

25th September 2026



Courage, Compassion,

Headteachers Update

Sometimes the most important weeks in school are the ones when nothing particularly extraordinary happens.

There have been no big launches or special events this week. Instead, I have enjoyed watching the rhythms and routines of the new school year begin to settle into place. Children know what is expected of them, classrooms are busy and purposeful, and the changes we have introduced over the past few weeks are beginning to become simply the way we do things at William Gilpin.

This week has seen the start of our new home learning expectations, and I have been really pleased to see how positively the children have responded. Home learning has an important role to play. It helps children practise and consolidate what they have learned, develops independence and responsibility, and creates a valuable connection between learning at school and at home.

However, I also want to be clear that homework should never become a source of anxiety or conflict within a family. We want children to develop positive attitudes towards learning, not to associate it with stress. Please encourage, support and establish good routines where you can, but if home learning is regularly becoming difficult or taking considerably longer than you would expect, talk to us. We would much rather work with you than have homework become a battleground.

One habit I am particularly keen for us to nurture is reading.

It has been fantastic to see how many children are already achieving their five home reads each week. Thank you to everyone at home who is making time for this. Few things we do have as much impact on a child's education as helping them become a confident, fluent reader who genuinely enjoys books.

But I want us to go further than counting reads. I want William Gilpin to be a school of readers. I want children to talk about books, recommend them to one another, discover favourite authors, encounter new worlds and experience that wonderful feeling of not wanting to put a book down.

So, children, be warned: if you bump into me around school, there is a very good chance I am going to ask you, "What are you reading at the moment?" I would love every child at William Gilpin to have an answer and, even better, to be able to tell me why they are enjoying it.

Beyond the classroom, we are continuing to look for ways to broaden the opportunities available to our children. We would love to get our new Tuesday Drama Club up and running, but we need enough children to make it viable. If your child might enjoy developing their confidence, creativity and performance skills through drama, please let the office know as soon as possible. I would be delighted to see this become part of our after-school offer.

Finally, I hope many of you will be able to join us next Wednesday, 30 September at 3.30pm, when Adele Dodd from Children's Services will be talking to parents about children's mental health and the Local Offer. After School Club will be free of charge for children whose parents are attending.

Perhaps an ordinary week is something worth celebrating after all. Education is not built only through memorable events and exciting new initiatives. It is built through the small things, repeated day after day: arriving ready to learn, opening a book, persevering when something is difficult, remembering what we have been taught, showing kindness and taking a little more responsibility than we did yesterday.

It is in those ordinary moments that extraordinary growth begins.

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Headteacher



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Headteacher Awards & Class Updates



Headteacher Awards



In Acorn Class, Rafe and Noah received headteachers awards for showing our COURAGE value



In Saplings Class, Benji and Harry received headteachers awards for showing our COURAGE value



In Oak Class, Harry and Annie received headteachers awards for showing our COURAGE value

The Attendance Cup was won by Oak this week, with 97.5% - just pipping Acorns to the post with 97% attendance



Acorns

This week we have focused on autonomy and independence! The children have really enjoyed choosing what their learning would be during Continuous Provision and tracking it with their monsters. They have learnt to label the parts of their body, practised Maths and vocabulary, letter formation and much more!



Saplings

This week, we have been busy in English completing our final write, using the key events from The Legend of Crabe Phare to create our own diary entries. We have worked hard on organising our ideas into paragraphs and adding feelings. Well done, Saplings! In My Happy Mind, we started learning about happy breathing and how this can help us when our amygdala goes into fight, flight or freeze. We have been learning about how taking calm breaths can help all three parts of our brain work together again.

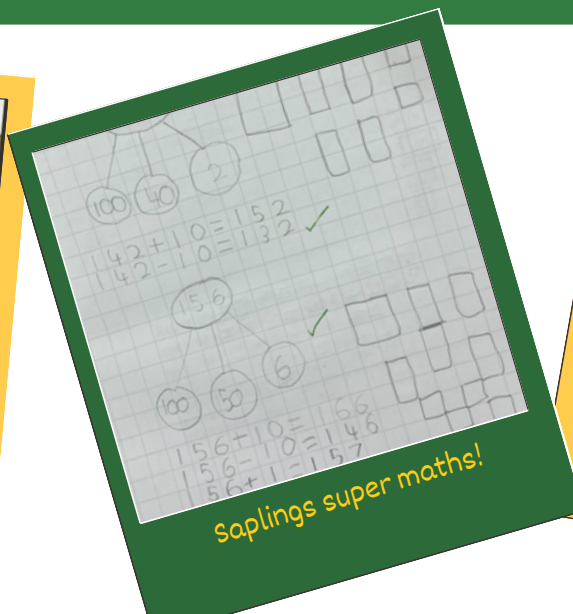


Oak

This week, Oak Class have been busy starting our new reading text, Black and British, and learning all about the Victorian circus owner Pablo Fanque. We have also been practising mental addition and subtraction techniques in Maths. In Science, we had an exciting lesson creating a water filtration system using materials of different sizes to filter muddy water. They were very effective, as you can see from the picture!



Saplings have been practising counting in 2s



Saplings super maths!



Oak Class Filtration Experiment