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OLD UNICORN NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026

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From the Headteacher Despite our unimaginably difficult start, I am pleased to say the children have enjoyed another fun filled and exciting year which, on top of the academics, has been packed with an abundance of sports fixtures, visits and trips.

That said, we continue to feel the loss of our friend and colleague, Hannah Langdon, Red Class Teacher, Head of EYFS and Assistant Head, who tragically died suddenly from a ruptured brain aneurysm last September. We miss her more than words can say.

Autumn term saw memorable Christmas productions; Red and Orange Classes' Nativity and Yellow and Green's 'The angel who nearly missed it all!' were both full of vibrant singing, acting, costumes and music. The Junior Christmas concert at the Barn Church resonated with beautiful singing, musical ensembles and Ultra Violet speaking their parts so confidently and clearly.



Ultra Violet deserves huge congratulations for their results and even more praise for the calm and mature way they have conducted themselves throughout the 11+ process. Please scan the QR code to see the Instagram post of destination schools. For a cohort of 21 children, they received 66 offers, including 6 scholarships and accepted places to:



Chiswick Community
Kew House
Orleans

Grey Court
Kings College Wimbledon
St Benedict's

Harrodian
Kingston Grammar
St Paul's Boys

Ibstock
Latymer
Thomas's

Party Day didn't disappoint; whilst the Infants enjoyed 'The Story of Babushka' in the hall, the Juniors walked down to the Curzon Cinema in Richmond to watch *The Emoji Movie*. All the children then had parties in their themed classrooms with UV's as a scene out of *The Wizard of Oz* with all the children dressed as Tin Men and Mr Gladstone dressed as the wonderful Wizard!



Ember (on the left - daughter of OU India Waters)

Charity We still carry on the tradition of the children bringing in a present for those less fortunate via the West London Action for Children and Unicorn families showed amazing charity by donating so many on Party Day.

School Committee has raised an amazing £16,300 over the last year, which will be split between our charities, Little Village, The Children's Trust and the School Bursary Fund.

Trips Blue Class stayed one night camping under the stars at a new venue, Bushcraft Camp in Kent; Indigo had a great stay at Sayers Croft; Violet enjoyed their week, again in a new venue, on the Isle of Wight and UV had a memorable action-packed stay in Cumbria. Other trips this year have included the National Archives, Science Museum, Natural History Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Rose Theatre, Junior Citizenship at Holly Lodge, Bekonscot Model Village, the Living Rainforest, Legoland, Orleans House Gallery, Kew Gardens, Orange Tree Theatre, Hampton Court and Jeremy King's all-day STEM workshop here at school. All UV completed their Bus and Tube day challenge to get themselves from school to the fountain outside Green Park Station, a quick selfie and then back again!

This year's UV in Cumbria



Some of Violet on the Isle of Wight



Indigo at Sayers Croft



Red and Orange at Forest School



Music Miss Gresson, Head of Music, has been busy. There have been tea time concerts, try an instrument afternoon, UV and Violet Choir sang at the Cecil Court Care Home and MTB music exams have been held in school. The Junior Carol concert, Yellow and Green's nativity and Red and Orange's nativity were all fantastic. Violet and UV performed in the Young Voices at the O2, Indigo and Violet classes performed at the Richmond Singing Festival at the Rose Theatre and we thoroughly enjoyed the Infant and Junior Summer music concerts. Unicorn Singers competed in Music for Youth national

competition and successfully made it into the finals, they also filmed for Twinkl and Disney and performed in West End Musicals concert with Mike Reed and stars of West End Theatre. Musical Theatre's production of *Seussical the Musical* was spectacular, as was UV's production of *Grimm - once upon a musical*. Last but not least, Lola (V) has played Little Cosette for the last 4 months in the West End production of *Les Misérables*.



World Book Day saw some brilliant costumes including Dolly!, Harry Potters, Darth Vader, Fireman Sam, Spiderman, Stick Man, princesses, witches, wizards and a marvellous Mr Tickle!



