

# Whitchurch Highlights



22nd May  
2026  
Issue 14

## Message from the Headteacher

**Dear Whitchurch Families,**

It has been an action packed start to the Summer term, with a variety of visits and experiences including our STEM Day today, where the whole school explored sustainability and developed curiosity. It was lovely to see many of you at our exhibition this afternoon, demonstrating our important partnership with families.



This half term, Year 1 and Year 5 have taken visits to Kew Gardens to enrich their learning in Science and Art, whilst Year 2 enjoyed the great British seaside. Year 6 have mastered the challenge of putting on a play in a day - very useful experience for their forthcoming production in July.

At Whitchurch we continue to be proud of our Music enrichment, with choral and percussion workshops for our young musicians. Our Year 4 children put on a wonderful trumpet and clarinet concert today and next half term our Year 3 children will be putting on a recorder concert. We shall also look forward to our musicians will be performing at our flagship Summer concert in June.

I would like to thank to Friends of Whitchurch for holding the school disco last week - all the children and staff had a brilliant time together. We are looking forward to the Summer Fair on Sunday 28th June and hope to see you there.

A reminder that Monday 1st June is a staff training day; school reopens on Tuesday 2nd June at the usual time.

Wishing you all a relaxing and enjoyable half term break.

**Ms Rachel Inniss**  
Headteacher

Children  
back to school  
Tuesday 2nd  
June - gates  
open 8.40am

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## STEM Day: Sustainability and Curiosity

To celebrate STEM Day today (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), the whole school explored the theme of sustainability - clever resourceful design to meet our needs as well as future generations. During the day we developed our curiosity to innovate and find solutions through discussion, videos and sharing ideas. We were excited to present our work to families on exhibition at the end of the day - thank you for coming along!

**Early Years:** The Sustainability Squad showed us how to recycle, make our own paper and not be wasteful.

**Year 1:** We explored materials for strength and built our own bridges.

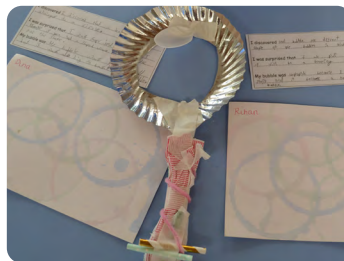
**Year 2:** We investigated the size and shape of bubbles and designed our own bubble wands.

**Year 3:** We experimented with balloon rockets and explored forces to make things move faster.

**Year 4:** We built and adapted simple electrical circuits to light a bulb.

**Year 5:** We designed a structure to protect an egg during an egg drop.

**Year 6:** We carried out a scientific investigation to solve real world problems (such as insulation or water filtration) and presented our findings.



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Year 1's visit to Kew Gardens today will be shared soon!



## Year 5 visit to Kew Gardens

Year 5 had a fantastic day exploring the beautiful grounds of Kew Gardens as enrichment for Science and Art. We explored a wide variety of plants and environments from around the world, noticing how plants adapt to different climates and habitats. We were also fascinated by the incredible diversity of species found throughout the gardens, from towering tropical plants to delicate flowers and unusual trees.

During the visit we took inspiration from the many natural shapes, textures, colours and patterns found in plants within the gardens and glasshouses, in readiness for our upcoming mixed-media art project.

Highlights of the visit were walking amongst the treetops and roaming through the incredible glasshouses. The visit encouraged us to appreciate the beauty of the natural world and think creatively about how nature can inspire art.

***Miss Lakhani, Year 5 Leader***



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Music

## HMS Percussion Festival at Harrow Arts Centre

The HMS Percussion Festival was a wonderful day of music making for our Year 6 drummers. The day began with a West African drumming workshop, where the children explored off-beat rhythms using agogo bells and a range of African drums. Later, they formed a rhythm section, performing alongside a rock band using untuned percussion instruments and taking turns on the drum kit.



The samba workshop that followed drew on skills developed through our current Year 6 curriculum topic on 'syncopation' and Latin American music. The children worked together to build layered Afro-Brazilian rhythms using maracas, agogo bells and snare drums, while responding confidently to the leader's musical cues.

In the final session, the children performed on tuned percussion instruments in a lively rendition of Ecuador. Mr Longman, our drums teacher, was able to rely on our pupils thanks to the experience and skills they have developed through our own school percussion ensemble.

The day concluded with a brilliant concert, featuring performances of world and pop music. Well done to these children, who represented our school so well!

