

This week, I promised myself I would keep the blog short...

Then I looked at the diary. Then I looked at the temperature. Then I looked at the diary again.

So, this week you are getting a very short blog! Not because nothing has happened (quite the opposite!), but because the overwhelming focus of the week has simply been keeping everybody cool enough to function!

On Friday, our temperature sensors recorded 39°C inside school and an incredible 42°C just outside. Suffice to say, the usual race around the playground was replaced by a much more sensible pace, with plenty of water bottles, shaded areas, hats and the occasional teacher wondering whether it might be acceptable to deliver a maths lesson whilst sitting in the paddling pool! I have been enormously proud of how sensible the children have been in such challenging conditions. They have looked after one another, listened carefully to staff and adapted brilliantly to the heat.

Despite the soaring temperatures, it has still been another wonderfully busy Woodlands week.

Our week was kicked off with Sports Days in Foxes and Reception before the temperatures increased to levels incompatible with outdoor activity. Thank you to all of the parents, grandparents and family members who came along to support the children. Sports Days are always amongst my favourite events of the year. Yes, there is competition, but there is also encouragement, resilience, laughter and children cheering one another across the finish line.

This week has also seen a huge amount of transition work taking place. We welcomed families who will be joining Reception, Pre-School, Hedgehogs and Squirrels in September, all of whom were sweating in the hall or Squirrels rooms, whilst many of our Year 6 pupils continued their enhanced transition programme with Whitby High School. Preparing children for their next chapter is one of the most important pieces of work we do at this time of year, and it is lovely to begin welcoming the newest members of the Woodlands family at the same time as we prepare to say goodbye to those moving on.

There have been plenty of exciting learning opportunities too. Some Year 4 pupils attended a special mathematics workshop at Whitby High School and Year 6 continued their Food Technology sessions. Alongside this, some of our Outdoor Learning sessions have continued, proving that children can still enjoy nature even when it feels like we're living somewhere much closer to the equator than Ellesmere Port!

Some of the leadership team spent time at an Ofsted briefing from a local headteacher. Whilst inspections are never anybody's favourite topic of conversation, it was extremely useful to hear directly from colleagues who have recently been inspected and to reflect on the continually evolving national picture. We are always looking at how we can continue to improve what we offer our children and families and we are certainly preparing for our inspection in the coming year.

Now for the really important news...

Many of you know that Gus takes his role as School Dog extremely seriously. On Tuesday he attended the vets for a professional teeth clean. I am delighted to report that he was an exemplary patient, behaved impeccably and was even awarded a certificate for being so good!

Quite frankly, if the dog can have his teeth professionally cleaned without complaining, then there is absolutely no excuse for our children not to brush theirs properly twice a day! I suspect Gus will be expecting to add "Dental Hygiene Ambassador" to his ever-growing list of school responsibilities.

Finally, behind all the excitement has been the enormous amount of work that keeps Woodlands moving forward: safeguarding meetings, SEND reviews, report proofreading, curriculum moderation, planning for September, student support, and preparations for transition. At this point in the year, every member of staff is balancing today's priorities with next year's plans, and I continue to be hugely grateful for their commitment and professionalism – especially as they were nearly melting.

As we head into the final few weeks of term, there is still so much to look forward to. Summer performances, transition days, celebration events, reports, trips and sports all lie ahead... although, if we're being honest, we're all secretly hoping for temperatures a little closer to "British summer" than "Mediterranean heatwave" if only because we have no access to a pool around which we can sit during the day!

Have a wonderful weekend, stay cool, drink plenty of water... and remember to brush your teeth. 😊

Dr Carr