

Whitchurch Weekly

16th May
2025
Issue 31



Year 3 visit to Neasden Hindu Temple

This week, half of Year 3 visited the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, a Hindu temple in Neasden, to enrich their R.E. learning about Hinduism. Children and staff alike were awe-struck by its magnificent structure and intricate carvings. During the visit, the children explored the history of the temple and why it was built. Built according to traditional Hindu architectural principles, it was a pioneering effort made entirely of stone and was the first traditional Hindu temple in Europe. Whilst inside the temple they also learnt more about the ways in which Hindus pray in daily life.

Everyone was truly captivated by its grandeur and beauty!



Enrichment Highlights



Year 1 visit to Canons Park

This morning Year 1 visited Canons Park for a walk around the park grounds to see the beautiful plants and huge trees. It was a warm and sunny day, perfect for spending time outdoors! After enjoying their fruit under a large oak tree, the children took time to examine the leaves on the trees, deciding if they were deciduous or evergreen, and also learnt the names of trees including oak, willow and maple and monkey puzzle! They saw butterflies flying, a squirrel climbing, a ladybird crawling and also heard birds singing.

Later on, the children enjoyed sketching plants and flowers in the secret garden. It was peaceful and relaxing to be surrounded by nature!

Mrs Ahmed



Year 6 SATs

Well done to Year 6 who completed their SATs this week! They have worked hard to prepare for the week and completed these tests to the best of their abilities. We are very proud of you! Thank you to the staff who supervised the SATs breakfasts on these days to ensure that the children were suitably fuelled for the week!



Enrichment Highlights



Year 2 visit to London Central Mosque

Year 2 visited London Central Mosque in Regent's Park as enrichment for their learning about Islam in R.E. During the visit the children learnt more about the Islamic faith including the importance of prayer, the Five Pillars of Islam and how Muslims prepare for worship. The hosts were warm and welcoming, answering the children's thoughtful questions and helping them to understand the significance of the mosque in the lives of Muslims. Year 2 then enjoyed a tasty picnic together in leafy Regent's Park, making the most of the sunshine!

Mrs Akhund



FoW Kids' Disco

The disco sessions this week were a great success. A big shout out to Sej, our wonderful DJ. He did a fabulous job and the children had a fantastic time!

Many thanks to staff and FoW members for their support on the night and behind the scenes.

Team FoW



General Notices and Highlights



Class Photographs - next week

A reminder that class photographs will be taking place on Thursday and Friday next week. Please ensure that your child is wearing full school uniform - they should bring their jumpers/sweatshirts for the photograph and also bring their P.E. kit to school if it is their P.E. day.

RBP and
5SC class
assemblies
next week

Donations - Gazebos for Summer Fair (FoW)

Friends of Whitchurch are looking to get hold of more gazebos for the Summer Fair. If you have an easy-to-assemble gazebo that you no longer want and are willing to donate, please contact the school office by half term.

Parking on the Roundabout

Please can all parents and carers ensure that they **do not** park on the roundabout / turnaround area in the car park.

There have been a series of near misses because children are being taken out of or put into the car, adjacent to two busy lanes. Also, coaches cannot turn around the corner safely with cars parked on the roundabout. This has delayed children returning to school after school trips. I would appreciate it if all parents and carers use the car park appropriately. *Ms Inniss*



Summer Music Concert

This is an early notice that our Summer Music Concert (ensembles) will take place on **Wednesday 18th June at 5pm**. The children are already very excited and rehearsals are well underway - including our newest group, the Mini Choir, as well as joint practice sessions for the Orchestra and Rock Band. Full details of concert arrangements will be sent to parents of ensemble members via School Spider after half term break.

