

Whitchurch Weekly

27th June
2025
Issue 36



Nursery visit to Woodside Animal Farm

Nursery children had a brilliant time at Woodside Animal Farm. They were very excited to travel by coach to the farm and see all the different farm animals!

They really enjoyed feeding the goats and alpacas and were keen to pet the rabbits and guinea pigs. All children had lots of fun in the big sand pit, play area and on the swing ride! They were very tired and fell asleep on the coach after such an enjoyable day and had lots to talk about with their families!

A big thank you to all the parents who joined us on the trip, we really appreciate your support and hope you enjoyed the farm too!

Ms Szabo and Ms Azward



Enrichment Highlights

National Youth
Choir auditions -
click here to
find out more



Junior Music Day at John Lyon School (Senior Choir)

It's been another especially musical week at Whitchurch! Our Senior Choir, made up of pupils from Years 5 and 6, took part in the Junior Music Day at John Lyon School, joining young musicians from across the area for a day of collaborative music-making. The children participated in vocal warm-ups, rehearsed short rounds and sang in two-part harmony 'You raise me up' by B. Graham and R. Lovland and in unison 'If only you would listen' from School of Rock by A. L. Webber. The day concluded with a wonderful concert, attended by many parents, showcasing the hard work and skills of the local schools' joined orchestra and choir. Many congratulations to our Senior Choir for representing Whitchurch so brilliantly!



HMS Percussion Workshop (Drummers)

The HMS Percussion Workshop was another highly successful and enjoyable event. Well done to Ella and Dominick in Year 5, and Luca in Year 6, who took part in this fantastic workshop. The day began with West African drumming, where the children combined syncopated rhythms using a wide range of untuned percussion instruments. In the afternoon, they took part in short percussion sessions, which included exploring auxiliary percussion instruments and creating imaginative sound effects for the Building a Rocket clip from the Wallace and Gromit film. They also played Cuban clave rhythms, repeating patterns on the bass drum and on South American instruments such as claves, agogo bells, and cajóns. In the final session, they accompanied a Rock Band on drum kit, steel pans, and congas in a vibrant performance of 'Superstition' by Stevie Wonder. Well done to our drummers!



Mrs Leutfeld, Director of Music

Enrichment Highlights



National School Sports Week

To celebrate National School Sports Week, one year group visited a local high school to take part in a football tournament and another year group went to The Elms for a tennis session. The athletics team also took part in a competition and came back with some medals!

Cricket Tournament at Harrow School

The Year 5 and 6 Cricket Team went to play a tournament against other schools at Harrow School's beautiful grounds this week and won 4/4 of their matches. Well done to the boys who took part!

Miss Wong and Miss Byrne



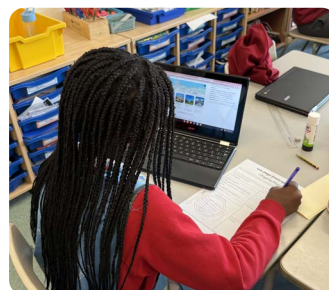
Enrichment Highlights



Year 5/6 Languages Day at Newton Farm School

Some Year 5 and 6 children took part in a range of Modern Foreign Languages enrichment activities at Newton Farm to develop their language skills and cultural awareness. They had the chance to learn some Mandarin, German and French. They took part in a dance session and carried out research about French-speaking countries. The visit helped boost their confidence, curiosity, and enthusiasm for learning languages.

Mrs Nawroly and Mr D'Amore



2KK and 2ST River Cruise

Today it was 2KK and 2ST's turn to experience a River Cruise down the River Thames! The children enjoyed spotting famous London landmarks old and new, including the Shard, St Paul's Cathedral, the London Eye and Big Ben!

*Miss Karia,
Year 2 class teacher*



Enrichment Highlights



3SH and 3LA visit to the Verulamium Museum

This week, it was 3LA and 3SH's turn to visit the Verulamium Museum in St Albans. The children had a fantastic time dressing up and experiencing what life was like during Roman times. They toured the museum and enjoyed seeing a range of fascinating Roman artefacts.

We had lunch in a beautiful open field before walking up to the site of a former Roman villa. There, we imagined what it might have looked like long ago, whilst exploring the remains of the mosaic floor and hypocaust system. Mrs Hill gave us a mini tour and history talk about what was once called Verulamium - now known as St Albans.

Miss Aid, Year 3 class teacher



General Notices and Highlights



Parental Survey

Please remember to complete our parental survey by **Monday morning at 9am** (link via the School Spider message). Your feedback is incredibly important to us as it enables us to continue to improve and shape the best possible experience for our pupils and families. Thank you for your support.



