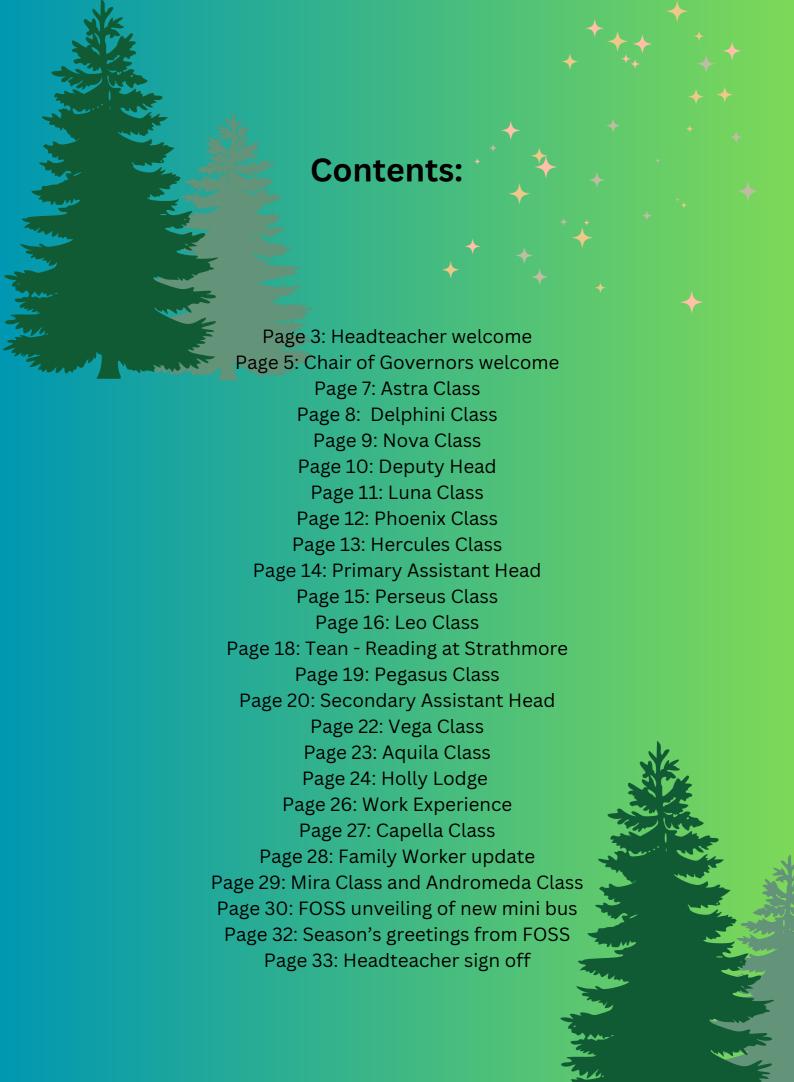
Grapevine Christmas 2023





Headteacher Welcome

Dear Strathmore Community,

What an incredible term it has been, and it really does seem such a long time ago that we were welcoming everyone back after the summer holidays. As I look back over the weekly articles I have written to you all via our Family Newsletters, I am amazed by all the wonderful things that have happened over the last 4 months.

We surveyed your thoughts on how well Strathmore was doing with supporting your children and I want to share some of those results with you from the Summer and the Autumn Term surveys. I am sharing the results from the Summer Term because double the amount of parents responded in comparison to the most recent survey.

My child is happy and enjoys school - Autumn 2023 92% Summer 2023 94%
My child is making good progress - Autumn 2023 78% Summer 2023 88%
I am provided with information about my child's attainment and progress Autumn 2023 86% Summer 2023 94%

I am provided with information as to how I can support my child's progress at home –

Autumn 2023 69% Summer 2023 88%

My child is safe at school – Autumn 2023 97% Summer 2023 95%

My child has opportunities to practice and learn new skills in the community –

Autumn 2023 78% Summer 2023 87%

The school provides an education that meets my child's needs –
Autumn 2023 92% Summer 2023 91%