## Year 4 Trumpet and Clarinet Concert

Year 4 delivered a fantastic concert, impressing everyone with their confident and expressive performances on the trumpet and clarinet. The pupils demonstrated strong instrumental and ensemble skills, performing with enthusiasm, musicality, and growing confidence.



Their repertoire included a range of pieces in different

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styles, using all the notes of the C major scale. Pupils read music notation accurately, responded carefully to dynamic markings, and followed visual and conducting cues with precision. They also demonstrated excellent listening skills while performing alongside pre-recorded backing tracks.

It was a real pleasure to see the progress the children have made this year, both as individual musicians and as an ensemble. Congratulations to all Year 4 pupils on a truly memorable performance - and a special thank you to Miss Naddermier (clarinet) and Mr Rieband (brass) for their expert teaching and support.

## NLCS Choral Day (Year 4 Junior Choir)

This week, our Year 4 Junior Choir members took part in an exciting Choral Day at North London Collegiate School alongside pupils from three other Harrow schools. The workshop was led by the school's choral lead, Miss James, with piano accompaniment from Mrs Osedo.



The day began with lively vocal warm-ups and fun call-and-response songs, focusing on pitch awareness, diction and posture. The children also performed Fire, a three-part round, working on expression and incorporating well-synchronised actions into their performance. They then sang the two-part harmony piece 'I See a Star' by G. Gilpin, concentrating on pitch, rhythm and dynamics.

The day concluded with a wonderful choral concert, well attended by many parents. Well done to all our talented Year 4 singers for representing the school so beautifully!

**Mrs Leutfeld**  
**Director of Music**

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## Recommended Reading Challenge Awards

A huge well done to all of the children who have already achieved their Bronze or Silver Reading Challenge certificates by the end of Summer 1! We are so proud of the fantastic start our Reading Challenge has had across the school.

It has been wonderful to see children around the school talking enthusiastically about the books they are reading and proudly receiving their certificates during our Friday Celebration Assemblies. The reading corners across the school are also looking fantastic, with children enjoying exploring the books and working their way through the challenge.

We have even noticed that some children already own some of the recommended books at home, which is fantastic to see. The aim of the challenge is simply to encourage children to read, read, read and most importantly, enjoy reading. Thank you for your continued support at home and well done again to all of the children who have taken part so far! Please see award winners so far listed below.

### *Miss Francis-Dottin*

**Reception RJP** Ariyan  
**RDW** Kayra, Aarya, Aayah, Aryan, Isla, Sara, Liam, Josh, Thomas, Yehara and Zakeria  
**RLW** Indie and Aryiana

**Year 1 1KB** Vladimir, Sheldon, Dhvani, Arya, Daniel, Khalilah, Aarav, Urvi, Aleena, Ariya, Maya, Bianca, Mannat, Veer, Nathan and Sepanta  
**1RA** Sulayman, Liam, Inaya, Aayush, Shreya, Inuki, Tiara, Jiaan, Mishv, Antonia, Amaya, Tiyaan, Rahela, Karmen, Neeva, Vivaan and *Navya\**



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- 1TG** Hana, Saba, Seline, Avyan, Arya, Charlie, Alexandra, Emma, Archer, Malav, Sofia, Raeya and Zian
- 1RS** Shriyan, Dhyan, Naysha, Maanvika, Reva, Maryam, Ruhi, Aria, Jonathan, Noah, Aadhya, Tanay and Zack

- Year 2**
- 2NT** Alexandru, Judith, Elias, Rosalie and Isai
- 2DN** Anaya, Christine, Daniel, Eveline, Kelly, Kiara Kiera, Kryzana, Rhea, Siya and Viaan



- Year 3**
- 3NN** Aavish, Anna, Arya, Austin, Avni, Beatrice, Diyan, Ella, Emma, Neel, **Stara\***, Vaani and Vedanshi
- 3MD** Abhay, Aisha, Ariya, Benjamin, Dhilan, Eva, George, Ilya, Iosif, Jeremy, Lana, Layla, Mehreen, Moise, Raeya, Ruqayyah, Shay, Shri and Amirah
- 3MS** Xianarah, Amina, Bela, Emanuel, Aiysha, **Insiya, Saanvi, Mukti\***, Saajan, Aaron P, Shiv, Saleh, Dua, Nyla, Joshua, Kevin and Akshara
- 3SA** **Leya**, Eva, Aniya, Niyam, **Saman\***, Avira, Harshiv, Amelia, Veer, Anaya, Mishti, June, Esandi, Abigail and Stara