Mrs Leutfeld



Dates for your Diary

Summer 1



Monday 19th May

3LA and 3NL visit to Neasden Hindu Temple
Year 4 Junior Choir Choral Day at NLCS

Tuesday 20th May

5RC and 5TG visit to Kew Gardens
Year 6 Play in a Day (Macbeth)

Wednesday 21st May

4PC and 4XL visit to London Zoo
6ET and 6HH visit to the Paradox Museum

Thursday 22nd May

Class Photographs
4BS and 4ND visit to London Zoo
6CM and 6HA visit to the Paradox Museum

Friday 23rd May

Class Photographs
5SK and 5SC visit to Kew Gardens

Please note class change for Year 5 visit to Kew Gardens



Class Assemblies

Tuesdays
Reception
to Year 3
(9.05am to 9.45am)

Tues 20th May	RBP
Tues 10th June	RLS
Tues 24th June	RTP
Tues 1st July*	RWD

*rescheduled

Thurs 22nd May 5SC

Thursdays
Years 4 to 6
(9.05am to 9.45am)

Spotlight on Humanities

Year 5
are learning
about South
America in
Geography



South America

This half term, our Geography topic has taken us across the globe to South America, where we've learned to identify the Amazon on a map, explored its climate and discovered just how important and unique tropical rainforests are. We've also studied the four layers of the rainforest (emergent, canopy, understory and forest floor) and found out which animals live where and why. The children really enjoyed mapping the rainforest and drawing labelled diagrams to show what they've learned.

We've also been thinking about the people who live in the rainforest, particularly the Yanomami tribe. The children compared their own lives to those of rainforest communities, looking at differences in homes, food, schooling and technology. Through creative drawings and thoughtful writing, they've shown an understanding of how rainforest tribes live closely with nature and how their survival skills differ from ours.

Miss Chauhan-D'Souza



Year 5 views

"I have learnt that there are lots of indigenous people in the Amazon rainforest and their life is really different to people in Brazil." Dylan

"The Amazon rainforest is the largest rainforest in the world and the Amazon river is the second longest river in the world." Reevea

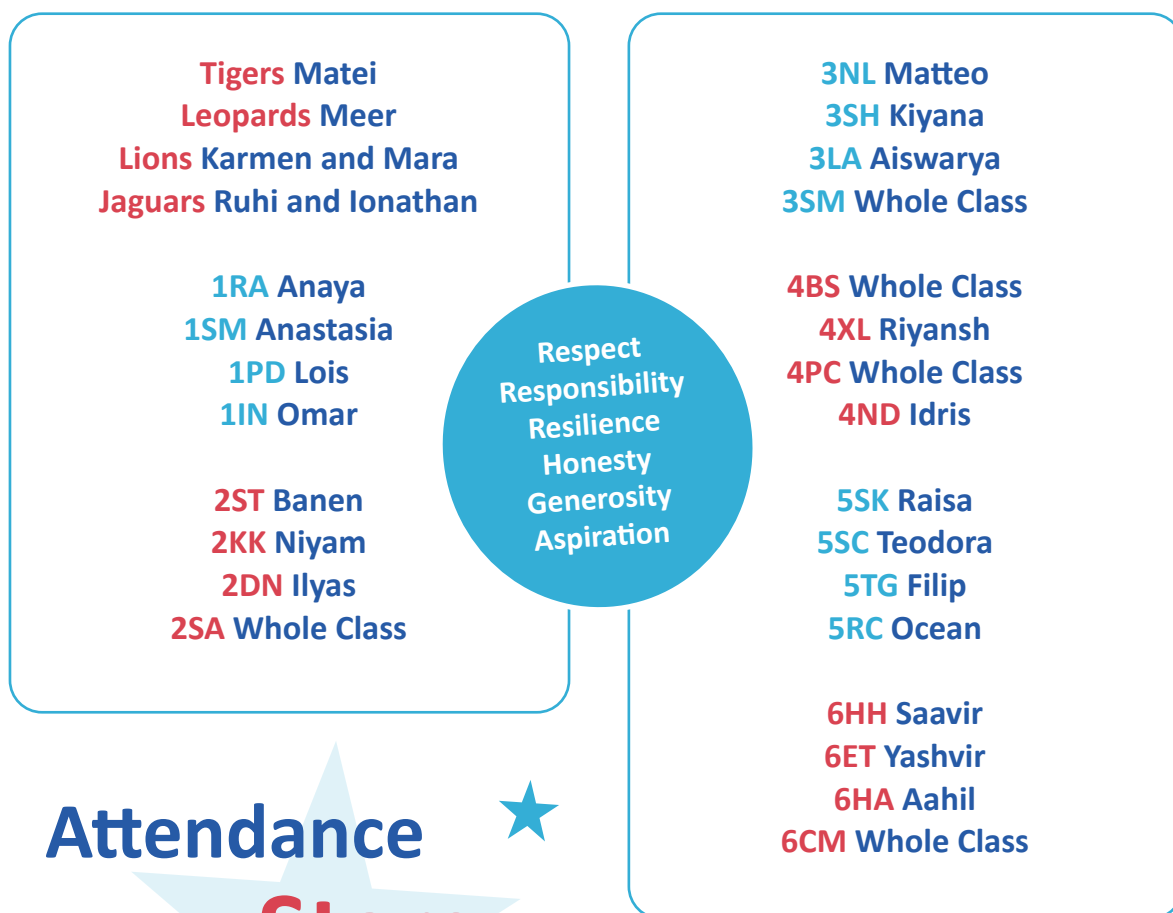
"I have enjoyed learning all about the Amazon rainforest!" Yashvi



