

Aurora Whitehouse Newsletter

October 2023



Caring

Ambitious

Collaborative

Trusted

Innovative

Headteachers Welcome

Dear Parents, Carers, and Students

We started the new school year by inviting the families of new children to spend some time with us and we have finished it by inviting all the families to do the same. It is always lovely to see families (because we don't routinely in the way you might in a mainstream school); I especially look forward to the children proudly (mostly!) showing you their school (and it is, their school!). Sandwiched between these events, we have hosted visits by families exploring whether we are the right school for their children and multiple visits from other professionals for a variety of reasons. Whenever we have visitors, our children are always keen to show them their school. It is the thing I think I am most proud of!

One of those visitors (a fellow Headteacher from another Aurora school) paid us a great compliment by saying at the end of his day long visit: "Well David, you wouldn't know the White House School was a SEND school". I believe that we are just a great SEND community, who mostly get it right and you can see that in the children.

I have been really pleased with how well our newest children have settled into their new school and, equally, how well our more established children have helped to make this happen.

This year we have started teaching a new curriculum called 'A World Through a Book' which has its inception back in World Book Day 2022 (when the school was transformed by storytelling). Stories and reading are important to us as it is how children make sense of the world and their place in it. It is also the starting point for so many dreams and ambitions. On this note, look out for the second half of the term when we will take part in National Film Week and take the whole school to the movies!

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and that it gives you a sense of your child's community and their place in it and the achievements that they will weave through the school year, helping to make their school what it is.

David Clark
Headteacher



A Message from the Principal

Dear Parents, Carers, and Students

It seems quite incredible that we are already at the first half term holiday of the school year; the last six and a half weeks have truly flown by! The opening of the new Pine and Ash classrooms, our early years outside space alongside our intervention cabin has made a positive impact to the school. The children have settled very well in their new classrooms and our enjoying decorating them to make them their own. The new trim trail is almost finished and I know the children will have hours of fun.

The children have settled really well into the routines of the school day and visitors to the site have remarked upon the happy and productive feel of the school. This I believe has been achieved by the building of strong relationships with the children and their trusted classroom teams, alongside our engagement and clinical colleagues that continue to ensure the students are supported in times of need. I am wanting to take this time to congratulate the children for an excellent beginning of the academic year and to thank my colleagues who have made this possible in what can be a challenging environment at times.

The half term has been very busy. We hosted members of the Aurora Group Executive team on site in late September and the unanimous feedback from them was extremely positive. They thoroughly enjoyed visiting classes, walking the grounds and speaking with the children.

The Senior Leadership Team and supporting staff worked very hard to prepare for our Governance meeting which was well received by leaders and governors alike. All were impressed with the information provided around progress and outcomes, destinations, anti-bullying, safeguarding and student wellbeing. Our students state that they are happy and feel safe at school and we are proud that is the case. It was remarked that the school and site continue to be improved—confirmation of the huge effort of our maintenance team who do work tirelessly.

A Message from the Principal Cont...

Norfolk LA completed a monitoring (Quality Assurance) visit, an important focus is always on attendance with discussion – and challenge – around absence. Currently, our attendance is generally above that of other SEN settings and close to or above the percentage of mainstream settings. However, we will always strive to improve our students attendance as research clearly demonstrates that being in school regularly, improves outcomes for children. Term time holiday requests remain quite high and we would ask that you take any holidays in the set holiday weeks to avoid absence from school. We appreciate that medical appointments and illness cannot be avoided. We recently hosted an Open Morning for prospective families which was very well attended. The families were impressed with the school and grounds and the provision we offer. Thank you to our 'tour guides' (colleagues!) they did a great job, explaining about the school and the provision available

The White House School was nominated for a NASS Award in Anti-Bullying for their work on drama workshops with the children. David and Marina attended the award ceremony and although we were not fortunate enough to win, we are all so proud to have been nominated. Thank you to everyone involved in getting us to the ceremony!

