WHITEHALL

Autumn 1 Week 2

Message from the Headteacher

Welcome back to all of our children and families who have returned to school after the summer and a very warm welcome to all of our new families who are joining us this year.

As a school, we really pride ourselves on being a values-based school which asks big questions of who we are, who we want our children to be, and the role we play as part of a being something bigger than ourselves. All of you who are part of this school community would have known and chosen that for yourselves, and your children, too. We all co-parent and value the relationships we have with each other. So, in a departure for us, we would like to share some of the academic success we have had this year and some key headline figures that the children here have managed to achieve in their SATS. I would caveat this and say that that these figures are still dependent on a few marking reviews and there may be slight variation to them when they become finalised.

There are a few key matrixes we look at:
The combined percentage for The Expected Standard and for Greater Depth;
the percentage of pupil premium reaching national expectations;
and progress that children have made.

National combined for reading, writing and maths is **63%.**
Our combined percentage is **84%. This is 20% above national.**
National combined for Greater Depth for this year is 9%.
Our combined Greater depth for 2026 is 26%.

We are above national in outcomes for Reading, Writing and Maths in their individual subject disciplines, too.

A very big well done to everybody for their hard work in ensuring that the children have achieved so well; it now means that they are in a great place to start secondary school and aim high for their next set of milestones. We know this is a huge team effort and I would like to thank everybody who has in-putted, and continues to work so restlessly hard, for all of the children at Whitehall. This is often at cost and sacrifice to themselves and their families and may often not be seen, acknowledged nor feel as though it is appreciated, so, I would like to just take this opportunity to highlight the tremendous work they do. Thank you to everyone who continues to work so hard on for our children.

This has been quite a journey for us to get there; not just in terms of the academics- for those of you who have been with us since the beginning of this journey, you will know that how much change and development the school has undergone- but in terms of what we stand for and the children and community we want to impact on and co-parent with. For those who have always been cheerleading from the sides, and continue to do so, it is very much appreciated and felt; we believe we have a thriving school community where parents know what we offer and have chosen to be part of who are all are here. We know we all work in partnership, together.

I hope we have another great year supporting, encouraging and working respectfully together to ensure all of our children flourish and succeed. I leave you with the Inclusion Quality Mark Assessment we have just had come though- thank you to everyone who spoke to the assessor and everyone who works so hard to ensure our children get the very best possible deal we can offer them.

Inclusion Quality Mark Assessment

Report on IQM Inclusive School Award

Whitehall Primary School is an extraordinary school. From the moment of arrival, it is clear that this is a place where inclusion is not a policy position but a lived reality, woven into every interaction, every space and every decision the school makes. The headteacher, who leads with exceptional vision and humanity, described a journey the school has been on, one of building a genuine sense of community and belonging, of making sure every child can be seen and heard. That journey is visible everywhere.

The building itself communicates the school's values before a single word is spoken. Displays repurposed from the annual exhibition line the corridors, functioning as pieces of art in their own right. They represent world topics including Windrush and the experiences of asylum seekers, and reflect the school's deep commitment to widening children's cultural understanding so that they truly know about the world they live in. The books children have access to represent all cultures, and the library is a wonderful, colourful and welcoming space that fosters a genuine love of reading. Older children take responsibility for keeping it well maintained, a small but telling detail about the culture of care and ownership the school has cultivated.

All classes are inclusive in nature, and this is genuinely embedded rather than an add-on. Children with a range of different needs learn in the same environment, with adaptations seamlessly integrated to ensure every child gets what they need. Children were seen on the carpet whilst others worked at desks, sitting wherever they felt most comfortable and able to engage with learning. The school is flexible and fluid, and the children respond to this with confidence and ease. There is no unnecessary time spent trying to get everyone to sit the same way, which could take away from learning. The principle at work is always quality teaching first.

