Friday 23rd October 2026

Dear Parent and Carers,

It has been a long but successful half term with a fabulous finish!

We hope your children have enjoyed our final week as they have undertaken the challenges of '11 Before 11' in our Explore and Discovery week, embraced the adventure of Bryntysilio or enjoyed the fun of Halloween events. It is certainly time for a break before the craziness of Christmas begins.

Before we end this half term I need to share my news with our families. I have decided that after 21 years at the wonderful Woodlands Academy of Learning it is time for me to find a new pathway which will begin in the new year.

It has been an honour to be part of the Woodland's journey as we have continually strived to ensure that the provision that Woodland's offers your children is the best that it can be.

Your children are amazing in every way as they have shown their joy and delight in learning, growing and becoming a person to be proud of. The role of headteacher has had it's challenges, particularly as the educational climate continues to change but I could not have undertaken this role without the incredible Woodland's team and your support. The families of Woodlands create a very special community that is quite unlike any other Primary School.

It has been a very difficult and very emotional decision but I know that Woodlands will continue to grow, become stronger and even more effective in teaching, supporting and guiding your children so that they are ready for the next step in their lives.

Currently, the governors are busy planning the steps of recruitment for the next substantive headteacher. In the interim, from January, Mrs Macpherson will step up to be Headteacher working alongside Mrs Jackson, Miss Edmunds, Mrs Baker and the management team. I will continue to keep you updated.

However, that is still half a term away and there are all the usual exciting events on the calendar for Autumn 2. The events include parent workshops focussing on the important skill of phonics to help reading and writing for our parents in Reception and Year 1, Anti-bullying week, Remembrance Day, Christmas Nativity performances, Christmas Fayre, Christmas dinners and a trip to the theatre for Y6 plus so much more...

I hope all our children, families and team Woodlands have a restful half term.

Mrs Newton

WINNING CLASSES WITH THE BEST ATTENDANCE!

Well done to our children who arrive on time, before 8:50, and so are ready for the important first lesson of the day.

Best classes during the last week who earn extra play time are:

2CH 99% and 3A 99%

Absolutely Fantastic!



11 Before 11



The theme of Explore and Discovery Week has been '11 Before 11'. We launched this exciting part of our curriculum last year as children focus on different themes in each year group, from aspiration and careers to learning about different religions to understanding the environmental damage litter causes to our oceans.

Every theme is underpinned by learning about British Values and The Protected Characteristics whilst learning encourages children to reflect on their own values and character.

Every child now has their own booklet that will go through school with them, collecting sticker badges as they achieve each theme which will be taught every autumn in Explore and Discovery Week. The content of the week will be written up and placed on a sticker for their book. You can see the badges look quite blank at the moment!

There are also additional badges that children can collect throughout the year for achieving in different challenges. More information will come home to you about this next half term.

What are the year group themes?

The Treehouse children have been visiting their year groups and working towards the year group badges.

Make or Break Badge in Nursery and Reception. The children have been breaking their own records this week! They have been learning to get changed for PE, take jumpers on and off, put on their pumps and shoes by themselves. Many children have broken their own timed record by changing more quickly and with greater independence. Parents please get your children to keep practicing getting dressed by themselves at home.

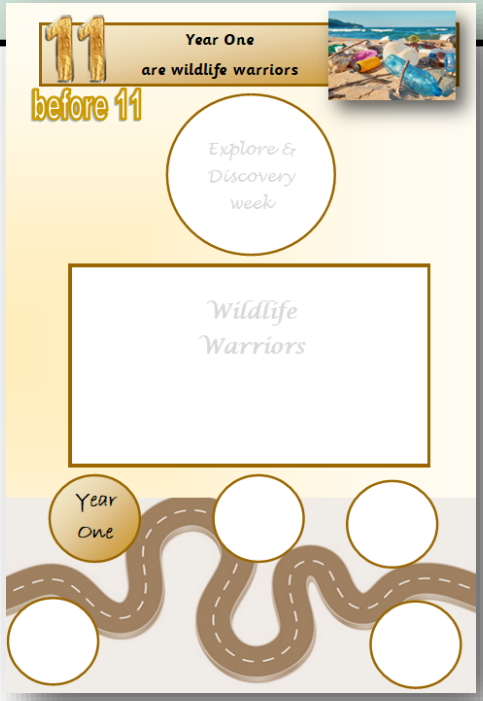
Wildlife Warriors Badge in Year 1. The children started the week as scientists, learning about materials and rubbish. Their three R words are Recycle, Reduce and Reuse! This learning led to exploring the environmental problem of litter and plastic in the oceans. They have then been 're-using' the litter to create sea creatures and wonderful art work!



