

NEWSLETTER

Headteacher's Message

As we reach the end of the autumn term, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what has been a wonderfully busy and rewarding few months. Since officially joining the school in September, it has been a real privilege to become part of such a vibrant, caring and dedicated community. I would like to thank our pupils, staff, parents and carers for the warm welcome and continued support.

This term has been rich in learning experiences and memorable events. During Black History Month, pupils enjoyed an engaging African drumming workshop, which brought history and culture to life through music and rhythm. Our Pumpkin Celebration Day was another highlight, filled with creativity, smiles and seasonal fun. We were also delighted to take part in Royal Ballet online classes, giving our children the opportunity to experience high-quality dance education and inspiring many to try something new.



As December arrived, the excitement in school truly grew. We enjoyed a range of successful festive activities as we geared up for the holidays, including the 12 Signs of Christmas, the Kestrel Christmas Cinema, Santa's Grotto, and the much-enjoyed Kestrel Door Decoration Competition, which brought creativity and festive cheer across the school.



Staff Changes and New Beginnings

As is often the case at this time of year, we also say farewell to some valued members of staff as they move on to new adventures. Alun from Hampstead will be leaving us, and we thank him for his dedication and contribution to the school. We are pleased to welcome Minka, who will be joining the team in his place.

We also say goodbye to Juan, and we look forward to welcoming Vivian as his replacement. Lucas in Waterloo Class will also be leaving us this term to go travelling, we wish him all the best for the future. In addition, we are delighted to welcome Zoe, who will be joining us as our new Life Skills Teacher, strengthening our provision in this important area. Alongside her Elaina has also joined us to become our new Physical Wellbeing Lead, and we look forward to further development of our offering in this area.

Finally, we bid Pam a very happy and well-deserved retirement, thanking her sincerely for her years of commitment and service to our school community. Makiko will be joining us to take on Pam's role, and we look forward to working with her.



We extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our community and wish all those moving on every success and happiness in their next chapters.

I am incredibly proud of all that our school community has achieved this term. Thank you to our dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment, and to parents and carers for your ongoing partnership and support.

I wish you all a restful, joyful and safe holiday season, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new term as we continue our journey together.

Warm regards,
Aimée McMillan
Headteacher





Angel Class

Angel Class have made a wonderful start to the school year this Autumn term, full of fun and engaging activities.

Our theme for this term has been "Homes", we learned about different types of homes from sensory stories such as "On Every House, On Every Street", "Who Lives Here?" and "Home". We explored the rooms of the house and different types of houses in our community, as well as looking at some animal's and their homes. Learners have also been engaging in individual reading time, where they have enjoyed picking and reading their favourite stories.

We have been continuing to work on developing our awareness of phonics, working on letter recognition and environmental sound awareness both in the classroom and out in our community.

In Maths, we have continued to develop our numeracy skills, working on our counting skills as well as recognizing and matching quantities to numerals through a variety of activities such as games, fine-motor skill activities, personalized worksheets and messy play.

The theme for science this term has been "space", and learners have been exploring the colours, textures and sizes of some of the planets in our solar system. Our learners have had the chance to get some hands-on learning experiences, having conducted many science experiments and used messy play and water play to explore the various planets.

Music is the highlight of Angel Class's week, where Sam has been teaching us many new songs and dances on the guitar, and we have had the chance to try out lots of new instruments

Physical wellbeing has been a key focus for our learners in Angel Class. Each day, we have been developing our self-regulation skills with some calm time, where learners choose tools from our class calm kit that they would like to use.

We have also been working on sensory circuits in the morning, moving and calming our bodies to help us get ready to learn for the day. In P.E, we have been taking part in circuits and various games, developing our turn-taking skills as well as keeping active.

Angel Class have enjoyed getting out and about in our community, going on regular walks throughout the week where we practice our road safety skills, as well as going some maths and phonics walks and use our skills outside of the classroom.

We have also continued to build on our self-care skills, practicing our daily routines such as handwashing, toothbrushing and our self-dressing skills, as well as developing cleaning routines for our classroom.

We have had an amazing Autumn term in Angel Class, and we look forward to continuing this in the new year.



Victoria Class

This Autumn term has been full of wonderful successes in Victoria Class. The children have settled incredibly well into their new school and class, showing confidence and enthusiasm in their daily routines.



There has been fantastic progress in fine motor skills through activities such as playdough gym, painting, mark making, and using a range of tools.

Pupils have actively participated in social stories and related activities, as well as engaging positively during bucket time. In science, the children loved learning about different planets and “flying to space” in rockets they made themselves.



We have also seen great improvements in social skills, particularly sharing and turn-taking.

In personal development, the children achieved important milestones in dressing skills, brushing teeth, and washing hands.



They enjoyed exploring the local area on walks, developed counting skills through active maths sessions to support number understanding, and showed creativity and teamwork while using the outdoor construction area.



This term was also very exciting, as the children explored a wide range of messy play and sensory activities, supporting their curiosity, engagement, and sensory development.

