

# Whitchurch Highlights



27th Feb  
2026  
Issue 12

## Message from the Headteacher



**Dear Whitchurch Families,**

I hope you have had a relaxing half term break. This second half of the Spring term is fairly short but, nonetheless, packed with learning and enrichment opportunities across the school, including Year 5 and 6 residential visits over the next few weeks.

Next Thursday (5th March) is World Book Day where we shall get into the spirit of reading with a variety of book related activities. Children are invited to wear pyjamas for the day and bring in their favourite story book from home to enjoy. Meanwhile, Friends of Whitchurch will be holding Mother's Day Celebrations on Tuesday 10th March, so be sure to come along to get a gift for your loved ones. Our upcoming soloists Spring Concert will be take place on Wednesday 18th March, celebrating the achievements of our Whitchurch musicians.

We shall be holding Parents' Evenings towards the end of term (24th and 26th March) and written reports will be moved to the end of the Summer term so that you have the most up to date information before going into the new school year. For children to make the best possible progress in school, and to avoid being fined, it is crucial that your child attends school regularly - these habits start in Nursery and Reception. Please take a moment to refer to the attendance feature on the following page of this newsletter for more information.

Read on to catch up on some highlights so far this term, as well as our latest radio show featuring an interview all about our Whitchurch Woodland.

Have a lovely weekend.

**Ms Rachel Inniss**  
Headteacher

Listen  
to School  
Council's  
radio show  
here

# Attendance Matters



## Good School Attendance

Regular school attendance is vital to every child's learning, progress and wellbeing. We closely monitor attendance and, in the weeks immediately before and after school holidays, our attendance figures fall below national averages. This is largely due to families taking leave during term time and some pupils returning to school later than expected.

**To date, we have issued 19 Education Penalty Notices (EPNs) since the start of the school year. These start at £80 per parent/carer and per child, if paid within the first 21 days.**

Time away from school has a significant impact on children's education. Even short periods of absence can lead to missed learning, gaps in understanding and disruption to routines. This can affect children's confidence and slow their progress. Good attendance also supports friendships, a sense of belonging and overall wellbeing in school.

We ask all parents and carers to plan family travel outside of term time wherever possible. If this is not possible, any request for leave during term time must be made in advance by submitting an Exceptional Leave Request for consideration. Please be aware that leave can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

We ask that parents and carers work with the school to improve attendance. If you have any questions or need support, please contact us.

**Mr Thompson-Lawrie**  
Deputy Headteacher

See the  
Attendance  
page of our  
website here  
for more  
information

# News and Highlights

We raised  
£397.28  
for Schools  
Counselling  
Partnership



## Children's Mental Health Week

To mark Children's Mental Health Week 2026 as a school, we explored the importance of belonging and the vital role it plays in mental health and wellbeing through the theme 'This is my place'. We began by discovering what we have in common with one another, helping to build connections and a sense of community. We also designed our own greeting cards (a big thank you to Meera Pandya), illustrating places where we feel we belong and how these places make us feel.

During assemblies, we learned that mental health is just as important as physical health, and that it is okay to talk about emotions and ask for help. In addition, our non-uniform day helped to raise both awareness and valuable funds of nearly £400 for Schools Counselling Partnership!



### Reach Out - Schools Counselling Partnership

Sometimes we could all do with someone to talk to. If you would like to meet Tom for a confidential and non-judgemental chat about you, your child, or any other worries, he is available on **Wednesdays at 9-10am**.

You can call/text Tom on **07799 028 461** or email him at **tom@schoolscounsellingpartnership.co.uk**



# News and Highlights



## Year 3 visit to the Mithraeum Museum

Year 3 had an exciting and memorable trip to the London Mithraeum Museum as part of our learning about the Romans. We travelled back in time to explore the remains of a real Roman temple dedicated to the god Mithras, which was discovered right in the heart of the City of London. During our visit, we learned about how Romans lived, worshipped and built their settlements in Britain. We were fascinated to see the ancient artefacts found on the site and enjoyed experiencing the atmospheric temple reconstruction, which helped bring Roman London to life.



*Miss Daniel, Year 3 Leader*



# News and Highlights



## School Council Radio Show - Forest School

Our School Council have recently put together and presented a radio show with a focus on our Whitchurch Woodland forest school, featuring an interview with Mrs Portou, our Forest School leader, who has played a vital role in bringing this project to fruition.

