



NEWSLETTER



Headteacher's Message



Dear Parent/Carer,

We have come to the end of another fantastic year at Kestrel House. The highlight of the year must be the school being awarded 'Outstanding' from Ofsted. We could not have done this without our fabulous staff and support from you, the parents/carers as well as our amazing young people.

It has been brilliant to see how quickly those who have joined Kestrel House settle into their new class and new environment. Our Wellbeing Team has grown which has enabled us to support learners even more than what we have previously.

This term, we have had so many new faces join the Kestrel Family, those who are with us have supported us in delivering positive outcomes for every single learner. You have been true advocates for autism, and I am proud of what we have achieved since September.

This newsletter will show you what our learners have achieved over the term. I will let you see for yourself, the fun and exciting activities and experiences that they have participated in.

Next year we look forward to celebrating even more cultural events, including: Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day and World Book Day, to name but a few. I am so proud of what our learners have achieved and look forward to seeing them continue with their journey.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and I'll see you all on Thursday 4th January 2024!

All the best,

Marc

Angel Class



In Numeracy, Angel Class have been learning about counting; this has been done through interactive whiteboard games and exploration with sensory trays. By delivering the lessons in this manner, the learners are motivated to join in with Numeracy whilst also practicing turn taking.





This term in Literacy, Angel Class have been engaging in Sensory Stories. Our Sensory Stories have been centred around national celebrations such as: Halloween and Christmas, but also around different animals that live in the jungle, and colours using 'The Colour Monster' story. The combination of an engaging story and different sensory inputs has been a huge success with the learners as they can a deeper understanding of the story through sensory exploration.



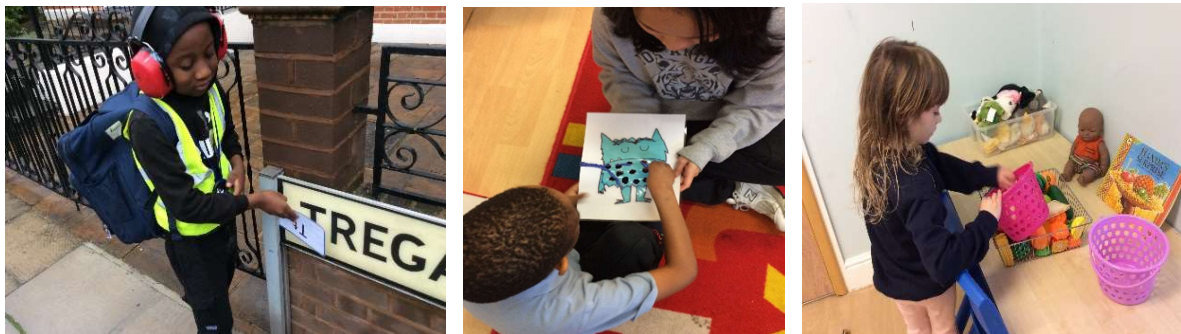
Angel Class has been discovering processes and transitions, in Science. The learners have explored what the changes in season will look like. We have also incorporated relevant holidays, such as Halloween, to help develop their skills with cause and effect using appropriate sensory materials.

Victoria Class

This term Victoria class have been exploring and engaging in different activities linked with our topic 'Express yourself'. The learners have been interacting more with each other through group activities such as: building Lego, painting, choosing songs, playing in the yard and/or throwing-catching games. We also, had lot of fun participating in the SMSC activities and going on community walks, public transport, and Sea Life Aquarium.



In Literacy, Victoria class have been reading 'Handa's surprise' and have engaged with related activities to learn more about: Africa, African culture, music, food and animals, through: songs, art, mark making activities, sensory play, tasting food and an African drumming experience. We also, read 'The Colour Monster' to learn about sharing our feelings and find out what can make us feel better. During these lessons, we worked on phonics and mark making activities.



In Numeracy, we worked on sizes, numbers and shapes through building activities, sorting and matching games and arts. The learners had fun looking at big/small items around the classroom and community. They also draw shapes on trays with sand and using the interactive board.



In Science, we read 'The Rainbow Fish' and we went to the Aquarium to look at the different sea animals. We also, worked on mixing colours and exploring different textures. We had so much fun looking at the different experiments and playing with sensory trays.