Year 1 to 3 Sports Day

Unfortunately, Sports Day for Years 1, 2 and 3 was postponed due to overnight rain making the field too wet for use. We will inform you as soon as an alternative date has been arranged.



Nursery Sports Day - Monday 30th June

Sports Day will take place on Monday at the times below. All children should come to school wearing their P.E. kit and bring their water bottle, wear a sun hat and have sunscreen applied. We look forward to seeing you there!

Nursery AM Sports Day (9.30am-11am)

Nursery PM Sports Day (1.30pm-3pm)

School Counselling Partnership Workshop - Wednesday 2nd July

Our Therapeutic Lead Tom will be running a bereavement workshop on **Wednesday from 9am-10am**. There will be a presentation and a forum for discussion in a safe space. All parents/carers are welcome, coffee and tea will be provided. If you intend to come along, please call or email the school office to give us an idea of numbers.

RWD class
assembly
on Tuesday
at 9.05am

Transition Day
(children meet
their new teacher)
on Wednesday
morning

Year 3 Recorder Concerts Thursday 3rd July

3NL/3SM (9.20am-9.50am)
3SH/3LA (10.30am-11am)

General Notices and Highlights



FoW Summer Fair - this Sunday

A reminder that the Summer Fair is taking place this **Sunday from 12pm-4pm**.



To view the Summer Fair brochure, please view the School Spider message (or scan the QR code with another device). If you are able to volunteer some time on the day please click on the link.

Sign up to
volunteer
here



Car Parking - Safety

Please ensure that you are parking safely and considerately in and around the school. We have had more reports of dangerous parking on Marsh Lane. The road next to the Scout Hut should not be parked on or blocked - this acts as an emergency access road for Avanti School.



We advise parents and carers to park carefully on one of the neighbouring roads and walk the remainder of the journey to/from school at the start and end of the school day.

Connecting SEN Families

One of our parents has set up a WhatsApp group for parents whose children have additional needs - helping you connect with parents/carers for support with signposting to services, suitable clubs and activities, or even just sharing experiences. Please note that this groups is not managed by the school.



Hello, SEN Parents let's share our journey together.

A community designed for all year groups, a place to build friendships, express knowledge and share experiences.

Scan the QR code
to join our
Whatsapp group



This was created by SEN Parent.

View our
Summer term
menu and
allergens
here

Dates for your Diary

Summer 2



Sunday 29th June	FoW Summer Fair (12pm-4pm)
Monday 30th June	AM Nursery Sports Day (9.30am-11am) PM Nursery Sports Day (1.30pm-3pm) Year 5 Maya Day
Wednesday 2nd July	Transition Day (children meet their new teacher)
Thursday 3rd July	Year 3 Recorder Concert 3NL/3SM (9.20am-9.50am) 3SH/3LA (10.30am-11am)
Tuesday 8th July	Year 6 visit to Hollywood Bowl (9am-1.30pm) Parents' Evening (from 3.30pm)
Wednesday 9th July	Year 4 visit to Cineworld Wembley (9.30am-2.30pm) Parents' Evening (from 3.30pm)
Monday 14th July	Reception visit to Hertfordshire Zoo 1RA and 1PD visit to London Aquarium (SeaLife) 6HH and 6ET Production (5.30pm-7pm)
Tuesday 15th July	Year 4 day visit to Woodrow High House 6HA and 6CM Production (5.30pm-7pm)
Friday 18th July	1SM and 1IN visit to London Aquarium (SeaLife)
Monday 21st July	Year 6 Leavers' Assembly (2pm-3pm) Year 6 Leavers' Party (6pm-8pm)



Spotlight on Physical Education



Dodgeball

This half term in PE, Year 3 have been learning the exciting and energetic game of dodgeball. We have been developing key skills such as throwing, catching, dodging, teamwork, and spatial awareness. Each session focused on building confidence, improving reaction time, and encouraging good sportsmanship.