School Council have worked hard to prepare the interview with Mrs Portou, finding out about the origins of the Whitchurch Woodland, what makes forest schools important, as well as plans for the future.

*Ms Liu, School Council Leader*

Listen to School Council's radio show here



## Rights Respecting School Ambassadors

Our Rights Respecting Ambassadors have presented children's rights to all Year 4 children and staff. Year 6 children have enjoyed designing posters to demonstrate our understanding of these rights and Year 5 children have discussed these rights.



**"We should all be treated equally." Maya**

**"Children have the right to have food, shelter and water." Ayesha**

**"You have the right to a name and the right to be heard." Ayumi**

**"Children have the right to rest and play." Adam**

*Ms Liu, Rights Respecting School Leader*



# News and Highlights



## PlayPALs

Well done to the following children in Years 2 to 5 who have been chosen as PlayPALs; to 'Play with you, Advise you and Listen to you' at playtimes. Thank you to all the children who applied to be a PlayPAL this year, there were many strong applications and it was hard for us to choose!

*Miss Chrysostomou, Pastoral Leader*

### Year 2

*Rayn (2JJ), Aarav (2JJ), Aisha (2KK), Kelly (2DN), Ioshua (2KK), Eveline (2DN), Viaan (2DN), Valentina (2JJ), Krisanya (2DN) and Eliza (2JJ)*

### Year 3

*Saanvi (3MS), Bela (3MS), Akshara (3MS), Sheba (3NN), Vedanshi (3NN), Bhavyaa (3SA), Niyam (3SA), Yousef (3SA), Aisha (3MD) and Moise (3MD)*

### Year 4

*Sebastian (4RS), Dinara (4RS), Amos (4AK), Maariyah (4XL) and Reeva (4HH)*

### Year 5

*Aanya (5PS), Raiya (5RP), Sahar (5PS), Krish (5RP) and Jasmine (5RC)*



# News and Highlights



## The Whitchurch Carbon Footprint

As part of our commitment to becoming a sustainable school, we have recently received the results of our school's carbon footprint assessment, and our rating has come back amber. This is encouraging news. An amber rating tells us that we are doing many things right and that our efforts to reduce our environmental impact are being recognised. At the same time, it is a reminder that we still have work to do before we reach our goal of a truly sustainable, low-carbon school community.

A carbon footprint measures the amount of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), that are released into the atmosphere as a result of our activities. In a school, this includes the electricity we use to power lights and computers, the heating that keeps our classrooms warm, the journeys we make to and from school each day, the food we consume, and the waste we produce. All of these everyday actions add up.

The amber result reflects the positive changes we have already made. Over recent years, we have increased our recycling efforts, raised awareness about reducing paper use, and encouraged students to take part in environmental initiatives. Many classrooms are more mindful about switching off equipment and lights when it is not in use, and sustainability is increasingly part of student discussions and projects. These actions matter. They show that as a community, we care about our role in protecting the planet.

Our efforts also contribute in a small but meaningful way to wider global ambitions, such as those set out by the United Nations in its Sustainable Development Goals. Schools across the world are being encouraged to think carefully about energy use, waste, and environmental responsibility.

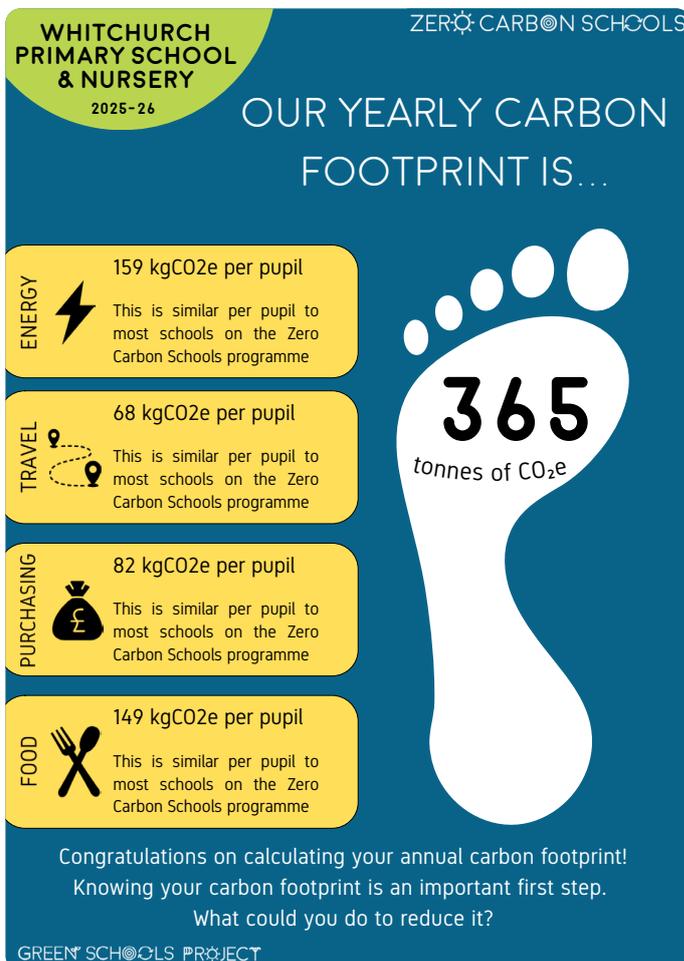
The assessment also highlighted areas where we can improve. Energy use remains one of our biggest challenges. Heating and electricity account for a large proportion of school emissions, and simple habits - such as turning off lights,

