



## AUTUMN 1 – WEEK 6

### A busy week at MCS!

We've had Ofsted inspectors visiting us here at school this week.

Staff and pupils alike have managed brilliantly, with some learners being brave enough to speak to the inspectors themselves about their learning - well done everyone!

We will of course share the final report with you all as soon as we receive it.

### Dates for the diary

Coffee morning - Oak class - 7th  
November

Half term 21st October - 5th November  
(pupils return Weds 6th November)

### Jokes of the week

Finley B's joke: 'My Dad sent me down to the shop to pick up six Sprites, but I picked 7 Up'

Benji's joke: 'knock knock'  
'who's there?'  
'bless'  
'bless who?'  
'I didn't sneeze!'

## Headteacher's Award



This week the Headteacher's Award goes to **Camron-Jon** for being a role model this week, challenging himself to step out of his comfort zone!

# THERAPY FOCUS

Last week we introduced you to Reflexes. We will revisit them again later in the term but do keep playing the games at home if you have space!

This week we would like to introduce you to Hand Skills, otherwise known as Fine Motor Skills. This week we will share the components of fine motor skills and next week we will start to share activity ideas that you can play to help develop each skill at home. Teaching staff have learned these components and find ways to integrate them through the class day from science to food tech to outdoor ed!

	<b>Shoulder and postural stability</b> – Think of a crane – it needs to have a strong core from which it can do dextrous work. The same is true for the body – we need strong postural muscles and shoulder stability to have dextrous fine motor control for writing, using scissors, cutlery and much more.
	<b>Bilateral integration</b> – a fancy way of saying coordination between the left and right sides of the body and everything that our body does across its midline. When we are talking about fine motor skills we are thinking about how two arms/hands work together to get a job done, e.g. a helping hand to hold the paper and a doing hand to cut with scissors. Activities where we see this include using cutlery, chopping fruit or veg, writing, doing up a coat, tying shoelaces and plenty more.
	<b>Wrist stability in extension</b> – Children will compensate for difficulties with wrist extension by flexing or hooking their wrist to lock it into a stable position. Have you spotted this in your child? But this adaptive position limits movement and function. Imagine threading a needle – which position is your wrist in? Slight extension allows for better thumb positioning, arching of the hands and isolation of finger movements. Try it in flexion – is it harder?
	<b>Palmar arches</b> –we have 10 arches in the hand to shape and support different grasps, direct the fingers and adjust grip strength. Hand arches develop in the first few years of life through weight bearing activities, such as crawling. Cup your hands and notice how your hand can form a bowl using all 10 arches. Imagine peeling a potato with no hand arches – impossible!
	<b>Thumb opposition</b> – This move creates the space you get when you do the 'ok' sign! Vital for grip and strength and enables us to touch our thumb to each fingertip. If this doesn't develop soundly, one muscle tends to take over leading to a pinched in thumb grasp and reduced web space, often causing fatigue.
	<b>Separation of two sides of the hand</b> –We have more dexterity with our thumb and index finger, when there is good stability on the little finger side. Thread a needle – what does your little finger do? Try writing or cutting without stabilising on the little finger side – it's much harder.
	<b>In hand manipulation skills</b> –This is the ability to shift objects about with the fingers, to see it more clearly or get it positioned just so. Children who struggle with this, may use two hands or put it down and pick it up again to reposition it. Movements include rotation, translation and shift.
	<b>Hand and finger strength</b> –there are over 25 muscles of each hand. Reduced strength in any muscle will impact function. Often some muscles have grown stronger at the expense of others which remain weak.

# HIGHLIGHTING... ATTENDANCE

Following changes in legislation in September 2024, we want to remind parents that by law all parents/carers are responsible for ensuring children between 5-16 attend school. Repeated unauthorised absences may constitute a legal offence.

Next week we'll share some of the positive effects of attending, all great reasons why parents should support children to attend school.

For more information, speak to Adele, read our Attendance Policy on the school website, or check out

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-attendance/attendance-advice-and-guidance-for-parents-and-carers/>

This week we're highlighting a couple of important items - why attendance at school matters, and ways to boost wellbeing courtesy of the 'Action for Happiness' calendar for this month. Why not try a couple of their tips this coming week?

