



UNICORN SCHOOL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER  
238 KEW ROAD, RICHMOND, TW9 3JX  
Tel: 020 8948 3926  
[www.unicornschooll.org.uk](http://www.unicornschooll.org.uk)

No 956

WEEK COMMENCING: MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY

SPRING TERM 2026

**'We are courageous, reflective and, above all, kind'**

**MONDAY** 2.30pm Girls' Cross Country event – selected pupils – email has been sent to parents

**WEDNESDAY** 8.00am Second Hand Unicorn Sale on the forecourt  
1.00pm Visiting speaker from our caterers, Thomas Frank, coming in to talk to our Eco Warriors about biodiversity  
3.45pm **NO** Karate

**FRIDAY** 9.30am Unicorn's Spring Open Morning (in the hall) – if you know anyone who is currently looking for a school place, we would love to welcome them to our Open Morning

To book wraparound care, please click: [Richmond Rugby Club \(WAC\) Booking](#)

**Breakfast club: Run by school and NO need to book in advance**

To report a child absent, please click: [absences@unicornschooll.org.uk](mailto:absences@unicornschooll.org.uk)



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:**  
**Frances (I)**



**Please note that return to school from half term is Wednesday 25 February**



**This week we launched our "Unicorn 100 book challenge"**

The children were so excited to receive their new booklets and there was a real buzz around the school, as they talked to their friends and their teachers about which books they were going to read first. UV have started their sprint to the end of the summer term to read their 25 books and Blue Class are preparing for their marathon of reading 100 books by the time they leave UV. Some children have already received their first star!

Please encourage your child by talking to them about what they have been reading. Perhaps borrow another copy of their book from the local library so that you can read it together!

For details of the prizes they can win, please see the email sent out last week, although as one child in Blue Class told me in our assembly "the prize is the knowledge you get when you read a book and the fun you have reading it". Wise words!

Any questions, please do drop me an email. Mrs Gladstone – [jackie.gladstone@unicornschooll.org.uk](mailto:jackie.gladstone@unicornschooll.org.uk).

(NB please note there will be a £5 charge to replace any lost booklets).



## Great British Birdwatch - a wonderful success!



This week the children had a fantastic time taking part in the Great British Birdwatch. Armed with clipboards, curiosity and plenty of enthusiasm, they spent time exploring the school grounds and carefully noting down every bird they spotted. From cheerful robins and lively sparrows to elegant magpies and soaring gulls, the pupils were delighted by the variety of birdlife around them.

The activity helped develop their observation and recording skills and it also sparked lots of thoughtful conversations about wildlife, habitats and how we can all help look after nature.

We are very proud of how engaged and excited the children were throughout the event.

**Orange Class had a brilliant time birdwatching;** our UV monitors enjoyed it too!



## Second Hand Uniform Sale on the forecourt Wednesday 4 February at 8.00am

# 2nd hand uniform

### Donations:

Good quality duffle coats, polos, sweatshirts, sports tracksuit bottoms, new style sports jackets, PE tops, skorts, gym shorts, trousers but please **NO** old school sports jackets.

Please bring your clean uniform donations and leave them in the office by **Monday afternoon 2 February**. Please do not bring donations on the day.

**Red and Orange Class** were so lucky to have Albi and Finley's mummy come in to talk to us about our feelings and how to manage them.

The session was absolutely lovely and the children really enjoyed it.

A huge thank you from us all!



**Red class** are doing brilliantly in their music lessons learning to read notation from a score. This photo shows them reading rhythms using the Kodaly method and sounding out crotchets, quavers and rests.



**In Orange Class** we've been really thinking about the Unicorn Code. We made this lovely poster with pictures of us all playing and being kind.



**Indigo class played hockey matches against Prospect House** on Wednesday. We beat one of their teams a whopping 10-0! Our other two teams battled hard for some close results of a 4-2 and 5-2 loss. All the children played well, enjoyed themselves and represented Unicorn very well. A few children were even inspired to join external hockey clubs - I would definitely recommend they do this. Some of our old Unicorns who were motivated in our school lessons, went on to play with Barnes/Richmond Hockey clubs and now compete at high levels.



**Violet and UV played hockey matches against Prospect House** on Monday. There were some extremely close games with our captains' (Ollie and Emily) team going on to draw 2 - 2. Excellent hockey skills displayed throughout the afternoon, and all teams worked their socks off, showing real Unicorn grit and determination.





## Our Stars of the Week



**Article written by Mrs Fraley on:**

## **Helping children learn how to learn: Why Metacognition matters**

In today's fast-moving and academically demanding world, one of the most valuable gifts we can give our children is not simply knowledge but the ability to understand how they learn. This skill, known as metacognition, lies at the heart of successful, confident and independent learners.