Miss Aid, Year 3 class teacher

Year 3 views

“Dodgeball calms our minds and helps us learn some self defence as we need to dodge to ball.” Aiswarya

“It is very entertaining and keeps on alert because you need to dodge the ball.” Aarna

“Dodgeball has helped us with our throwing and is a fun way to learn.” Nivai

“Dodgeball makes me feel happy and is a really fun sport to learn.” Aylan

“Dodgeball is a really fun activity and you can get exercise. It make me feel really relaxed and I also learnt that when you hit below the shoulders you are out.” Maariyah

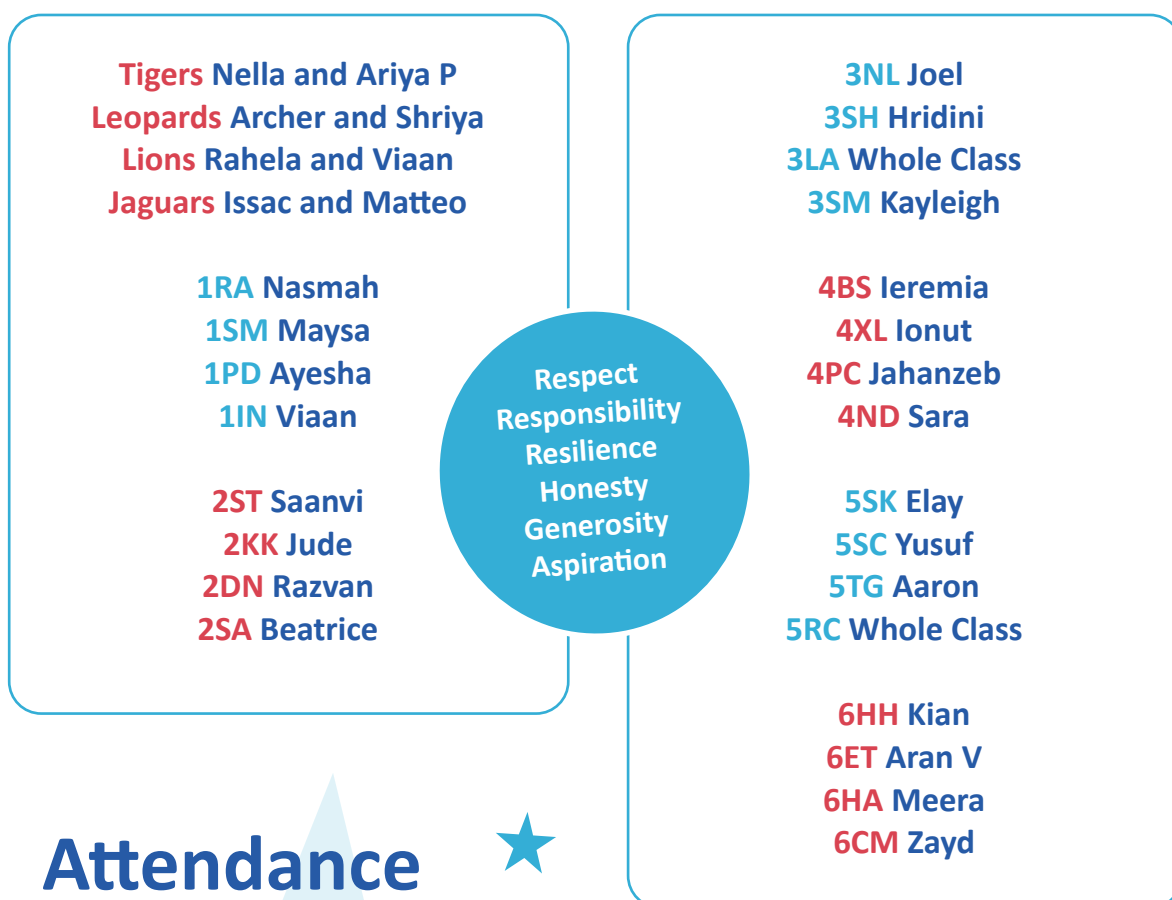
“I learnt how to hit a player and when the ball bounces of the floor and hits you, you are still in the game. Dodgeball makes me feel happy and competitive.” Sofia



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
1IN (99.2%)

Whole
School
95.5%

Did You Know?

Term time holidays will
not be authorised -
holidays should be taken
during school holidays.

Support for Families

Online Safety



Nintendo Switch 2

New name, new features... same concerns? The Nintendo Switch 2 is the Japanese gaming giant's latest console, and while it boasts impressive updates, it also brings a few new features for parents and educators to be aware of.

From the arrival of real-time GameChat and a plug-in camera to an easier path to mature content and in-app spending, there's a lot to consider.

Please refer to the poster attached to this newsletter for a guide on what adults need to know, and how they can keep gaming fun and safe for the children in their care.



HAF in Harrow

Bookings for the **Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) scheme in Harrow** are now open.

There are thousands of free places for school aged children at participating holiday clubs across the borough. To be eligible, families in receipt of income-related free school meals.

All activities can be booked via the link.



