

Children's Hospital School

'Better Together'



Executive Headteacher: Mr S Deadman

Willow Bank School

Simmins Crescent

Leicester

LE2 9AH

July 2025 Newsletter

Tel: 0116 2298137

Welcome to The Children's Hospital School newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading about all the latest news across all our settings, Willow Bank School, Magpie Learning Centre, Leicester Royal Infirmary, The Beacon Unit and The Phoenix Learning Centre.

Dear Parents / Carers,

We are coming towards the end of another exciting year at The Children's Hospital School. There is always so much happening across every school site, and I would like to praise all the staff who work tirelessly to provide first-class education and support to all the young people. The feedback we get from children, families and anyone who visits is always so positive and it is a real privilege to work in such a special school.

The school has grown this year, with the opening of the Phoenix Learning Centre in Hinckley which has developed into a great provision for those in the locality. Although it's only been open for 1 year, the provision is moving into a larger space and increasing to a 5-day provision for some students.

In other news, the school is planning to open a regional hub in Oakham to provide support for young people living in Rutland. This will help them remain in their community, support transition back to school whilst reducing travel times and costs.

Our teams at the LRI and Beacon have been very busy again this year, always adding in new activities for the young people. There have been lots of arts and music projects going on, in addition to the wider curriculum offer.

Across Willow Bank and Magpie, staff continue to organise visits for students in the local area and some residential trips to London and the Peak District. Once again, we had a group complete their Duke of Edinburgh expedition during some very hot weather.

Our Year 11 students worked incredibly hard towards their exams, and I hope they enjoyed the prom and leavers' assembly. It is always great to see how much progress they have made in so many ways. We wish them all the best as they move on to their next phase of education or employment.

At the end of term, we are saying goodbye to a few members of staff. Ren Collard is leaving us after 8 years of teaching and leading science at the school. We wish her the best in her new adventure in Wales.

Both Nicky Henson and Elaine Stephens are retiring after supporting our school for many years. Nicky has been our chef at Willow Bank and has transformed the quality of food being prepared for all of us. She has built great relationships with the young people, and we will all miss her fun and great cooking. Elaine has been instrumental in the administration of referrals into the school and without her, the transition into school would not have been so smooth.

In September there are a number of new staff joining us including Sian Bhatt (lead teacher of science), Rachel Brennan (science teacher), Hayley Grant-Smith and Megan Hayward (HLTAs), Rebecca Carter (referrals admin) and Nana Quarde (chef). There are still a couple more interviews to come and we will update you once we've made appointments.

I am sure everyone is looking forward to a well-earned rest over the summer, and I am so grateful for everyone's hard work and dedication that has made this year such a productive one.

Thank you for your ongoing support and I hope you all have a wonderful summer holiday. I look forward to working alongside you all again in the autumn ready for another exciting year at CHS!

Best wishes

Stephen Deadman



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NEWS FROM THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL



In May, I attended the HOPE conference in Dublin which is a bi-annual meeting of educators from hospital schools across Europe. This year we were also joined by colleagues from USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The theme of the conference was ***'Together: Sharing Information, Sharing Knowledge, Sharing Practice'***. Over 3 days, I was able to meet colleagues from different countries who work in hospital schools and visited the Linn Dara school in Dublin. It was a great experience to hear and see what other schools do – getting some new ideas but also realizing that there is so much we all have in common.



I heard about remote learning in Australia, mental health support in Finland, how children with cancer are supported in Slovenia, the use of photography in Greek hospitals and how CAMHS is organised in Ireland. On the second day, I gave a presentation about Leicester Children's Hospital School – how we are organised, what we do to support children in hospital and how we support transitions back into school or to college.

