

## What a busy fortnight it has been!

Thanks to Wendy Midgley, Charlotte Russell, Steve Tolhurst, Neil Clark, Gemma Boak, Jan Lomas and Ken Sanderson who came to visit the school this week to talk to children for Aspire/Inspire week.

The children learnt a wide range of information, were shown a variety of skills and given a flavour of different careers. This included:

- the horse-racing industry -we even had a mechanical horse which children-and staff-had chance to have a go on! ;
- the farming industry -where children were shown lots of interesting items that are made on a farm and with an explanation of how they are produced;
- children's book-writing and illustrations skills
- a video presentation all about copy-writing
- a talk about creating ceramic clay heads
- a workshop about morse-code and code-breaking skills!



## Some quotes from Oak Trees children about the visits from:

### Author and illustrator - Neil

*"It was inspiring because it's fun to draw and imagine it in your head"*

### Ceramic Heads - Jan

*"It was so cool! It looks so fun to create the heads from clay and get ideas for sculptures"*

### Farming - Steve

*"I enjoyed hearing about the day in a life of a farmer and was amazed at the different types of machinery and what they could do."*

### Code-breaking - Ken

*"It was really cool learning how to send messages to your friends without the teacher knowing what you're saying!"*

## School Attendance

**Last week our school attendance was 94.4%**

This is *above* the primary national average attendance of 93.5%

Attendance **this week** so far: **96.7%**

Attendance **this term** so far: **92.3%**

## DIARY DATES

### FEBRUARY

**Friday 10th**

Young Voices Concert

**Monday 13th-Friday 17th**

Half term week

**Monday 27th**

Oliver Hind (British paralympian athlete) in school

**Tuesday 21st 3.20pm**

E-Safety Parent Session held by police. Childcare provided. Please let us know if you are able to attend.

**Thursday 23rd**

Popup library at school 1pm  
Oak Trees STEM Challenge

### MARCH

**Thursday 2nd**

World book day (Dress up as a book character & bring in favourite book).

**Monday 13th-Friday 17th**

Science week

**Wednesday 15th**

Bingo night -details to follow...!

**Thursday 16th**

Popup library at school 1pm

**Friday 17th**

French Breakfast Café

**Friday 24th**

Fire safety day

**Tuesday 28th**

Easter movie afternoon

**Thursday 30th**

Non-uniform day

Popup library at school 1pm

**Friday 31st**

Easter concert, crafts, FOLS cake-making & egg-design competitions  
Last day of term

### APRIL

**Tuesday 18th**

Start of term

Reminders:

Children are NOT to bring any toys from home into school.

See visit the school website for further information on attendance and to view our attendance policy

## Recent highlights from Acorns Nursery and Conkers Class

What a week we have had learning about different jobs we could do when we are older! Conkers and Acorns class loved dressing up like horse riders and having a go on the training horse, even Miss Cooke and Mrs Bennett couldn't resist a go to! Neil Clark then came to share what he does as an author and illustrator, showing the children the process of producing a book and reading us one of his books 'Walter the Wonder Snail', (what a great story that is!) and sharing with us the ideas of his upcoming books, which sound amazing!



Conkers children have been working hard this half term on creating their puppet characters from 'The Gingerbread Man' story. We think they've done an amazing job and they have definitely shown off their talents!



## KS2 Swimming Gala

A huge well done to Jack H, Noah, Oliver T, Jenny, Bella, Betty, Amelia and Olivia for taking part in the KS2 swimming gala on Tuesday morning last week against 7 other local schools.



## Reading for pleasure at home

We are delighted with our pupils' attitudes towards reading at Leavening and we have a positive culture of 'everyone a reader' which, of course, is the most important factor in enabling access to a broad curriculum. We are keen for all pupils to read widely and often at home and therefore have introduced the following incentive to start after half term.

Your child will have a reading reward card and will be encouraged to read 5 times a week at home.

Each time they read/share a book, they/you will sign their reading record and then this will correlate into a 'punch' onto their reading card (a bit like a loyalty card in Costa!)

Every time a child achieves 20 'punches' to demonstrate they have read 20 times, then they will be able to choose from the reading reward list.

You child won't bring their reading reward card home, but they will bring their book and reading record and so please do encourage and support them in reading for pleasure at home. Any further questions please get in touch.

# Safer Internet Day

Tuesday 7th February was Safer Internet Day, and the Young Leadership Team led an assembly about the positive and negatives of using the Internet. Conkers and Oak Trees then took part in activities which focused on how to keep themselves safe online.



## 10 WAYS GAMING CAN SUPPORT POSITIVE OUTCOMES in Children and Young People

Gaming, of course, is phenomenally popular with children and young people. In 2021, for instance, more than three-quarters of teenagers played online games, with almost 70% of primary school aged children doing likewise. If enjoyed in moderation and supported by a healthy routine (staying hydrated, good sleep habits, taking breaks and so on), gaming can actually benefit a person's mental health. As long as we stay alert for potential risks, games can be much more than what we see on the surface: they can be a way to socialise, an avenue for creativity and a route to solving problems. Check out our top ten tips on how gaming online can sometimes work to your child's advantage ...

### THE FEEL-GOOD FACTOR

Gaming is so popular because at the base level, it's enjoyable for the player. Succeeding in any game or contest releases dopamine in our brains: the 'feel-good' chemical that makes us happy or excited. Those emotions can be incredibly beneficial for mental wellbeing – as long as young players don't become reliant solely on playing video games to make themselves feel happy.