- Year 4**
- 4AK** Daria, Matteo, **Keren\***, Amos, Aarshay, Stefania and Tiana
- 4RS** Maryam, Sebastian, Sara, Sofia, Kiya, Nataneal, Joslyn, Kevin, Sophie and Aqsa
- 4XL** Dhanesh, Eloise, Avyaan and Aayat

- Year 5**
- 5PS** Riyaan, Sana, Aanya, Jia and Avinash
- 5RP** Anaiya P
- 5RC** Siya, Jasmine, Dheven and Rebecca

- Year 6**
- 6ND** Dylan and **Yusuf\***
- 6BS** Rebeca, Diya, Leila, Juliet and Amiya
- 6ET** Dylan, **Anahi Lily\*** and Reeva

\*These children have also received a silver award!

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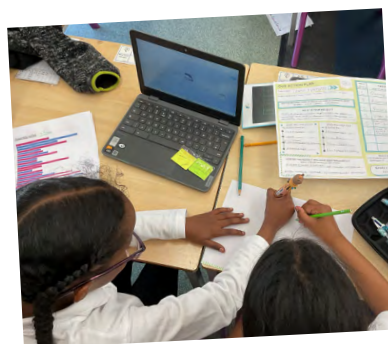
## Year 5 Carbon Schools Project

Year 5 pupils have been taking part in the Zero Carbon Schools Project, an exciting initiative designed to help children understand climate change and explore practical ways to reduce our school's environmental impact.

Each Year 5 class selected a different area of sustainability to investigate. 5PS focused on energy, exploring ways to reduce electricity use and make our school more energy efficient. 5RP investigated purchasing, considering how the school can make more sustainable choices when buying resources and materials. 5NL examined travel, looking at ways to encourage walking, cycling, and other environmentally friendly methods of transport. 5RC focused on food, exploring how reducing food waste and making sustainable food choices can help lower our carbon footprint.

Working in teams, pupils took on different roles and researched the causes and effects of carbon emissions. They created presentations, posters, surveys, and action plans to share practical ideas for making our school more sustainable. The project has helped pupils develop important skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, and public speaking. They have shown great enthusiasm, responsibility and creativity while exploring how small changes can make a big difference to the environment.

Each class will select one group to represent them and present their project to a wider audience. We are extremely proud of the thoughtful and innovative ideas the children have generated and look forward to seeing how their proposals continue to develop and have a positive impact on our school community.



***Miss Lakhani, Year 5 Leader***

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Schools  
Counselling  
Partnership

## Schools Counselling Partnership Update

After three years as Art Therapist and four years as Therapeutic Lead, Tom will be leaving Whitchurch at the end of term. He has supported pupils, parents and staff across the community, helping to develop and strengthen access to emotional wellbeing and therapeutic support where it has been most needed. Tom has greatly valued the opportunity to work alongside dedicated colleagues who share a commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people throughout his time in the role. A new Therapeutic Lead from Schools Counselling Partnership will be joining Whitchurch in September.

*"I have appreciated the collaboration, learning and achievements we have accomplished together. I would like to thank everyone I have worked with and wish the school and wider community success in the future." Tom*

## Welcome to Lavanya and Ramon from Harrow Mental Health Support Team



*"Hi everyone, we're from Harrow Mental Health Support Team and work with Whitchurch every Thursday. As mental health practitioners, our goal is to increase access to wellbeing support for young people and their families. We specialise in anxiety, challenging behaviour and emotional regulation. We offer 1:1 parent sessions to help support your child, whole-school approaches to small groups, classes and year groups, as well as signposting support to appropriate services. Some things to look out for that we may offer are assemblies, specialist workshops, webinars and coffee mornings!*

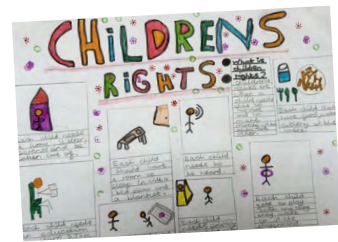
*If you'd like more information or feel that you/your child may benefit from our intervention, please reach out to Miss C for a referral. We look forward to working with you and your young people in the future!"*

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## Rights Respecting Award - Rights of a Child

This half term, our Rights Respecting Ambassadors have presented children's rights to children in Years 1 to 4. We have written our thoughts and created posters to share our growing awareness of these rights.



