

## Inside Our Classrooms

**The Hive** The Hive have had a fabulous week. We started with our first place win at The South of England Show for our Dreamcatcher; we have then had train week - learning all about trains, London and the London Underground. We took the train to Plumpton Park on Tuesday and had a picnic in the park before getting the train home.

**Thinkers** It was a week of firsts for Thinkers class this week! On Monday, the intrepid reception children took their first class coach journey to the British Wildlife Centre, where they observed all creatures great and small in a fantastic setting. In class, we have started our Under The Sea theme and have been describing marine life with some wonderful adjectives. In maths, they have been learning how a whole number can be split into different parts, using the part-whole method.

**Inventors** came back to school in fine form after the half term break and showed off their amazing phonics skills. They have now moved on to look at the spelling rules for adding suffixes -ing, -ed and -er. We have been inspired by the artist Henri Matisse and have taken objects from nature to observe and draw carefully. In maths, they have been looking at how we split quantities into equal groups.

**Explorers** have had a great week continuing to learn all about BRILLIANT BEES! We used iPads and information books to research facts about different species, habitats, the anatomy and importance of bees. In Art we used bubble wrap to create a honeycomb pattern print. We then did some observational and directed drawing of bees and flowers to create our class beehive. In Maths we have been terrific at telling the time to quarter past, quarter to and 5 minute intervals! We are practicing for Sports Day and are really looking forward to learning new skills in Sports Week.

**Warriors** have had a brilliant fortnight! We wrote letters as different household items that had quit as they were either overused, underused or mistreated! Letters were written from iPads, games consoles, hair bands and even Mummy's car (we'll let you guess who that is about...)

In Maths, we have finished our fractions topic looking at equivalent fractions, ordering and comparing fractions before adding and subtracting them too.

In history, we learnt about the most famous steam locomotives in the UK and what made them Britain's best engine.

Finally, in computing, we have been looking at ways to control sprites using the mouse and the keyboard.

We are all looking forward to sports week!

**Ground-breakers** In Year 4, we have been getting creative, drafting and publishing our own Mayan creation stories. Over half term, the children researched the artist Romero Britto and they have been creating Queen Elizabeth II portraits in his style, as well as adding the finishing touches of paint to our clay pots. In maths, they have been multiplication superstars and we have been learning about fractions of quantities.

**Innovators** have been studiously editing and publishing their fantastic poetry. The children have been studying The Highway Man and have now created their own alternative endings to the poem. In maths, we have been getting to grips with converting units of measure and we are investigating reversible and irreversible changes in science.

**Trailblazers** It was a classic start to the half term in Year 6, as they returned to school dressed to impress, with many of them sporting the fashions of the Ancient Greeks for their Greece immersion day. The children have been flexing their dramatic muscles in preparation for their end of year performance. This week, they have been enjoying the sunshine and a very active residential week at Little Canada in the Isle of Wight.

### Sports Week Is Coming!



Just a reminder that Sports Week is coming to Blackthorns next week!

Mr. Luckhurst, our fabulous PE Lead has done a marvellous job organising a vast array of visitors to share their sporting knowledge and enthusiasm with the children and we have a jam-packed week that ends with Sports Day on Friday.

Sports Day runs from 9:45 (parents can arrive from 9), with a break for a picnic lunch on the field. Please see previous parentmails for fuller details.

It will hopefully be warm, so the usual reminders about suncream, sun hats and water bottles will apply (to parents and children!). We can't wait to get active!

### E-Safety— What is 'metaverse'?

'Metaverse' is a relatively new term to many, however the concept has been around for some time.

Videogames, for example, use many aspects of the metaverse; avatars, digital currency, mini-games, and open communication. A metaverse can also take many forms; Fortnite can be seen as a metaverse, as is Roblox. Put simply, a metaverse is an online environment where people interact, play games and express themselves – but not everyone has good intentions. That's why we've added a guide from the folk at National Online Safety at the end of this newsletter to help parents and carers understand exactly what a metaverse is all about.

### Dates for your diary:

20th-24th June Sports Week

24th June Sports Day

27th June-1st July Year 6 Bikeability

30th June—Non-Uniform Day

1st July Year 3 Trip—Bluebell Railway

1st July—Grounds Day (3.30pm—6.30pm)

6th July Year 5 Trip—Tower of London

13th July Year 6 Performance

15th July Year 6 End of Year Outing

15th July (after school) Summer Festival

19th July Year 6 Leavers' Assembly

21st July INSET day and End of Summer Term

Summer Festival Fun!