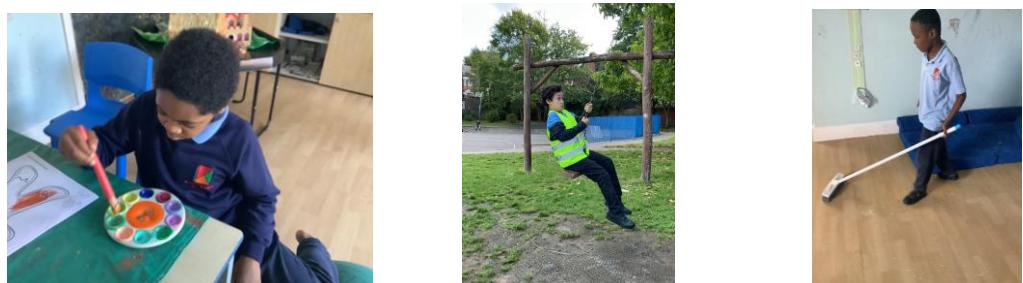


Pimlico Class

Pimlico Class have been learning about different types of homes through stories including 'Hansel and Gretel', 'We're going on a bear hunt', 'The Nativity' and 'Home.' Also, we continue to develop our phonics understanding and skills.



They have also been exploring and learning about the solar system and that they live on Earth. We made bear caves out of paper mache and decorating paper templates as planet earth. Pimlico Class have been very creative! They have thoroughly enjoyed the music sessions and daily walks within the community focusing on road safety and how we keep safe in the community as well as developing life skills in preparation for adulthood including sweeping, etc.



It has been a fun and exciting term in Pimlico Class, and we look forward to having more fun next term.

Westminster Class

This term has been productive and fun for Westminster Class.

In Phonics, we have been learning through sensory activities, about environmental sounds, such as drumming, clapping, and guitar strumming. We use “what’s in the box”, which is similar to Bucket Time. This helps learners to engage and think about what might happen next, before matching the sound to the correct item.

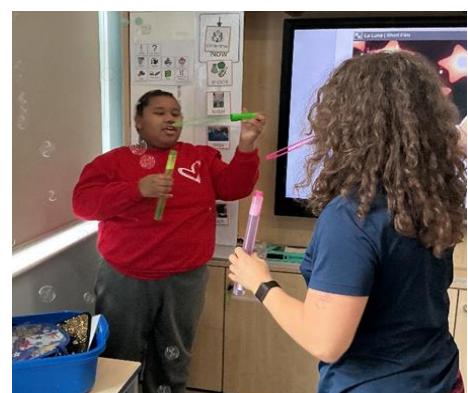
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Maths, we have been learning about number recognition from 1 to 5. Like Phonics, learning is multi-sensory. Counting out loud, using visual aids, and using paint, puzzles, and dice helps numbers be shown in different ways. This supports understanding in fun and engaging ways.



Another area we have been working on in Westminster Class is calm time. Throughout the day we have opportunities to practise self-regulation skills. We use items from the calm kit to help us to look after ourselves.



Paddington Class

Phonics: Paddington learners have had access to multiple learning offerings to engage with during phonics learning. Activities are made available at the whiteboard as well as having activities individually offered within a work tray for each learner. Phonetic sounds are focussed on a 2-week rotation with some offerings remaining the same but varying with the sound in focus. "Table work" typically lasts roughly 20 minutes and all learners engage in tasks of their choosing for at least 5 minutes. All our learners have enjoyed making birds' nests with a combination of chocolate and shredded wheat for the phonics sound nN.



Writing: Letter formation offerings are opportunities that have taken place during our class morning circle time as well as phonics sessions. It has been providing our learners with the opportunity to trace and/or write their name using a whiteboard stylus as well as write or trace phonics letters, words and sentences using a traditional pen. During the phonics learning the tracing and/or writing has been focused on the sound of the week and words or feelings which start with the focus sound too. The learners had fun using black paint to resemble ink (il sound) as well as using brightly coloured paint to look like snot dripping out of a nose (nN sound).



Reading: Reading is offered to the learners at least 4 days within the week and we have had learners reading aloud whole stories for fellow learners as well as learners speaking out loud sections of text, making comments, making observations and making inquiries about the stories which are being read to them in the moment. Our stories in focus this term have been:

“What Makes Me A Me?” by Ben Fauls & David Tazzyman

“The Cloud” by Hannah Cumming

“Born To Stand Out” by Nikki Rogers



Numeracy: Plenty of numeracy learning opportunities have been offered to our learners at the whiteboard and at the work desks. They have been in circulation all term. The activities have all been based around numbers, counting, identification and quantity. Classic board games and dice games have also been provided such as Yahtzee, Beetle Drive, Snakes & Ladders, Race To Base and Connect 4. It has been fun getting out a reversible dart board for the learners with velcro darts and arrows to throw at numbers.



SEMH: Paddington have maintained an active schedule with physical wellbeing opportunities in the hall as well as structured community walks weather and staff permitting. We have also been fortunate to have an African Drumming workshop this term, dance workshops offered by The Royal Ballet remotely online and trips to the local swimming pool.