*Ms Liu, Rights Respecting School leader*



**"All children have rights to have a house, water and food."** Yusra

**"All children have the right to education."** Lois

**"Every child has a right to share their thoughts."** June

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

**"Children have the right to develop their skills and talents."** Kelly



1 DEFINITION OF A CHILD	2 NO DISCRIMINATION	3 BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD	4 MAKING RIGHTS REAL	5 FAMILY GUIDANCE AS CHILDREN DEVELOP	6 LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT	7 NAME AND NATIONALITY
8 IDENTITY	9 KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER	10 CONTACT WITH PARENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES	11 PROTECTION FROM KIDNAPPING	12 RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS	13 SHARING THOUGHTS FREELY	14 FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND RELIGION
15 SETTING UP OR JOINING GROUPS	16 PROTECTION OF PRIVACY	17 ACCESS TO INFORMATION	18 RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS	19 PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE	20 CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILIES	21 CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED
22 REFUGEE CHILDREN	23 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES	24 HEALTH, WATER, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT	25 REVIEW OF A CHILD'S PLACEMENT	26 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HELP	27 FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME	28 ACCESS TO EDUCATION
29 ARMS OF EDUCATION	30 MINORITY CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION	31 REST, PLAY, CULTURE, ARTS	32 PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL WORK	33 PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL DRUGS	34 PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE	35 PREVENTION OF SALE AND TRAFFICKING
36 PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION	37 CHILDREN IN DETENTION	38 PROTECTION IN WAR	39 RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION	40 CHILDREN WHO BREAK THE LAW	41 BEST LAW FOR CHILDREN APPLIES	42 EVERYONE MUST KNOW CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
43-54 HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS	<b>CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD</b>					

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## Year 6 Play in a Day - Macbeth

Year 6 took part in an all day exciting drama workshop - immersing ourselves in acting, storytelling and performance. Throughout the day we explored themes, characters and scenes from Macbeth and put on a wonderful performance at the end of the day. It was great preparation for our upcoming production in July.



## Year 2 visit to the Seaside

Year 2 had a wonderful time at Clacton-on-Sea! We enjoyed a fantastic day at the beach, taking part in sandcastle building, beach games and spending time together by the seaside. We especially loved paddling our feet in the sea, burying ourselves in the sand and making happy memories with their friends. Many thanks to Friends of Whitchurch for contributing towards the cost of the visit.



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Sport

## Year 4 and 5 Cricket Festival

Year 4 and 5 children have taken part in a cricket festival. Our teamwork and sportsmanship shone throughout the day, where we played some incredible cricket and won all of our matches.



## Year 5 and 6 Table Tennis

Year 5 and 6 children from table tennis club have taken part in a table tennis competition against other schools in Harrow. We played single and double matches with resilience and determination during an action packed morning.



## Year 3 and 4 Quad Kids

Year 3 and 4 children who took part in the Quad Kids event, featuring the 400m, 50m sprint, vortex howler and long jump. We did very well and enjoyed the day.



## Year 4 and 5 Boys Football

Year 5 and 5 boys participated in a football tournament against other schools at Elmgrove Primary School. We did extremely well and had a great day.



*Miss Wong and Miss Byrne*

# News and Highlights



## Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Update

Our Outdoor Play and Learning scheme has been a great success so far - more children are loving being outside, no matter what the weather, as there is now so much more to do. Whether it is playing with tyres and planks, playing in the mud kitchen, enjoying imaginative play in the small world area or exploring, OPAL is offering a creative and exciting alternative to the regular activities on the playground.

In addition to the areas already being used, we are introducing music and a disco/dance stage for our junior children and more crates and pallets for building.

Through this kind of play, not only are children more active at lunchtime, they are also having the opportunity to further develop life skills such as co-operation, team work and problem solving. They are becoming motivated and enthusiastic builders, engineers, explorers and designers. Thank you for your support so far with donations and supporting the OPAL ethos - you can find out more about OPAL via the link to their website.

*Miss Byrne*

Discover  
more here



# The Whitchurch Woodland

Year 6 will be participating in Forest School Sessions in Summer 2



## Year 1 Forest School Sessions

This half term, Year 1 have had a fantastic time exploring and learning through nature in the Whitchurch Woodland. We have enjoyed creating clay models inspired by the woodland environment and developed our understanding of flora and fauna found within our outdoor space.

We also explored our senses through a sensory line activity, where we used touch, smell and observation skills to identify natural objects from around the woodland area. Another favourite activity was trying Hapa Zome leaf bashing, using hammers, stones, leaves and flowers to create beautiful natural prints and patterns. We also gathered together for hot chocolate, marshmallows and biscuits around the woodland area, reflecting on all the wonderful learning experiences we have shared.