Pimlico Class

This term in Pimlico class we've been having lots of fun getting to know our new friends and learning lots of different things! We've been working on our 'Express yourself' topic, we've been trying new things, learning about ourselves and each other and most of all trying our best every day! Well done Pimlico Class!

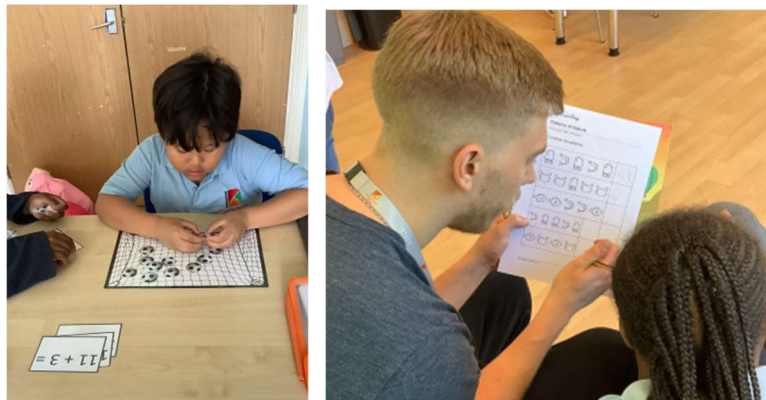
Pimlico have been going on lots of nature walks in Science; we have been learning all about our environment and practicing how to stay safe in our local community. We have also been finding leaves and plants and taking them back to class to learn about: how plants grow and the different parts of a flower/plant. We've all really enjoyed Science this year.



In Literacy, we have worked really hard on our 'Amazing Grace' story. We have been reading it both independently and engaging in the book as a Sensory Story. Everyone has done amazing work with their comprehension skills this term, and we all very much enjoyed participating in this story and the activities! We have also done amazing work in phonics this term and have all worked really hard to say or recognise the different sounds and words. Pimlico class have particularly enjoyed listening to lots of different phonics songs!



In Numeracy we have been working on our problem-solving skills. We have all worked really hard in problem solving and have been able to use these skills in other lessons and throughout the school day. We have also done a great job at continuing to work on Numeracy skills such as: sorting, sums, puzzles, and number recognition.





Westminster Class

This term we started reading 'It Was a Cold, Dark Night' about a hedgehog who is looking for his home and meets different animals in their own homes. We learnt hedgehogs like to live under leaves and some animals live in trees. In our Sensory Story we got to experience the fall of autumn leaves, feeling "worms" (made out of spaghetti) and the spiky hedgehogs we made during Creativity lessons.



Westminster start their days with table top activities in a carousel play style programme that incorporates Numeracy/Literacy/Science concepts. We have explored: counting to 5, building structures using language "more" and "less", sorting and grouping objects with different colours. We also use our numeracy skills during cooking sessions: measuring quantities and when out at the shops counting out what we need from our shopping lists.





In Science, Westminster have been exploring the autumnal environment around the school linking to our Sensory Story. We made leafy undergrowth for hedgehogs and explored pumpkin carving. Later in the term we were visited by Wild Science and met some animals that like to live on the ground. We were very brave saying hello to them!





Paddington Class

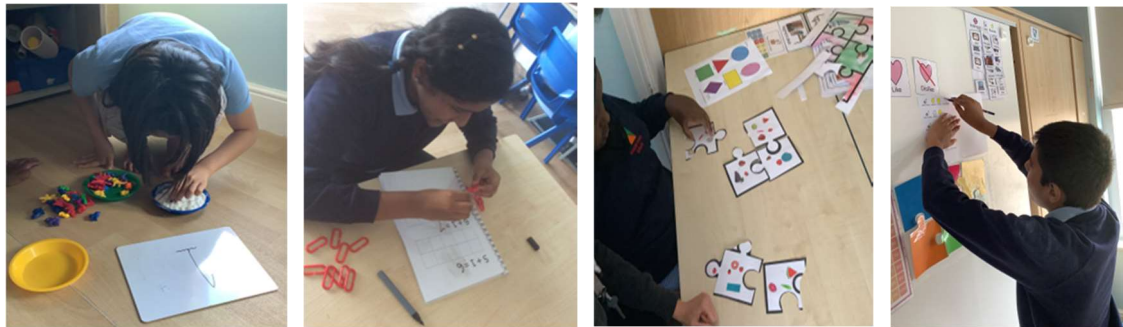
This term in Paddington Class, we've been working hard on our 'Express yourself' theme; we're very proud of what we have done. We've been trying our best and experiencing new things every day. We've been exploring the local area by going on community walks, engaging in music and bucket sessions, and interacting with our school friends throughout the week.