I feel involved with my child's education – Autumn 2023 87% Summer 2023 89%

There is good, efficient communication between Strathmore and parents –

Autumn 2023 97% Summer 2023 95%

I feel comfortable about approaching Strathmore staff with a question, problem or complaint –

Autumn 2023 94% Summer 2023 96%

Parents views are listened to and taken into consideration -

Autumn 2023 83% Summer 2023 91%

Strathmore has high quality leadership -

Autumn 2023 96% Summer 2023 94%

I am aware of the roles and responsibilities of the Governing body –
Autumn 2023 72% Summer 2023 79%

I feel part of the school community Autumn 2023 81% Summer 2023 83%
I would recommend Strathmore to other parents - Autumn 2023 92% Summer 2023 91%

What the survey shows, is that generally there is a very positive response to what Strathmore offers and that showcases the excellent partnership we have with our families, the professionals we work closely alongside and most importantly with your children. There are some areas to refine, as expected, and we will be focusing on these areas next term:

- Exploring how to help families to support learning at home.
 - Investigating ways to improve attendance at school.
- Encouraging you to be involved in our community events.
- Canvassing parent and learner views in different ways, other than surveys.

You will read about some changes that are happening next term later in the Grapevine as well as some goodbyes due to staff moving on. It is always sad to see people leave, but at the same time, change offers a chance to do things differently.

In preparation for Lauren (Deputy Head) and Louise (Careers and Community Inclusion Lead) both going on maternity leave in February 24, we have made some additions and some changes to our School Leadership Team (SLT) which is as follows:

Laura Wrigglesworth (Assistant Head) will be mainly based at the Russell Campus.
Amy Upton (new Assistant Head) will be mainly based at the Grey Court Campus.
Adriana Martyr (Assistant Head) will be mainly based at the SRR Campus.
Luis Ferriera (new part time Assistant Head) will be working as our lead for Behaviour,
Wellbeing and Culture and will be supporting all campuses and will continue as part time Mira
Class Teacher.

Lauren Crew (Deputy Head) will be supporting with induction of the new SLT, and you will see her around **all campuses** until her baby decides to arrive.

I will continue to lead the 4 campuses. If you need to get in touch with me, please contact me via info@strathmore.org.uk but I know that I will see most of you next term at a FOSS event, a school event or at an Annual Review.

We welcome back **Penel Cumming**s, a past teacher to take on the role of **Astra Class teacher** while Amy takes up her new role of Assistant Head. Amy will continue to oversee the Darell Campus and will be very much involved in supporting Penel.

I know that, as you read through the pages in this edition of The Grapevine from the 14 classes, SLT, Jane, our Chair of Governors and other leading staff, you will be incredibly impressed. It is testament to the hard work that every child has put in and the outstanding support they have received from my wonderful staff team and from you all. It is a privilege to be the Headteacher of Strathmore School.

Enjoy!

Sarah

Chair of Governors Welcome

Jane Curzon

Dear Parents/ Carers and Staff

I have taken on the role of Chair of Governors after John Watkins made the decision to step down in September this year to enjoy his well-earned retirement after many years of service within the education sector. John has been exemplary in leading the Governors over the past three years, helping the staff to steer the school in the right direction and influencing successes in our school across many areas.

I have worked closely with John and the Governing body for over five years which has given me an in-depth knowledge of the school and the amazing way the staff and parents make it so successful - both from a parent and a Governor point of view. I am lucky enough to have my own child at Strathmore School and I truly believe that this is a really special school. I have seen first-hand just how much effort the staff go to to ensure all children are happy, confident and supported each day, enabling them to reach their full potential.

In addition, the school is incredibly fortunate to have such a close-knit community supporting it including its parent and staff body, governors, school charity (Friends of Strathmore School (FOSS)) and support from the wider community too. As the old African proverb goes, 'It takes a village to raise a child' and I believe it also takes a community to support a school and I'm proud to be part of the community that supports Strathmore in being the outstanding school it is

As far as our role is concerned, as a Governing Board, we support the school in a number of key areas including pupil and staff welfare; progress and achievement; finance and budgets; staff development and recruitment; holding leadership to account and to ensure the school has a clear vision, direction, and ethos. Governors come from a wide variety of backgrounds, bringing different skills to the fore and meet regularly with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and staff to check that the school continues to monitor and evaluate it's objectives both strategically and operationally. Please see a few pictures in this article of the governing board attending our Annual Governors Strategy Day held each year in the summer which sets out our school priorities for the academic year ahead.