Caring Campaigners Badge in Year 2 These children invited and welcomed a member of their family to 'Afternoon Tea' but they had to invite, plan, bake, prepare, decorate and lead the very special occasion during the week

Culture Vulture Badge in Year 3. These children have been exploring famous artists, their pieces of work and studying their artistic techniques. Including Seuret's pointillism and Mondrian. The children have also been creating Woodlands' colour palette.

Celebrating Differences Badge in Year 4. Year 4 have been learning about Hinduism and Sikhism. They have been understanding the religious themes, routines and traditions whilst focussing on the British Value of tolerance.



Look To The Future Badge in year 5. *These children have been entrepreneurs this week as they have invented new products to help children learn and then pitched their ideas in a presentation to the 'Dragons' (Mrs Day and Mr Hand!)*

***Year 6 undertook the Energetic Explorers Badge** for the children at Bryntysilio or the **Professional Role Badge** for those children who were Teaching Assistants at Woodlands. Lenny who was based in Year 1 said 'I love it!'.*

A HUGE thank you to all our families who have supported our Junior PCSOs this week.

Our families words of encouragement gave a boost to our children and our families choosing to park elsewhere for drop off is valued by everyone.



Our children have started their patrols this week and put their training into action. They are looking for cars that are parked illegally and this includes:

- Parking on a single yellow line (during school opening times)
- Parking on a double yellow line
- Parking on the zig zags
- Parking across a dropped kerb
- Parking partly on the pavement

The children have written 31 warning tickets this week; luckily for these parents the first warning ticket doesn't include a fine but please be aware that repeat offenders will be referred to the PCSOs and a fine is likely.

Parking away from Hunt's Lane, such as at The Royal Legion or around Church Road, is a much safer option for everyone.

We have also noticed that some parents are dropping their young children off on the pavement and driving off. This is a concern because no one is supervising these children as they walk into school. Please do walk your children into school and wait until the doors open at 8:40 so that they are safe.

The PCSO patrols will continue after half term!

5D's class assembly

On Tuesday, 5D led a fabulous class assembly about our British Values.



They shared how small acts and choices, might not seem like much, but they can make a world of difference.

How a small act of kindness such as a smile or holding the door open for someone, can have a domino effect and lead to many acts of kindness.

How if everyone decided to pick up just one piece of rubbish... how much cleaner our world would be.

To finish, they set us all the challenge of choosing one small act of kindness or one smart choice.

Together...we can make a difference!

Miss Edmunds









Parental and School Request regarding vaping and smoking

Could parents and carers that vape or smoke please not do this around the school gates where our families are entering and leaving school.

The smell is very strong and it is not healthy for children with respiratory issues.

Thank you everyone for your support in this.

Remembrance Day

After half term, children can purchase items for Remembrance Day. Please place the correct money into an envelope labelled with:

- Your child's full name
- Your child's class
- What they would like to purchase
- The amount of money in the envelope



Price list



Rubber Bracelet Band - £1

Adjustable Fabric Bracelet - £1

Slap Bands - £1

Pens - £1

Poppy Keyring - £1

Paper Poppy - 20p

Poppy Sticker - 10p



Who are our SUPERSTARS this week?