Stephen Deadman



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NEWS FROM LEICESTER ROYAL INFIRMARY

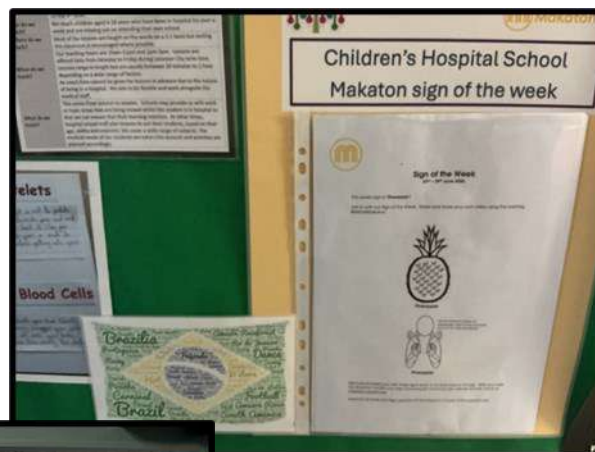
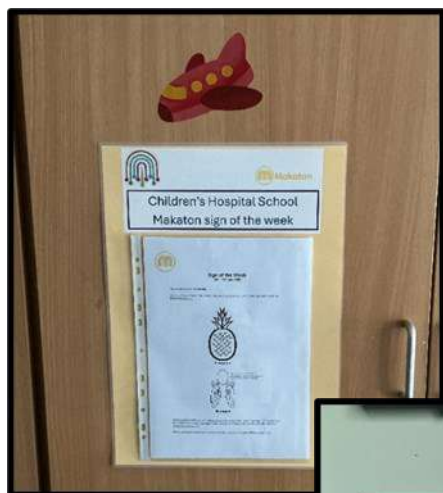
Messy Senses

It has been great to welcome Messy Senses to the wards this term offering our children four fun-filled sessions. Louise and her team have engaged our children in different themed sensory experiences with links to art and craft activities. It has been wonderful to see children's confidence grow and the excitement on their faces when they know Messy Senses are back on the wards!



Makaton Sign of the Week

This term we have introduced Makaton sign of the Week across the hospital. The children's wards have the display clearly visible for children, parents and UHL staff. Everyone looks forward to the new weekly sign and tries to use it throughout the week. We feel this really promotes Makaton as a form of communication for those who use it.



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Art From The Heart

In June 2024, the children from The LRI took part in a very special art project with visiting local artist Scott Bridgwood. The project was delivered in partnership with Sallie Varnam, Creative Health & Heritage Senior Project Manager at UHL.

The children created beautiful artwork, each inspired by one of our hospital's core values:

We are compassionate

We are proud

We are inclusive

We are one team

Using collage, paint, pencil and print the children brought these values to life with creativity and imagination.

On Monday 30th June, the artwork was put on display in the Windsor building main entrance and our children and families were invited to the event. It was wonderful to share this special moment with all those able to attend.

BEFORE



AFTER



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NEWS FROM WILLOW BANK

LOROS Pop-Up Shop

Our talented Year 10 students recently organised a crafting pop-up shop, showcasing handmade clothes and jewellery created from recycled materials. The event raised an Impressive £220, which will go towards the school's fundraising efforts for the upcoming LOROS Elephant Trail, launching on July 14th. A huge thank you to everyone who supported the cause and helped raise money.



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Leicester Animal Aid

The year 10 students will be attending a trip to the Leicester Animal Aid on Wednesday 9th July. The charity care for over 30 cats and 40 dogs, who are available for adoption. If you would like to make a donation to the charity, they have a wish list on the following website:-

<https://www.leicesteranimalaid.org.uk/about-us/centre-wishlist>

Please bring your donations into school before the trip. Thank you to those that have already donated.



Results Day

Exam result will be available at Willow Bank School on Thursday 21st August between 9am and 10am

Further details about results collection can be found on the website, in the Student Exams section.



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Drayton Manor

Some of our students having a fabulous time at Drayton Manor.



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NEWS FROM THE MAGPIE

Drayton Manor

On Monday 23rd June Magpie CHS students went to Drayton Manor. It was an adrenaline filled day, with everyone enjoying the rides. Students and some staff did get drenched on the log flume and had to spend the rest of the day with soggy clothes! It is always a highlight of the year seeing the students enjoying themselves and laughing all day. The countdown to the summer holiday has officially begun.



