WHITEHALL

Autumn 1 Week 4

Message from the Headteacher

We are sooooo pleased with the start back that we have had. We have deliberately changed a lot of our staffing arrangements this year and that was to ensure that staff, too, have the breadth of experience to ensure they are always growing and developing and have opportunities in pretty much the same way we would expect and provide for our children. I must credit where credit is due; staff have shown a real enthusiasm as they have all braced new challenges. This has been really inspiring and motivates us to keep pushing boundaries and what the ask of ourselves and each other. We are really proud of how aware our parent community is and, your recognition and encouragement of the changes and opportunities we take here, has really been appreciated- especially the response to the children experiencing different teachers and new experiences.

Thank you also for your feedback re the IQM assessment. We shared with you the summary. The assessment was long and very thorough. To keep you informed, we thought we would share further bite -sized pieces of the report so you can also see and hear how the school was perceived especially around some of the unique experiences and concepts we offer here. We hope you enjoy reading those pieces.

Just a heads up that this, as always, will be a busy half term and before breaking up we will be having 'Using my Voice' to relaunch the Whitehall Collective for this year, Family maths and our Art Symposium so please do keep an eye out for those. School photos will be on 22nd October.

Inclusion Quality Mark Assessment

Report on IQM Inclusive School Award

Element 1- The Inclusive Values of the School

Whitehall Primary School presents a vision of inclusion that is coherent, deeply held and consistently enacted across every aspect of school life. The headteacher set the tone clearly at the outset of the assessment: "make sure every child can be seen and heard." That aspiration is not rhetorical. It shapes how the school is led, how classrooms are designed, how families are supported and how children are taught to see themselves and each other.

The school's overarching theme of "We All Belong Here" provides a meaningful framework within which all aspects of school life sit. This is reinforced through the three core values of courage, curiosity and collaboration, which are consistently referenced across the curriculum, behaviour policy and relationships with families. These values give staff and pupils a shared language and a clear moral compass, and their presence is tangible when moving around the school. The restructuring of inclusion leadership has been a significant development. Moving away from a single SENCO who leads inclusion to a model where everyone is involved has been described by staff as the most effective change for inclusion the school has made. Leaders now deal with all issues within their own phases and the result is, as one member of staff put it, a lot more fluid. There is a genuine culture where teachers are fully accountable for every child in their class, with the understanding that all teachers are teachers of SEND. This is a powerful principle and its impact is visible.

Family Dining was observed during the visit and is a wonderful initiative. Year groups sit together in mixed tables, older pupils take responsibility for serving younger ones and the lunchtime atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Pupils described it as being like a restaurant and said we look out for the young ones and help them get their food. The staggered playtime that follows continues that calm into the outdoor space, which is thoughtfully designed with places to read, space for ball games and quiet corners.

Support for families is holistic and proactive. Pupil Premium families are given priority booking for school events and clubs, and the school approaches families before families feel they need to approach the school. This includes help with holidays, referrals to food banks and sustained relationship-building with families who carry multiple vulnerabilities. Parents spoke with genuine emotion about what the school has done for their children. "I don't think he would be as successful as he is if it wasn't for Whitehall," said one parent. "We worked together as a team, as a parent and as the school," reflected another. The chair of governors summarised it clearly: "inclusion is integral. It is not an add-on."

Attendance and punctuality

Thank you to all our families who ensure that their children arrive at school on time every day.

The gate opens at 8:45am, and lessons begin promptly at 9:00am. During the 15 minutes before lessons start, children complete morning work and receive additional support and feedback from staff. This equates to an additional 1 hour and 15 minutes of learning each week.

Parents will be informed, and attendance meetings will be held for any pupils whose attendance falls below 90%.

We are hovering at the national percentage for last year and this will flag up as a concern for authorities. Our target must be 96% attendance at least. Last year we were 94.6%. The good work of the school will be lost if attendance is not at national etc. This is now a qualifying judgement that is used to judge schools and how good they are. Schools where attendance is below national will never be judged as anything other than needs improvement even if the school is exceptional in all other areas.

EYFS

Our Nursery children have been developing their curiosity by exploring the pumpkins that have been growing in our garden.