It was lovely to welcome parents and carers to the Cake Sale on Friday 20th October. Thank you to everybody who either donated a cake or attended. We look forward to offering another occasion to come into White House School very soon.

You will recently have received an email asking you to sign up to the Engage Parent Portal. Please do not ignore this request and do get signed up and logged in as soon as possible. The help guide is on Class Dojo and should you require any further assistance you can contact Emily.fenton@the-aurora-group.com It is important that at least one parent/carer from each family has access as we will be using the Parent Portal to share more information in the future and this is where you will be asked to complete the Parent and Carer Surveys. Thank you for your support with this project.

May I wish you all a restful half term holiday and I look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on our return

Arabella Hardy
Principal



Important Reminders

Emergency contact information

It is absolutely essential that you let us know if you have recently changed your telephone contact information, address or email details. Please email ecclesschool@the-aurora-group.com to update us thank you for your support.

Medication

Please notify us as to any changes in the pupil's medical health including allergies and provide your child with spare underwear, pull ups and clothes as necessary.

Student absence

If your child is not going to be in school for any reason, you must contact either the absence telephone line (01953 887217 option 1) or email ecclesabsence@the-aurora-group.com before 8.30am. You will need to leave your child's name, class and full reason for absence. Please make sure you do this daily throughout the absence.

Parent Portal

Please ensure you have signed up for the Parent Portal, you should have received an email from Ecclesmis@the-aurora-group.com (please note, this is an unmanned mailbox). Please either use the link in the email or <https://whitehouseschool.engagehosted.com/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f> to access the website. Thank you.



**Important
reminders!**

School Calander

September 2023:

6 - First day back
26 - Flu vaccines

January 2024:

4 - First day back

May 2024:

6 - May bank holiday

October 2023:

20 - Cake Sale
23-27 - Half term
31 - Non-uniform day

February 2024:

19-27 - Half term
28 - School photos

June 2024:

November 2023:

7 - Cinema
8 - Cinema
23 - Cinema

March 2024:

28 - Last day of term

July 2024:

19 - Last day of term

December 2023:

14 - Christmas lunch
20 - Class parties
20 - Last day of term

April 2024:

15 - First day back



Ash

Ash class have settled in well to their new surroundings and the class have started to form some great friendships. The boys have welcomed our newest class member this week by including him in all games and play. Some of the children have said "I've enjoyed making new friends and learning about helping the environment" and "I've enjoyed everything!".



The class have been learning about how pollution affects the world we live in and how we could help reduce plastic pollution, this will also see the class write a letter to the local MP with ideas of how to help.

Maths has seen the class looking at adding and subtracting and how number bonds can make whole numbers in different ways. Finally, in English the boys have been looking at the book 'Fantastic Mr Fox', they have written character profiles, setting descriptions and sequenced the story.

A fantastic half term, Well done Ash class!



Beech

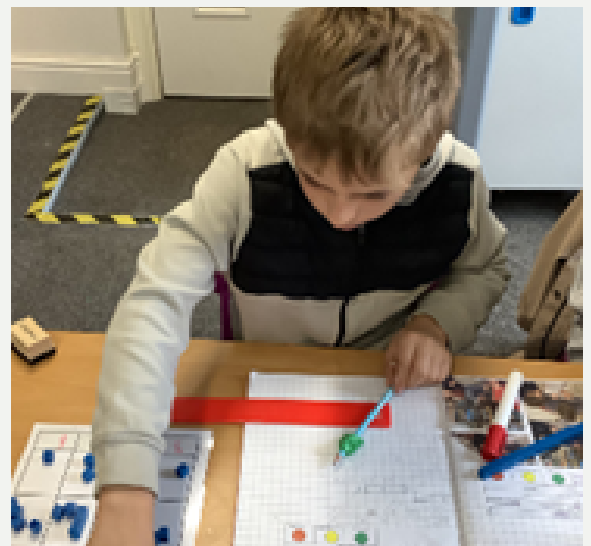
During Autumn 1, the students have settled in very well and have been focusing on the book *Stig of the Dump*. They were able to create some outstanding and descriptive work.