Whitchurch Star Pupils



Well done to our stars of the week, who have been selected for excellent work and demonstrating our school values



Attendance Stars

This week's attendance stars are 5SK (100%)

Whole School 95.7%

Did you know?

Regular routines and increased social interaction promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Support for Families

Online
Safety



Minecraft

Still the best-selling game of all time, Minecraft has hundreds of millions of players - making it more important than ever to stay informed. With its vibrant worlds and endless potential for creativity it's no wonder Minecraft continues to capture young imaginations.

With the Minecraft movie hitting cinemas in April, interest in the game has remained strong. But whether they're mining resources or building digital castles, children could also encounter strangers, scary content or bullying behaviour online.

Please see the poster attached to this newsletter for top tips on how to keep children safe from issues like grieving, chat risks and unintended purchases, while still embracing the game's educational and creative benefits.



NHS Dental Care

NHS Dentists appointments are **FREE** for children under 18 years and women who are pregnant/have had a baby in the last 12 months. If they can't attend an appointment they must cancel it to free up space for others as availability is limited. Please refer to the NHS find a dentist service for availability to register at a dental practice. You can also refer to the table attached to this newsletter.

Top tips for good dental care:

- Brush twice daily for 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste
- Visit your dentist regularly
- Reduce consumption of sugary food and drinks

Find an
NHS Dentist
here

View
eligibility
for free NHS
dental treatment
or help with
costs here

Support for Families



Schools
Counselling
Partnership



Helping your child find their calm

When your child feels a big emotion such as anger, worry or sadness, they will find it very difficult to listen to your instructions, to think or even sometimes to find their words to let you know what they need. This is because when our feelings get so big, our 'thinking/upstairs brain' goes offline and disconnects from our 'feeling/downstairs brain'. We call this 'flipping our lids'. As a result, your child can act out their emotion by misbehaving, withdrawing and going quiet, becoming extra clingy to you or having a teary meltdown.

Your child will need your help to find their calm again so that they can listen to you, use their words instead of their body to communicate how they are feeling and choose more positive behaviour. They need you to help them feel safe again. As always, it is essential that you find your calm first.

It can also be helpful to have either a 'calm space' or simply a 'calm box' in your home for them to use when they feel in their body that they are having a big emotion (hot cheeks, knot in the tummy, tight fists, etc). In this space or box, have various simple items that can help them: a fidget toy, a squishy ball to squeeze, quiet music, a little cuddly toy, lavender scented hand lotion, a raw carrot or apple to bite on, paper and pencils to draw/colour, a calming book, a family photo, pictures of nature scenes, etc. Also encourage some deep belly breathing. Once they feel calmer, they are ready to listen and to talk, you can check in with them and think together about what happened.

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@schoolsounsellingpartnership.co.uk**

Staff Snapshot

Name: Katie Bainbridge
Role: Year 2 Class Teacher



All about me

I was born and raised in Harrow and continue to live locally with my husband, 4 children and my dog Luna. I studied Criminology and Forensic Science at University and worked for the Metropolitan Police Service for 15 years, undertaking roles on the front counter at the police station and as a witness care officer in Harrow, Camden and Islington and finally the Serious Crime Unit covering all 32 boroughs of London. During this time, I was awarded a Harrow community award and a Commendation at New Scotland Yard. My teaching journey commenced in 2020 and one of my teaching placements was at Whitchurch. I loved the school so much that I then started working here as a newly qualified teacher.