Class	Name	Reason
Treehouse	Noah	For demonstrating improving gross motor skills during our sensory circuits! Well done Noah!
NAM	Ushna	Using her sense of touch, exploring various materials, describing the papers as crunchy
NPM	Darwin	Being a scientist, he made a man from mirrors naming all the parts of the body including elbows, neck, knees and wrists.
RG	Rory	For trying so hard to remember his set 1 RWI sounds. Well Done ☺
RJ	Elsie B	For trying so hard in everything you do! You are so keen to learn and work on your next steps, we couldn't ask for more!
1W	Ezme	For coming to school every day with a Woodlands smile and always trying her best in lessons. Well done, Ezme!
1NP	Hero	Trying hard with all his learning this week. Hero has been sitting lovely on the carpet and putting 100% into his work this week. Keep going!
2CH	Jaida	always being ready for learning and trying her best with letter formation and handwriting.
2D	Sreeya	For brilliant work in RE when learning about different celebrations and thinking about their similarities and differences. Well done!
3A	Jacob	For Jacob's fantastic work in maths last week! Jacob used number lines to add tens to a three-digit number crossing a hundreds boundary. Well done!
3E	Barney	For working hard on making sure his handwriting is beautiful and impressing his teachers. Well done Barney!
4R	Ella-Rose	Super explanations in Science using Scientific vocabulary
4N	Aurora	A wonderful setting description in English using ENP and Similes (FL)
5D	Olivia	For showing excellent sound knowledge and using those sounds to read trickier words, fluently. Well done, Olivia!
5H	Leo	For showing a fantastic improvement in engagement with lessons. You have worked hard across a range of subjects and have made excellent progress. Keep up the great work!
6P	Brody	Your kind and thoughtful nature. You bring a positive attitude to your learning. You show great determination when faced with challenges and should be proud of your efforts.
6H	Lenny	Being polite, respectful and well-behaved. You get on well with others, listen carefully and work sensibly and independently. You consistently make positive choices and are a pleasure to have at Woodlands.

Well done to our 'Out of school achievers'

Haiden in Y5 was awarded Player of the Match

Rosie in Y3 has achieved Stage 3 in swimming

Ryan in Y4 was part of the winning team in a football tournament

Arla-Mae in Y3 was awarded Star of the Week in gymnastics

Ella S in Y4 has achieved Stanley 5 in swimming

Elsie in Y3 was a winner in a dancing competition

Tommy in Y5 plays in a football team that came 2nd in a tournament, he scored the winning kick and received Man of the Match

Seraya in Y4 was awarded Star of the Week in gymnastics

Arlo in Y5 came 4th in a bike race and was awarded a medal

Tobias in Y4 man was awarded Man of the Match in football

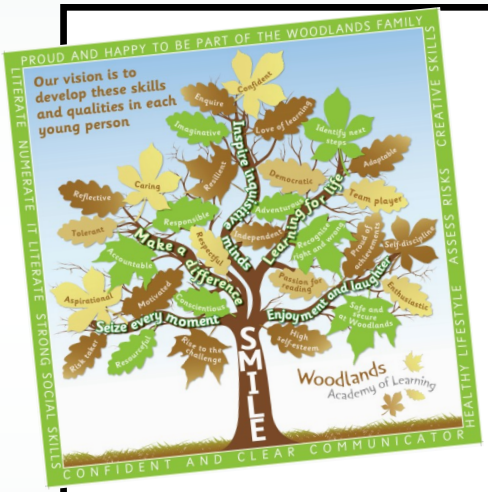
Simeon in Y4 took part in a cycling competition

Albie in Y3 was awarded Parent's Player of the Match for his defending skills

Natalia in Y4 was awarded Player of the Match at football

Lucas in Y5 stepped in to play a match for another football team and scored.





Question of the week that we have been discussing in school and you can discuss at home too:

What games do you enjoy?

Eleven-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan from London has become the youngest person ever to earn the woman grandmaster title in chess.



Our linking Woodland's value is:

Confident

Which British Value does this question highlight?

