

Headteacher Blog - Week Beginning 17th November 2025

If autumn term always feels busy, then this week in particular has felt positively supercharged. Not only have both of my own children had a birthday in the last week, but I have travelled to London for an AI conference and delivered a talk to the Headteachers in Ellesmere Port and sadly attended the funeral of my father. At the same time, Woodlands has been a buzzing hive of activity from Monday morning right through to Friday afternoon, and it's been one of those weeks that really shows how full, rich, and carefully woven primary school life truly is.

We began the week by welcoming Chester University and Wrexham University student teachers, who joined classes across school for placements. They have already thrown themselves into school life with great enthusiasm - teaching small groups, observing lessons, supporting interventions, and discovering (very quickly) that our children ask the most brilliantly challenging questions. It is always a privilege to support the next generation of teachers, and our pupils love having new adults to impress, chat to, and occasionally baffle with their encyclopaedic knowledge of dinosaurs, Minecraft, or the relative unfairness of bedtimes and homework.

Monday also saw our Year 3 pupils dig into the Polio Awareness project, planting crocus bulbs as part of a Rotary initiative. Watching them plant each bulb with such care - some more buried than others - was a lovely reminder of how small acts can grow into something meaningful and we very much look forward to a burst of purple flowers in the spring.

Meanwhile, Squirrels had a special visit, a physiotherapist worked with some of our pupils, and staff attended online safeguarding briefings - a typical Woodlands Monday: busy, purposeful, and held together by coffee and teamwork.

Visits, Learning and Community Engagement

On Tuesday, we hosted the Flu Immunisation Team, who worked their way impressively through the entire school from Reception to Year 6. Our children were incredibly brave - some giving a thumbs-up, others requiring the moral support of half the class! We also sent our three Hospice Ambassadors to the Hospice of the Good Shepherd, where they represented Woodlands with maturity and empathy. Their behaviour was exemplary and we are incredibly proud of them.

Staff training continued in full force, with colleagues attending everything from the Now We Are Two early years programme, to the Health & Safety for Headteachers course, from finance sessions to AFI meetings.

Wednesday brought a memorable event to our calendar, our Year 6 pupils took part in the Big Maths event at EPCHS! Urenco visited Year 5, impressing our children with exciting facts and information. Our Education Psychologist worked on-site with several children and staff and SLT met for the afternoon (with an agenda that could have easily lasted a week).

Academic Clubs, Visitors and Learning Everywhere

Academic clubs have added a wonderful rhythm to the week, with everything from handwriting to times tables, arithmetic, comprehension and reading taking place across both buildings. It's been lovely to see children racing into sessions, eager to take part.

Thursday brought Twilight INSET for EYFS, Cheshire Wildlife Trust meetings and ELSA sessions. By close of play today, we'd hosted parking and travel meetings with the Council, swimming sessions, Annual Reviews, and been on our much loved regular library visits. In short, another thoroughly "Woodlands

week”, busy, purposeful, joyful and held together by committed staff, resilient children, and an impressive amount of multitasking.

A Serious Note - Police Visit and Social Media Concerns

We have sadly also had a visit from the local Police, who had to come into school to work with us on an increasingly concerning issue: children being allowed access to inappropriate social media platforms that they are neither old enough for nor emotionally equipped to manage safely. This commanded SLT time all day on Wednesday, way into the night on Wednesday and into Thursday night and Friday too.

This is untenable and something we cannot ignore. We are seeing:

- Pupils distressed by content they’ve encountered,
- Social conflicts spilling into school from group chats,
- Children exposed to language, videos, and conversations far beyond their developmental stage,
- Children putting themselves and their peers at risk.

While we work hard to educate our pupils about online safety in school, the reality is that access at home - even “only on Snapchat”, “only on their tablet”, or “only when supervised” - is placing some children at real risk. These platforms have minimum age limits of 13 or higher, and the emotional maturity required to navigate them is far beyond what a primary-aged child can safely manage.

We ask parents again:

Please do not allow children access to TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, or any social media designed for teenagers and adults.

The Police were extremely clear: although the behaviour is happening out of school, the impact is falling firmly into school and affecting children’s wellbeing, friendships, and safety. We need your partnership on this. We need you to take children’s safety as seriously as we do.

And Finally...

As we move deeper into November, I continue to be incredibly proud of the calm, warm, hardworking atmosphere across school. Our pupils are thriving in the routines and richness of school life, our staff continue to go above and beyond, and even the grey weather doesn’t seem to dent the buzz across classrooms.

Thank you, as ever, for your support, your humour, and your willingness to work alongside us — especially on the tricky topics like online safety. When we work together, we really can make a difference.

Wishing you a restful weekend (or at least one with slightly less mud than the school grounds currently contain!).

Victoria Carr