Hobbies and Interests

I enjoy taking my children to the theatres in London and to watch ballet. I like to attend music events and I'm looking forward to Reggae Land in Milton Keynes over the summer. I usually spend the weekends going on long walks with my dog Luna. She is a miniature Yorkshire terrier and she was named by the children in my year 2 class last year. She is so tiny she only weighs 1.3kg.

Best part of my role

The Whitchurch community of staff, children and parents is what makes our school so special. At the end of each school day, it's lovely to see so many parents and children that I have taught over the past few years, passing by my classroom waving and stopping to update me on their progress. Every school day is different and each year I get a new class of eager little learners all with their individual personalities.

Reading Corner

reading for parents
and carers

Staff share
their favourite
books for parents
and carers to
enjoy



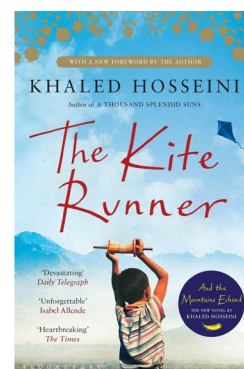
'Becoming' by Michelle Obama *Mrs Hassasing*

I really enjoyed 'Becoming' by Michelle Obama because it offers such a powerful and personal look into her life - from her humble beginnings to becoming a lawyer, the First Lady, and a passionate advocate for education, health, and equality. What stood out to me most was her honesty in sharing both the challenges and triumphs she experienced along the way. She writes in a way that's both relatable and inspiring, and it made me reflect on how our backgrounds and struggles can shape who we are. It's a book that left me feeling motivated and hopeful.



'The Kite Runner' by Khaled Hosseini *Mrs Shah*

This book was so gripping, I couldn't put it down. It takes you on an emotional journey of friendship, loyalty, guilt, strength of character and personal conflict. It is a story of 2 young boys, Amir and Hassan, growing up in Afghanistan. Amir is from a middle class family and is raised with the son of his father's servant, Hassan, in Afghanistan, before the Soviet's invasion. After the invasion, Amir and his father move to California. He returns many years later to his homeland which is now under Taliban rule to right some of the wrongs and seek redemption. It is a beautifully written and superb book on many levels.





Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absences

2024
updates:
what you
need to
know

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for unauthorised absences that occur after 19th August 2024.

5 consecutive days of Term Time Leave

Fines
will be
issued
for:

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days *(or for fewer days where this has happened before)*.

10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10 week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered where there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10 week period.

Each parent/carer - for each child

Fines
will be
issued
to:

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent/carer, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent/carer receiving 3 separate fines.



First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

***£160 per parent/carer,
per child when paid
within 28 days.***

***(reduced to £80 per
parent/carer, per child
if paid within 21 days)***

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

***£160 per parent/carer,
per child when paid
within 28 days.***

***(no option to pay
at £80 level)***

Third Offence (and any further offences within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. the case will proceed to the Magistrates' court.

***Magistrate's fines can
be up to £2,500 per
parent/carer, per child.***

Please refer to our Attendance and Punctuality Policy and speak with the school if you are thinking of taking your child out of school during term time. You will need to make a written request to take your child out of school and any leave of absence will need to be agreed by the Headteacher before it is given.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Still the best-selling game of all time, Minecraft is a bastion of creativity and community, with hundreds of millions of players building and crafting in its almost endless world. The popularity of Minecraft among gamers of all ages means it's important to remain informed about the game, including how to play it safely and whether it's suitable for the children in your care. That's why we've created this guide explaining the risks associated with Minecraft and how to ensure a purely enjoyable gaming experience.

SCARY ELEMENTS

While Minecraft can be seen as a kind of 'digital LEGO', certain game modes include creatures accompanied by eerie sound effects. These can be a bit too frightening for some younger players, potentially leading to distressing in-game combat and other encounters – although the combat is quite basic and free from any real depiction of violence.

GRIEFING

Some players in Minecraft take pleasure in deliberately damaging or destroying another person's creations. This behaviour, known as 'griefing', is a form of bullying – it intentionally ruins someone else's experience by erasing hours of their work and forcing them to start over. Many public servers regard griefing as a serious offence and often ban those who engage in it.