It's back! And it's better than ever!

The Friends of Blackthorns (FoBs) Summer Festival will be a great event for all.

We look forward to seeing you all there!



*Platinum Jubilation!*

We all had a 'royally' good time on Friday 10th June, when we held our Platinum Jubilee Tea Party. The bunting was 'throne' up in good time and the 'crowning' glory was the beautiful sunshine which greeted us at just the right time.

The children paraded to the sound of the national anthem and tucked into a feast fit for a King (or Queen). A big thank you goes to parents for almost exactly the right amount of food for the party and decoration donation, to the staff and parent helpers or their hard work handing out the dishes and setting up the event and to the children for being the superstars we know them to be. We danced, we sang and we ate until full! Who could ask for more? Well done Blackthorns and Her Royal Highness for giving us a great 'platty jubes'!



**The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of!**



The Hive were showing their winning ways this week, when they claimed victory at the South of England Show with their Dream Catcher! Their creation took first place in a competition organised by the Countryside Hub—well done to all of the team in The Hive!



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE METAVERSE

AGE RATING

Varies per metaverse platform

'Metaverse' is a relatively new term to many, however the concept has been around for some time.

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## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### UNSAFE AREAS

Many metaverse platforms feature little to no moderation. This is due to the decentralised nature of the metaverse - as there is no one company overseeing the platform, users can create and build with freedom. This can be a minefield for younger users as adult material or sensitive topics can feature on a parcel of land seen by everyone.

### VOICE COMMUNICATION

The freedom found within creation is also found in communication. Most metaverses use proximity VOIP communication (Voice Over Internet Protocol) and users can approach any other user to start a conversation. It is necessary for avatars to be quite close to another in order to talk and once they are, anything can be said. While a chat box can be moderated, voice chat cannot.

### ANONYMITY

As with almost every other form of online interactions, anonymity features heavily within the metaverse. The concept for the metaverse is to live any type of life digitally. This could mean that 'bad actors' (those with malicious intent) can take advantage of others with ease. Reporting and monitoring these users is becoming easier on the more popular platforms, but others struggle to police these situations.

### VIRTUAL REALITY

Not all metaverse platforms are VR enabled, in fact less than 10% feature VR interactivity. However, it's always worth monitoring the amount of time younger users spend in virtual reality. A VR metaverse differs greatly to VR gaming in user interaction. Approaching each other in a VR metaverse attempts to represent 'reality' and can result in a greater impact if experiences are negative.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Whether in virtual reality or not, interactions and experiences in the metaverse can often carry more weight because they mimic 'real life'. Oftentimes, due to the freedom in avatar creation, younger users may open themselves up to bullying, prejudice or an unrealistic idea of reality. For instance, female-orientated avatars may find themselves targeted by bullies or inappropriate users.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### TRY IT OUT FIRST

This may sound like an obvious tip, but by entering the metaverse and exploring on your own, you'll be able to see what your child might. You can explore the busier areas and even the quiet sections to see what users are building or advertising. You'll also learn first-hand how users communicate with each other. Many metaverse platforms will feature an entry area which showcases the busiest areas. Check them all out and see what's happening.

### LEARN ABOUT NFTS, WALLETS AND CRYPTO

With the metaverse comes Web3 technologies such as NFTs, cryptocurrency and wallets in which to store them. If you have a crypto wallet, do not connect it to your child's metaverse. One simple click could result in loss of cryptocurrency. If you are unsure what these technologies are, try to research them as these terms will appear in the metaverse.

### CREATE AN AVATAR TOGETHER

If you decide on allowing your child into the metaverse, set up their initial avatar together. This way you can ensure the avatar is age-appropriate and keeps their identity private. You can also advise on aspects which may result in attracting bullies or unwanted attention. It will also allow you to see which avatar items cost money, and talk to your child about in-game spending.

### START WITH THE FAMILIAR

There are already metaverse experiences with children in mind; explain to your child what a metaverse is and have them recognise similarities between those and games like Roblox, Fortnite and Minecraft. Unfortunately, there is no 'child safe' metaverse option as yet, though Epic Games and LEGO are currently developing a family safe metaverse.

## Meet Our Expert

Daniel Upcombe is a father to two girls, aged 14 and 12. Before Dan began his Web3 metaverse journey, he worked as a videogame journalist and author for a decade; reviewing games, talking to creators and writing about videogame trends. Dan has also written fifteen guide books about Fortnite, Minecraft, Roblox, Apex Legends and Valorant for HarperCollins and Bonnier Books.



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