Should you wish to share any thoughts or ideas, please feel free to contact me via icurzon@strathmore.org.uk and we will ensure that your comments are heard.

I also want to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Sarah and her leadership team, and to all the staff at the school for their stellar contributions and tireless efforts over this past term, without you all, we simply wouldn't be the exceptional school we are! Thank you too to our governing board members who are all volunteers, giving up their time generously and providing invaluable input and strategic advice in advancing the school.

Wishing you all a wonderful festive season and I look forward to seeing you all in the new year.

With best wishes,

Jane Curzon – Chair of Governors







Astra Class

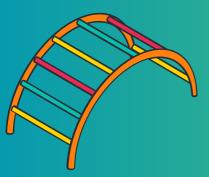
Astra Class was lucky to welcomes five new learners this term: **Brody, Ben, Murtaz, Austin and Ismail**. They have all had a wonderful start and we are enjoying a busier classroom!

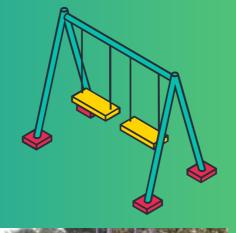
This term Astra Class have explored the local park. It is important that the learners get opportunities to generalise the skills they are learning in class, here are some of the skills we have been developing:

- Sharing a space and play equipment.
- Taking turns on equipment and waiting for a turn.
- Making choices and preferences using preferred method of communication.
 - Expressing their likes and dislikes.
 - Counting how many steps are on the climbing frame.
 - Walking with a small group safely.
 - Listening and following instructions.
 - Climbing, reaching, and navigating equipment.

"I like the park!" - Leo, Astra Class













Delphini Class

Delphini class have been enjoying sensory stories in Autumn. We especially like exploring different stories through touch, smell, sight, sound, and taste.

One of our favourite sensory stories this term was 'Happy Diwali'. We learnt about how Diwali is celebrated by some of our friends. Pupils enjoyed the torch light in the dark classroom and washing their hands with sandalwood soap. Some pupils tried the garlic and coriander naan and requested more. We played instruments such as drums and maracas along to music too!











Nova Class

Nova class have been busy this term and they have welcomed three new friends **Lucca**, **Anna** and **Maisam** who have all settled in so well .

Nova class have been focusing on sharing resources with friends and finding out each other's interests. Some of these include art, water play, bikes and scooters, and a class favourite, messy play.

One activity in particular our learners have enjoyed and engaged with was 'Music for Autism' where the learners got to listen to an orchestra play music right in font of them and some learners even stood up to dance and conduct.

Well done Nova Class!











Deputy Headteacher





Lauren Crew

With the weather and the festivities Autumn is a term of change and celebrations for many of our learners, families, and staff. We have had a fun-packed term full of school trips, special events and cultural and religious celebrations.

Diwali, Thanksgiving, Hanukah & Christmas - Strathmore's had it all!

Spring term will bring more change to our staff team, and I am delighted to be able to tell you about the changes happening across our school.

After an amazing few years, our Speech and Language Therapist at the SRR campus, Franky, will be leaving at the end of Autumn term. Franky knows the SRR learners so well and has worked extremely hard to support their communication over her time at Strathmore. We are so grateful for everything she has done and the amazing training she has provided to staff to improve our provision. We will miss you Franky and look forward to meeting our new SALT in the new year.

Louise Ross (Careers and Community Inclusion Lead – previously PE lead) will be going on maternity leave from February. Congratulations to Louise and her family, and we can't wait to meet her little one next year!

I will also be going on maternity leave at February half term (if I make it that far...!). This will be the first time away from Strathmore in 11 years! In my absence, the amazing Amy Upton and Luis Ferreira will be stepping up into Assistant Headteacher roles from January to support SLT to continue to run our school. The teaching and progress of the learners in their current classes are our priority and there is a robust plan in place for learners and staff to support the transition into these new roles.