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projectors, and screens - can make a measurable difference. Travel to school is another key factor. Encouraging walking, cycling, car sharing, or public transport where possible can significantly reduce emissions linked to daily journeys. In addition, reducing food waste and limiting single-use plastics are important steps that will help us move closer to a green rating.

What makes this challenge both exciting and achievable is that success depends on all of us. Staff, students, and families each play an important role. Small changes, consistently practised, create lasting impact. When an entire school community acts together, those small actions multiply into something powerful.



An amber rating is not a warning sign - it is an opportunity. It tells us that we have built a strong foundation and that with focus, determination, and collective effort, we can do even better. Over the coming months, we will be reviewing our practices, setting clear targets, and looking for new ways to reduce our environmental impact.

Together, we can turn amber into green and continue building a school community that not only talks about sustainability but lives it every day.

*Mrs Portou*

# The Whitchurch Woodland

Forest  
School Sessions  
Spring 2 - Year 2  
Summer 1 - Year 1  
Summer 2 - Year 6



## More Year 5 Forest School Sessions

Year 5 have enjoyed a fantastic Forest School programme filled with exploration and practical learning. We developed our skills in identifying plants and animals, taking part in a woodland scavenger hunt to deepen our understanding of the natural environment.

We used clay to create detailed models inspired by our discoveries and learned how to tie important knots, including the clove hitch and reef knot. These new skills helped us to create a standing wind chime and to build our very own scarecrow, ready for the Spring as we begin growing vegetables.

We also enjoyed hot chocolate and time together around the base camp, reflecting on our achievements and teamwork whilst following the Forest School ethos.

***Mr Coutinho, Forest School Leader***

**“My favourite part was building the den and learning new knots for example the clove hitch and a reef knot.” Diana**

**“I learnt many skills and I know the outdoors better.” Summer**

**“Forest school really gives us a sense of the outdoors.” Jayden**



# News and Highlights



## Informal Music Performances

Twenty-six pupils from Years 2 to 6 showcased a variety of orchestral and non-orchestral instruments, as well as singing, during our celebration assembly. These informal, half-termly performances give our musicians a wonderful opportunity to perform in a supportive environment for their friends and teachers. They also allow the rest of the school to observe and listen to different instruments, learn to be a respectful audience, and hopefully develop an interest in learning an instrument themselves.

*Mrs Leutfeld, Director of Music*

*Congratulations to the following children for their performances:*

**Violin** Anbar (4HH), Tilly (4HH), Layla (3MD), Dyana (2DN) and Manolis (2JJ)

**Clarinet** Kian (6ND), Alexis (6ND) and Siya (5RC)

**Singing** Niam (5RC) and Elissabeth (4XL)

**Drum Kit** Ella (6ND), Shaurya 6ND and Viyaan 6ND

**Guitar** Ziyun 5NL, Krish 5NL, Niam 5RC, Jahanzeb 5RC, Stefania 4AK, Riya 4AK, Avyaan 4XL and Aavish 3NN

**Recorder** Reeva 6ET

**Piano** Krisha 6CM, Elissabeth 4XL and Sophie 4RS

**Tabla** Arjun 5RP and Harshiv 3SA

**Harmonium** Rose 6CM



# News and Highlights



## HMS Guitar Festival

Congratulations to our young musicians who proudly represented our school at the HMS Guitar Festival. Fifteen of our guitarists took part in a full-day rehearsal alongside pupils from other Harrow schools and performed in the evening concert at Harrow Arts Centre.