Book activities here

Support for Families



Schools
Counselling
Partnership



Bedtime Fears

All children will go through a time when they find it difficult to go to bed and fall asleep. They may tell you they are scared of the dark or of the monsters under their bed. However it is actually what their 'worry brain' is telling them about those things that is making them so frightened. This is why reassuring them that everything is fine doesn't usually work.

By empowering your child to be the boss of their own brain and teaching them to not always believe their 'worry brain'. It works really hard to keep them safe, but this means that it can create (often scary!) stories whenever it doesn't understand or know something.

Always empathise first: "I know you're feeling scared right now..." Then, try not to rush to reassure. Instead, show your child that they have a choice: "OK - let's hear from your worry, what is it telling you? Then we will hear from you about what you really think." You can then be curious about their fears and even get creative with them: can they draw a silly version of the monster? It can also help to have a 'worry time' earlier in your schedule, so that your child doesn't need to talk about them just before bedtime.

Finally, ask your child to think of four things they'd like to think about instead. They could draw four doors on a sheet of paper and fill in each door with an idea (birthday party, decorating cupcakes, blowing bubbles, etc). Before going to sleep, ask them which door they want to go through tonight and they can tell you all about their adventures in the morning.

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@schools counsellingpartnership.co.uk**



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.

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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about NINTENDO SWITCH 2

Nintendo launched its Switch 2 games console in early June 2025 – its first new console in eight years. While it builds on the original's success by remaining compatible with certain existing games, it also adds powerful hardware and new features like GameChat and a USB-C camera. As more children look to upgrade, it's important to understand how this new console might affect their play and safety.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EASIER TO ACCESS MATURE CONTENT

18
CENSORED

Despite Nintendo's reputation for family-friendly titles, mature games like *Cyberpunk 2077* and *Hitman* have been released onto the platform. With the Switch 2's improved performance, developers will be able to port even more mature-rated games. These may appeal to children due to their popularity, but they contain content that is highly unsuitable for young audiences.

IN-APP & GAME STORE PURCHASES

The Nintendo eShop enables purchases with just a few taps. If payment details are saved and PIN protection is disabled, children may unknowingly make costly purchases – including game add-ons, cosmetic items or entire new releases – without parental approval.

UNRESTRICTED ONLINE PLAY IN SOME GAMES

While GameChat is one feature, Switch 2 also connects to the broader Nintendo Switch Online service. Many free-to-play titles like *Fortnite* or *Splatoon 4* allow voice or text chat with strangers unless chat settings are adjusted, meaning children could encounter inappropriate language or unwanted contact.

GAMECHAT & REAL-TIME VOICE COMMUNICATION

GameChat enables live chatting with up to 12 people, even across different games, with optional video and screen-sharing. Though children under 16 are restricted to chatting only with approved friends, the sheer interactivity could raise privacy concerns or create pressure to remain online longer.

CAMERA COMPATIBILITY & PRIVACY CONCERNS

The optional USB-C camera supports video calling and facial overlays in games; however, this also raises the risk of cyberbullying or the unwanted sharing of personal images. The camera can be disabled, removed or covered, and parental controls are essential to manage how and when it is used.

POWERFUL PULL OF FAMILIAR CHARACTERS

Nintendo's mascot, Mario – along with Pikachu, Donkey Kong and others – remains hugely appealing to younger audiences, especially after the success of the recent film, *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* (2023). These beloved icons are central to Nintendo's branding and often feature in merchandising, adverts and in-game promotions, creating strong emotional attachments in children and a sense of urgency to keep up with their peers.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK RATINGS & USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Every Switch and Switch 2 game comes with a PEGI age rating. Before buying one, ensure the content matches your child's age. Use the Nintendo Parental Controls app to monitor gameplay, set screen-time limits and manage friend requests.

REVIEW FRIEND LISTS AND CHAT PERMISSIONS

Child profiles are restricted to chatting with approved friends only, but it's good practice to regularly check their friend list and communication settings. Use the Parental Controls app to switch off voice or video chat if necessary.

REMOVE OR RESTRICT PAYMENT METHODS

Avoid accidental spending by unlinking credit cards from the device. Instead, consider adding funds via prepaid eShop cards or requiring a PIN for purchases. Some banking apps can also be set to approve transactions manually.

ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Teach children how to block, report and capture any behaviour or content that makes them uncomfortable. The console's built-in tools allow them to create screenshots and video clips, which can aid in reporting any issues. Keeping an open dialogue helps children feel supported and safe.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Games Editor of Daily Star and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new tools, he's also a parent and understands the importance of online safety. He's also a tech and fitness writer and has been published on sites including IGN, TechRadar, and plenty more.



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