Change can be scary but can also bring new opportunities and fresh ideas.

I look forward to seeing everyone in January for the start of 2024 and hope everyone has a lovely break & for those celebrating, you have a wonderful Christmas.

Lauren x









Franky Louise Amy Luis

Luna Class

The Autumn term has been filled with lots of creativity whilst developing relationships with new peers and supporting adults.

Everyone has been drawn together through music and songs. The learners are particularly enjoying our daily Makaton time when we learn a weekly song using Makaton signs.

During explorer time, we have been practising mixing paints and using it to print. We have created pictures and patterns with various 2d and 3D shapes.

Throughout the term, the learners have been continuously developing their ability to share space, resources and take turns with adults and their peers.

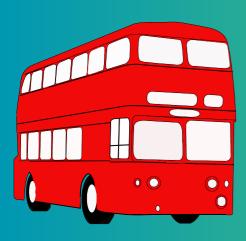
Most recently, some learners have been generalising their skills in the community by taking a local bus trip to the supermarket or the park. We will continue to do this so at the end of this term, all of learners will have experienced going on public transport.

Well done to all of Luna class learners and staff for such a fantastic term!













During the Autumn term, some of the learners from Phoenix Class have been going horse riding! The learners have thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and gained so many new skills. At first, a few of the learners in Phoenix were worried about the horses as this was a completely new experience for them and some learners had never seen a horse in real life before. Due to social stories and listening to a range of animal sounds in phonics, learners were able to gain confidence with the horses.

Over the many weeks, the learners have gained independence in many aspects. One aspect is transitions. When the learners change their visual timetable, they now understand what horse riding means and most of the learners will transition to the minibus independently.

Another aspect is getting ready. When they get to the stables the learners can put on their helmets and gloves independently and climb the steps ready to get on the horse.

Well done Phoenix Class







Hercules Class



In Hercules, we have been exploring our theme of "Art Attack!" through printing and painting with different materials. Learners enjoyed sensory art sessions in the hall, where they explored different activities and materials, such as tearing and sticking paper, threading with yarn, and using everyday objects to paint.

During Autumn 1, learners also enjoyed learning about Black History Month. They listened to the sensory story about Empire Windrush and explored the event further in our role play learning zone. We also spent a day learning about the Notting Hill Carnival. We enjoyed listening to calypso music, making our own instruments, and decorating carnival masks.

Well done to all learners in Hercules for having a great Autumn term and building positive relationships with new adults and peers!







Assistant Head of Primary

Laura Wrigglesworth

As the Autumn term draws to a close, preparations for Christmas begin!

Within our termly theme of 'Art Attack' staff have been engaging learners with the sights, smells, tastes and sounds of Christmas. Learning zones have been transformed into toy shops, Santa's grottos, post offices and snowy landscapes. The children have loved the opportunity to get creative with making decorations, icing Christmas biscuits and cards.

We are also continuing our annual carol concert at St Peters Church in Petersham and are excited to extend this tradition to our SRR campus, where we will be hosting a carol concert for the first time at St Mary's Church in Twickenham. We hope we can continue to foster these fantastic community links that bring new experiences and opportunities for our learners.

Rehearsals for these and our school-based Winter Performances have begun in earnest and our incredible music teachers Debs and Liz, supported by the music therapist John, have been practicing the songs with the classes.

We are look forward to welcoming as many parents and carers as possible to these festive celebrations.





Perseus Class

Horse riding has had a positive effect on Perseus class, our new learners specifically. Some learners have been given a chance to meet farm animals first hand and even can ride the horses with adult support. This is beneficial for our learners because not only does it give them a different experience outside our school, but also, they are learning to cope with a completely new environment. Some learners may struggle with understanding what is going on around them, but after a few consecutive trips to the stables, learners have gradually bettered their understanding and have acknowledged that it is time for horse riding once they reach the stables.



Because our learners have been given this opportunity, it slowly builds their confidence and allows them to be comfortable with transitioning somewhere unfamiliar. Horse riding has also taught our learners to be friendly with animals and to use a gentle touch when in the same vicinity as an animal. This is crucial for our learners as they most likely come across animals on their day-to-day life, but with what has been learned from horse riding, learners will be confident and able to realize the animal may be smaller than them and a calm, gentle approach may be best.