ADDICTIVENESS

Minecraft's focus on creativity means that, as with any creative endeavour, it can be easy to get carried away. If your child is finding it difficult to manage their time because they're drawn in by Minecraft's gameplay loop of resource gathering and building elaborate projects, it could have a knock-on effect on their social interactions and schoolwork.

PUBLIC SERVERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

With public servers being so easily accessible in Minecraft, it's highly likely that children will end up chatting with strangers through the in-game text chat. Some servers even place an emphasis on social interaction, actively encouraging communication between players. While there's nothing inherently wrong with this, it does carry certain risks. In addition to the concerns around speaking with strangers online, players who host their own servers may have their IP addresses exposed, posing a further security concern.

ADDITIONAL PURCHASES

Minecraft is available as a free trial on a variety of devices; however, the full game requires a one-off purchase. After that, players have the option to buy additional cosmetic upgrades or subscribe to Minecraft Realms. Realms is an entirely optional subscription service that allows users to run their own private server to play with friends. Without proper supervision, younger players may end up making unintended or excessive purchases.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE

Selecting Creative or Peaceful mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is far lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of enemies and creatures attacking you or damaging your building.

HOST A PRIVATE SERVER

The easiest way to find a safe server for children to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given its address and password. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – ban anyone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental controls in Minecraft. Hosting a private server, however, will cost a monthly fee.

TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

At some point in their lives, almost everyone will make contact with a stranger online. Talking to children about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan for dealing with any hostile or difficult people. It's important that a child knows never to tell a stranger about themselves online and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.

RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS

Much of Minecraft's early stages can be an exercise in frustration for players who don't know where to start. Thankfully, there's a wealth of material online and in video format to help you learn the basics. Just be mindful that some of this content may not be appropriate for children, so you should consider watching it yourself first.

PLAY MINECRAFT WITH YOUR CHILD

As a creative building tool, Minecraft makes it great fun for children to team up and construct vast buildings accompanied by imaginative landscapes, much like working with LEGO or model kits. Playing in a game mode that includes enemies can encourage critical thinking and teamwork; however, you should consider which game mode is appropriate for the child in your care.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Gaming Editor at the Daily Star, and has worked in games media for more than 6 years. A long-time gaming enthusiast, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety for children of all ages.



The National College®

Local Dentists

accepting NHS patients

Dental Practice	298 Whitchurch Lane, Edgware, HA8 6QX	020 8952 7108
Headstone Lane Dental Practice	197 Headstone Lane, Harrow, HA2 6ND	020 8428 3769
Mollison Dental Practice	106A Mollison Way, Edgware, HA8 5QT	020 8952 2808
218 Smile Dental Clinic	218 Pinner Road, North Harrow, HA1 4JU	020 8427 9585
Streatfield Dental Surgery	206 Streatfield Road, Harrow, HA3 9BU	020 8204 9485
Bhuva Dental Surgery - Pinner	692 Pinner Road, Pinner, HA5 5QY	020 8866 7737
Harrow Smile Clinic	99 High Street, Wealdstone, HA3 5DL	020 8863 0186
Care Dental	2 Stag Lane, Edgware, HA8 5JY	020 8951 0003
Bright Dental Practice	300 Kenton Road, Harrow, HA3 8DD	020 8907 7733
Rayners Lane Dental Practice	6 Warden Avenue, Rayners Lane, Harrow, HA2 9LW	020 8868 9922
Dental Practice	211 The Heights, Northolt, UB5 4BX	020 8423 5121
Raeburns Dental Practice	198 High Road, Wealdstone, HA3 7BA	020 8427 3626
Eastcote Lane Dental Practice	3 Eastcote Lane, South Harrow, HA2 8BW	020 8422 1857
Cohen Dental Practice	486 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, HA5 4SL	020 8428 4606
Pinner Green Dental Clinic	8 Pinner Green, Pinner, HA5 2AA	020 8866 0362
Stanmore Dental Surgery	9 Church Road, Stanmore, HA7 4AR	020 8954 9333
Quadrant Dental Care	2 The Quadrant, Headstone Gardens, HA2 6PN	020 8861 3737
Ace Dental	172 Long Elmes, Harrow Weald, HA3 5JZ	07810 797694