

Newsletter

June 2024



Welcome



Dear Parents and Carers,
Welcome to the early summer edition of our newsletter.

As we approach the busiest few weeks of the school calendar, it's a joy to see how far the learners have come since September. In the upper school, students have been taking part in formal assessments. These allow them to show and celebrate their progress.

They're looking forward to having some fun as they end. We also wish a warm welcome to Daria Kohls, our new Haselbury head of school, who introduces herself on the "West Lea in the news" page.

This issue is about mental health and wellbeing. Across the school, we held many activities to mark Mental Health Awareness Week 2024, which ran from 13 to 19 May. This year's focus was on moving more for our mental health. Regular physical activity can improve our mental health, quality of life and wellbeing. Cath Goodwin's pastoral update contains simple suggestions to help boost our fitness.

The number of children with a diagnosed mental health condition is on the rise. Research shows that education and early intervention can have positive results. We build wellbeing into all aspects of the curriculum. And we work together to support the young people in our care.

We know that a child experiencing poor mental health impacts other family members. There are often high levels of worry and stress, and it can be difficult to know what to do. We are here to listen and help.

The best support is often given by other parents and carers in similar situations. If you feel this would be useful, we would be happy to set up family groups. We're open to ideas and encourage you to contact us.

With every blessing and good wish,

PAUL QUINN
CEO

community
kindness
learning for life
innovation inclusion

In this edition

Welcome	2
The West Lea Way	4
Meridian Campus	6
Haselbury Campus	7
Learning for Life Campus	8
Horizon Campus	9
Enterprise Cooperative Trust	10
Learning for Life Charity	11
West Lea in the news	12
Pastoral update	14
Key term dates	16

West Lea School
Haselbury Road, Edmonton
London N9 9TU

020 8807 2656
office@westleaschool.co.uk
www.westleaschool.co.uk

The West Lea Way

Schools have the potential to impact the mental health and wellbeing of those who learn and work in them.

Our culture sets the scene for creating the conditions for everyone to flourish. It's made up of our vision, mission, values and curriculum intent. We call this, "The West Lea Way."

We work hard to ensure everyone's experience is as positive as possible. And when we don't get it right, we learn from our mistakes.



Vision

We believe in a world where everyone can flourish.

This extends to all members of the school community. Our learners. Their families. Members of the school team. And our partners.

When we're flourishing, we enjoy what we do, build healthy relationships, and lead meaningful lives.

Whilst we can't be happy all the time, the goal of life is to feel good, achieve our potential, and help others.