For Perseus, swimming has been fantastic, allowing learners to navigate and explore the water in their own space. Swimming has also built a lot of learners' confidence regarding the water. For example, **Jack**, who only recently joined us in September. On our first swimming trip, Jack refused to leave the changing room, but did get changed into his swimming costume. A week later, Jack then transitioned poolside and was watching his peers in the water. Another week later and Jack is fully dressed in his swimming costume and even comes towards the pool's stairs where he would dip his feet into the water. This is a prime example on how beneficial swimming is for our learners, essentially these sessions let our learners know that you shouldn't fear the water. The next step for Jack is to fully enter the water independently, this being with a float or not.

Another example would be **Shafay**, another student who also joined us in September.

Shafay was more confident and familiar with a swimming pool. During the first few weeks,
Shafay would independently get changed and enter the water. Over the course of these
first few weeks, Shafay did seem timid in the water and wasn't as comfortable as he is
today. Gradually, Shafay was able to build up enough confidence to roam the water
independently and without a float. The next step for Shafay would be being able to put his
head under water and realize that he is in full control of his body and can emerge from the
water whenever he sees fit.



Perseus Class





Leo Class

"On our trip we went to the Tate Modern in London. We got there by bus, train and tube and it was exciting. Some people were a little bit scared but it was ok. We saw some art by Yayoi Kusama, it was lights and mirrors. I was so happy because it was fun and epic!"

By Aimee B

The adults were so proud of everyone for being brave trying new things such as escalators and representing the school so well. One of the parents who accompanied us was very impressed by how well behaved everyone was.

Everyone, the adults included, learned so much!











Our learners at the St. Richard Reynold Campus enjoyed a visit from the Usborne Book Fair this half term. The learners and staff across the whole school brought in money and enjoyed looking at the books they wanted to buy and take home. This event will be rolled out in the other Strathmore Sites in the new year.

Here are some of the learners from the different classes accessing the book fair. The learner had the experience of looking, choosing and buying the books of their choice - which is developing their independence, supporting self-esteem with choices, and developing knowledge and understanding of the world. The money that gets spent at the book fairs mean we have more money to spend as a school on new books for the classes.

Thank you to everyone who brought a book from the book fair!





Pegasus Class

Pegasus class have taken part in a variety of educational visits in our local community this term. Each Monday we have attended St Mary's University for PE lessons. Our learners have really enjoyed working with new adults and engaging in activities with varied and exciting resources.

We have also been visiting Café Sunshine in Twickenham on a weekly basis. This is an enterprise run by young people with Special Educational Needs and the focus for our learners has been how to enjoy leisure activities together.

These trips have been in addition to our skills for independence activities in the local shops and supermarkets which allow learners to practice following a shopping list to make a recipe, and use a credit card.







Assistant Head of Secondary

Adriana Martyr

We have had a very successful Autumn term. We welcomed four learners, **Rafat, Ethan, Nadia, and Michael,** who transitioned from the Russell campus to Grey Court and all settled well in Pegasus class.

The secondary teams offered cooking and project-based afternoons, which culminated with the winter markets. Leo class also participated in the GC winter market and sold beautiful arts and crafts to peers and families. These afternoons have run well, and the feedback from learners and staff is very positive. We will continue offering two afternoons with mixed secondary classes and work in different groups.

The aim is for learners to apply their communication and motor skills in a new setting with different adults and show increased independence

Thank you to Luis, Matt, Chris, Tania, Raquel, and Pamela, who made this offer possible and brought their teams on board. I also would like to thank our therapists, Tess, Alison, Helen, Franky, Sarah, and Ewe, for advising and supporting the different groups.

We will continue with the sessions twice a week, and the focus of the project-based afternoon will be gardening. Don't miss our big plant and vegetable sale at the end of the Spring term!

