



A Message from Mrs Hewitt

Another great week in Meadows! The weather has been beautiful too. On this newsletter, I have included some photos of activities that we have been completing over the last couple of weeks for you to see.

Next week is Sports Week, so we have lots of sporting activities planned for the children. We launched Sports Week on Wednesday by welcoming the Commonwealth Mascot into school for an assembly.

Sports day for KS1 and 2 will take place on Monday 20th June at the following times- 9.30-10.30 for KS2 and 10.45-11.45 for KS1. It will be a fun round robin for the children to join in with; parents are welcome to watch as the children move round the different activities. Reception's sports session will be at 2.00 on Thursday 23rd June, and Nursery will have theirs on Wednesday 22nd at 10.30-11.15

On Thursday we are holding a Gymnastic Festival in school.

On Friday, we are finishing the week with Commonwealth Games activities for all the children.

Dyslexia: Mrs Rowley and Mrs Dodman have created a help sheet for parents who have children who are showing signs of dyslexia; we have included it below on this newsletter.

We attained a merit Green Flag Award this week! A great achievement. Please see the report below.

I hope that everyone has a wonderful weekend.

Here are some of the examples of our children's art displayed in Worcester Cathedral as part of the Voices and Visions Exhibition.





Supporting children who are showing signs of dyslexia



It is estimated that there are up to 1 in every 10 people with some degree of dyslexia. Children can not be assessed for dyslexia until the age of 9. Before this some of the characteristics of dyslexia may appear in children due to their usual development eg spelling errors may be due to age and the child making typical errors for that age. One of the assessments used to assess for dyslexia is also only for children aged 9 and above.

Despite children not being able to gain a formal diagnosis until 9, we believe that early intervention is important to ensure the children are receiving appropriate support. We use a range of different strategies to support children that are showing 'dyslexic tendencies' regularly within the classroom. These include:

<p>Teaching a structured phonics programme.</p>	<p>Give clear simple instructions.</p>	<p>A range of ways to record their work: spider diagrams, photographs, drawings.</p>	<p>Paired work in class</p>
<p>Visual timetables</p>	<p>Over learning and consolidation (not rushing onto the next steps before the children have a good understanding)</p>	<p>Use of pictures to support verbal information.</p>	<p>Seating: children facing the front, close to the board.</p>
<p>Using dyslexia friendly fonts in the classroom.</p> <p>Dyslexic Friendly Font</p>	<p>Colour background of computer screen.</p>	<p>Minimise copying from the board or put the information in front of me.</p>	<p>Teaching of spelling rules and patterns. Using mnemonics or colours.</p>
<p>Extra time for work or answering a question.</p>	<p>Reduce the expectation of the work in the same amount of time.</p>	<p>Enlarge fonts</p>	<p>Seat the child out of direct sunlight</p>
<p>Use audio versions of the text.</p>	<p>b/d prompts</p>	<p>Triangular pencils and grips</p>	<p>Alphabet strips</p>



<p>Mini whiteboards</p>	<p>Phoneme charts to break up a word.</p>	<p>Talking tins</p>	<p>Writing frames</p>
<p>Highlighters for key information</p>	<p>Lots of opportunities for discussion to verbalise ideas.</p>	<p>Allow rests/ movements breaks</p>	<p>Multi sensory learning: Engaging more than one sense.</p>
<p>Songs for learning key facts</p>	<p>Line trackers</p>	<p>Writing slope to support handwriting.</p>	<p>Use of computer to record work if appropriate</p>
<p>Differentiating the task: Ensuring the task is matched to the ability of the child.</p>	<p>Dictionaries</p>	<p>Magnetic letters</p>	<p>Word mats</p>
<p>Wobble cushion to support sitting.</p>			

These are used at different times in school depending on the child's needs and also the activity. We regularly monitor the children's progress in school. With a few children with prolonged difficulties, there may be need for further interventions. In school we use:



Nessy – reading and spelling



Better Reading

Precision Teaching

Precision teaching – spelling or reading



Additional Phonics



Meadows First School Weekly Newsletter



WE ARE A UNICEF GOLD
RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

Children's rights are learned, understood
and lived in this school.