The children investigated pumpkins that had been grown from seeds planted by last year's Nursery children. They carefully harvested them, cut some open and explored what they could find inside, particularly the seeds. We discussed what plants need to grow healthy and strong, including water, sunlight and care. The children also shared their ideas about fruits and vegetables they may be growing at home with their families.

We also talked about how the pumpkin seeds can be planted again to grow new pumpkins next year, helping them develop an understanding of growth, change and the natural world. Elm Class showed great curiosity as they explored, asked questions and shared their ideas.

It has been a wonderful start to the year in Reception as the children have been settling confidently into their new environment and building new friendships. They have loved exploring our outdoor area, discovering all the exciting opportunities for learning and play. From sharing stories in the outdoor reading space and developing their balance on

the obstacle equipment to investigating water, sand and natural materials, the children have shown great curiosity, independence and enthusiasm. It has been lovely to see them collaborating with their peers, using their imaginations and growing in confidence as they explore, create and learn together.

KS1

This week Year 1 have thoroughly enjoyed their indoor P.E. lessons. As part of this term's focus on gymnastics, the children have been working incredibly hard on their agility and coordination. They have been practicing jumping in a variety of creative ways and mastering some fantastic balancing positions.

Year 2 have settled into the new academic year well and are immersing themselves fully in our topic “We belong”. During our establishment week, we explored how the land on our planet is divided and understood how countries and borders are formed. Through meaningful discussions in P4C, we considered who has the right to own land and what it means to truly belong to a place; as part of our studies, we wrote a letter to humanity highlighting how the earth has changed since dinosaurs roamed the lands. To develop our topic further, we are now using Mary Hoffman’s “Amazing Grace” books as a stimulus, providing plenty of opportunities to consider how we can feel a sense of belonging as a community and how we can treat others equally and with kindness and empathy. We look forward to exploring this theme throughout our half term and delving into the complexities of forming relationships and creating communities.

LKS2

In science, Year 3 have very much enjoyed learning and identifying different types of rocks. Through a collaborative activity, the children grouped and classified a range of rocks, looking at their appearance and physical properties. This week, our children have loved venturing out in our school playground and natural spaces, to find their very own rocks. It has promoted rich discussions and deep questions about the structures around us and our connection with nature. We are quite proud of Year 3 and our wonderful rock collection so far!

This term as part of Year 4’s music curriculum, Year 4 pupils have been developing their musicianship by learning to play the ukulele (which will occur weekly on Wednesdays). They explored rhythm, pulse and tempo, and developing their ability to play simple chord progressions with accuracy and control whilst simultaneously learning how to play in time with a focus on C string and G string. Using a range of strumming patterns, pupils are learning how different dynamics and techniques can change the mood and character of a piece. Our ukulele lessons also tie in with our science topic this term on ‘sound’. The children were able to identify that the resonance produced by the ukulele is a result of vibrational soundwaves produced by energy. Through regular practice and ensemble playing, they will learn to improve their timing, coordination, and performance skills, growing in

confidence as young musicians. The Year 4's have really been enjoying their ukulele lessons and have been thoroughly immersed in learning to play it accurately.

"I like how the pitch of the strings go high, low, low and then back to high- it sounds really interesting." Amelia
"I really liked how the ukulele sounded when we all played together in harmony it sounded like a peaceful song." Lucas

UKS2

This half-term, Year 6 have been immersed in our topic, 'Caught in the Crossfire', exploring the events and experiences of World War Two. Earlier in the term, we visited the Imperial War Museum, where pupils gained valuable knowledge and explored a range of artefacts and stories from the period. They have since applied their learning across writing, topic and P4C lessons. In writing, pupils have been researching and gathering information to create their own non-chronological reports which included the role of women and the rights and experiences of children during World War Two. Through their learning, pupils have developed their historical knowledge while also considering the different perspectives and experiences of people living through this significant period in history.

"In our Writing and Topic lessons, we have been learning about what life was like for men, women and children during World War Two. I learnt that men were required to fight for their country, while women were encouraged to help with the war effort by working in factories and other important jobs. I also discovered that children did not really have a choice when they were evacuated and had to leave their homes and families to stay somewhere safer." Benji