Mission

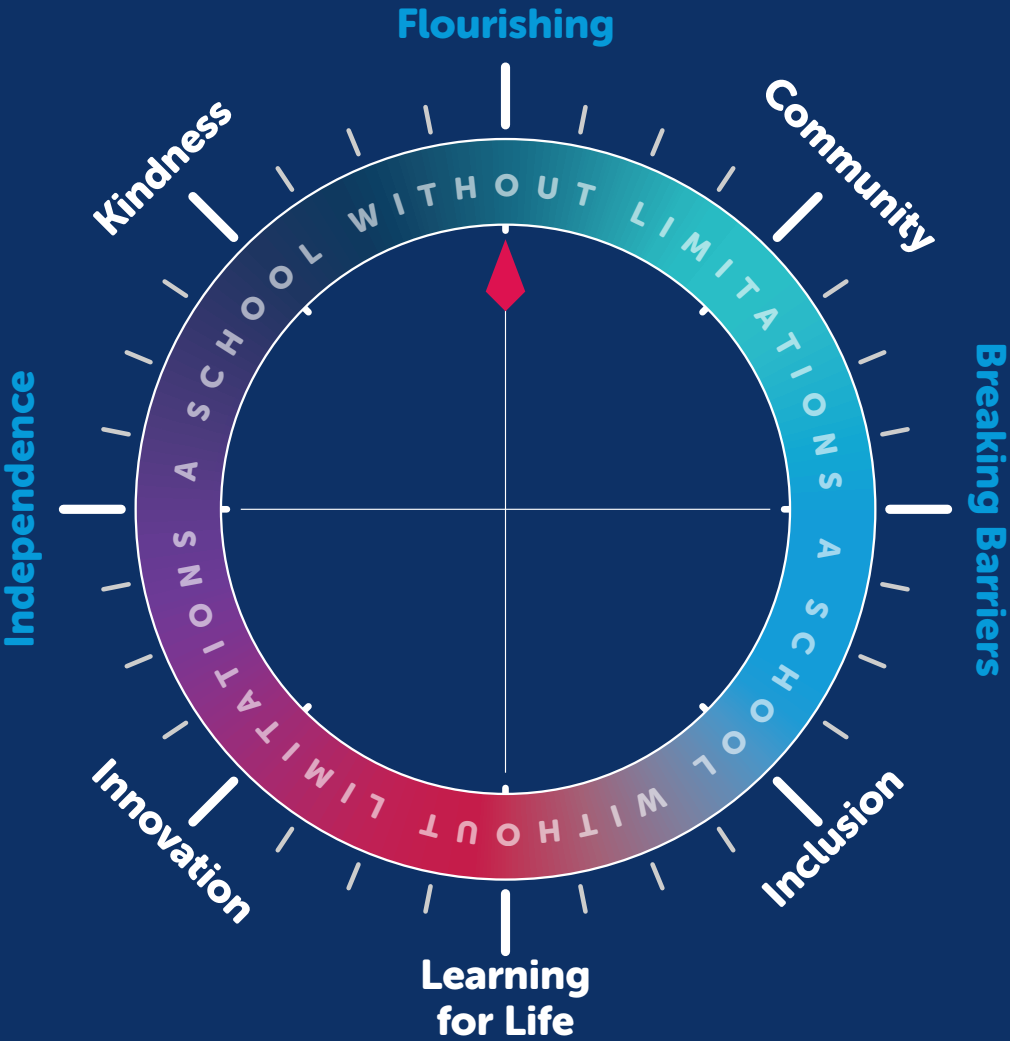
We're on a mission to break down barriers for children and young adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Every moment of every day is aspirational. We're about growth and learning.

Together, we look for creative ways to identify

and overcome the obstacles that stand in the way. We're champions and advocates for the children and young people in our care.

We influence local employers so learners can access work experience, internships and jobs. Meaningful work is one of the keys to wellbeing.



Curriculum intent

We built an innovative curriculum. It's designed so learners can flourish, develop skills for life and embrace independence.

Independence might mean learners confidently travel to and from school on their own. For others, it may be going on a trip or residential, learning

to dance, or mastering a topic in maths.

We help learners to get fit, be resilient, manage their emotions and succeed in their studies. As they journey through the school and into further education and work, we want them to live happy and fulfilling lives.



Values

We live our values of Community, Inclusion, Innovation, Kindness and Learning for Life.

These behaviours are the anchor for everything we do. They're taught and modelled across our school community.

They help us to create an extraordinary and happy school.

We focus on creating positive relationships among learners, and between learners and staff. This has the potential to improve everyone's mental health and wellbeing.



community
kindness
learning for life
innovation inclusion



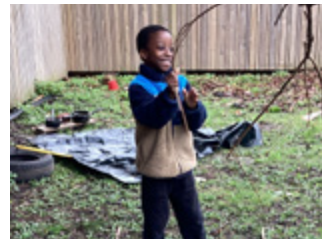
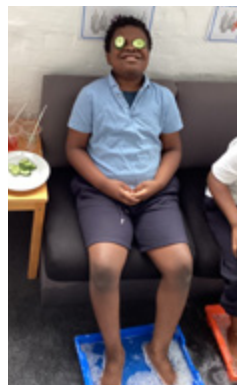
Meridian Campus

In May, we covered the topic of mental wellbeing.

Everyone has mental health. But we don't always talk enough about it. Children often communicate their mental and emotional health through their behaviour.

Across campus, we looked at different ways we can share our feelings. We used a variety of communication methods. And we covered how our feelings influence our behaviour, and vice versa.

