

Inside Our Classrooms

The Hive The Hive have had another busy week and have done very well to adapt to some change to their normal week. They visited the Beech Hurst Miniature Railway alongside year 3 and also went to explore the steam trains of old with a trip to the Bluebell Railway. What a busy week!



Thinkers were visited by Mr. Marks, Ethan's dad, who has been helping to tame our garden and helped us to plant flowers and produce earlier in the year. He came back to show us how to prepare our ready to pick broad beans and also brought in some homemade broad bean hummus to try. We have now added more to our planters!

Inventors Sports Week was an absolute hit with Inventors! Each house group thoroughly enjoyed their many experiences and loved competing in the events on Sports Day. Inventors received multiple class dojos for showing Blackthorns' Core Values!

This week in Inventors, the children were introduced to their new story from a secret place, 'The Wind in the Willows'. We started the week by reading the beginning of the story and role playing their favourite scenes. The next day, Mr Toad, Ratty, Mole and Badger were spotted on our English Working Wall looking very smart in their car. Poop! Poop! Inventors have been working hard to write detailed character descriptions of Mr Toad and have answered the questions: What does Mr Toad look like? What does Mr Toad wear? What is Mr Toad's personality like? and today, Inventors will be answering the final question: What does Mr Toad sound like? Their writing is excellent so far and I look forward to hearing them share their descriptions next week!

Explorers had a fantastic sports week and demonstrated all our values during Sports Day. We started this week with a wonderful trip to Pulborough Brooks RSPB nature reserve. First, we were Plant Detectives, identifying different plants and learning about the lifecycles. We worked in groups to create some plant art using natural resources, and even spotted some wildlife! Our second activity was pond dipping, in which we learnt lots of interesting facts about pond creatures and their habitat. We wrote recounts of our brilliant day with illustrations. This week we have also focused on properties of shape in maths and become weather presenters in geography when forecasting the week's weather.

Warriors The last fortnight in Warriors has flown by! We had an amazing week during Sports Week, taking part in all the different activities - we particularly enjoyed dodgeball, Fun Abounds and the football tournament in which some of us got through to the

final! We enjoyed Sports Day too and loved running in the sprints at the end as well as enjoying an ice lolly! This week, we have tackled turns and angles in Maths looking at clockwise, anti-clockwise and quarter/half/3-quarter and full turns; looking at the impact of steam locomotives in Britain on different members of society and the use of super, anti and auto as prefixes! We have been superstars!

Ground-breakers We had a fabulous Sports week trying new sports, improving our skills, and a trip to 'Fun abounds.' The highlight of the week was Sports day. Ground-breakers to share the fun with our families and create memories. This week we continued the outdoors fun with a skateboarding session. Having the last session of the day, we had to watch all the other classes take part, then it began to rain! Luckily, true to British weather it stopped in time and kitted out with all the safety gear we finally had our turn. In Maths, we have finished our fractions using our skills to find a fraction of a number of objects. All of the children have become more confident working with fractions and remembering to use the correct terminology, numerator or denominator, when comparing fractions. In English, we have designed our own chocolate bars, learnt about the key features of persuasive writing and begun to write adverts.

Innovators have been enjoying some practical maths and learning how to use protractors to measure and calculate angles. We also joined in a live session with Spaceport Cornwall, learning about the first UK launch planned for later this year and how they are using economical and sustainable technology to make this happen. In history, we have reached the Victorian era and acted as judges to decide punishments for different crimes. We absolutely loved sports week and the Year 5 adults were incredibly proud of the teamwork, respect and maturity shown throughout the week.

Traiblazers had a fantastic time on our residential trip. They faced their fears, and were so supportive of each other. What impressed the adults the most was how independent the children were and so resilient at keeping going in very hot weather. They were an absolute pleasure to take away. Champions of the week were Taylor, Rom, Zachary and Rose, who were voted by staff and children as just going that extra mile where necessary. Back in school we are began Money Week -looking at the cost of living, from pets to children, from mortgages to investments...



