

And we are back!

A huge welcome back to all of our children, families and staff, and an equally huge welcome to Woodlands to everyone joining us for the first time this September. Whether you are nine months old and beginning your Woodlands journey in Hedgehogs, arriving elsewhere in school, joining us as a new member of staff, or returning for another year, we are delighted to have you with us.

It has been wonderful to see the school full of children again this week. There is something very strange about a school building during the summer holidays: lots of work happens, but without the children it is simply a building. Within about five minutes on Wednesday morning, Woodlands was noisy, busy and gloriously alive again!

🏡 A Summer of Change – and More to Come!

Anyone returning to school will have spotted that we certainly haven't been idle over the summer. Cool Canvas and Team Maintenance have done a fabulous job completing our latest two Specialist Inclusion Base rooms and improving our infant outdoor environment. We are thrilled with the results. Woodlands continues to grow and evolve, particularly in the breadth of provision we offer our children, and - predictably – I am already plotting what comes next! There is always another idea...

It hasn't only been the physical school that has been changing. Just before we broke up, the Government published a considerable amount of new legislation, statutory guidance and national policy affecting schools. Consequently, a significant part of our summer has been spent reading, reviewing policies, updating procedures and working out what the various changes mean in practice for Woodlands.

You will already have received information from us about Benedict's Law, and there will be further information and changes communicated to families as the term progresses. Some of these changes will require your help and cooperation, and we will explain them properly as we implement them. Please do read communications from school carefully - even the boring-looking ones! They are not always the most exciting emails we send, but they are often amongst the most important.

👉 Starting As We Mean To Go On

A new academic year gives all of us a chance to reset, and we want to start exactly as we mean to go on.

Our expectations of our children remain very simple: Ready, Respectful and Safe. We expect high standards of behaviour, language, effort and respect because children learn best in calm, orderly environments where everyone feels safe and valued.

We need our parents and carers alongside us in maintaining those standards. Please support staff when they address behaviour, reinforce our expectations at home and communicate with colleagues appropriately and respectfully. We will not always agree about everything - that is perfectly normal in any relationship involving hundreds of children and families - but disagreement must never become disrespect. Our staff come to work to educate, nurture and care for children and are entitled to be treated with courtesy at all times. Equally, if you have a concern, please talk to us, using the appropriate school channels, so that we have the opportunity to understand it and work with you to resolve it. In a world where most things are now instantaneous, please do pause for breath and thought before pressing 'send' on the angry email or making the impossible demand.

The strongest schools are built on a genuine partnership between children, staff and families. That is very much the partnership we want for 2026-27.

🚗 Three Days In... and Already the Parking!

I had hoped to make it slightly further than three days into the new academic year before writing about parking. Alas, it was not to be!

We are already receiving photographs and messages from our neighbours showing Woodlands parents blocking driveways, parking inconsiderately and creating dangerous situations on the road outside school. This is enormously

frustrating. There is simply no justification for preventing somebody from entering or leaving their own property because it is more convenient to park there – even for a few minutes.

Please park legally and considerately, even if that means parking further away and walking. We have hundreds of children crossing these roads at precisely the time traffic is at its busiest.

We are therefore very much looking forward to the installation of the traffic enforcement cameras in the near future. The purpose is not complicated: we want the road outside Woodlands to be safer for our children. Until then, please help us - and please be considerate of the people who live around our school.

❤ Mrs Liversey

Finally, many families will have noticed that Mrs Liversey is currently absent from school on medical leave. At present, we anticipate that she is likely to remain away for at least the rest of this half term.

Mrs Liversey is an enormously important part of Woodlands and will, of course, be greatly missed while she is away. Our leadership arrangements are in place to ensure that school continues to run smoothly, and I know everyone in the Woodlands community will join me in sending her our very warmest wishes. We look forward to welcoming her back when she is well enough to return.

And with that, 2026–27 is officially underway.

There is a huge amount ahead of us this year, and we are genuinely excited about what comes next. The school continues to grow, our provision continues to develop and our ambitions for our school and our children remain as high as ever.

To our returning families: welcome back. To everyone joining Woodlands this year: welcome to the family.

Here we go again! ☀