We are also incredibly proud of our school Rock Band, who were the only primary school band invited to perform at the festival, marking their first experience performing in a theatre. A fantastic event and a wonderful showcase of all our pupils' commitment, confidence and musicality.



*Mrs Leutfeld, Director of Music*

## Friends of Whitchurch Cake Sale - 'Bake a Memory'



A huge thank you to everyone who baked, bought and supported our recent school cake sale - raising an amazing **£176**. The money will go towards supporting school activities and resources for our children. We are so grateful for the wonderful community spirit.

*Team FoW*



# News and Highlights



## Year 4 Pedestrian Training

Year 4 children have completed pedestrian training. Each class went out with instructors to gain an awareness of the dangers, whilst developing independence and confidence when walking on streets around the school's local area.



## Year 5 visit to the Science Museum

Year 5 visited the Science Museum in London to explore a range of exhibitions relating to our learning, including forces and the human body. We instructed a robotic hand to sort materials for recycling using our programming skills and investigated the mechanics of a clock, learning how gears work together to move the dials. A fantastic hands-on learning experience!



## February 'Stay and Read' sessions



# Spring Lunch Menu



Allergens are listed on our website (click here)

Salad bar and bread available daily



|                        | WEEK ONE<br>5/1, 26/1, 23/2, 16/3                  | WEEK TWO<br>12/1, 2/2, 2/3, 23/3                     | WEEK THREE<br>19/1, 9/2, 9/3                                    |
|------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>MONDAY MAINS</b>    | Chicken Hot Dog, with Potato Wedges & Garden Peas  | BBQ Lamb Pizza, with Diced Potatoes & Peas           | Chicken Burger, Served with Jacket Wedges & Corn on the Cob     |
| <b>DESSERT</b>         | Cherry Flapjack (Ve)                               | Apple Flapjack (Ve)                                  | Fruit Shortbread (Ve)   |
| <b>TUESDAY MAINS</b>   | Turkey Korma Curry, with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans  | Chicken Katsu Curry, with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans   | Chicken Sausage Pasta Bake, Served with Peas                    |
| <b>DESSERT</b>         | Lemon Drizzle Cake (V)                             | Chocolate & Pear Tray Bake (V)                       | iced Sponge Cake (V)  |
| <b>WEDNESDAY MAINS</b> | Lamb Lasagne, Served with Garlic Bread & Broccoli  | Chicken Sausage & Mash, with Gravy, Peas & Carrots   | Roast Chicken with Gravy, Roast Potatoes, Carrots & Cauliflower |
| <b>DESSERT</b>         | Strawberry Jelly (Ve)                              | Strawberry Mousse (V)                                | Raspberry Jelly (Ve)  |
| <b>THURSDAY MAINS</b>  | Chicken Shawarma Wraps, with Cous Cous & Sweetcorn | Tuna Pasta Bake, Served with Garlic Bread & Broccoli | Turkey Biryani, with Naan Bread & Broccoli                      |
| <b>DESSERT</b>         | Ginger Cookie (Ve)                                 | Jam Sponge (Ve)                                      | Vanilla Cookie (Ve)   |
| <b>FRIDAY MAINS</b>    | Fish Fingers, with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas     | Fish Stars, Served with Chips, Peas or Baked Beans   | Battered Fish, with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas                 |
| <b>DESSERT</b>         | Vanilla Ice Cream Pot (V)                          | Chocolate Ice Cream Pot (V)                          | Butterscotch Mousse (V)   |

Allergen Information: Menu descriptions may not list every individual ingredient. We are aware of the presence of allergens requiring labelling, so please ask a member of the catering team should you require any more details. Vegetarian options are indicated by the symbol (V) and Vegan options are indicated by the symbol (Ve).

COOMBS CATERING PARTNERSHIP



# Staff Snapshot



**Name:** Nitisha Patel  
**Role:** Learning Support Assistant

## All about me

I was born in London and into a big family. I live in Harrow with my husband and two lovely children. I enjoy cooking many different types of dishes. I am a foodie and I like trying out something new. I love travelling locally as well as abroad. One of my favourite countries I have travelled to is Fiji - it is beautiful.