During Mental Health Awareness Week itself, we explored how moving makes us feel good. And the children chose activities that made them feel happy.



If your child is struggling with their mental health at home, please get in touch. We can share the activities we use in school and help you adapt them for home. There is always someone available to listen and support.

We love welcoming you into school. Thank you for joining us at our "Family Tuesday" and "Take Off Thursday" events. We hope you enjoyed the picnics and activities.

We look forward to sharing our summer term adventures in next month's newsletter.



EMMA DRIVER
Head of School



Haselbury Campus

We've been busy building movement into our daily activities this half term.

Standing in the playground at lunchtime, we watched a group of learners singing, dancing, and laughing in the rain. The link between movement and mental health was right before our eyes.

Every person deserves good mental health. Being active can help us manage our wellbeing. Regular movement and exercise can raise energy levels and boost self-esteem.

For children, exercise is key. It helps them develop a sense of control, get to know their body, and reduce stress and anxiety. It's a good way to distract them from negative thoughts.



If we want children to be active, it's important we help them to find a form of exercise that they enjoy. Which is why we offer a choice of activities. From basketball to dance, and football to yoga, there is something for everyone.

Music is a great motivator for encouraging children (and adults) to get moving. Lister class enjoyed a musical experience during Mental Health Awareness Week. They listened to different pieces of music and used dance and art to express how the music made them feel.

Sanchez class focused on the link between mind and body. They discussed how mindful movement, like yoga or dance, can strengthen this connection.



Exercise isn't only going to the gym or training for a marathon. Simmonds class proved this during their maths lesson. They had great fun practising their times tables by moving across a large "multiplication square."

Any exercise done mindfully can boost our mental health. Being mindful in our movements, we can pay attention to our feelings and how they affect us. It helps raise our awareness and helps us slow down.

Why not try some mindful walking yourself in the coming weeks? What colours, sounds, smells, and feelings do you notice as you walk?



DARIA KOHLS
Head of School





Learning for Life Campus

Research shows clear links between physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. So, we encourage learners to be active and offer many interesting activities.

For example, learners enjoy swimming, playing basketball, kayaking and canoeing. And many love going to the fantastic, state-of-the-art gym at CONEL.



One of the most beloved offsite activities by far is the Duke of Edinburgh Award. We include this in our curriculum as it's a great way to boost the children's wellbeing and confidence.



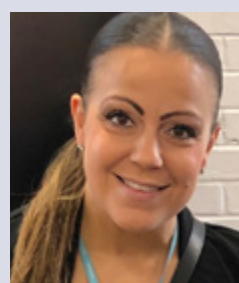
As part of the award, our Year 10 learners enjoyed a two-day adventure in Epping Forest. Under expert guidance, they explored the forest on foot, and had lots of fun orienteering.

They also pitched tents, made a camp fire, and cooked their own food on a gas stove.



As you can see from the photos, they had an amazing time. Everyone commented on their positive behaviour and willingness to try out new activities.

There are many benefits to being outdoors. We're encouraging everyone to support us in reducing traffic congestion and carbon emissions. Please consider walking to school, to the shops, and to see your friends.



THESPINA SKARPELLIS
Head of School



Horizon Campus

Staff and students took part in activities during Mental Health Awareness Week. Together, we explored how movement helps our mental health.

We each shared what we do to stay active.

I said how much I enjoy a walk in the evening to help clear my mind after dinner. Mr Gibson said he is training for RideLondon, which is a 100 mile cycle across the capital.

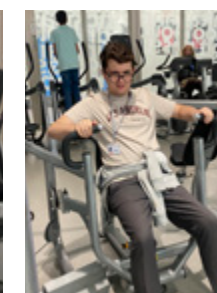
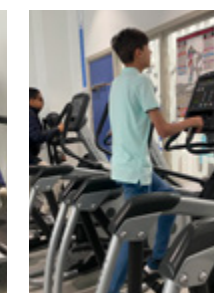
Many staff said they enjoyed long walks, especially those with dogs. Others said they love to work out at the gym, do yoga in the woods, or build dens outdoors with their children.



