

Mapledown School Newsletter

Autumn Term– December 2023



Message from the Headteacher

Welcome to our Autumn term Newsletter – the end of a very busy term, which has seen many wonderful events for our pupils, who have been working very hard in school and beyond. We have welcomed many of you for coffee mornings and workshops, and we look forward to many more in the coming months. It has been lovely to see so many of you coming onsite for transition-in reviews and EHCP reviews, and our parents' consultation evening in September was really well attended.

Although we do not have the official report back just yet, we are very pleased with the positive feedback we have received from the Ofsted inspectors who visited the school on 28th and 29th November. Thank you to those of you who were able to complete the parents' questionnaires or were able to speak to the Inspectors. The final report should be available in early January.

Enjoy reading about what your children have been doing this term!

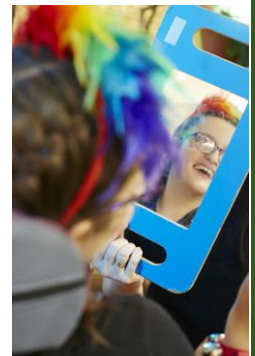
Students new to school

Our **new year 7 students** settled well into school. They benefited from group Music Therapy, which was provided by Alexandra and Fizz, who is currently covering Angelina (maternity leave). Everyone has worked really hard, and enjoyed getting to know their new teachers and friends.



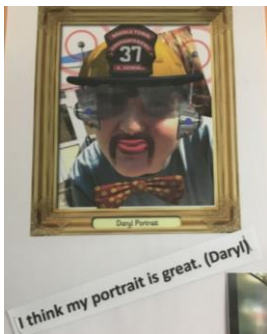
Flamingo Chicks

In October students were extremely lucky to participate in a performance created by the fantastic Flamingo Chicks Ballet, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.



“We are Family”

This term the curriculum has been delivered through the “We are Family” topic. In literacy, this has enabled our pupils to look at autobiographies, and more specifically autobiographies from artists and sports people celebrating black history in the first half term. Pupils have also written their own autobiographies. In Art, pupils have been looking at a number of artists and their self-portraits. Pupils created their own self-portraits, using a variety of media and techniques, resulting in fabulous displays.



Curriculum

We aim to provide a motivating and engaging context in which pupils can achieve and make progress based on their assessed levels and next steps in a personalised way, with the following as a foundation to the delivery of the curriculum:

- communication and interaction, which is fundamental to learning and building relationships.
- personal and social development including awareness of self, own emotions and relationships with others.
- independence including life-skills.
- engagement and enjoyment.

For pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum at an adaptive level meeting statutory requirements, we have developed 4 pathways which enable further personalisation and progression: Pre-Formal, Semi-Formal, Formal and Reaching Higher.

Communication and developing literacy skills are key to our pupils' success in all areas of the curriculum and their everyday life. Therefore, we are further rolling out PODD (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display, a symbol-based communication system), and we have adopted a whole school approach to teaching reading (including phonics where appropriate) and writing.

There is more information on our website, and families are encouraged to discuss the curriculum at EHCP reviews, parents' consultation evenings and of course at forthcoming coffee mornings.

Reading and Phonics

We place a very high priority on early reading skills, including the teaching of Phonics. All pupils engage in a robust and highly structured literacy programme, with the aim of ensuring all of them leave school well on their way to achieving their full potential. Pupils are encouraged to foster an enjoyment of sharing books and stories, and spend time experiencing literature. Everyone engages with a comprehensive literacy curriculum, where teaching is adapted to meet individual pupils' needs. All our pupils engage with daily shared reading, working with letters and sounds (Twinkl Phonics scheme Phase 1), and independent and self-selected reading for pleasure. Pupils on our formal reaching higher curriculum engage with reading and comprehension (Twinkl Phonics scheme Phase 2+). Pupils at Phase 2+ are learning sounds within a structured approach and focussing on **S A T P I N** – **if you have any household items beginning with these sounds, we would be very grateful for your donations.**



Sports and Healthy Lifestyles

In addition to keeping active at school, either within PE sessions, in our gym, through our Rebound sessions, our MOVE sessions, or through sensory processing circuits, a number of classes have been able to attend sporting events at Hendon Sport Centre this term.



School Council elections

Like every year, classes held the School Council elections, and every pupil was able to cast a vote.

Our School Councillors this year are:

Learning Zone 1: Yuta, Lavinia and Bryan

Learning Zone 2: Rezan, Areeb, Carlton, Nikkel, Kore and Kobi

Learning Zone 3: Nida, Kaitlin and Savannah

Learning Zone 4: Tino and Riley



Work Related Learning, Careers and work experience

Preparing for life after Mapledown, and Careers Education are a fundamental aspect of our curriculum.