### ACHIEVEMENT & PRIDE

A sense of achievement is incredibly important to all of us and can be particularly valuable to someone who's feeling unhappy or distracted. It's easy to get caught up in our thoughts, which can sometimes take a negative turn. So even achieving something small – like finishing a difficult level in a Mario or Sonic game – can feel like conquering Everest and give us renewed optimism.

### SOCIAL SALVATION

Gaming can be an incredibly social activity. When playing online with trusted friends, what usually start out as chats specifically about the game can often develop into conversations about school and life. Even if they've had a bad day, simply knowing that a friend is there, on the other end of their headset, can provide young gamers with a sense of security and some welcome laughs.

### TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

In many online games, teamwork is crucial to winning. Often, people who are struggling with their mood tend to feel like they fail or let others down a lot. Working as a team with trusted friends or family in a game can reinforce a young person's self-importance: striving for a common goal and succeeding together can remind them that they're an integral part of something bigger.

### REAL-WORLD RELATABILITY

Because many major releases are shooting or action games, when some people hear "gaming" they think of guns, explosions and violence. What's less recognised is how many titles explore relatable issues such as overcoming anxiety or coping with grief. These games allow young players to understand their emotions more deeply and realise they aren't alone in how they might be feeling.

### A DIGITAL COMFORT

Video games can provide a reliable constant. No matter what happens in school or between friends, playing a favourite game is something that youngsters can look forward to all day and can help them de-stress. Let's not forget, games are fun – and, when approached safely, an interactive activity in which the player has a degree of control over what happens next can feel immensely reassuring.

### PROBLEM-SOLVING PRACTICE

It can be difficult for young people to handle the feeling that nothing is going right or that their problems are insurmountable. Gaming can help alleviate that by presenting challenges to be overcome, either solo or alongside trusted friends. Defeating a powerful monster or solving a tricky puzzle reminds young gamers that even the most daunting obstacles can be faced and conquered.

### THE GREAT ESCAPISM

A certain amount of escapism is fabulous – allowing us to temporarily park some stress while exploring a world other than our own. For children, gaming can be like reading a novel or watching a film: a moment in the day when the fantastical becomes real, firing their imagination and immersing them in a story. Who wouldn't want to venture to the stars? Or battle monsters to save the planet?

### TRIED & TRUSTED

There can be reassurance in repeating tasks. It often promotes a controlled outcome, which is ideal when life feels overwhelming or out of control. Replicating an experience, such as playing the same level of a game over and over to perfection, gives the player a sense of control and familiarity: it's like listening to a favourite song that always makes you feel happy or confident.

### ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY

Inventiveness is a huge part of many modern games: in Minecraft and Roblox, for example, players regularly dream up amazing structures or new ways to play. Using our imagination to create something (whether digitally or physically) is massively beneficial for the brain; that's why Lego is sometimes used in the medical sector as both a stress reliever and a brain injury rehabilitation tool.

### Meet Our Expert

Daniel Lipscombe is a writer who specialises in technology, video gaming, virtual reality and Web3. Author of 15 guidebooks for children on games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Valorant, Roblox and Minecraft, his work has also been published in the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and VG247.



#WakeUpWednesday

# Oral Health

**The Oral Health Promotion Service across North Yorkshire and City of York** is working with special schools to set up evidence-based, supervised toothbrushing programme. The programme is designed to improve children's oral health. Poor oral health in childhood has a significant impact on children and families, with tooth decay being the most common reason for 6 to 10 year olds being admitted to hospital to have teeth removed.

## Top tips for parents

There are many Apps available that can support your child's teeth brushing. A reward chart might be helpful but remember not to use a sugary food treat as a reward!

Many children benefit from visual prompts to support their understanding of routines. Include a picture of teeth brushing or a toothbrush in your child's morning and evening visual schedule.

Sometimes children don't like the feel of a toothbrush or the taste of toothpaste. It takes time to get used to the taste and feeling of toothpaste and toothbrushes. Using a different type of toothbrush or toothpaste might help.

Between these ages, your child will be experimenting with many new foods and drinks so you need to know what sugars do to their teeth, as well as continuing to encourage toothbrushing.

To encourage healthy eating, it is important to reduce overall snacking and concentrate on providing healthy family meals. However, children need energy as they grow to develop and keep them active.

Young children have small appetites and need regular meals with snacks in between and do need some full fat foods in their diet.

Childsmile has put together some ideas to help you provide a variety of healthy safe snacks for both you and your children to enjoy at home and at school or play.

Dried fruit and fresh fruit juice can be counted as one portion each of your 5-a-day fruit and vegetables. However, they contain hidden sugars and are best taken at mealtimes.

## What can I do if my child won't allow me to brush their teeth?

- Let your child see you brushing your teeth. Young children love to copy.
- Make a game of it – brush your teeth and then let your child brush your teeth. Then you brush your child's teeth.
  - Use a mirror and clean their teeth from behind so they can watch what you are doing.
- Make brushing part of the bedtime routine. If your child is tired after a bath try brushing before bathing or even during bathing.
  - Let your child choose their own toothbrush, but make sure it's suitable for children.
  - If using a toothbrush is difficult, try using a smear of toothpaste on a clean dry flannel wrapped around your finger. You can move onto a toothbrush when your child is more confident.
- Using sounds can make tooth brushing fun. Ask your child to make 'tee' sounds when you clean their front teeth, and 'ahhh' sounds for the back teeth.
- Singing can also help. Let them choose a song for you to sing when they brush. You may also like to use a tooth brush timer which helps children to see they are brushing their teeth for long enough to get them clean (about 1 to 2 minutes). Tooth brush timers are available with colourful characters to make it more fun.
- Books about tooth brushing and visiting the dentist are available and videos of other children brushing can be found on the internet.