Mutual respect and tolerance

Bodhana has chosen to learn and play chess. We all enjoy different things and should respect everyone's choices.

Which Protected Characteristic does this story link to?

A person's sex

Bodhana became the youngest female player to earn the woman grandmaster title. Anyone can learn to play chess and it doesn't matter whether you are a girl or a boy.

Key Dates to share for the Autumn Term:

Friday 23rd October	School closes at the end of the day for half term
Monday 2nd November	Children return to school after half term
Tuesday 3rd November	Reception phonics and reading workshop for parents (2:15pm or 4:30pm)
Thursday 5th November	Height and Weight by the NHS for YR and Y6
Monday 9th November	4:00 Information meeting for Y5 parents regarding Queen Mary's Grammar Schools
Tuesday 10th November	Y1 Parent Workshop at 2:00 and repeated at 4:30
Wednesday 11th November	Remembrance Day
Thursday 12th November	Y1 Parent Workshop at 2:00 and repeated at 4:30
Friday 13th November	Children In Need. Non Uniform for a £1.00 on Scopay
Week Beginning Monday 16th November	Anti-bullying Week (Odd Socks Day on Monday)
Tuesday 17th November	Photographs for children who missed photograph days
Friday 27th November	Flu vaccination for Y6 by the NHS (and for those children who were absent when the NHS came in last time)
Wednesday 2nd December	Christmas Fayre after school
Wednesday 9th December	Christmas dinner for 3A (parents invited—letter closer to the time)
Tuesday 15th December	Y6 at the Theatre
Tuesday 15th December	Christmas Performance for Nursery and Reception at 9:15. Christmas Performance for Y1 and Y2 at 2:15
Wednesday 16th December	Christmas Performance for Y1 and Y2 at 9:15. Christmas Performance for Nursery and Reception at 2:15 Christmas dinner for 3E (parents invited —letter closer to the time) Christmas dinner day for everyone
Thursday 17th December	Christmas Jumper Day and last day of term for children
Friday 18th December	Teacher Training Day – school closed for children
Monday 4th January	Everyone returns for the Spring term

Forest School & Outdoor Learning

Autumn Term.

Forest School Rangers this half term.

Nursery – Thomas, Ace

Reception – Frankie, Darcy

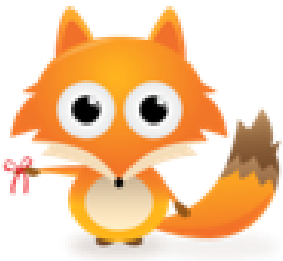
Year One – Hero, Keanu

Year Two – Ellanna, Millie





Please remember to bring your wellingtons, an old pair of trousers and a waterproof coat. The weather will be cold at this time of year so also bring your hat and gloves to keep you warm.



Autumn 2 Forest School Classes.

Nursery – Tuesday Morning

3rd, 10th, 14th, 17th and 24th November also 1st December.

Reception – Tuesday Afternoon *(letters for groups will be issued)*

Year Three – Wednesday Morning.

3A – 4th and 18th of November also 2nd December.

3E – 11th and 25th of November also 9th December.

Tree House

4th, 11th, 18th and 25th of November also 2nd December



BIG FUN, BIG ADVENTURES!

Introducing OPAL Playtimes at Woodlands Academy of Learning

Dear Parents and Carers,

We're getting ready for a new kind of lunchtime! We're really excited to be introducing **OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning)** at Woodlands. OPAL helps children enjoy more active, creative and adventurous play with their friends.

□ Why is play so important?





Play is much more than a break from learning. It helps children to:

- □ Be active, explore and build confidence
- □ Make friends, share ideas and work together
- □ Use their imagination and get creative
- □ Develop independence, resilience and problem-solving skills
- □ Have fun and enjoy coming to school

□ What will playtimes look like?

Children will have more opportunities to explore our outdoor spaces and choose how, where and with whom they play. This may include using a wider range of play resources, trying new activities and getting a little muddier along the way!