Student favourites included swimming, playing football, and riding their bikes. As well as meeting friends in the local park.

Many learners are taking part in assessments this term. It's especially important to focus on wellbeing this time of year.

We help students to keep active at school. Sensory circuits are a helpful way to get ready for afternoon lessons. And we've made great use of outdoor gym equipment and the basketball courts in the local park.



Students at college enjoy using the fitness equipment to warm up in PE. They also take part in sports like badminton and basketball.

In PSHE lessons, learners have been discussing the following questions:

- Why is it important to look after my physical health and keep safe?
- Why is it important to look after my mental health and wellbeing?

We've had some great conversations about managing stress and leading healthy lifestyles. It's been refreshing to hear how staff and students make time for this.



KIKA CHARALAMBOUS
Head of School



Enterprise Cooperative Trust



"It was a pleasure to meet the students from Laurel Park School. And to speak to them about the role of the council within Enfield. It is important to show young people the value of engagement with local government. And to inspire the next generation of citizens."

Suna Hurman, Mayor of Enfield

Shining the spotlight on ECT partner, Laurel Park School.

Students from ECT's partner school, Laurel Park, recently visited Enfield Council Chamber. They met with the mayor of Enfield, local councillors and council officers. The visit was part of a drive to broaden students' horizons and raise aspirations.

The students went on a tour of the chamber. They learnt about local government and the impact it has on the surrounding area. They asked questions, and discovered more about civic responsibility, representation and leadership.

The trip was part of the school's "Character Education" programme. The aim of which is to develop well-rounded, ambitious and determined students. And to encourage young people to become active citizens in their community.

During the programme, students take part in a wide range of activities. They carry out volunteering projects to learn new life skills. Attend arts and culture talks to develop their character. And take part in workshops to build awareness and understanding of societal issues.

The ECT partnership offers students access to many personal development and academic opportunities. Together, we help set students up for lifelong success.

"Our emphasis on character development is essential. Education should prepare young people to contribute to the world around them. Trips expose students to new career paths that they may not have considered. They also help them understand more about their own community. We must provide students with wide-ranging and varied opportunities to raise aspirations."

Adele Christofi, headteacher at Laurel Park School



"We learnt about the duties of the mayor of Enfield, which gave us an insight into the life of a mayor. We learnt about the responsibilities a mayor has. And the history of Enfield and its previous mayors. We got to see the maces and the mayor's hold chain - it was very cool."

Jack, a Year 8 student at Laurel Park

Learning for Life Charity



In December's edition, we wrote about our Life in the Community Project. The aim of which is to regenerate a landmark building in Enfield, turning it into a new café and community space.

This will ensure that the former charity school in Edmonton Green gets a new lease of life for years to come.

It will become a centre where young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and local disadvantaged groups will learn new skills.

As part of our planning, we set up a Youth Steering Group (YSG). Representatives from local schools and Chickenshed Theatre have helped shape the project.

They have been exploring ways to creatively tell the history of the building to visitors. Having considered many different ideas, they wrote a brief and appointed artists.

Members of the YSG recently toured the building. We asked Khadija, a Year 9 student at Laurel Park School, to report on the group's progress.

"We have been part of a project to refurbish a forgotten historic building in Edmonton. Many of us walk or drive past it without a second glance; our goal is to change that.

It's been a lengthy process to research the history of the building and to plan how we will work with artists. It will take even more time to complete. But our team is ambitious and full of creative ideas, and everyone is working hard to make this dream a reality.

Ferah and Jimmy from Chickenshed Theatre told me they are, "excited to revamp the building" and "keep the beautiful history that it holds alive." I couldn't agree more!



Recently, we interviewed and chose artists to help with the project. This was a new and useful experience for us all. We had to decide which artists we thought would work well with us. And who would create exceptional art that links to both the new audience and the site's origin.

This is only the beginning of our project. I am excited to see it become a success and the impact it has on our community."