Beech class went on a History trip to the Aviation Museum with Oak class to explore how life was during World War II. They were all praised on their outstanding behaviours and participation on this trip.



Beech class has also been enjoying our cooking session where the students were making their own bread, pizza, banana cupcakes, and smoothies, showing great skills.

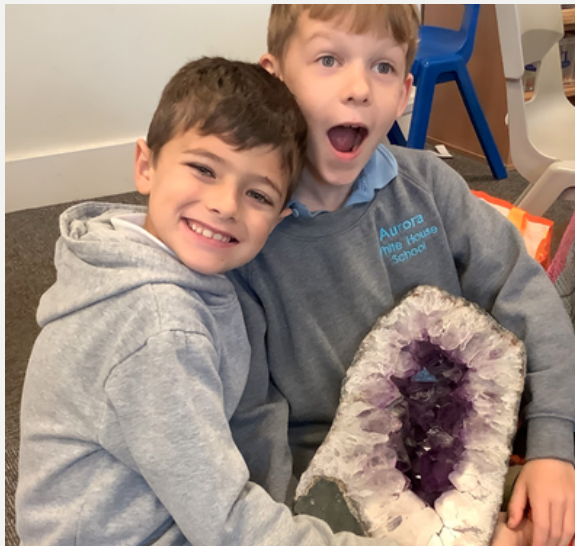
During Maths, students have been focusing on place value, adding and subtracting. They have all done some impeccable work.



Birch

Wow how time flies can you believe we've reached the October break already! We are very lucky to have had a new door placed in our classroom which now gives us direct access to the enclosed garden which we share with Willow class, and boy have we made use of that!

In "free time" we've built some impressive dens, played numerous games of football, bug hunted, played tag and generally taken advantage of the lovely weather.



In Maths, we've done some great addition work and learned about our number bonds.

Topic has been about the world around us, climate change, endangered animals and what we can do to help .

Vic brought in some crystals and fossilised wood for us to look at and touch- they were amazing a great treat!

In Art we've been exploring different materials and covered Matisse and Picasso, which has been great fun!

In Literacy we've been reading Handa's Surprise and linking the sequencing to our handwriting stories. My goodness those animals were hungry and enjoyed their fruit just like our Birch boys.



Cedar

We had a fantastic start in Cedar Class. When we first arrived, we liked exploring and playing on our own. We got used to our environment and our new friends and staff.

There were lots of routines to become familiar with. With lots of practise we are now experts in laying the table for lunch. We are even happy to invite guests to join us.



It has been lots of fun and now we are happy to learn and play with each other. The Colour Monster helped us to think about our feelings and emotions and we are beginning to let our adults know how we feel with our words. But sometimes our faces just say it all!

Have a lovely break and we will see you after the holiday.
Nick, Shantel and Nikki.



Chestnut

Over this half term, the children's learning has been based around the book 'Goodnight Mr. Tom'. We have learned lots of information about World War II, including what it might have been like to be evacuated.

We went for a walk to the shelter on the back field and the children had fun exploring and thinking about what it might have been like to be in a shelter during a raid.



As part of our studies in RE, the children visited the local church, where the Church Warden kindly gave his time telling us all about the history of the church. The boys had an opportunity to stand in the pulpit, and also to ring the church bell, which could be heard back at school!

During a Thrive lesson, the children created a laboratory in the classroom, using different liquids including vinegar, vegetable oil and water, as well as food colouring, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder, cornflour and conditioner to see what would happen. There were lots of excited faces when the mixtures bubbled and turned different colours!