Children may experience new challenges and greater freedom to lead their own play. Staff will carefully consider risks and benefits so that play is as safe as possible, while still allowing children to explore, learn and grow.

□ A little help from home

As our OPAL adventure develops, we will be asking families to donate suitable play resources. Take a look at the poster overleaf that has a list of requested items. If you are having a clear out over the half term holiday please bring clean and safe (no broken items please) items from the list to school, during the first week back. Collection point will be the back left side of KS1 playground.

□ Be part of our OPAL journey

Over the coming months, we'll share updates and invite you to events where you can see our new play opportunities in action. We hope you'll join us in making playtimes happier, more active and full of imagination.

Want to find out more? Visit **www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk** for information and videos about OPAL.

Thank you for your support. We can't wait to see our children learning, exploring and having fun together!



Best wishes,
Mrs T Newton
Head teacher
Ms. A Campbell – OPAL Mentor

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

We are looking for donations to improve our lunchtimes for your children. If you are having a clear out over the half term holiday and come across any unwanted items that we can use please bring them into school.

We need the following items that are clean and can be used safely for children from Nursery up to Year 6:

Clothing for Play
- Wellies
- Water proof coats, trousers and body suits.

Dressing up Items
- Dressing up clothes - any type.
- Scarves, hats, gloves, jewellery, handbags, purses, wallets, wigs.

Crafts
- Beads
- Ribbons
- Chalks
- Paintbrushes
- Paintbrush pots
- Sponges
- Dry paint palettes
- Wool
- String
- Natural objects (e.g. shells, pebbles, acorns)

Small World Items
- Model animals, dinosaurs, people, vehicles
- Small world mats
- Model buildings to make small worlds

Role Play/Toy Items
- Kitchen equipment
- Medical/hospital, post office, construction workers, vets, emergency services, school, shops, taking care of baby, explorer, anything else you can think of.

Musical Items
- Pots, pans, metal bottles
- old musical instruments
- Wooden spoons
- Pipes

Construction Items
- Large cardboard boxes (flattened)
- Lego and Duplo
- Large building blocks
- Plastic pipes and guttering
- String or thin rope

Storage
- Small wheeled suitcases
- Tarpaulin
- Lidded plastic boxes
- Curtains
- Shower curtains

Other Items
- Medium sized tents
- Scooters
- Balance bikes
- Boogie boards
- Go carts
- Pushchairs

Volunteers
We are also asking for volunteers to help with constructing our activity zones. If you are handy or like DIY, woodwork or gardening and have time to spare, please speak to Mrs Macpherson, Mrs Dickson or the school office.

Please bring your donations during the first week back. We will be waiting for you at the Donation Point at the back left hand corner of KS1 Playground.

THE SCREEN CYCLE AND THE CHILD'S BRAIN:
WHY EVERYDAY LIFE FEELS HARDER AFTER SCREEN USE

www.SocialWorkersToolbox.com

1. FAST REWARDS



TV, games, and videos give instant pleasure. The brain gets a strong dopamine hit.

Dopamine is the brain's reward and motivation chemical.

2. THE BRAIN ADAPTS



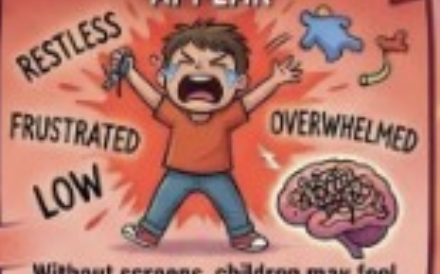
With repeated fast dopamine, the brain starts to expect it and needs more to feel satisfied.

3. REAL LIFE FEELS DULL



Play, homework, meals, and conversation feel boring or irritating by comparison.

4. BIG EMOTIONS APPEAR



Without screens, children may feel restless, frustrated, low, or overwhelmed. Their brain struggles with slower life.

5. SCREENS BRING QUICK RELIEF



Screens calm the brain fast. The child learns that screens mean comfort and escape.