Paddington Class have been doing lots of experiments in Science and learning about: the weather, seasons, animals, and plants. We have created mini storms in a bottle, edible gardens, sensory bags and we have been learning about how the weather and environment changes season to season. Everyone has had so much fun!



In Literacy, we have been reading a book called 'Amazing Grace' and working hard in our phonics lessons. We have been doing lots of matching and comprehension activities in class and in the community, and we have been exploring letter formation and developing overall hand writing skills. We've been doing lots of typing and using the interactive whiteboard to play Literacy games. In the Spring term we are planning to visit the local Library to explore more books to continue to develop our reading skills.



We have been focussing on: problem solving, likes and dislikes, patterns, and puzzles, in Numeracy. We have made our own puzzles and mazes, which we have used in our lessons, and during free time. We've been working together as a class to solve number problems and to put bigger puzzles together. We've had lots of fun engaging with: matching, quantity, and ordering activities and games.

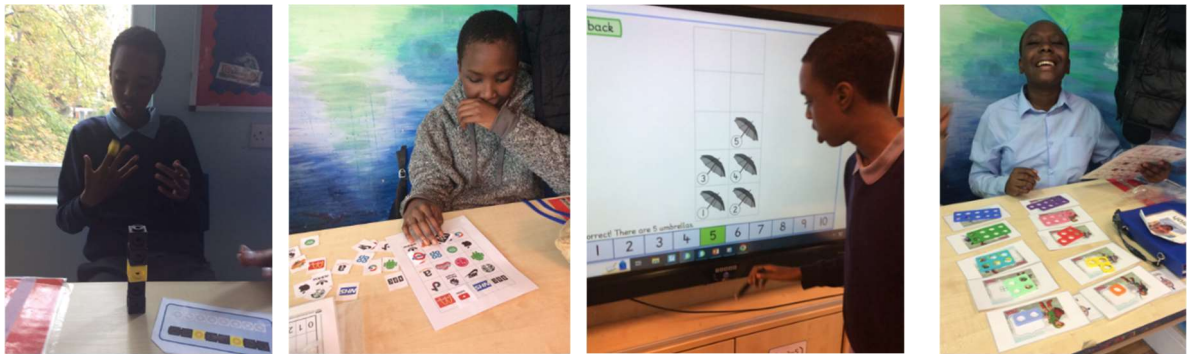


In our Creativity and Topic lessons we have celebrated lots of different cultural events, and have made some wonderful art. We have sold some of these pieces in our Paddington class shop during our Numeracy lessons. We have celebrated Black History Month; we made traditional jewellery, decorated biscuits with Caribbean and African flags, and cooked Jollof rice.

We have also made: masks and tin foil art inspired by our 'Amazing Grace' Literacy lessons, Poppy plates for Remembrance Day, decorated shortbread and made Pudsey ears for Children in Need, and Halloween and Christmas crafts. We've all had a great time, and we are looking forward to creating and celebrating lots more next term!

Hampstead Class

In Numeracy, Hampstead have been solving problems. We have been using tangible and engaging learning resources, Multilink and Numicon in particular.



We have been successfully engaging in phonics and reading, in Literacy. We have explored environmental sounds, phonemes and letters. We choose books to read, or to be read to us, every day in class and we have watched 'The Very Busy Spider' by Eric Carle.



In Topic Hampstead have listened to a sensory story version of Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman. We have made sentences retelling the story.



In Creativity lessons, Hampstead have enjoyed creating their own art inspired by our Literacy story 'Amazing Grace', where the main character (Grace) loves to perform as many things, such as: a tiger, a spider, a native American and a knight.



In Science Hampstead have enjoyed activities inspired by Amazing Grace such as making pirate ships to float on water.