Have a restful winter break
Adriana



















Vega Class

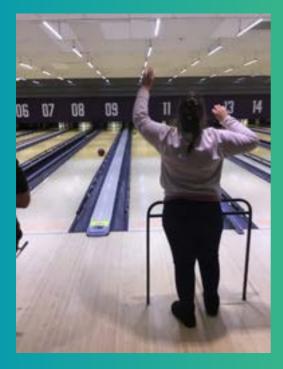


Vega class had have been very active during this Autumn term. They have been going to St Marys University every Monday to join P.E sessions with Pegasus class. The learners have been learning different types of sports like, Net ball, volleyball, and football. They are also learning how to work in teams and learning new way to be active. Also, the learners are building new friendships with the other students of Pegasus class.

Half of the learners in Vega and Andromeda class went to join the Panathlon Ten Pin competition on the 17th of October 2023. They travelled to Royale Leisure Park, Western Avenue, in London, where they competed with other SEN schools. They split into two groups: girls vs boys, and the girls group came second place. One of the learners in Vega class scored the highest points.

The learners communicated that they had so much fun and loved the sport and would like to participate in future competitions.











Aquila Class















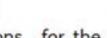
















to make christmas decorations for the winter market |













Holly Lodge



This term Astra, Luna and Phoenix classes attended the Sensory Christmas Workshop at the Holly lodge Centre.

At Holly Lodge the learners were welcomed warmly by the friendly staff. The morning began by helping to decorate the huge Christmas tree. They explored the sensory nature trail. Along the way they took part in some art and craft activities. The learners enjoyed snow painting, creating wreaths, making clay decorations and using water filled pipettes to melt the Christmas ice shapes. Everyone had gingerbread biscuits – they were a delicious treat for!

The trip also helped them all to get used to walking in different environments especially as the ground was uneven at times! All the learners worked well at generalising their learning from the classroom into the community.















Work experience

Louise Ross



Our secondary learners are already working towards getting their work experiences badges at the end of the academic year.

Here is Robert who has been working at the SRRCC reception 1 day a week. He is really enjoying supporting them with their day-to-day tasks and can complete some tasks independently.

We have continued to work with Marble Hill Play Centre, Ham Youth Centre, Barnfield Stables and GC PE department this term. We look forward to working with Twickenham and Ham Library in the Spring Term all supporting our learners to apply their skills in a meaningful way.



Capella class

Learners from Capella class have been having an amazing experience at "Wheels for all"-Kingston, during the autumn term. Some learners from Andromeda have joined us to support our learners and gaining work experience, by helping with the helmets and the bikes/trikes, which has been amazing! Thank you so much Andromeda!

"Wheels for all" provides a range of specially adapted cycles (bikes and trikes), which means that our learners have been able to experience the feeling of freedom, and the sense of achievement that comes with inclusive cycling.

Learners have tried new movement skills every session and have experienced new learning opportunities, which are linked to their EHCP targets. They have been interacting with volunteers at the cycling centre and creating positive interactions with them.

The volunteer team is incredible and very understanding, which has been crucial to our learner's development and engagement.

It is wonderful seeing the learners progress and their ability to try new things. Well done, Capella!











Family Support and Wellbeing

Natalie Arciero, Family Worker

Autumn Term Highlights



- Strathmore family worker and Sue Robson from RUILS, held the annual Post-16 Parent information session at Etna Centre. Six families from our upper classes attended.
- As Family worker I attended the Leavers Annual Reviews to gather all the information for destinations next year and various ongoing support.
- Coffee mornings at the Fox and Duck ran as usual once a month. Our final coffee morning
 was on December 5th being the 'Auriga Trust Community Christmas coffee morning', held at
 Etna Centre in St Margrets. External club providers and other professionals attended to chat
 informally with families across the trust and have a mince pie or two.
- The coffee mornings at St Richard Reynolds campus have starting up in collaboration with Andromeda class 'Vanilla Café'. We would like to encourage all SRR parents and carers to come and support this if they are free, no confirmation needed, just drop in on Thursdays.
- Online Parent wellbeing sessions with AfC MHST practitioner Isabelle Neumand, for yoga and CBT techniques, were held every Wednesday in Autumn 2.
- Strathmore and Skylarks Puberty Parent Workshop was held on 10th November with Strathmore specialist teachers Matt, Angela and community school nurses. Four Strathmore Parents attended along with nine Skylarks parents. It is good to get together to share common experiences. There was a very positive response from all parents attending.
 - As Family worker I was at the Parent teacher consultations across all campuses (except Astra class) to talk with parents and sell second-hand uniform. We raised £7 across all campuses for FOSS.
- Forty one families so far this Autumn term have accessed the Family Worker service for 1:1
 support ranging from applications and various other tailored support.