PANAY RICHARDS
Operations Director
Learning for Life Charity

West Lea in the news

A whole-school approach to mental health

We will feature in the next edition of Teach Primary magazine. Here's a sneak peak of what we cover in the article. It's about the importance of a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

We bring our culture to life by living our values and deepening our relationships. 'Relationships and Behaviour' is more than a school policy. It sits at the heart of our approach to mental health and wellbeing. Learners who develop positive relationships with a trusted adult achieve better learning outcomes.

American positive psychologist, Martin Seligman, developed a theory of wellbeing, which we follow. His PERMA model includes five research-backed building blocks that help us to flourish. These are Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment.

The framework ensures a broad focus. Not only on what learners achieve, but also how they achieve it. This includes recognising their strengths, relationships and how they feel about learning. It helps us to take a preventative approach to mental health and wellbeing.

STARTING WITH OUR PEOPLE

It begins with us supporting the people that work at West Lea. We created a 'magic formula' to remind us of this. Flourishing people = Flourishing pupils = Flourishing communities.

Our people have regular meetings with their line managers. The focus is on personal and professional development and wellbeing. When people are feeling good about the work they do, they are better able to support learners and each other.

The training and support we provide helps people to lead by example. It sets the tone for a learning culture that puts wellbeing and happiness at the core.



KEEPING CULTURE AT THE HEART

The term mental health is often viewed in a negative way. We built practices to support good mental health throughout the curriculum. We teach students how to keep physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.

We support learners with identifying their feelings and emotions. Our approach helps young people to connect their feelings with their behaviours. They learn ways to manage both.

We keep our culture at the heart. We role model how to show kindness and empathy to others. We place great importance on how to develop meaningful connections.

EVERYONE WORKS TOGETHER

Learners have access to in-house professionals. Our team includes speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, school nurses, a clinical and educational psychologist, school counsellors and mental health practitioners from the Enfield MYME team. Some of our support staff have become pastoral mentors.

We also work with external partners. This includes professionals from The Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS, SCAN, Cheviots, Children's Social Care, Early Help team and the Enfield Advisory Service for Autism. Learners recently enjoyed sessions with a music mentoring company, 'Everybody Loves Music' (ELM). Song writing and music production help learners to express themselves, boosting self-esteem and self-confidence.

Everyone works together to ensure the young people get the support they need.

THE WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The wider school community plays an important role within our "network of care."

Support beyond the classroom requires strong collaboration with parents, carers and local partners. This is especially important to help mitigate and prevent issues from arising.

We provide guidance to parents on how to support their child's mental health. And we work with families who are struggling or in crisis, helping them to engage with other services. Our Parent Support Advisor visits families at home.

A whole-school approach to wellbeing extends to everyone surrounding our young people. Teachers, support staff, parents and loved ones deserve to and must flourish. And this creates a ripple effect of wellbeing and meaningful care that benefits us all.



Everyone works together to ensure the young people get the support they need.



Introducing Daria Kohls

I am delighted to introduce myself as the new head of school at Haselbury Campus. It is a privilege to have started this role in May.

My passion for education is deep-rooted. I believe that every child, regardless of their starting point in life, has the right to succeed socially and academically.

I am the eldest of three children and have a brother with special educational needs. I am acutely aware of the importance of an outstanding education. And in developing young people's independence so they can flourish and achieve their personal goals.

I grew up in Germany where I studied maths and chemistry at university before moving to the UK over 25 years ago. My entire career has been in education. I was a science teacher and then worked in various leadership roles: head of department, specialist leader of education, and assistant headteacher. For the last five years, I have served as deputy headteacher in a secondary school in Hertfordshire.

I recently joined the governing body of a local primary school to use my experience to support my



local community. As a committed life-long learner, I enjoy the challenge of acquiring new skills and knowledge. Last year I qualified as a yoga teacher for children and adults. I also have a keen interest in photography and open water swimming.

What drew me to West Lea is the sense of community and culture of high aspirations for all. A successful and happy school depends on us working together so that your child enjoys their time at school. It is my desire that they feel safe, make excellent progress, and leave with the necessary skills to lead successful and fulfilling lives.

I look forward to meeting you soon. Please join me at one of our regular coffee mornings to introduce yourself and ask any questions.