Art and DT continues to be enjoyed by the children and is truly inspirational, whether paintings, ceramics, charcoal or pottery, it's always of an exceptionally high standard. Our Big Draw's theme was 'Drawn Together' with the classes painting a wonderful array of watercolour landscapes inspired by the work of JMW Turner in celebration of the 250th anniversary of his birth. Our Arts Week's theme was 'Reflections' which was interpreted in many ways.



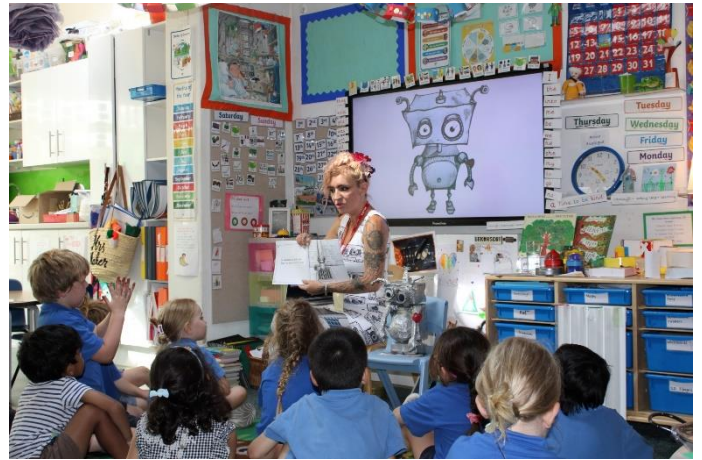
Sport The children have participated in matches and tournaments in football, netball, hockey and cricket. We hosted the Unicorn Cross Country and all classes have had swimming lessons with selected pupils taking part in the Borough's Gala. We were very lucky with the weather for both of our Sports Days and all the children participated, enjoying the races.



Old Unicorns Hen Otley, Zoe Teale, Catherine Drewett and Joanna Copland (from left to right) popped in during the Christmas Fair for a couple of hours and had a good tour of the school and thoroughly enjoyed a trip down memory lane 50 years on! They had a photo taken in the playground standing in the same order as a school photo 5 decades ago!



Old Unicorn Vicky Steane We were delighted to welcome Vicky back to Unicorn last week when she visited Red, Yellow and Green Classes to read some of her books from the wonderful series of Little Robot adventures, which she has written and had beautifully illustrated. The children thoroughly enjoyed listening to stories and loved meeting Little Robot who she'd built out of rubbish collected around Eel Pie Island Boatyard! Thank you Vicky for sharing your stories and inspirational Little Robot with us.



Current children of Old Unicorn Pupils We currently have 9 children from 4 families where a parent attended Unicorn as a child:

Alford (nee May)

Duff (nee Hardyment)

Trotter (nee Stone)

Verwey

Thursday Afternoon Clubs This year's clubs on offer included Art, Computer, Cookery, Dance, Debating, DT, Golf, Inventors, Padel, Pottery, Riding, Sailing, Sew What? and Ski Club.



Staff At half term we said a fond farewell to **Mrs Gentle**, Teaching Assistant in Red Class for the past 16 years, who has left to help look after her gorgeous new grandson. At the end of term, we say farewell to **Mrs Walcot**, Head of Computing, who has been with Unicorn the longest, having started her career here in 1998 - a total of 28 years; **Miss Botes**, maths and classroom support and school listener amongst a myriad of other roles she has played here over the past 16 years; **Mrs Young**, Head of Games, for the past 8 years; **Mrs Frazer**, Red Class Teacher and ex parent (Evie and Drew from 1999 - 2010) and then started working here, so on and off an association that has lasted for 27 years! We also say goodbye and good luck to **Mr Jack**, Old Unicorn and gap year student for the past year, who is going on to do a Teaching degree at Roehampton University in the autumn. We will be sad to see them go and wish them every happiness for the future.

Governors we bid farewell to **Will Barker**, part of the Finance Committee for the past 3 years. We thank him for his support and invaluable contribution.

Listed below is our current cohort of staff, I wonder how many names you still recognise!

