page and there are many more photographs on our school website gallery [here](#) too. Well done to everyone who attended and thank you so much to the staff who gave up their evening and made it possible.



We are together...

As part of our RSHE curriculum, we work closely with PCSO Amy Webb and her team. Many of you will know Amy from her role in the community. She is an excellent PCSO and is so keen to support the school and the village in many ways. She regularly visits us here and loves to work with the children to build their understanding of the police and their role in the community as well as help them build up trust with a familiar face in a police uniform.

This term, PCSO Webb and her team visited school to support the year 6 children through their SchoolsBeat programme which supports the children as they transition to secondary school, carried out their Sunnyhouse programme with Year 2 and 3 and then brought Colin the Crocodile in to Willow class to help them practise staying safe on the roads.



Finally, we ended the term with a celebration of all of the people who make our school a community. Everyone who has helped us out since September, was invited to our first 'Helper's Tea' at school where the year 6 children served them tea, coffee and cake. The children were so brilliant in the role, approaching people they didn't know with confidence and, we hope, making everyone feel welcome. We had upwards of 60 adults in the hall including governors, parents, reading volunteers, sports coaches, neighbours and friends. We have received some lovely feedback from people including cards, postcards and emails which has been so nice for us all to read and which we have shared with the children. The highlight of course was Mrs Edmonds incredible 'Thank you' video. She has spent the last few weeks putting together a compilation of all the children in school singing two thank you songs especially for the Helper's Tea and it was a joy to see them all up on screen singing and signing and being their wonderful unique selves! Thank you so much to everyone who attended, we can't thank you enough for all that you do to support our school. Thank you as well to the staff and children who helped on the day. We look forward to the next one!