Elm

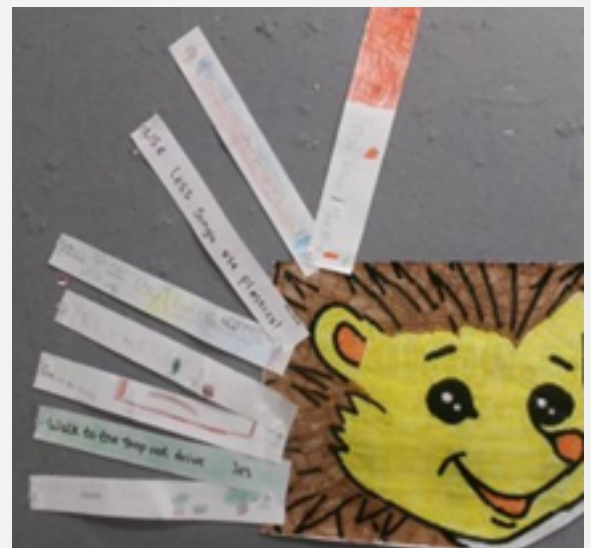
Hello from Elm! This term we have been focusing on the story: The Iron Man by Ted Hughes. We have had lots of fun making predictions and even doing our very own news round reporting about the black speck in the sky. We had a debate to see whether the world should or shouldn't fight the space dragon.



We have been very creative and have been looking at pop art. We looked at lots of artists including Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and local artist Colin Self! We even made our own ironman out of recyclable materials thinking about the artist Romero Britto. In food tech we looked at lots of healthy recipes and made some classics with a twist including banana sushi, couscous and breakfast trifle.

We made our very own leaf monsters when looking at our feelings. We have been using the Zones of Regulations every day and checking in with our friends every morning by asking 'how are you feeling?'

In science, we have been curious about our planet. We made a pledgehog to our environment and have our very own food composter where we put our food waste ready for the compost.



Larch

We've had a wonderful first half term in Larch class, welcoming new students to the class.

In Larch class we have been reading 'Charlotte's Web'. Because of this, we have been learning about different aspects of farming in Topic and created lots of art work about farm animals.



We have had lots of fun playing games and learning new games together. Uno has been a class favourite this half term and there is always a chess match to play or watch.

Students have enjoyed doing puzzles and playing on their electronics in the 'gamer zone' that the students created where you can get cozy with cushions, blankets and beanbags.

Students in Larch class designed and created their own memorials for a fallen tree at sycamore gap. They then spoke in front of the class and used what they learnt about persuasive language to explain to the rest of the class why their design was good. Larch class then voted for the best fit for a memorial.



Maple

Maple class have been working hard this half term. They have all settled well into their new class and have enjoyed getting to know each other. The children have really enjoyed exploring pop art and have definitely shown what fabulous artists they are. They have also explored the main beliefs of Hinduism and tried to understand what reincarnation means.



They have also learned about early Stone Age writing and had a go themselves in clay. The children have used The Iron Man as their inspiration for creating similes, making predictions and descriptive writing. We have enjoyed exploring Forest School by collecting bugs and creating areas of interest. We have touched on what an eco- system is and how it works alongside developing our computer skills.

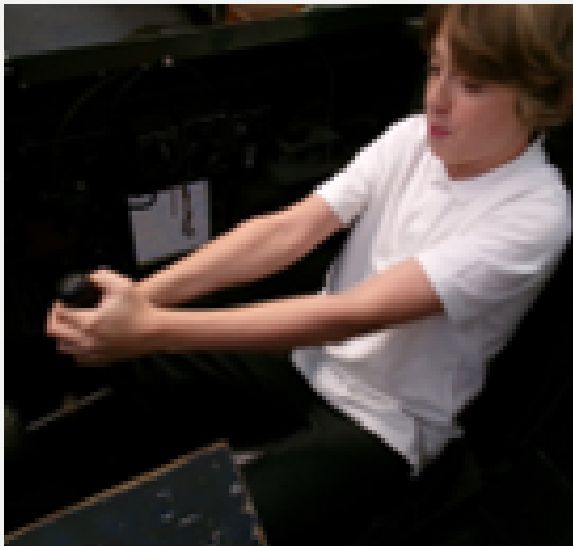


We have encountered fractions and enjoyed thinking about cake and chocolate bars to help us understand them! We have been very interested to learn how our fish fingers and chicken nuggets are made and learned how to make our own from fresh fish and chicken. They don't just come from McDonalds after all!