Work related learning is an integral part of the whole school curriculum and more specifically of the PSHE curriculum that is taught to all students as they move through the school. Work related learning can therefore take place via classroom-based learning, workplace visits, work placements, development of skills for independence and visits to the school by local employers and / or providers. Students have the opportunity to develop their enterprise skills by undertaking specific projects. For some students this will be a chance to develop an awareness of the workplace while for others it will be an opportunity to improve skills that may help them to enter the job market at some point in their lives. Our students have opportunities to participate in a wide range of work placements which may include visits to off-site venues and guided tours of establishments. Some students however will have more formal work placements through local employers, where appropriate. Students can also access work opportunities in school, via work experience in various areas (i.e. school kitchen, admin office, classrooms, caretaking).

This term our pupils have been taking part in a variety of activities, from assisting with lunches to making and selling hot chocolates. Some pupils have been undertaking work experience at the local Pavilion, led by Related Argent and our staff.



Thank you to those of you who were able to attend our Friends of Mapledown AGM on 23rd November. We are still recruiting trustees and volunteers to support our worthwhile association. If you would like more information, please contact us via fom@mapledown.barnet.sch.uk or leave a message for our Acting Chairperson Pete Korniczky with our admin staff - 020 8455 4111.

Parent Governors

We need enthusiastic and committed parents from a variety of backgrounds. You do not need leadership or education experience; just a desire to give back to the school and its community and a proactive approach to becoming involved as a member of a team. If you are interested in finding out more, or to nominate yourself, please contact Sue O'Halloran, Chair of Governors at suemohalloran@gmail.com or our Vice Chair Pete Korniczky (who is also a Parent Governor) at peterkorniczky@btinternet.com or me at head@mapledown.barnet.sch.uk for a chat.

Brent Cross West Station

London's newest mainline station, Brent Cross West, opened on Sunday 10 December. It was a fantastic celebration, with family-friendly workshops, a brass band and food and drinks from local retailers. Pupils from Hummingbird, Osprey and Toucan classes were fortunate to take part in an art project that is now displayed at the new station!



Festive season!

Pines and Needles have kindly donated a beautiful tree which stands proudly decorated in our courtyard. They have a pop-up store in Finchley at Charter Way, and offering a discount: MAPLEDOWN10. Keep an eye on Pines and Needles social channels @pineandneedles for fun activities!

Shopping online

Help us raise money for the school. The initiative **Easyfundraising** is steadily raising money for FOM (Friends of Mapledown School - Cricklewood), but it desperately needs the support of many more people in our community in order to have a significant impact on fundraising. **So how does it work?** You shop directly with the retailer as you would normally, but if you sign up to: www.easyfundraising.org.uk for free and use the links on the Easyfundraising site to take you to your chosen retailer, then a percentage of whatever you spend comes directly to your nominated cause (FOM) at no extra cost to yourself.

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 13th December	Enterprise Fair and Coffee Morning – Open to all
Thursday 14 th December	Whole school concert – Pupils only
Thursday 14 th December	Christmas Lunch (Main site and Whitefield) – Pupils only
Friday 15 th December	Safari Pete (Learning Zone 3) – Pupils only
Tuesday 19 th December	Christmas Lunch (Copthall) – Pupils only
Thursday 21 st December	iCanDance performance – Pupils only
Thursday 21 st December	End of Autumn Term 2023
Friday 22 nd Dec – 5 th Jan	Winter / Christmas Break 2023 - School closed to students
Monday 8 th January	Inset day - School closed to students
Tuesday 9 th January	Students back to school
Monday 12 th Feb – 16 th Feb	Half term - School closed to students
Monday 19 th February	Students back to school
Wednesday 21 st Feb	Parents' consultations
March (Date TBC)	Class Spring performances – Open to all
Thursday 28 th March	End of Spring term 2024
Friday 29 th March – 12 th April	Spring / Easter Break
Monday 15 th April	Students back to school
Monday 6 th May	May Bank Holiday – School closed
Monday 27 th May – 31 st May	Half term - School closed to students
Monday 3 rd June	Inset day - School closed to students
Tuesday 4 th June	Students back to school
Wednesday 3 rd July	Parents' consultations
July (date TBC)	Graduation
Tuesday 23 rd July	End of Summer Term
Wednesday 24 th July	Inset day - School closed to students
Thursday 25 th July	Summer Break 2024 starts - School closed to students

Have a lovely and restful festive break, and see you all on Tuesday 9th January, as Monday 8th January is a Staff training day.

