

Another week at Woodlands and the Woodlands machine continues at its usual pace!

One of the things I am particularly proud of at Woodlands is that our school is never dependent upon one person. We have experienced leaders and teams across school who know our children, understand our expectations and simply get on with the job. With some key staff out, this is also a valuable opportunity for our wider leadership team to step up, work together and demonstrate the considerable leadership capacity we have built across school. Bravo one and all!

📖 🏹 Learning Far Beyond the Classroom

There has been plenty happening for our children this week.

Year 3 continued their judo sessions on Wednesday, and on Thursday a small group of Year 3 and 4 pupils took part in a Rugby Skills event. We started Thursday with archery at KS2 Breakfast Club - quite an impressive range of sporting opportunities before some of us have even managed our first cup of coffee!

Music also continued to play an important part in school life, with singing assemblies across the different phases and Year 3 violin lessons on today. Year 4 continue their swimming programme and our Year 5 children once again visited Hope Farm Library.

These enrichment opportunities matter. Education should never simply be about what children can record in an exercise book. Sport, music, reading, competition, teamwork and trying something completely new all contribute to children's confidence, character and understanding of what they might enjoy or be good at. Some children will discover a lifelong love of music; somebody else might discover that rugby is their thing. Others may simply discover that firing an arrow at a target before 9am is a surprisingly good way to start a Thursday!

❤️ The Work You Don't Always See

Alongside all of that visible activity, there is another Woodlands running quietly in the background.

This week included Child in Need and Core Group meetings, a TAF meeting, Mental Health Support Team work and further updating of SEND paperwork for individual children.

I mention these things regularly because they are an important part of understanding what a modern primary school actually does. Our responsibility extends far beyond delivering the National Curriculum. On any given day, members of our team may be working with health professionals, social care, mental health services or families, reviewing an EHCP, coordinating support for a vulnerable child or ensuring that reasonable adjustments are working properly.

Much of that work must quite rightly remain confidential, so it is largely invisible to the wider school community. Nevertheless, it represents an enormous amount of professional expertise, time and care. I genuinely believe our pastoral team is second to none, led by Mrs Morphet, our Assistant Head for Inclusion, and our SENDCo, ably assisted by Mrs Cotton, Mrs Wilkinson, Miss Edwards, Miss Gittins, and Mrs Jones.

💻 Keeping Woodlands Safe - Including Online

Our commitment to safeguarding also means ensuring that our own staff continue to learn.

On Wednesday, colleagues across EYFS, our Resource Provision and Years 1–6 undertook Cyber Security Training. On Thursday, staff undertook further Ofsted preparation training.

Neither safeguarding nor school improvement is something we “complete”. The risks children face change, technology changes, statutory expectations change and our own school continues to change. With children joining us from just nine months old and our specialist inclusion provision continuing to grow, it is particularly important that our systems, knowledge and practice grow alongside it.

That is why so much of our staff development happens after the children have gone home. The school may look quiet at 3.45pm; I can assure you it frequently isn't!

Welcoming New Families

We also had new parent tours taking place this week.

It seems slightly extraordinary to be only a couple of weeks into one academic year and already welcoming families who are considering joining us in the future. It is also lovely to show people around Woodlands when the school is in full swing. They don't see a carefully staged version of school; they see children learning, staff teaching and all the ordinary bustle of a large primary school.

For families who have only just joined us this September, I hope you are beginning to feel properly part of Woodlands too. It takes a little while for new routines, names, gates, ParentPay, PE days, reading books and the seemingly endless vocabulary of primary education to become second nature!

Three Weeks In...

We are now properly into the rhythm of the new academic year.

Assemblies are happening across school, children are swimming, singing, playing violins, practising judo, visiting the library and representing school in sport. Our inclusion and safeguarding teams are supporting children and families behind the scenes. Staff are training and developing their practice. Our leadership team is continuing to move our priorities for the year forward.

Thank you, as always, to our staff for everything they are doing, to our children for throwing themselves into another busy week and to our families for your continued support.

Have a lovely weekend.

Victoria

Headteacher

Woodlands Primary School