Oak

We have had a busy half term in Oak Class. The children have settled into the new class and environment really well. We think about how we work and how to get on with each other.



In art we have looked at colour palettes and colour mixing, landscapes, and the work of John Constable.

In maths, we have been focussing on the basics such as times tables, number bonds, addition, and subtraction. We use a lot of visual and practical activities.

Topic this term is linked to the book *Goodnight Mr Tom* and World War 2. The children have really enjoyed finding out about life as an evacuee and what life was like during the war. As part of our studies we visited Flixton Aviation museum.



Pine

This term we have been getting to know one another and exploring our environment. We have had lots of fun learning about our sensory preferences and our emotions.



In our emotional literacy sessions we have been learning how to label our feelings and choosing regulating activities.

We have also been exploring the different seasons and weather.

In PHSE we have been learning about building relationships and how to maintain these.



Willow

WOW, what a busy half term it has been in Willow class. We are pleased to report everyone has settled in quickly and happily. Tigger and Pooh Bear have also joined as class mascots and made it into a few of the garden show performances!!



We have been reading Handa's Surprise this term and it has inspired many of our lessons. We have role played the story and explored the fruits in the story using our different senses, pulling some very funny faces when trying the passion fruit. The children have been trying hard with their learning and challenging themselves meaning our Wow Wall is filling up and above and beyond Class Dojo points have been earned.

Our artwork this term has been inspired by famous artists, including Matisse, Jackson Pollock and Pablo Picasso and we have an ever-growing gallery wall. Art is for sale.

The weather has also been kind and meant that we could spend lots of time outside, playing and exploring with the new equipment. We have harvested the seeds from our sunflowers we grew last term, adding them to our bird feeders. We picked the apples to make apple cookies in Food Tech. Teamwork has also been high on the agenda working together to construct with our new building blocks.



Millie's Woof and Walks

Millie has very much enjoyed being back in school and has loved all the cuddles, new stories to listen to and all the strokes!

Unfortunately, Millie had an accident in the garden towards the end of the Summer holiday so had to have an operation on her leg. This meant she had to use a chariot (a doggy pram!) outside the school site as she could not walk very far. She certainly loved her new method of transportation!



Over time, her leg has started to heal so she has enjoyed getting out at playtimes and all the children have been very gentle in helping to look after her and making sure she doesn't walk too far.

Millie continues to enjoy having a nap in my office (she usually tries to climb on my lap!), she loves listening to children read and is always ready to have a cuddle with a very happy wagging tail! Millie loves seeing all the children in school.



Staffing Updates

We have been sad to see the following colleagues move on to new adventures
- we are sure you will join us in wishing them all the very best of luck!

Kayleigh McGill TA
Millie Knights TA



However, we are delighted to warmly welcome the following new colleagues
to Whitehouse School:

Hannah Lea Early Years Teacher
Claire Pashley TA
Taylor Storey TA
Jessica Todd TA
Emily Green SaLT Assistant



0 Days
Absence

190

Days
in
School



100%
Attendance

Best chance of success

10 Days
Absence

180

Days
in
School

95%
Attendance

19 Days
Absence

171

Days
in
School



90%
Attendance

Less chance of success

29 Days
Absence

161

Days
in
School

85%
Attendance

38 Days
Absence

152

Days
in
School

80%
Attendance

Serious impact on
education and
reduced life chances

47 Days
Absence

143

Days
in
School

75%
Attendance

Over half
a term
missed!

Having **90%** Over 5 school
years, is half a school
year's work missed.

A **2 week** holiday in term
time, means that the
highest attendance a child
can achieve is **94.7%**

How Does School Attendance Affect a Child's Learning?

365 Days in a Year
190 School Days
175 Non School Days