The outdoor spaces are exceptional. The playground has been recently redeveloped and is thoughtfully laid out so the whole school community can enjoy that precious outdoor time. There are dedicated spaces for ball games, an amphitheatre for outdoor performances, tyres, a play area and places to simply sit and read under the trees. The children are on a rota to care for the school chickens. The EYFS outdoor space is just as impressive, with lanterns, drapes and an outdoor piano, creating what can only be described as a home-away-from-home feel. Children were seen crushing garlic they had grown themselves to make garlic bread later in the week. It is that kind of school.

The Whitehall Collective was one of the most striking features of the assessment. This is not a traditional school council but a genuine forum open to any child from Year 2 upwards, built on the belief that children have strong ideas and that even the youngest among them can make a big difference to the world. When asked whether it is only adults who can solve problems, one child replied: "children are so creative and can help people." Another said: "even if you are young you can make a big difference to the world." The collective has organised initiatives including selling ice creams for less than the local van so that every child can afford one, and has raised significant sums for global causes including War Child. The children spoke about it with pride and purpose. "It makes me feel that we play a part in saving people's lives," one pupil said. "Everyone has the right to be safe, have water and food."

Philosophy for Children permeates all aspects of school life. During an observed session, pupils were engaged in a rich discussion about a topic that could not be answered easily or with technology, challenged to consider different perspectives and to respectfully question each other's thinking. Pupils described it as not a typical lesson and spoke of loving the debate, of learning other people's opinions and finding it really great. The chair of governors noted that P4C gives pupils the language to be able to use to talk about difficult things and that the children use that really well. Topics explored include the afterlife, racism, sexism, disability and genocide. The school describes these as very

bold topics, because it is good to hear children's views, and the approach is clearly working. As one leader observed, there is a measurable change in behaviour and the school is able to address misconceptions thoughtfully.

Staff are proud, warm and deeply committed. When asked what they are most proud of, their answers were telling: "our children's confidence," "how eloquent they are," "they have good self-esteem, so there is space to care for other people." The school does not use an online platform such as Tapestry for learning journeys but instead uses handcrafted books, which is more personable in a world where technology is everywhere. When asked to describe their school, pupils offered words including unimaginable, eco-friendly, resilient, courageous, environmentally aware and different. One pupil wrote a pantomime, performed it in front of over two hundred people and spoke about it with quiet confidence. This school makes things like that possible for all its children.

The performances observed during the visit were joyful and accomplished. Year 1, Year 4 and Year 5 took to the stage with confidence and evident pride. One pupil described having written a pantomime that was performed in front of over two hundred people. It was said simply, without boasting, as if this were entirely natural. At Whitehall, it is. Staff reflected that they work hard to make the school as beautiful for the children as possible. That care is visible in every corner of the building, in every conversation overheard, in every child encountered. It is a school that knows what it is, believes in it and lives it every single day.

New beginnings

We know that new beginnings can sometimes be tricky; our new Reception and Nursery children have settled in beautifully; thank you for your trust and working with us to enable that to happen so fast and so smoothly. We really pride ourselves in the time we spend investing in the children and we always use the first few weeks back to work on establishing classroom practices and norms and ensure the children are ready for learning and growth. Thank you to the parents who have come along to see their children's teachers this week. We hope you found the information informative and have had a chance to see where your children will be based for the year. We know that you all will have chosen our school after much careful care and consideration and are very proud of the parent community we have here. We look forward to working in partnership with you.

Attendance

Attendance continues to be a national priority. We will continue to encourage all children to attend every day and to be on time, every day. Term time leave, particularly for journeys overseas or holidays, cannot be authorised.

Additionally, although there is a 10-minute window for the children to be in school by 8:55, please note **school gates open at 8:45** and the expectation is that children arrive at school then. We are now working with parents who arrive late, or around the time the gate closes, and are habitually late. For these children, this equates to missing approximately over an hour's worth of being in school across a single week. Please ensure your child **arrives at school by 8:45.**

We will be working with families where lateness has become a habitual pattern with members of the senior leadership reaching out to you should lateness nor attendance improve. A reminder that we have breakfast club for our families who may need this if they are struggling to meet the 8:45 start time.