

# The WHPS Weekly

Friday 16th January 2026



Dear WHPS Families,

It was great to see such an incredible turnout for the annual 'Winter Read Aloud'. The queue of families to get into the event was epic!

It was lovely to see so many of our excited children and parents getting enthusiastic about reading for pleasure. The classrooms were packed and the hot chocolate was in danger of running out. This sort of event demonstrates how important reading is to our school community.

As the spring term kicks in, we have so many other different opportunities for enrichment activities at WHPS.

On Thursday 29th January, years 4, 5 and 6 have been invited to the London Coliseum to see HMS Pinafore for free! We received almost 200 tickets as a thank you for hosting the English National Opera filming back in 2024. What an amazing, once in a lifetime, opportunity for the children!

On Thursday 12th February we have our annual music event, 'A Night at West Hampstead'. Definitely one of the highlights of the WHPS calendar!

On top of that, we have numerous trips and visitors over the forthcoming months. Watch this space for photos!

Before all of that, I would like to remind you of our parent workshop on Wednesday 21st January at 9.10am in the Dining Hall.

The meeting will be hosted by myself and I will be focussing on the new OFSTED framework and how we are preparing for our imminent inspection. I hope to see you there!

Have a fantastic weekend!

Sam Drake, Headteacher

## EVENTS NEXT WEEK

**MONDAY:** Yr4 Danube Class Swimming PM

**TUESDAY:** Yr1 and Yr2 OAE Workshop

**3:15– 5:30 Football Competition @ Castlehaven**

**WEDNESDAY:** Coffee morning for Parents/Carers– OFSTED

**Yr3 Thames Class Swimming PM**

**FRIDAY:** Danube Class Assembly

**2:45 PM Golden Time**










# Reading at West Hampstead

At West Hampstead, Reading is at the heart of our curriculum.

We use the Little Wandle programme from Nursery to Year 1 to ensure children build strong early decoding and comprehension skills. In Year 2, learning is revised and consolidated, and additional catch-up support is provided for any child who has not reached the expected standard by the end of Year 1, or who joins us partway through the year. Reading is a key life skill that opens the door to learning, confidence and opportunity, and we believe no child should leave our school without it.

These skills are reinforced not only in reading lessons, but are threaded through writing and across the wider curriculum, including subjects such as science, history and geography.



Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 	 snake	Show your teeth and and let the s hiss out ssssss ssssss	Down the snake from head to tail.
 	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the a sound at the back of your mouth a a a	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
 	 tiger	Open your lips; put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press t t t	Down the tiger and across its neck.

**We teach reading explicitly through daily lessons across the school.**

**Nursery** - Reading is embedded throughout the curriculum and early phonics skills are taught.

**Reception** - Children take part in daily phonics lessons and read in a small group with an adult at least 3 times a week.

**Year 1** - Children take part in daily phonics lessons and read in a small group with an adult at least 3 times a week. Children who need extra support are given extra 'keep up' sessions within the school day.

**Year 2** - In Autumn Term, children revise the key learning from Y1 using our Little Wandle scheme. Once they are fluent readers, they begin to read in small guided groups.

**Year 3 to Year 6** - In these year groups, children have an explicit reading lesson every day from 9 to 9:45am. On Fridays, children have a reading for pleasure session in which they enjoy reading a book of their choice.

**Additionally, all of our lessons introduce new words to children so they are constantly building their vocabulary bank; these are called star words. They are encouraged to learn them, understand them and use them in their lessons.**

**All of our classrooms have book corner that the children can access. They are organised in terms of difficulty or genre and the children are encouraged to browse and develop their reading habits from an early age. Children have bookmarks displayed in their classrooms, which as they fills earns them certificates and free books!**

## The Winter Read Aloud

On Wednesday, we invited families into school to enjoy a cosy reading aloud session. As well as, reading in school, time reading at home and enjoy stories with others is a fundamental part to developing able, well-rounded readers at West Hampstead.

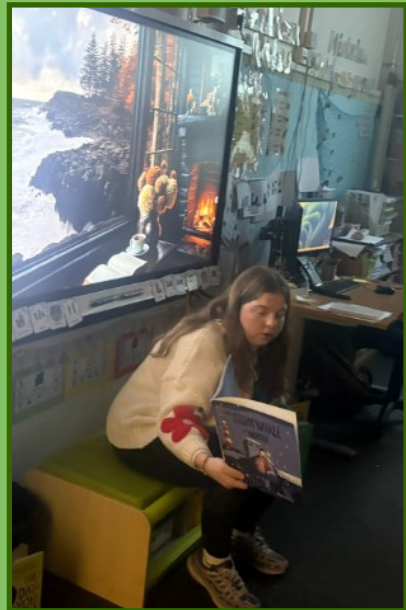
We encourage all of our children to read at home each evening.

This event was a chance to enjoy a story with your child's class teacher. It also showcased the reading corners we have in school as well as our *Read Aloud* boxes which are in every classroom across the school and used during story time.

Families were invited to come into school, cosy up in front of (digital) fire and listen to a teacher read them a story. Hot chocolate and sweet treats were on offer to make the experience even more enjoyable during this extremely cold January!

We hope you enjoyed the experience - here are some photos of the event!







**Thank you to all of our teachers for sharing stories, our LSAs for making sure everyone got a hot chocolate and our families for coming to listen!**



"Reading can take you places you have never been before."  
- Dr. Seuss