6. THE CYCLE REPEATS





Break the cycle: Prioritise connection, outdoor play, and slow, engaging activities such as walking and talking, sports, creative projects, reading, music, cooking, building, puzzles, or shared tasks. These help the brain settle and cope with everyday life.

Connect
Share
Support
Belong

ClassDojo

Stronger Together

We're using ClassDojo!

Our new way to keep in touch with families

We are excited to let you know that we will be using ClassDojo as our new messaging system. ClassDojo helps us to communicate with you, share updates and celebrate your child's learning – all in one safe and easy-to-use app.

You will receive an invite via your email

We will send you an invitation to join ClassDojo through your email. Look out for an email from ClassDojo (please check your junk/spam folder if you can't see it).



Download the ClassDojo app

To use ClassDojo, you will need to download the free ClassDojo app on your phone or tablet. You can't access messaging through a web browser.

How to get started

1. Look for your invitation email from ClassDojo.
2. Click the link in the email.
3. Download the ClassDojo app from the App Store or Google Play (if you haven't already).
4. Follow the instructions to create your account and connect to your child's class.

With ClassDojo you can:

- Receive messages from your child's teacher.
- See updates and photos of what your child has been learning
- Celebrate your child's achievements
- Receive important reminders and announcements
- Use translations to read messages in your home language



A happy community helps children thrive!

Download the app here:

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Or search for 'ClassDojo' in your app store.

If you have any problems receiving your invite or need any help, please let us know.
We're here to support you!

Walsall Police
West Midlands Police Headquarters
Lloyd House
PO Box 52
Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6NQ

Date: 7th October 2026

Dear parents and carers,

This is a message from West Midlands Police about Halloween and Bonfire Night.

We want everyone to have an enjoyable Halloween and Bonfire Night this October half term. This letter is to provide you with useful advice to keep you, your child, and your community safe.

On the run up to half term, your child might get a visit from one of our local officers visiting their school to deliver important messages about how to stay safe around fireworks and keep themselves safe in the darker nights.

To help start that conversation with your child about personal safety, stranger danger, and antisocial behaviour School Officer PC Smith has created a short video for you to watch with your child. Watch here: https://youtu.be/hyIRME6G9hU

Trick-or-treating safety tips:

- Accompany young children while trick-or-treating and talk to your child about staying with their friends. Tell them never to enter a property they do not know.
- Plan a safe route in familiar neighbourhoods, use pelican and zebra crossings, and stick to well-lit streets.
- Add reflective tape to costumes and carry flashlights or glow sticks.
- Make sure phones are charged, have location apps turned on, and keep it out of sight when they are not using it.
- Keep a light on in your home to help welcome your children home and prevent burglars.
- We ask that children do not visit homes that display a 'no trick-or-treating' sign as this time of year can be unsettling for many.

It is always best to check any sweets, gifts, or toys children have been given while trick-or-treating.

Fireworks and Bonfire Safety Tips:

- Attend a public firework display rather than handling fireworks at home. Never allow children to handle fireworks or sparklers without supervision.
- Talk to your children about the danger of pointing fireworks at people or buildings. Police can prosecute for dangerous use of fireworks.
- Wear high-vis jackets, glow sticks, or give a torch to your children.

- Before visiting a bonfire or firework display talk to your child about a safe meeting place or a time to regroup after the event.
- Never create a bonfire, or start a fire, in a public space, against a building, or next to vehicles. Call the fire service on 999 if you see any fires in public spaces or in public bins.

Always ask: What are your child's plans? How are they going to enjoy fireworks and bonfire night safely?

Throughout half term, local officers will be patrolling your town centres, visiting community hubs and policing large events. Stop by and say 'hello' if you see us out and about.

In an emergency, you can report misuse of fireworks or dangerous behaviour to us on 999. To report non-life-threatening incidents or antisocial behaviour please contact us online by searching 'WMP report' or calling us on 101.

You can report 100% anonymously to Crimestoppers by calling 0800 555 111.

Thank you,

West Midlands Police

Community Matters