Dates for your diary:

1st July Grounds Day (3.30pm—6.30pm)
6th July Year 5 Trip to Tower of London
11th July Transition morning in school
13th July Transition afternoon in school

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





Learning Outside the Classroom

Blackthorns pupils have been here, there and everywhere recently, taking learning beyond the school building and enjoying enriching experiences in many different places. Year 6 travelled to the Isle of Wight 13th-17th June, while the Fire Service came in to visit Year R and 5 (unfortunately they were called out to an emergency before they



could see Year 2) and members of Years 3,4 and 5 travelled to Area Sports at Oathall Friday 17th June. The whole school visited Fun Abounds to flex their gymnastic muscles during a busy Wednesday of Sports Week. Most recently, Year 2 have visited Pulborough Brooks Nature Reserve, Year 3 and the Hive have been going loco (motive) with visits to the miniature railway at Beech Hurst Park and Bluebell Railway and some pupils took part in a festival of sports at Twineham Primary. Well done to all involved!



General Reminders

- Please be mindful of other road users and the local residents when picking up and dropping off at school. Remember not to block driveways when parking up, or to compromise vehicles turning into or out of junctions.
- Children are not to play in or on school equipment at the end of the school day. Please keep them with you and call them off if they forget this rule.
- Trading cards or game cards (Pokémon, Match Attax etc.) are not allowed in school. Children wanting to trade or play with these should do so outside of school and should not have them in bags at school.

Mrs. Lee, Teaching Assistant in Reception, has not been in school recently. Blackthorns is a huge part of her life, as she has had 3 children attend here and has worked in school for many years. With this in mind, she has requested that we share a website with the community, which explains in a little more detail what her family is currently going through. Mrs. Lee appreciates your support and understanding at this time and it will help her to share in this way, rather than trying to explain everything to all of those caring individuals who have shown their concern. Please visit the [link here](#) for information and updates.

Our Super Sports Day!

It had been a long time since our last Sports Day as a community and we were as pleased as punch to welcome our families onto the hallowed sports day on Friday 24th June. Determined to give the occasion the status it deserved after such a long hiatus, Mr. Luckhurst pulled out all the proverbial stops to deliver a truly wonderful event for the pupils, families and the staff. The children were of course the stars of the show, getting involved with the sporting skills and activities on offer and embracing the idea of physical exercise and enjoyment which we hope they learn to carry with them for the future. Other highlights included the super sports helpers from Downlands Community School, Hassocks, who got fully involved with the day and really helped us to have a smooth running carousel of events; a coffee truck, which sold amazing tasting coffee and so many pastries that they had to escape to get more and the portaloos! In the morning, the children moved around a variety of sports in their house groups and with their siblings. The afternoon was time for tunnel vision and eyeballs-out running in the sprint races. This was particularly evident in the fantastic parent races at the end of the day! I hope the tweaks and twangs of muscles have subsided for some of you by the time you read this!



Not Just One Day

Sports **Day** was the culmination of a week of sporting events, after another successful Sports **Week** at Blackthorns. Mr. Luckhurst, our PE leader, organised a terrific timetable of sporting experiences for the children, which was almost as exhausting an experience as some of the events themselves! The children took part in stool ball, hockey, basketball, dodgeball, cricket, dance, tennis, badminton and gymnastics at Fun Abounds, with skateboarding and scootering also taking place on Monday this week. It was an excellent week and we hope we may have uncovered some potential passions for our Blackthorns' pupils that will keep them active, healthy and happy in the future.