Please contact me if you would like to book a 1:1 session for support or e-mail for a call back on any issues familyworker@strathmore.org.uk

Your borough's local offer page is a good point of information for updates on clubs and events this Winter and beyond. Please look at the F.U.E.L clubs information and contact the clubs directly so they can asses if they can meet your childs need for support at their club.

Contact myself for **FUEL codes** and any further support if needed.

AfC Info website - Kingston and Richmond :: SEND Local Offer
Synergy (hounslow.gov.uk)
Wandsworth's SEND Local Offer | THRIVE Wandsworth



Mira and Andromeda Class



As part of our 'Art Attack' theme this term we have been looking at the work of Vincent Van Gogh in art.

We have been experimenting with different art materials and textures to recreate our own versions of: 'Sunflowers', 'Self-Portrait', 'Olive Grove' and 'The Starry Night'.

Learners have been engaged through multi-sensory activities involving taste, music, and touch.

As part of a special educational visit a group of students from Mira and Andromeda class visited London's Van Gogh Immersive Experience. Learners really enjoyed the interactive art activity using new technology and being part of the art exhibition in the immersive museum.





Friends of Strathmore School Official unveiling of the new minibus

On the 29th November, we welcomed The Victoria Foundation and their Trustees and Ambassadors along with an Auriga Academy Trustee and parents to the formal unveiling of the new minibus at The Russell campus.

The Victoria Foundation (TVF) has supported Strathmore School for a number of years with the proceeds of the Main Auction at the Annual TVF Winter Ball. In the past, the charity has generously provided funding for a number of Friends of Strathmore School (FOSS, our school charity) projects including equipment for the Hydrotherapy Pool, 16 Specially adapted Trikes, the fitting out of a Softplay Room and many other initiatives including specialist Physio and OT equipment.

More recently, at the TVF Crystal Anniversary Ball, held in December 2022, The Victoria Foundation raised over £21K for Strathmore School to part-fund a new minibus. The new minibus replaces one of our old buses that is no longer reliable/ fit for purpose nor ULEZ compliant.

As the guests and staff can attest, the smiles on the faces of the learners and words, expressed their utter joy and pleasure with the arrival of the new minibus. We enjoyed a presentation of the original video, showcased at **The Ball, https://youtu.be/DLTLdZFv_7I**, followed by a wonderful speech from Sarah and participation from the learners. Cards and flowers were presented to the TVF Trustees followed by an official ribbon cutting ceremony.

Sarah Hurtado said: "The new minibus, now standing proudly at school will make a huge difference to our learners and we are thankful to each one of you at The Victoria Foundation for the support you have given in raising the funds to purchase it. As the learners grow older, they use the minibus to access local gyms, cafés, and places of interest and once they get to the last few years of their time at Strathmore they travel further afield and attend colleges and work experience placements. We could not fulfil our promise to enrich our learner's lives with our crucial community programme, which forms an integral part of their education, without adapted minibuses. Our children have physical disabilities which makes it difficult for them to access public transport and some of our learners are isolated within their family homes and do not access the wider community because of their sensory and social needs. Your contribution will allow each one of our children to access the world outside of the school buildings. You have broken down the barriers to their right to access our wonderful world and you have opened up opportunities that they wouldn't have normally had. Thank you from all of us at Strathmore."

It truly was a memorable and heart-warming occasion, and an opportunity for our learners, staff and school community to express our gratitude and appreciation for all the invaluable support that Strathmore School has received through The Victoria Foundation and their supporters.

















SEASON'S GREETINGS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Thank you for all your support this year

-Friends of Strathmore School (FOSS)







Headteacher sign off

I hope that you all enjoyed reading through this Winter edition of The Grapevine.

I wish you all a very restful holiday and a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