Waterloo Class

Our theme this term has been “Express yourself”. In Waterloo class, we have been exploring the theme throughout Creativity, Topic and Literacy. In our Creativity lessons, we have been doing self-portraits; the learners were given a picture of themselves, which they cut out and re-glued back together in their own way. In Creativity we also let the learners take control by giving them different resources, which allowed them to create and express themselves artistically.



In Topic, we celebrated Black History Month; we discovered and celebrated different role models and notable people. We read stories about their jobs, their roles and the huge part they played in making changes in the world.

In Literacy, we have been reading a sensory story called “I like myself because I’m me”. The learners were involved in the story and were given a quiz about the story after reading it. We also discussed and wrote down what the learners liked about themselves.



In Numeracy, we have been focusing on ordinal numbers as well as revisiting counting, adding and subtracting. We introduced ordinal numbers through looking at the calendar and races. The learners drew a race track around the playground and raced one another whilst commenting on who came 1st, 2nd, and 3rd; we also did mini races in class with windup toys which the learners really enjoyed.



In Science, we have been looking at different habitats and the life cycle of a plant- we have also been identifying and labelling different parts of the plant. The learners have been watching habitat videos and researching facts using the laptops; with all the information collected, the learners had to sort it into the correct habitats. For the life cycle of the plant, the learners went through a presentation and then they had to order the plant cycle. The learners also painted a flower and labelled each part and their function.



PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education)



Victoria class worked on self-care routines such as toileting, brushing teeth, feeding and wiping activities. We also worked on taking turns through play and group activities.

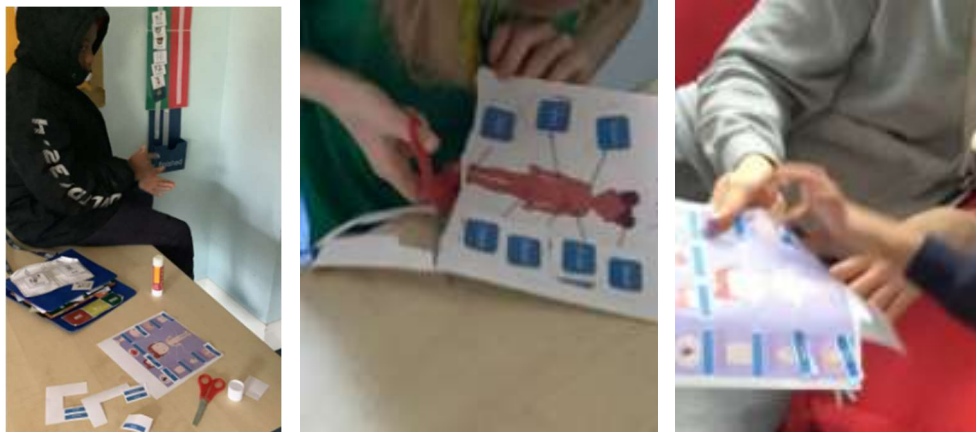


Angel Class have focused on toileting. The Social Stories we have been using normalise different healthy habits, such as: eating well, drinking water, and going to the toilet. The social stories are accompanied by core communication boards with relevant symbols for the learners to access communication around healthy habits. As a result, the learners have been able to develop their independent toileting and personal hygiene skills.

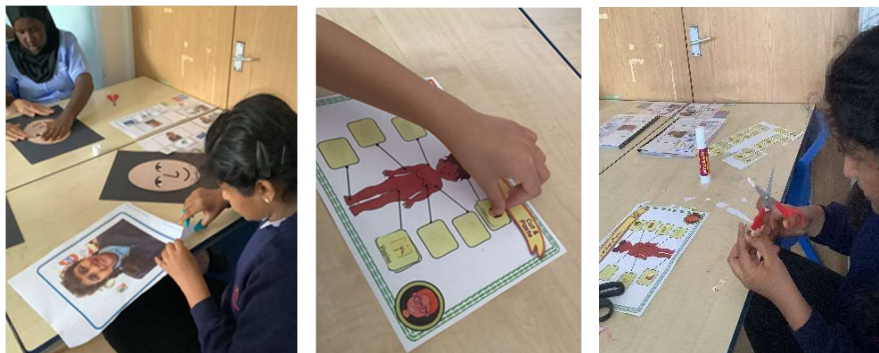


Westminster Class have been working on self-care skills including brushing our teeth and cleaning up after ourselves. We even get a chance to use the school's washing machine to wash up our beanbag covers!