Supporting Blackthorns Student

It just goes to show that Blackthorns never leaves your heart and that the Blackthorns community will always be there for you, as the school collected a wonderful £263 to support former pupil Henry Carter with his fundraising for his South Korean scouting adventure. Henry came in to talk to year 6 about his fundraising efforts and to share the message **“Think big. Dream wild. Act together.”**



E-Safety— Navigating the Minecraft Minefield

A game that became a colossal hit purely on entertainment value, Minecraft also packs some educational credibility. As well as coding skills, it's used to teach young people about town planning and environmental issues. Although hugely popular with children, the average age of Minecraft players is actually 24. This raises the possibility of other players using explicit language or behaving in ways that young ones ought not to witness. The guide from National Online Safety at the end of the newsletter breaks down potential issues in the game that trusted adults need to be aware of.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MINECRAFT

AGE RATING

7+

Minecraft is a beloved classic of modern gaming. First released in 2011, this open-ended 'sandbox' game of building and exploration still has over 140 million players who happily return to play it at least once every month. Minecraft has also been utilised for much more than just entertainment: it's sometimes used in schools to teach children coding, and it's also employed as a tool for computer-aided design, which is another valuable skill. Encouraging creativity and problem solving, Minecraft has plenty to offer gamers of all ages, and it's available on almost all video game platforms.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

PUBLIC SERVERS

Joining a public network (called a server) lets your child potentially interact with strangers through text chat. Some servers focus on building, while others are dedicated to role-playing – encouraging direct player interaction. Anyone can join public servers and connecting to one is relatively simple. Public server IP addresses (and therefore someone's location) are easy to find with search engines.

GRIEFING

Some people in Minecraft delight in purposefully damaging or destroying another player's creation. This is called 'griefing' and is a form of bullying: it intentionally spoils someone else's experience in the game by deleting hours of their work and forcing them to start from scratch. Many public servers treat griefing as a severe offence and frequently ban offenders.

ADDICTIVENESS

Minecraft's gameplay is relatively simple, and the outcome (when a child has built something new, for instance) can be extremely gratifying. This can make the game highly addictive. It's easy to lose track of time while playing Minecraft, causing committed young players to forget about other activities like homework or enjoying family time.

SCARY ELEMENTS

The visual design and gameplay of Minecraft is purposefully child friendly, so there's nothing too untoward in the game. However, some of the 'baddies' that can be encountered might prove a little too scary for very young players. In the game, certain enemies come out at night and are accompanied by audio – such as zombie moans and skeleton bone rattles – that may unnerve young ones.

ADDITIONAL PURCHASES

After initially buying the game, players can make optional extra purchases for cosmetic items and other bonuses. Minecraft Realms is an optional online subscription (requiring regular payments) that lets users run a multiplayer server to play with their friends. Most games consoles also need an active subscription to enable online play – so online gaming can quickly become an expensive hobby.

Advice for Parents & Carers

RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS

There are a lot of Minecraft content creators who release helpful videos about the game on YouTube and Twitch. Not all of these, however, are suitable for children. Watching these content creators' channels yourself first is a safe way to find appropriate Minecraft videos to share with your children. This also helps you learn more about the game itself, and how your child plays it.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE

Selecting 'Creative' or 'Peaceful' mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of moaning zombies or creepers damaging your build.

HOST A PRIVATE SERVER

The easiest way to find a safe server for your child to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given the necessary joining details. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – to ban someone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental controls in Minecraft.

ENCOURAGE BREAKS

It's easy for the hours to fly by while your child is playing Minecraft, so reminding them to take regular breaks is essential. This is a useful way for them to learn good time management, which they'll benefit from as they get older. It will also teach them to play their favourite games in moderation – limiting addictive behaviour and allowing them to manage their day better.



TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

At some point in their lives, almost everyone needs to have contact with a stranger online. Talking to your child about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan in place for dealing with any hostile or difficult strangers. Ensure that your child knows never to tell a stranger about themselves online, and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.



Meet Our Expert

Clare Godwin (a.k.a. Lunawolf) has worked as an editor and journalist in the gaming industry since 2015, providing websites with event coverage, reviews and gaming guides. She is the owner of Lunawolf Gaming and is currently working on various gaming-related projects including game development and writing non-fiction books.



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