Ms Daria Kohls, Haselbury head of school

Pastoral update

Eat, Sleep, Move, Repeat.

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week focused on the benefits of movement.

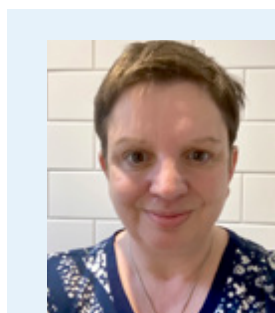
If you'd like to be more active, there is lots of good information online. But a Google search can also lead to confusion and overwhelm.

My belief is that fitness can be simple. I base my health routine on the framework: Eat, Sleep, Move, Repeat. And I thought I would share it with you.

- **Eat.** There's lots of conflicting advice about diet. And it tends to change with the times. A simple tip is to eat more fruit and vegetables. And swap fizzy drinks and caffeine for water. A good diet can have a big impact on our energy levels.
- **Sleep.** Getting enough sleep is vital. It might even be the most important of all. Lack of sleep can cause us to forget our good intentions in other areas. When tired, it's easy to skip the walk and opt for a less healthy ready meal. We also crave high sugar foods.
- **Move.** If we're eating and sleeping better, we have more energy. But don't wait until you feel like exercising or have time for a big workout. We should all be moving more throughout the day. Find physical activities that you enjoy.
Replacing the word "exercise" with the word "movement" may be helpful. When we move our bodies, we release "feel good" hormones called endorphins. This helps us to relax, feel more positive, and sleep better too.
- **Repeat.** Start with one new activity in each area. Then, repeat it! Repetition is key to creating a habit that sticks. Even if this is as simple as walking for 15 minutes, three times a week.

"I've been taking part in a weekly Park Run, which is a free community event at 9am on a Saturday morning in parks across the country. It's wonderful to see people of all ages and fitness levels come together to walk, jog or run 5km."

Cath Goodwin



CATH GOODWIN
Head of Pastoral Development

WHAT DOES SCIENCE TELL US?

Regular exercise can make you happier

In "The How of Happiness," Sonja Lyubomirsky writes about a research experiment. The researchers put adults suffering from depression into three groups. Group one did four months of aerobic exercise. Group 2 took antidepressant medication. Group three did both. By the end of the experiment, everyone reported being happier with greater self-esteem.

The interesting discovery was that aerobic exercise was as effective as the medicine. And the effects were longer lasting.

There's a magic number of steps to ward off unhappiness

In "The Joy of Movement," Kelly McGonigal tells us to walk at least 5,649 steps a day. Below this number of steps, research revealed a risk of anxiety and depression.



Key term dates

Thursday 6th June

Meridian Campus, Dysons Road – Open morning at 9.30am

Friday 7th June

Meridian Campus, Dysons Road – Open morning at 9.30am

Friday 14th June

Horizon Campus Summer Fete at Haselbury Campus

Friday 28th June

Year 11 Prom and Leavers Assembly
Last day of term for KS5 learners and Pre-Interns

Monday 1st July

Meridian Campus, Dysons Road – Summer Concert

Monday 1st July – Friday 5th July

Year 11 PGL

Thursday 4th July

Meridian Campus, Dysons Road – Open morning at 9.30am

Friday 5th July

CONEL INSET Day

Tuesday 9th July

Meridian Campus, Dysons Road – Early Years and KS1 Sports Day at 9.30am

Meridian Campus, Springfield Road – KS2 Sports Day at 1.30pm

Wednesday 10th July

Parent/Carer end of term review meetings
School closes at 12.30 except Year 9

Wednesday 10th July – Friday 12th July

Year 9 Residential to Grosvenor Hall

Friday 12th July

Last day of term for Interns

Monday 15th July

Meridian Campus, Dysons Road – Graduation

Tuesday 16th July

Meridian Campus, Springfield Road – Summer Concert and Graduation

Wednesday 17th July

Year 9 Parent/Carer end of term review meetings

Wednesday 24th July

Last day of summer term



community
kindness
learning for life
innovation inclusion