Well done to the Eco Committee! We have been awarded the Green flag Merit Award for our work and commitment to sustainability and eco education. A huge thank you goes to Mrs Date and Mrs Ashton for their hard work in developing this area across the school. Here are excerpts from our report:

Congratulations!!! Fantastic work! We are very pleased to tell you that you and your Eco-Committee at Meadows First have been awarded an Eco-Schools Green Flag.

- We love your democratic and fair approach to appointing Eco-Committee members. It's great to see that other pupils played a part in selections. Great work!
- We love how active your Eco-Committee was in communicating their Eco-Schools activity school-wide. Feedback and discussion in circle time, emails to staff, newsletters and in assemblies...all combine to make a great approach! This is really strong informing and involving and shows how valued and embedded the Eco-Schools programme is in your school.
- COVID has brought massive challenges to schools over the past few years, however, despite all the disruptions caused you have still placed environmentalism at the heart of what you do - planning impactful projects, making school exciting for pupils and educating about important issues! Take great confidence from the fact you have managed to succeed despite such challenging circumstances.
- It's brilliant that most year groups were able to contribute to your school's Environmental Review and share their findings with your school community.
- Your Action Plan was concise, SMART and clearly influenced by your environmental review. This is a great example of self-reflective practice, research-led planning and critical thinking. We're really impressed at how you've linked environmental issues to a variety of curriculum areas. This approach looks at the big issue of climate change in a holistic way, which is the best approach to understanding and appreciating the enormity of the issue. We loved seeing your school visitors engaging students and pictures of your Eco-artwork! Great work!
- You've clearly looked externally and engaged with different campaigns, projects and organisations. What an impressive list - your application made us feel really positive for the future.
- We love that your pupils have taken their great work beyond the school gates and into their local community. This is a very challenging aspect of the Eco-Schools programme, so your Eco-Committee should be very proud of their successes in this area! The fact that you do this every year is doubly impressive!
- Your Eco-Board is great. Your board is incredibly visual and engaging and promotes your work in an attractive way.
- Having a pupil represent the school at Children's Parliament prior to the COP26 summit is a great achievement - not just for the pupil, but the Eco-Committee who will have supported him and your school for making it possible. Amazing!
- We LOVED seeing the pictures of your pupils hard at work on their Eco-Schools activities. They inspired us! The pupils have clearly made your school a greener, more welcoming and engaging environmental for themselves and other to be in. Brilliant work.
- We thought your Eco-Code was brilliant!

Overall, this is a terrific application and a great year's work. The Eco-Committee and the entire school should feel very proud. The Eco-Schools team is delighted to award you an Eco-Schools Green Flag Merit Award.



Here are some of the Big Breaktime photos:



Thank you for your donations (£140) which went to the NSPCC to help them fund vital services such as Childline.



Meadows Mouse Awards

Cygnets	Chloe – being a very kind and helpful friend. Robyn – trying so hard with handwriting.
Goslings	Myles – great effort and enthusiasm. Jake – super focus.
Caterpillars	Oliver P – brilliant focus in maths. Jessica C – using different punctuation marks in her writing correctly.
Dragonflies	Olivia – always being so kind and helpful. Jack – enthusiastic and determined attitude to learning.
Owls	Ted – super focus and independent work in all of his lessons. Addison – always showing great organisation and helping others to be organised too.
Hedgehogs	Zac L – always pushing himself in Maths. Leni M – enthusiasm during P.E.
Sharks	Leo C – determination with his Maths work. Abigail G – excellent focus in all lessons.
Dolphins	Daman M – fantastic inference skills and great answers in class. Jake M – enthusiasm and focus in lessons.
Jaguars	Harry P – super teamwork and fielding skills in Rounders. Reuben H – excellent report about teeth.
Tigers	Noah L – being a superstar in the leavers production and learning all his lines. Jack P – being enthusiastic and determined in maths.