RSE (Relationships and Sex education)



Pimlico class have done lots of work around: our bodies, boundaries, private and public, safe spaces, safe adults, and keeping healthy.



Paddington class have been learning about their bodies, boundaries, how to keep safe, secrets, being healthy, and who is a safe adult.



Hampstead have continued to remind themselves of the 5 PANTS rules as well as think about puberty and growing up into an adult.

Physical Wellbeing

This term in Physical Wellbeing we have been exploring a range of different Sensory Circuits, games and activities.

Throughout the sessions we are trying different movements with our bodies, learning to engage positively with our peers, and learning different rules/structures.



We have been working on getting changed before and after the sessions which has helped to teach about different clothing for different activities. We have also gone on walks in our local community (which offers the perfect chance to work on road safety) and to the park to play and explore

Sensory Circuits offer the learners a chance to engage in a range of different movements such as; crawling, rolling, jumping, running which will aid in exploring different ways to move around and getting different sensory inputs. There are also visual and touch stimulus to explore during these sessions.



We have tried different activities including throwing the bean bags to the correct coloured hula hoop, scooter board races, using big Lego blocks to build different shapes, running to the correct coloured cones. These activities and games have helped to teach about colours, competition, working together and ordinal numbering.



We will continue to build on these skills next term and continue to explore and develop.



Wellbeing Team

During the Autumn 2023, the Wellbeing Team, with the help of the Therapy Assistants (TAs), continued delivering therapy at a specialist level (1:1 therapy sessions), enhanced level (individual programmes, equipment, or small therapy groups) and a universal level (whole school/class strategies and approaches).

We're thrilled to introduce two new members who have joined our dynamic team this academic year:



Dr Shika Das, our new Clinical Psychologist who will be working part-time at our school, collaborating closely with teaching staff, families, and community supports. Her focus is on supporting access to learning, nurturing positive identities, and promoting independence among our learners.



Molly Mulvaney our full-time Speech and Language Therapist, who is supporting learners understand spoken language and to communicate their wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas. She utilizes a range of communication methods, including spoken language and alternative approaches such as visuals, gestures, and sign language.

Both Shika and Molly are committed to delivering therapy at all levels of input — specialist, enhanced, and universal, ensuring that every student receives the tailored support they need to thrive academically and personally.



On an enhanced level of therapy input, our Occupational Therapist (OT), Lucy Allen with the support of the Therapy Assistants, continued delivering weekly therapy groups for specific female learners to work on developing specific self-care skills; so, they could work toward their EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) outcomes. The learners also had opportunities to engage in enjoyable relaxation/self-care activities (e.g., hair styling, nail painting salon, foot spa, dressing and styling dolls).



Being on the true spirit of winter holidays, a festive singalong assembly was orchestrated by the Music Therapist Catherine and one of the therapy assistants Coryn. Guided by the Occupational Therapist, the singalong was infused with sensory elements to engage and delight every learners as well as Makaton signing, ensuring that the joy of music is accessible to all. The learners also had the chance to write a letter to Santa Claus!

As we look ahead to the next year, we are confident that the diverse skills and experiences of our team will continue to make a positive impact and always deliver best practice!

Events



Macmillan Coffee Morning



Wild Science



Black History Month



Pumpkin party



Children in Need – Kestrel House School took part in sponsored walks for charity, in total we walked 23,000 steps that's 15 kilometres!

... and finally



Over the summer we have had some new equipment added to our Sensory room. The room now doubles as an Immersive space, where we can project images on 3 walls and the floor, accompanied with sound and interactive features. We have conducted some trial sessions with Waterloo class, and we created an Immersive Christmas experience for all classes to access.



We intend for more learning experiences, which utilise the Immersive equipment, to take place next term, and for such activities to be fully integrated into our curriculum offer.



We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year! See you all again in the Spring Term ...



Acorn Education And Care
Options Autism