*Mr Coutinho, Forest School Leader*

**"I like doing Hapa Zome in forest school, finding mini insects and making clay animals."**

**"I love using my senses to find out what was on the string in forest school."**

**"I like playing in the mud, den building and the hot chocolate and biscuits."**

**"I enjoyed exploring outside in the Woodland with my friends".**



# Summer Lunch Menu



Allergens are listed on our website (click here)

Salad bar and bread available daily



	WEEK ONE 13/4, 4/5, 1/6, 22/6, 13/7	WEEK TWO 20/4, 11/5, 8/6, 29/6, 20/7	WEEK THREE 27/4, 18/5, 15/6, 6/7
<b>MONDAY MAINS</b>	Chicken Hot Dog, with Herby Diced Potatoes & Garden Peas Grilled Cheese Sub, with Herby Diced Potatoes & Garden Peas (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad Cherry Shortbread	BBQ Lamb Pizza, with Diced Potatoes & Peas Margherita Pizza, with Diced Potatoes & Peas (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve) Apple Flapjack	Chicken Burger, Served with Jacket Wedges & Corn on the Cob Vegetable Burger, Served with Jacket Wedges & Corn on the Cob (Ve) (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad Orange Cookie
<b>DESSERT</b>			
<b>TUESDAY MAINS</b>	Turkey Tikka Masala Curry Served with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans Lentil & Chick Pea Keema Curry Served with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve) Tropical Fruit Salad	Chinese Chicken Curry with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans Chinese Quorn Curry with 50/50 Rice & Green Beans (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad Jam Sponge	Chicken Korma Curry Served with 50/50 Rice & Broccoli Quorn Korma Curry Served with 50/50 Rice & Broccoli (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve) Tropical Fruit Salad
<b>DESSERT</b>			
<b>WEDNESDAY MAINS</b>	Lamb Bolognese, Served with Pasta & Broccoli Vegan Bolognese, Served with Pasta & Broccoli (V) (Vg) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad Strawberry Jelly	Chicken Sausage & Mash, with Gravy & Peas Vegan Sausage & Mash, with Gravy, Peas & Carrots (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve) Orange Mandarin Jelly	Lamb Hot Pot, Served with Potatoes, Carrots & Cauliflower Lentil Hot Pot Served with Potatoes, Carrots & Cauliflower (V) (Ve) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad Peach & Raspberry Jelly
<b>DESSERT</b>			
<b>THURSDAY MAINS</b>	Chicken Shawarma Wraps, with Cous Cous & Sweetcorn Falafel Wraps, with Cous Cous & Sweetcorn (V) (Ve) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve) Apple Sponge Cake	Tuna Pasta Bake, Served with Garlic Bread & Broccoli Macaroni Cheese, Served with Garlic Bread & Broccoli (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad Chocolate Brownie	BBO Chicken Served with Rice & Corn on the Cob Lentil & Red Pepper Roulade Served with Rice & Corn on the Cob (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve) Pancakes with Berry Compote
<b>DESSERT</b>			
<b>FRIDAY MAINS</b>	Fish Fingers Served with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas Vegan Sausage Roll Served with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad Vanilla Ice Cream Sundae	Fish Stars, Served with Chips, Peas or Baked Beans Cheese & Bean Turnover Served with Chips & Peas (V) Pasta & Tomato Sauce (Ve) Strawberry Ice Cream	Battered Fish, with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas Cheese & Onion Lattice, with Chips & Baked Beans or Peas (V) Jacket Potato with Cheese, Baked Beans (Ve) or Tuna Mayo with Side Salad Chocolate Ice Cream
<b>DESSERT</b>			

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 (Vg).

COOMBS CATERING PARTNERSHIP



# Staff Snapshot

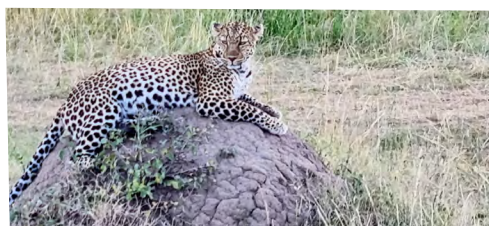


**Name: Jalpa Shah**  
**Role: Finance Administrator**

## All about me

I was born in a lovely coastal town of Mombasa, Kenya where the temperature is never below 30 degrees and it is famous for its sandy white beaches. I spent lots of weekends and holidays enjoying the beach, jungles and going on safaris. My family would take numerous road trips to see my grandparents and whilst en route, we would get to see zebras, giraffes, lions and elephants and many more. At the age of 10, I decided to have pets and I adopted 2 adorable puppies, who were a big part of my teenage years.