Fudge & Co - Wellbeing day

On Friday 27th June following a wellbeing day, we welcomed Fudge & Co to Magpie. Dan brought a selection of small furry friends – and some not so furry friends – for our students to hold. We had animals ranging from millipedes and snakes to armadillos and skunks. Ending on a hairy tarantula. All students loved it and all managed to hold the tarantula! All of our students were incredibly brave and pushed themselves to hold more animals than they thought they could.



Beach Party

As per Magpie Tradition in the last week of term we had our annual beach party. With garden games, drinks and beach activities like hook a duck. It was a huge success and a great way to start winding down for the summer. The students even made their own ice cream for all to enjoy.



Eyres Monsell Pre -School Sports Day

Our CHS Red group were trusted with a very important job – helping with the pre school sports day. Toddlers doing an egg and spoon race is quite the spectator sport. The students loved seeing the children they help with every week take part in lots of different sports day games. However, it did get very serious when the dads stepped up for the parents race..



Last day of term rounders

Magpie closed down for the summer with a staff and student rounders match. The staff got far more competitive than the students and took it very seriously.

New staff

Magpie is also pleased to welcome a new lunchtime coordinator and TA after the summer holidays. We are looking forward to growing and expanding our team with even more amazing staff to support our students.

Student transitions

We also are saying a fond farewell to a large number of our CHS students. With successful transitions to Willow Bank as well as back to new mainstream schools, all our students should be so proud of themselves and how far they have come since starting at Magpie. All of the Magpie team wish each and every student the best of luck in their next steps and are sure they will all be amazing wherever their journey takes them.



NEWS FROM THE BEACON

It's been a bit of a quieter time at the Beacon lately, as we've had to temporarily relocate to a different ward. This has meant we haven't been able to run as many activities and sessions as usual—but we've still been busy! Lessons have continued but, in some cases, have had to be adapted to the environment. However, the young people have shown amazing creativity getting ready for our upcoming enterprise sale on the 9th of July. They've been hard at work making bracelets, pressed flower stickers, canvas paintings, and more, all to raise money for cancer research. We're also excited to host a special afternoon tea for all patients and staff on the day .



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NEWS FROM THE PHOENIX

During the summer term we have had new students join our group. We have been busy engaging in lessons and participating in enrichment activities in the local community, supporting students to build confidence. We have been to Hinckley Leisure Centre and to Holycroft Park to enjoy games. We will be having a mini sports day and picnic in our final week before the summer break.

In English we have been developing understanding of 19th Century literature and language through *Oliver Twist*. We have also enjoyed creative writing, developing our skills in creating effective story openings and character description.

In Get Creative students have created tie-dye bags, canvases and flower arrangements. We have also spent time creating a nicer garden space at the Atkins building, planting flowers and caring for them.

In our book club we have been reading and/or listening to *Charlotte's Web*. We also have a student who set Corisande the task of reading *Divergent* with her; they have both enjoyed this.

The site manager at the Atkins Building gave us a guided tour, sharing the history of the family and their business within the hosiery industry. Students have visited the local Museum to further research their independent study. Students are carrying out research on The Atkins Building, Joseph Hansom and the local Union Inn.



Students have shared:

“There’s more support and things around the room. Sensory things and the circuit.”

“There are lessons for all and everyone can be involved.”

“There are less people. You can get to know people and have better relationships.”

“No bullying”

“Consistent adults”

“Teachers want a friendship here. At mainstream they just teach.”

Parents have shared:

‘H said that it was like having another family and it restored his faith in teaching staff and pupils.’



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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



Free and confidential online parenting support in Leicester

We're here for you when you need us. No topic is too big, small, or embarrassing.

Get support with:

- feeding your baby or child
- mental health
- school and education
- child development
- additional needs
- family relationships
- behaviour

We can support you in the language you prefer.

parent-talk.org.uk/leicester



Action for Children, whose registered address is at 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, Watford WD18 8AG and registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee in England & Wales under number 4764232. Registered charity numbers 1097940/SC038092.



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We will be closing for the summer holiday on Friday 11th July and will re-open on Wednesday 27th August.

We would like to wish everyone a wonderful relaxing summer break.

