

The Whartons' Newsletter

26th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

A huge welcome back to all the children and families and a special welcome to our new reception children and families. I hope your children have settled well.

The first couple of weeks back in school after the long summer break can be a little strange, but when I have visited the classrooms or the outside play areas the children are happily engaged, playing with friends and have all settled well. Some of the new reception children had set up a MacDonalds in the mud kitchen and were serving the other children over the fence, hilarious.

We have hit the ground running in the first few weeks of school with visitors and exciting outdoor learning opportunities.

We also spent an enjoyable Sunday morning last week with children and families, transforming some of our wildlife areas around school. There was lots of hard work, fun and well-deserved refreshments. Thanks everyone.



Assemblies

Our assembly for this half term have focused on New Beginnings and linked to our Jigsaw PSHE lessons.

We have talked about the recipe of Success and the essential ingredients of a happy and inclusive school where children work hard to succeed. The children shared lots of great ideas for our recipe, such as a sprinkle of fun, a dollop of hard work and lots of kindness.

Well done to the certificate winners over the last few weeks who have worked particularly hard both inside and outside school: Chase and Ava Y1; Grace and Millie Y2; Charlie and Eliza Y3; Aoife and Toby Y4; Evie and Joseph Y5; Dougie and Emma Y6

Governor Learning Walk

Earlier this half term we welcomed visiting governors from the teaching and learning committee.

The purpose of their visit was to observe teaching and learning across all year groups.

It is the governing body's job to support school in their continual improvement and help monitor areas of the school development plan.

It is always great to welcome our governors into school on a normal working day. They were very impressed with the children's focus enthusiasm and positivity towards their learning.

Well done everyone.

MacMillan coffee Morning

A huge thank you to everyone who baked for this year's MacMillan Coffee morning last Friday. The offerings ranged from gooey brownies to traditional Victoria sandwich cakes and many other delights in between.

Thanks too for our school community members who could join us to share a coffee and a cake.

The company was delightful, and the conversations flowed. It was a fantastic way to spend an hour on a Friday morning, and such a great cause.

Thanks to Miss Milner and her team of volunteers who ensured there were refreshments and who encouraged our visitors to donate what they could, be it money or baked goods. We raised over £100 For the MacMillan nurses' charity.



• **Whole School Wildlife Day**

A Wild Day

Last week the whole school spent a learning day in the outdoors thanks to Neil Griffin and a team of volunteers from Wildlife Friendly Otley.

Mr. Young, our science leader, has been working closely with Neil, planning opportunities for the children to really enjoy our outdoor areas around school; alongside identifying further enhancements and continual improvements to some of our already established wildlife areas.

Outdoor learning is one of the school curriculum drivers and much work has been done, led by Mr. Fisk, to grow the useable wildlife areas which support learning in school.

Developing partnerships with organizations who can support our commitment to outdoor learning is hugely beneficial for school. On this page are some of the great activities the children enjoyed over the day.....

Bulb Planting with Helen and Edwina

Neil had brought with him a small team of volunteers to help the children across the day. Helen and Edwina took the children around the grounds to identify places where some bulb planting may enhance the areas, both visually and to support visiting insects.

They then showed the children how to plant the bulbs carefully, making sure they were well orientated in the soil with the right amount of space between them and reminded the children to give the new plants a good water and firm the soil around them to help them settle in. It will be great to see the fruits of their labours in the spring.



Going on a Bug Hunt

All the classes worked, in rotation, on a range of activities during the day.

One of the activities was to go on a bug and plant hunt.

Armed with identification posters the children explored all the different habitats the school grounds offer the local plants and animals. From open field to meadows and woodland. They found many different species and thought about the different eco systems



where plants and animals live together.



The children were fascinated with the range of wildlife they found.

fascinated

LEARNING ABOUT THE ANIMALS WHO LIVE IN OUR SCHOOL GROUNDS

As an introduction to our wildlife day the children enjoyed an assembly where Neil showed them a whole range of animals who would visit the school grounds regularly or live there permanently.

The different habitats around the school grounds support a wide variety of plants and animal from deer to beetles, bats to owls and birds of prey to field mice.

Neil explained how the children would be exploring the areas and how they could work together to enhance them today and in the future.



The children also learn more about



bats when Maggie from WY Bat Association brought in a bat for the children to meet.

Wildlife Areas- Project Maintenance and Improvement

What a fantastic time we had on Sunday last week, in our outdoor areas. Several families joined us in the school grounds with tools, enthusiasm and lots of energy, ready to spruce up the existing outdoor areas and add some great enhancements along the way.

Mr Young, in partnership with Wildlife Friendly Otley members, had planned a whole range of tasks for children and families to tackle in order to transform some of our outdoor learning spaces.

One key area was the pond, which over the last few years had become overgrown and out of control. I joined River and other volunteers from Wildlife Friendly Otley, who expertly led some parents, a past pupil and a headteacher in a pond clearing exercise. Pruning trees which were overshadowing the pond and starving it of light and removing all the vegetation that was choking the pond, transformed the space and will give the pond the opportunity to refill over the winter. Meanwhile an army of volunteers led by Neil, Mr Young and Mr Fisk cleared pathways, pruned willow arches, created bug hotels and weeded the climbing frame area, high above the back playground. Thank you so much everyone you were amazing. Same time same place in the spring??



Diary Dates

Sunday 20th September

Family Action Day- Improving and maintaining the wildlife areas around school

Wednesday 25th September

Meet the teacher – 3.30-4.30

Thursday 26th September

MAT Parent/Carer consultation evening 6.30pm

Monday 7th October

Flu vaccinations for children

Tuesday 8th October

Y6 Art gallery trip

Friday 11th October

Whole school training day

Friday 18th October

Y1 Bikeability day

Friday 18th October

Parent Association Quiz Night
7.30pm

Bikeability

In the first couple of weeks of this new school year, Red Kite class have engaged in the annual Bikeability course run by Cycle North. As part of the comprehensive training course the year 6 children have learnt how to check and maintain their bicycles so that they are roadworthy and safe to ride on the public highways. They have also learnt about the necessity of personal safety equipment such as helmets when riding on the roads.

The training course begins with maneuver practicing in the safety of the school playgrounds. This builds children's confidence and control when riding their bikes as well as honing their expertise when navigating other riders.

When the instructors felt that children were confident and skilled enough to ride on the roads they spent the next day riding around the local area under their close direction. Children earned their certificate and badge on successful completion of the course.

The children had a wonderful time and were incredibly sensible when riding around the area. Riding to school is great for children's health and for the environment. We hope that children and parents now feel more confident to ride to school especially as the children move towards secondary school.



A Final Note: It was lovely to see so many of you at our first meet the teacher event on Wednesday.

Many Thanks

Julia Dickson