Headteacher: Mrs Fraley
Deputy Head: Mr Gladstone
Assistant Head: Mr Jones
SENDCo & SLT: Mrs Simons
(nee Grover)
Bursar: Mr Guy
Teaching Assistants:
Mrs Gardner (nee Adie), Mrs
Chalong, Mrs Bryan, Miss
Oulton, Mrs Atkins, Miss
Minnie and Miss Jensen

Red Class: Mrs Nicholas
Yellow Class: Mrs Palmer
Blue Class: Mr Gough
Violet Class: Mr Jones
Violet & UV English: Miss Bird
(nee Roncone)
Music: Miss Gresson
Games: Miss Lowe, Mr Gough
Library: Mrs Gladstone
Science: Mrs Roblin (nee
Stephenson)

Orange Class: Mrs Maher
Green Class: Miss Engelmann
Indigo: Miss O'Gorman
UV Class: Mr Gladstone

DT & Art: Mrs Daw, Mrs
Washington, Mrs Chalong
French: Mrs Baghaei
Registrar: Mrs Rodgers
Marketing: Mrs Jones

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff, governors and parents for their continued support and phenomenal contribution to school life; I am grateful to them all.

Best wishes

Polly Fraley

POLLY FRALEY

Headteacher

Old Unicorn Staff

The Mottley Crew, a group of retired Unicorn Staff who live locally, continue to meet for lunch and occasionally other activities. Judy Mott, a much-loved teacher who died some years ago, was a founder member, hence the name.

We were hugely shocked and saddened to hear of the untimely death of Hannah Langdon, daughter of Lesley Anne Reynolds who is a past Unicorn teacher and Mottley Crew member. Hannah died as the result of a ruptured brain aneurysm, having collapsed in school just before term started.

Hannah was a much loved and brilliant Red Class Teacher, Head of Early Years Foundation Stage and Assistant Head of Unicorn. She had taught at the school for 20 years and her young daughter Rose is a Unicorn pupil.

A number of Mottley Crew members attended the beautiful Memorial Service held for Hannah at St Anne's Church on Kew Green on 3rd October and also the Celebration of Hannah's Life at Unicorn in April this year.



The Mottley Crew celebrated the 55th birthday of Unicorn School at the annual lunch at Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club last September and were joined by a number of guests with close links to Unicorn.



After welcoming our guests, Head Teacher, Polly Fraley, spoke about Hannah and we were very pleased that Lesley Anne had joined us for the lunch.

Julia Chappell gave a full, interesting and entertaining talk about the setting up of the school and the early days, first in Richmond then in Kew Road.

Memories of Unicorn were next on the agenda and past teacher Lee Pascal and Peter Watson, husband of Red Class Teacher, Shena, who died eight years ago, were amongst those who recalled their memories; both speakers were wonderfully witty and highly amusing.

Fran Bayliss concluded the proceedings and spoke thoughtfully of education now and in the future and proposed a toast to the future success of the school.

It seems a number of past staff have had significant big birthdays during the course of the year. Most have kept this highly secret information under wraps but rumour has it that two past Heads, one male past teacher and indeed a few others have come of age. We congratulate them and wish them many more happy birthdays.

We enjoy sharing news at our lunches and on our WhatsApp Group Chat, but we are aware that our Old Unicorns keep in touch mainly via social media, so it is very special when we have first-hand contact with those we have taught. Recently I attended a wonderful concert at The Wigmore Hall where past pupil Hugo Ticciati was performing with pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard. Hugo is a Violin player and Conductor who lives in Sweden and performs all over the world. It was a treat to meet his parents at the concert and to learn that his younger brother Robin was conducting Tosca with The London Philharmonic Orchestra that same night at Glyndebourne. Robin plays the violin, composes and conducts and has been Music Director of Glyndebourne since 2014. What an amazing family!

The Mottley Crew will be meeting next for the Annual Lunch on Wednesday 7 October at Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club. Other past staff are very welcome to join us, so do let anyone who might be interested to know about this get together and encourage them to come. Also, please contact me by email if you would like information or are thinking of coming.

With all good wishes to past Unicorns and their families.

FIONA TIMMIS

Headmistress 1988 - 2004

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