At Unicorn, we are committed to grounding our teaching in strong educational research. Recently, our teaching staff have spent dedicated professional development time studying and discussing the Education Endowment Foundation's *Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning: Guidance Report*.

Drawing on this evidence, we are now actively applying its recommendations in our classrooms to further support your child's learning journey.

### **What Is Metacognition?**

Put simply, metacognition means 'thinking about thinking'. It is a child's ability to:

- Plan how they will approach a task
- Monitor how well they are doing
- Evaluate what worked and what they might change next time

The EEF report explains that effective learners are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and can adapt their strategies accordingly.

Over time, these habits help pupils become more reflective, resilient and independent.

Metacognition is closely linked to self-regulated learning – the ability to manage motivation, focus and learning behaviour. Together, these skills support children in becoming confident learners who know what to do when they feel stuck.

### **Why Is It so important?**

Research consistently shows that metacognitive approaches have a high impact on academic progress.

More importantly for parents, they help children to:

- Develop perseverance and resilience
- Learn from mistakes rather than fear them
- Approach challenges with confidence
- Take responsibility for their own learning

Children who can reflect on their learning are better equipped not only for entrance exams and senior school but for life beyond the classroom.

### **How do children develop these skills?**

The EEF guidance makes clear that metacognition does not develop automatically. Most pupils need explicit teaching and regular practice.

Effective teaching focuses on three key stages:

### **1. Planning**

Before starting work, pupils are encouraged to ask:

- What do I already know?
- What is my goal?
- Which strategy might help me?

### **2. Monitoring**

During learning, pupils reflect:

- Am I understanding this?
- Do I need to try a different approach?
- Should I ask for help?

### **3. Evaluating**

Afterwards, they consider:

- What worked well?
- What didn't?
- What will I do differently next time?

These habits form a continuous cycle that strengthens learning over time.

## **What are our teachers doing?**

Over recent staff training sessions, our teachers have explored the EEF report in depth, discussing both the research and its practical classroom implications.

This professional learning has focused on:

- Modelling thinking aloud so pupils can hear how adults approach tasks
- Using carefully designed questions to prompt reflection
- Encouraging purposeful discussion about learning strategies
- Setting appropriate challenge to build resilience
- Gradually removing support as children become more independent

The EEF highlights the importance of sustained, high-quality professional development in embedding these approaches successfully. Our staff have worked together to share examples of metacognitive strategies that they have used successfully. Teachers have taken others' ideas and implemented them themselves – we really are modelling, in our own way, the benefits of collaboration.

## What does this look like in the classroom?

You may notice your child talking more about how they learn, not just what they learn. For example, they might say:

- 'I tried a different method when I got stuck.'
- 'I realised I needed to practise this more.'
- 'Next time, I'll plan my time better.'

In lessons, pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking, reflect on strategies and learn from one another – approaches shown to strengthen understanding.

Importantly, these skills are taught within real subjects, not as isolated 'learning to learn' lessons. Research shows that metacognition is most effective when embedded in meaningful curriculum content.

## How can parents support at home?

Parents play a vital role in reinforcing these habits. Simple questions can make a big difference:

- 'How did you approach that homework?'
- 'What helped you most?'
- 'What might you try next time?'
- 'What did you learn from that mistake?'

Praising effort, strategies and perseverance – rather than just results – helps children develop a healthy, growth-focused mindset.

Encouraging routines for revision, reflection and organisation also supports the development of self-regulation.

## Looking ahead

Developing metacognitive skills is a long-term investment. It is not about adding more pressure but about equipping children with tools to manage learning confidently and calmly.

By drawing on the strong evidence base of the EEF guidance and embedding it through staff training and classroom practice, we aim to nurture pupils who are:

- Thoughtful learners
- Resilient problem-solvers
- Confident decision-makers
- Independent thinkers

We believe these qualities are central to both academic success and personal growth.

# SENSORY PARENTING FOR SENSORY CHILDREN

Are you a parent of a sensory child? Join our in-person event to learn all about sensory parenting! Discover effective strategies and techniques that will help you understand and support your sensory child's unique needs. Emtia Bartlett, Occupational Therapist, will share her knowledge and encourage discussion with reference to the book 'Sensory Parenting for Sensory Children' by the author Tanya van Dalen. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with other parents facing similar challenges, and gain valuable insights into sensory processing issues and parenting styles and how they impact and are influenced by sensory children.