I grew up having a very well balanced, all-rounded education where I participated in many outdoor sports, in theatre production musicals, camping and climbing Mount Kenya. This is where my love of all things adventurous started. My biggest and most important adventure was when I moved with my husband to London 27 years ago. For the first 10 years, I adapted and settled my roots here and worked in a variety of office based roles. After having my first child, I became a homemaker though that didn't last long, as I qualified as a Teaching Assistant to fit in with the children's timings. I did miss working in an office and so made a change once again. I live with my husband and two teenage boys who keep me on my toes.



# Staff Snapshot



## Hobbies and interests

Growing up surrounded by the sun, sea and sand, I enjoy swimming, snorkelling and dabbling in various watersports. One of my highlights has been parasailing and scuba diving. I love travelling and have been to many different countries, exploring places, taking in the culture, food and the beauty of nature. I enjoy cooking all cuisines and have recently rediscovered my love of art and creating mandalas. I am a great fan of Bollywood music and have been to many concerts. I have a huge interest in spirituality, alternative healing therapies and energy work which has led me to practice meditations and learn reflexology. I am currently learning to be a pranic healer.



## Best part of my role

I like working in a school as the energy is very positive and there is never a dull moment. The best part of my job is that I love working with numbers and anything to do with finance.

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).

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## RECOGNISING & MANAGING STRESS

According to recent studies, over 60% of young people report feeling regularly overwhelmed – with stress impacting their learning, emotional wellbeing and social connections. If left unaddressed, stress can lead to more serious concerns such as anxiety, depression or disengagement. This guide offers ten practical, evidence-based strategies to help children and young people recognise, manage and recover from stress in healthy ways.

### 1 SPOT THE SUBTLE SIGNS

Look out for changes in mood, behaviour, or energy levels, such as irritability, withdrawal, clinginess, or frequent headaches. These may indicate that a child is feeling overwhelmed. By tuning into these cues early and offering a calm, non-judgemental space to talk, adults can help children feel heard and supported before issues escalate.

### 2 KEEP CONVERSATIONS FLOWING

Make time for open, informal check-ins – whether it's during car journeys, over dinner, or in quiet classroom moments. Let children know it's okay to talk about what's bothering them. Regular, low-pressure conversations create a safe space where emotions are validated, not dismissed.

### 3 MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF THE DAY

Physical activity can dramatically reduce stress hormones while improving mood and focus. Encourage movement through activities children genuinely enjoy – from team sports to dancing around the kitchen. Even light activity like stretching or walking the dog can help us all unwind.

### 4 SUPPORT HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Poor sleep makes stress harder to manage. Establish a calming evening routine that avoids screens before bedtime and promotes winding down, such as reading, listening to music, or chatting quietly. Good sleep hygiene helps reset mood, enhances concentration, and boosts emotional resilience.

### 5 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness doesn't have to mean long periods of meditation. A few slow breaths before lessons or short family meditation sessions before bed can make a real difference. These simple habits help children ground themselves, reduce emotional reactivity, and build inner calm over time.

### 6 SET DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Excessive screen time, especially before bed or on social media, is linked with higher stress levels. Set clear expectations for when and where devices can be used and suggest screen-free alternatives like crafts, nature walks, or board games to promote digital balance and reduce overstimulation.

### 7 NURTURE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Strong relationships act as a buffer against stress. Whether it's a trusted adult, a sibling, or a good friend, ensure children have people around them they can talk to and spend quality time with. Help them build those bonds through shared activities and meaningful interaction.

### 8 PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Set realistic goals and praise effort, not just outcomes. When children feel pressured to be perfect, stress naturally follows. Celebrate small wins and help them reframe setbacks as learning opportunities. This helps build confidence and reduces the fear of failure.

### 9 TEACH EVERYDAY PROBLEM-SOLVING

Use real-life scenarios to build resilience. Encourage children to identify problems, consider possible solutions, and choose a plan of action. Practising these steps builds a sense of control and reduces the helplessness that often accompanies stress.

### 10 BE THE MODEL THEY NEED

Children notice how adults respond to challenges. Model healthy coping strategies such as taking breaks, asking for help, or calmly expressing frustration. By showing how you manage stress constructively, you help normalise these behaviours and encourage children to do the same.

### Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

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