Hampstead Class

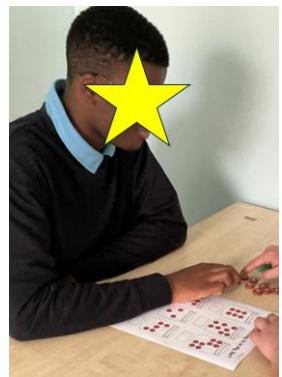
It has been a fantastic and very busy term in Hampstead Class, and everyone has worked incredibly hard. We have spent lots of time developing our phonics, reading, and comprehension skills using our new phonics books. Through these, we have enjoyed exploring a wide range of exciting texts, including stories about chimpanzees, hidden treasure, journeys around the world, and many more engaging topics. These stories have helped us to build our confidence with reading and to develop a deeper understanding of what we read.

In maths, we have been focusing on place value and subitising. We have used a variety of practical resources such as counters and everyday objects to support our learning, helping us to better understand numbers and how they are represented. Using hands-on activities has allowed us to explore number concepts in a fun and meaningful way.

In science, we have been learning all about the solar system. We discovered interesting facts about each of the planets and created our own planet fact files to show what we had learned. We also worked together to make a colourful and informative solar system poster, which we are very proud of.

This term, we have placed a strong emphasis on developing our independence skills and preparing for adulthood. As part of this, we have taken part in weekly tennis lessons, where we have been building our coordination, teamwork, and confidence. In life skills sessions, we have practised making sandwiches and hot drinks, developing important practical skills for everyday life. We have also worked hard on communicating our likes and dislikes, helping us to express ourselves more clearly and confidently.

Overall, it has been a fun, exciting, and productive term full of learning and new experiences. Everyone in Hampstead Class has shown great effort and enthusiasm. Well done, Hampstead Class!



Waterloo Class

This term in Waterloo class has been wonderful for the learners and the staff. All learners have engaged in all lessons and activities throughout the term and have made great progress in their development, working towards their targets.

We have made incredible progress in Phonics, working on sound recognition, writing and forming letters and identifying what letters the words start with. Learners have engaged well with the activities and have increased their confidence in identifying sounds.

This term we have been reading the *Born to Stand Out* story, which has taught the learners about embracing their individuality, it is ok to be different and expressing themselves regardless of others. The learners then showed their comprehension by retelling the key events from the story, which they all showed improvement in their understanding.



In Maths we have worked on number recognition from 1-40, ordering of numbers, place values and subitising. We have also worked on identifying money up to £2 and telling the time. The learners have engaged throughout and have used counters, manipulatives, the interactive whiteboard for games such as what time is it, building up values using money, ordering and identifying numbers up to 40. This has been a big area of improvement as we started the term working on numbers 1-10 and ended the term identifying numbers 1-40.

In Science we have worked on the day & night cycle, learning what we do during the day and night, the differences between the two and completing an activity of organising events and things we see into either the day or night. The learners have shown good awareness in what we can do and were able to correctly categorise.

The learners have been working on improving their independence and have worked on toothbrushing, getting dressed, tidying up, personal care for toileting and overall hygiene. They have all made great strides towards independence in these tasks and require minimal support/verbal prompting at times.

This term we have done lots of work on being out in the community by going for daily walks. We have practiced road safety, working on looking left and right and knowing when to cross the road. The learners have improved on their awareness of others, how to walk safely and independently.

This term has been wonderful, with lots of exploration, development and fun. All learners have engaged and shown great resilience and progress in their development.



Wellbeing Team



This term the clinical team have focused on the whole school environment. Calm kits have been replenished for each classroom with an accompanying topic core board, to support learners in using a range of sensory-based tools and language strategies to support their regulation levels throughout the school day.

The OT has completed a whole school environment audit and provided advice and training to ensure that classes and shared spaces throughout the school are in line with best practice for neurodivergent learners and are set-up and organized in a way that best supports regulation and learning.

The clinical team have been working together jointly to make sure that visuals are in place for regulation and follow a consistent colour coding scheme and layout.

We've greatly enjoyed being in classes to see these visuals and resources being used effectively to support our learners' regulation.

Kestrel Family Nest

Kestrel Family Nest.

We have had a fantastic Autumn term for Kestrel Family Nest.

We have heavily focused on sleep and home routines along with timetables and calendars. The sessions themselves have been a big success along with families and carers being able to join online for some of the sessions.

We set up our sessions to give some idea of how the class structure works with our getting ready to learn songs and calm time.

As you can see below we have some of the families dancing to one of the get ready to learn songs that the children enjoy listening to.



Next term we are planning more KFN workshops to meet the needs of families and carers. We are hoping to see more of you attend whether it be in person or online. Have a wonderful break and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.



Events





Life Skills

In Life Skills we have been focused on getting ready for winter and putting on winter clothing. We have also been focused on toileting and building those skills up along with toothbrushing and having a demonstration of it for them to follow has really helped.

As you can see the children have enjoyed dressing up in the hats and scarfs and dressing each other up.

With walks around the local area after we have dressed appropriately for the weather.



... and finally

Everyone at Kestrel House would like to wish you all a wonderful winter break and a happy new year!

We look forward to the students back on Tuesday 6th January for the start of Spring Term!





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