## Hobbies and Interests

During my spare time I like reading and going for long walks with my music on. I also enjoy spending a lot of time with my friends and family. My children keep me really busy! I love watching Bollywood movies. I'm not a baker, however recently I've been learning to bake something delicious.

## Best part of my role

I have a great team that I work with and I enjoy working with many other people. The children are lovely and I value being part of their learning journey.



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ADULT ANIMATED CONTENT

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Bright, bold, and widely shared, adult animated content is more popular than ever, but not always what it seems. These videos, which may appear cartoonish and harmless, often contain strong language, explicit themes, graphic violence, or dark humour. Many are accessible through platforms like YouTube, TikTok or streaming services, where filters may not catch them in time.

### MISLEADING VISUAL STYLE

Many adult animations mimic the colourful, exaggerated look of children's cartoons. This can easily mislead not just children, but also adults, into thinking they're suitable for younger viewers. Without watching the content fully, parents or educators might approve a show or video that contains explicit jokes, graphic imagery, or highly inappropriate language, all disguised beneath a playful and fun visual style.

### EXPOSURE TO HARMFUL THEMES

A number of adult animated shows and online videos explore mature or disturbing themes, such as addiction, trauma, abuse, self-harm, or violence, and often do so in a stylised or humorous way. Younger viewers may not have the emotional maturity to process this content, leading to confusion, distress, or the normalisation of very serious issues that should be discussed in a supportive context.

### RISK OF DISTRESS AND FEAR

Some adult animations, especially horror-based content or 'creepypasta' style stories, include disturbing imagery, unsettling music, and sudden scares. These videos sometimes feature distorted versions of well-known children's characters, such as Sonic the Hedgehog or Peppa Pig, in frightening or violent scenarios. Children can be negatively affected if they come across this unexpectedly, leading to sleep disturbances, anxiety, or long-lasting fears, especially if children have existing worries or sensitive personalities.

### INFLUENCE OF EDGY HUMOUR

Dark, edgy humour is common in adult animation and often includes jokes about topics like sexism, racism, mental illness, or abuse. When children hear these jokes, they may repeat them without fully understanding their meaning. This can lead to inappropriate behaviour in school or online spaces, and in some cases, it can reinforce harmful stereotypes or desensitise children to real-world injustice and discrimination.

### ALGORITHMIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Video platforms are designed to keep users watching by suggesting similar content. If a child watches one mature animation, they may quickly be shown more, including even darker or more extreme videos. These recommendations are based on viewing patterns, not age-appropriateness. Without strict settings in place, this can lead to a rapid spiral into unsuitable, upsetting, or even harmful content online.

### DESENSITISATION TO VIOLENCE

Stylised violence in animation is often exaggerated and constant. Repeated exposure to it can reduce a child's emotional response to harm, making aggression or cruelty appear entertaining or acceptable. Over time, children may become less empathetic or more tolerant of harmful behaviours in real life, especially if they see others online reacting with humour, memes, or praise for violent characters or scenes.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### LEARN WHAT CHILDREN ARE WATCHING

Take time to ask children what they're watching and who their favourite creators are. Sit down and watch a few videos to get a full understanding. This helps you spot inappropriate content early and shows children that you're interested and engaged in their online world, not just policing it.

### TALK ABOUT WHAT'S APPROPRIATE

Keep communication open and non-judgemental. Talk about why certain themes or jokes are not appropriate for children, even if they appear in animated form. Help children understand that just because something is popular or shared widely, it does not mean it's suitable or safe. If they've seen something upsetting, respond calmly, offer reassurance, and explain things in an age-appropriate way.

### USE PLATFORM SETTINGS WISELY

Make use of built-in safety tools like content filters, restricted mode, and age settings on platforms such as YouTube, Netflix or TikTok. Turn off auto-play where possible and regularly review what children are being recommended. Although these settings aren't foolproof, they add an important layer of protection and help reduce the risk of children encountering disturbing or adult content accidentally.

### ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING

Help children think carefully about what they watch. Talk about the difference between fictional exaggeration and reality, while helping them question why certain content is made. Is it informative, entertaining, or meant to shock? This builds digital resilience and encourages them to make safer choices in future, rather than simply following viral trends or peer pressure to watch mature content.

### Meet Our Expert

Home to the world's largest CPD library for educators, The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforces and managing compliance. We offer memberships and packages to help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.



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See full reference list on our website



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