**Saturday 28th Feb 10am-3pm in person**  
**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March 7:30-9pm online**  
**Saturday 21st March 10am-3pm in person**

110 Selkirk Rd TW2 6PU  
Sign up [here](#)



*'It was great to be able to hear from, and talk to, people who have similar experiences to my own with their children. I've dealt with this on my own (with my partner) without discussing with friends and family. To hear other peoples' methods and struggles helped me so much. We have incorporated several of the tactics discussed and become more accepting of some behaviours too after understanding more about sensory challenges'*

Camp Beaumont Holiday Camp - January Sale



15%  
off ALL  
2026  
camps

Use  
code  
JAN15

**JANUARY SALE**

# Unicorn Sport week beginning 2 February

## For Directions to Sporting Venues

[Directions to Barnes Hockey Pitch, Dan Mason Drive, Chiswick, W4 2SH](#)

[Directions to Old Deer Park \(London Welsh\), TW9 2HN](#)

Date	Sports information	Parents information
Mon 2 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Violet and UV Games lesson (HOCKEY)</b> 13:30 – 15:00</li> </ul> <p><b>Games address:</b> Barnes Hockey Pitch, Dan Mason Dr, Chiswick, London W4 2SH</p> <p><b>Cross Country event</b> for selected girls (email sent to those involved)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Violet and UV to WEAR KIT TO SCHOOL:</b> trainers, long navy socks, navy shorts/skorts, navy polo top, <b>FULL</b> Unicorn tracksuit, <b>SHIN PADS</b>, water bottle.</li> <li><b>CHILDREN MUST HAVE SHIN PADS and MOUTH GUARD.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Violet and UV</b> parents to collect their child from school at 15:35 or from Barnes Hockey Pitch at 15:00.</p>
Tues 3 February	<p><b>Swim Squad (selected pupils)</b> 15:45 – 16:30</p> <p><b>Swimming lessons for ORANGE CLASS</b> 14:00 – 15:00</p>	Swim Squad parents to collect their child from Pools on the Park at 16:30 (in changing rooms)
Wed 4 February	<p><b>Swimming lessons for INDIGO CLASS</b> 14:00 – 15:00</p>	
Thurs 5 February	<p><b>SQUAD for Blue – UV</b> Old Deer Park (London Welsh) 15:30 – 16:30</p> <p><b>Swimming lessons for GREEN CLASS</b> 14:00 – 15:00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SQUAD - Parents to collect their child at <b>16:15</b> from Old Deer Park or back at school at <b>16:30</b></li> </ul>
Fri 6 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Swimming lesson for Violet</b> - Parents to drop children to the pool for <b>08:45</b></li> <li><b>Green, Blue and Indigo Games lesson</b> 13:30 – 14:50</li> </ul> <p><b>Games address:</b> Barnes Hockey Pitch, Dan Mason Dr, Chiswick, London W4 2SH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Green, Blue and Indigo to WEAR KIT TO SCHOOL:</b> trainers, long navy socks, navy shorts/skorts, navy polo top, <b>FULL</b> Unicorn tracksuit, <b>SHIN PADS</b>, and water bottle.</li> <li><b>CHILDREN MUST HAVE SHIN PADS and MOUTH GUARDS.</b></li> <li><b>Green, Blue and Indigo</b> parents to collect children from school as normal at 15:35 or from Barnes Hockey Pitch at 14:50.</li> </ul>

# Lunch Menu

Week commencing 2 February

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Morning Break	Cheese twist (G, D)	Crudités with hummus And rice cakes (S, E)	Courgette and cheese Savoury muffin (S, E)	Apple and cinnamon Oat bar (G)	Cheese and crackers (G)
Mains	Chinese sticky lemon Chicken (S)	Slow cooked BBQ Pulled pork	<b>WORLD FOOD DAY</b> England	Garlic and herb roasted Chicken thighs	Oven baked fish fingers (G, F)
Vegetarian Option	Sweet chilli tofu with Stir-fry vegetables (S)	Macaroni & leek Cheese (G, D, M)	Cumberland sausages (G) Vegan sausages Mashed potato Garden peas Baked beans Onion gravy	Basil, mozzarella and Sun-dried tomato frittata (D, E)	Baked aubergine Parmigiana (G, D)
Sides	Wholegrain rice Chilli broccoli Honey carrots  + Salad bar	Brioche bun (G, D, E) Corn on the cob Crunchy coleslaw Savoy cabbage  + Salad bar	+ Salad bar	Roast potatoes Green beans Curly kale  + Salad bar	Cavolo Nero Garden peas Tartare sauce (E)  + Salad bar
Dessert	Pineapple and cherry Sponge cake (G, E) + fresh fruit	Mixed berry pot  + fresh fruit	Selection of jellies  + fresh fruit	Natural yoghurt with Berry compote (D) + fresh fruit	Bread and butter Pudding (G, S) and Vanilla Custard (D)

Contains: G = Gluten D = Dairy E = Egg F = Fish SE = Sesame CE = Celery  
M = Mustard S = Soya SF = Seafood SP = Sulphite C = Crustasean