Optimistic October 2024

MONDAY



TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

1 Write down three things you can look forward to this month

2 Find something to be optimistic about (even if it's a difficult time)

3 Take a small step towards a goal that really matters to you

4 Start your day with the most important thing on your to-do list

5 Be a realistic optimist. See life as it is, but focus on what's good

6 Remind yourself that things can change for the better

7 Look for the good in people around you today

8 Make some progress on a project or task you have been avoiding

9 Share an important goal with someone you trust

10 Take time to reflect on what you have accomplished recently

11 Avoid blaming yourself or others. Find a helpful way forward

12 Look out for positive news and reasons to be cheerful today

13 Ask for help to overcome an obstacle you are facing

14 Do something constructive to improve a difficult situation

15 Thank yourself for achieving the things you often take for granted

16 Put down your to-do list and do something fun or uplifting

17 Take a small step towards a positive change you want to see in society

18 Set hopeful but realistic goals for the days ahead

19 Identify one of your positive qualities that will be helpful in the future

20 Find joy in tackling a task you've put off for some time

21 Let go of the expectations of others and focus on what matters to you

22 Share a hopeful quote, picture or video with a friend or colleague

23 Recognise that you have a choice about what to prioritise

24 Write down three specific things that have gone well recently

25 You can't do everything! What are your three priorities right now?

26 Find a new perspective on a problem you face

27 Be kind to yourself today. Remember, progress takes time

28 Ask yourself, will this still matter a year from now?

29 Plan a fun or exciting activity to look forward to

30 Identify three things that give you hope for the future

31 Set a goal that brings a sense of purpose for the coming month



## Food Tech

This week in Food Tech has gone really well. Larch enjoyed making cheese and broccoli biscuit bakes. In addition, learners loved excavating mythical creatures from jelly and explored ideas about archaeologists and how they recover artefacts, linking to their current topic – ancient Greece. Birch class had a brilliant lesson making cereal bars, weighing ingredients and melting butter and sugar on the hob. Year 7 learners in Juniper and Oak made harvest fruit breakfast muffins, consolidating baking skills and also planning personalised fruit muffins for next week. Year 8 learners in Beech and Elm prepared one cup pancakes with a fruit infused yogurt. Learners did brilliantly making a smooth batter and cooking in batches. Chestnut class made savoury breakfast muffins, practicing their baking skills. Olive class made a wonderful French Toast with fresh fruit - learners are developing some great independent working skills, keep it going. Hazel and Maple class made sweetcorn fritters and completed skill records for their kedgeree recipe last week. Holly class made a classic leek and potato soup. Lime class completed skill records for their previous recipes Shepherd's pie and Lancashire Hotpot, then went on to make a delicious spiced lentil and butternut squash soup.

Next week, Larch class will have a go at making an American breakfast biscuit. Birch class will make crunchy cereal. Juniper and Oak will make personalised harvest fruit breakfast muffins. Year 8 learners in Beech and Elm will make drop scones. BTEC Level 1 learners in Elm are making sausage sarnies. Learners in Chestnut will make a one cup pancake recipe with fruit infused yogurt. Olive class will recap the grilling method and prepare sausage sarnies. Learners in Hazel and Maple will prepare a full English breakfast, testing their organisational and time management skills. Holly class will prepare a spiced lentil and butternut squash soup and Lime class will make a classic sausage casserole.





**Our Values**  
**Stars of the Week**

**Respect**  
&  
Resilience

Health  
&  
Happiness

Kindness  
&  
Independence

The value this term is **respect** and we've seen some great examples of this quality in school this week.

**Larch**

Lukas for respecting everyone in our community

**Chestnut**

Nathan for following instructions well

**Olive**

Daylun for speaking to parents with respect during Coffee Morning

**Elm**

Sophie for working hard on her tasks

**Juniper**

Louis for demonstrating growth in respecting boundaries when interacting with others

**Oak**

Oscar M for dealing with disappointments in a mature way and supporting others in his class to succeed

**Lime**

Macie for showing respect to peers and staff alike

**Maple**

Jasmine for her consistently polite and respectful interactions with staff and peers

**Beech**

Maisie Brown for being a wonderful Class Secretary and ensuring work is handed out/collected in promptly and neatly!