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At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about VIRTUAL REALITY

Virtual reality (VR for short) has existed for decades, but it's only in the last 10 years that the technology has really become publicly available. With VR's rapid rise as a gaming and educational medium, there are plenty of unknowns regarding its use – for adults and children alike. Is it safe? How long should someone use VR for? How expensive is it? What's clear is that VR is becoming ever more ubiquitous in everyday life: from companies using it for training to at-home fitness. Knowing what the technology is capable of is more useful than ever.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

PREMATURE EXPOSURE

13+

While VR has already found its way into schools worldwide – allowing teachers to take their class on digital field trips – most manufacturers advise an age restriction of 13. This safeguard is based on the idea that children's brains, eyes and bodies are still developing. With the technology still in its infancy, not enough research has been conducted as to how VR affects children in the longer term.

EYE STRAIN

One of the main worries about VR is that essentially having TV screens so close to your eyes could harm them with prolonged use. Lenses inside each headset have been specifically designed to trick the human eye into focusing to infinity (just as they would in the real world) to mitigate possible eye strain. Even so, longer VR sessions should be limited to adults only.

PHYSICAL ACCIDENTS

When used correctly, VR isn't dangerous as there are safety features built in. A common concern is that a child wearing a headset could bump into real-world objects while playing – so creating a clear, tidy gaming space is essential. Headsets also come with 'Guardian' or digital barrier systems that can be set up beforehand, indicating where walls and furniture are located so nobody trips over and hurts themselves.

SOCIAL VR

VR is more immersive than normal gaming and makes players feel very present in the moment. There are additional online safety fears, therefore, relating to trolling and abusive comments as players engage with each other in social VR spaces. Personal information shouldn't be given out and privacy and safety controls (who can see your real name, for example) need to be activated where possible.

MOTION SICKNESS

Children who are prone to travel sickness might encounter what's known as 'simulator sickness'. This is nausea caused by the eyes seeing images which tell the brain that the person is moving, while the rest of the body knows it is stationary. Most apps have features to reduce this discomfort, while some games simply don't feature locomotion to make for a more comfortable experience.

VIOLENT CONTENT

Among the growing range of VR games and apps, not all of them are appropriate for young players. Violent content can be for more visceral and disturbing in VR, so it's important to consider the age and maturity of your child before giving them access to this type of gameplay. As the majority of VR content is digital, online store access is easy – so careful curation is advised.

Advice for Parents & Carers

START OFF SLOWLY

Just like regular video games, if your child wants to try VR the best way to reduce risks is moderation. Keep their VR sessions to short stints and for young adults new to the technology, build up their usage time gradually to let them get acquainted with it. If they feel any discomfort, remove the headset and try again at a later point.

NO SURPRISES

It's easy to get lost in the moment in VR – and possibly forget where you might be standing in the real world. A minimum 2m x 2m play area is recommended, with no plant pots or other delicate objects within reach of flailing arms. Take pets into account, too: don't let the cat or dog walk into the room, for example, because a VR player won't see them and could certainly trip. A child is far more likely to get over-enthusiastic in VR, posing a risk to themselves and anything in their path.

KEEP A WATCHING BRIEF

It may seem that a VR player is in their own world, but all VR headsets allow external viewing via a linked monitor or mobile phone. This is the best way to ensure whatever a child is playing is appropriate. More VR supervision tools are on the way, such as securing specific apps behind unlock patterns or sending an approval notification to the parent if their child wants to purchase a game.

ANTI-NAUSEA OPTIONS

It's wise to get used to VR while comfortably seated and progress to standing or 'room-scale' VR (where players physically walk around an area) later. Look at the in-app options first: switching between seated and standing adjusts the player's height, while a vignette or 'tunnel' darkens the peripheral vision to reduce nausea. Teleportation Mode and Snap Turning are also important options for enhancing comfort.

RESEARCH CONTENT

There will be information online about most games and apps, explaining what type of experience they provide. They'll list age ratings indicating how violent the gameplay might be; comfort, so you'll know the intensity of the experience; and how much access the game requires to personal information or features like the built-in microphone.

Meet Our Expert

Peter Graham is the editor at XR (extended reality) and Web3 specialist site grrm3.com and has been writing about VR, augmented reality and the immersive tech industry for more than seven years. He's served as a panel speaker and a judge at awards events and game hackathons.



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