**Holly**

Lidia for showing kindness to others in Holly class

Next week

# AUTUMN 1 - WEEK 7



## MONDAY

**Outdoor Education**  
Birch & Larch

**Food Tech**  
Elm  
Drop scones, sausage sandwich  
Juniper  
Personalized muffins  
Chestnut  
Pancakes with fruit

## TUESDAY

**Outdoor Education**  
Beech, Oak & Juniper

**Food Tech**  
Larch  
American biscuits  
Olive  
Sausage sandwich  
Birch  
Crunchy cereal

## WEDNESDAY

**Outdoor Education**  
Elm & Chestnut

**Food Tech**  
Oak  
Personalized muffins  
Holly  
Spiced lentil & squash soup  
Hazel  
Full monty

## THURSDAY

**Outdoor Education**  
Hazel & Maple

**Food Tech**  
Lime  
Sausage casserole

## FRIDAY

**Outdoor Education**  
Lime, Holly & Olive

**Food Tech**  
Beech  
Drop scones  
Maple  
Full monty

## Safeguarding

Each week we focus on a different safeguarding topic. Yesterday was World Mental Health day, so this week's focus is on promoting physical activity to aid wellbeing. On the next page you'll find a guide with helpful information and tips for parents and carers.

If you would like any support with any of our safeguarding topics, please reach out to Jane.

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## PROMOTING PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Physical activity isn't only beneficial for our bodies; it also plays a role in promoting mental wellbeing. With both the Euros and the Olympics this summer, it's an opportunity to engage young people in regular exercise which can reduce stress, improve mood and boost self-esteem. Despite these benefits, many children face barriers to participating in physical activity.

### 1 MAKE IT FUN



Incorporate activities that children enjoy, such as playing games or dancing. Encourage participation in team sports or group activities to foster social connections and a sense of belonging.

### 2 MIX MOVEMENT WITH LEARNING



Educational settings can incorporate movement breaks and physical activities to enhance focus, concentration and cognitive function. Embedding exercise into the curriculum can also reinforce learning and stimulate creativity. 'Revision walks' with podcasts and flashcards can benefit older learners.

### 3 CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

Provide clear chances for physical activity throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors. Schools can encourage active play during breaks and at lunchtimes, while limiting screen time at home can help keep children up and about.

### 4 PROVIDE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT



Praise and encourage children for their efforts and achievements in physical activity. Recognise their progress and celebrate their successes to reinforce positive behaviours. Educators could do this in several ways, such as applauding their efforts at assemblies or celebrating their accomplishments in newsletters.

### 5 VARIETY IS KEY



Introduce a selection of physical activities to keep children engaged and prevent boredom. From swimming and cycling to yoga and martial arts, trying different types of exercise can help children to discover what they enjoy most.

### 6 ENJOYMENT OVER COMPETITION



Encourage children to focus on the enjoyment of physical activity rather than winning or achieving perfection. Emphasise effort, improvement and having fun rather than outcomes, to minimise the amount of stress that children can sometimes associate with sports and other competitions.

### 7 SET REALISTIC GOALS



Help children set achievable physical activity targets based on their interests, abilities and preferences. Celebrate their progress and successes to maintain motivation and enthusiasm.

### 8 MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE



Ensure that children have access to safe, suitable spaces for exercise at home, at school and in the community. Advocate for inclusive environments which accommodate diverse needs and abilities. Be a change maker in your community if facilities aren't already available.

### 9 LEAD BY EXAMPLE



Parents and carers can be positive role models by prioritising their own exercise and involving children in their fitness routines. Gentle walks, bike rides or sports activities can be wonderful opportunities for bonding and staying active together.

### 10 ENCOURAGE PERSISTENCE



Help children develop resilience and perseverance by encouraging them to overcome challenges and setbacks in physical activity. Teach them the importance of perseverance and the value of effort in achieving their goals.

## Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillitt is a learning and development specialist who, as well as working for Minds Ahead, is associate vice principal for personal development at a large secondary school in Barnstaple. He was asked to be part of an expert research group for the Department for Education, one of only three school leaders to be asked to do so.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College