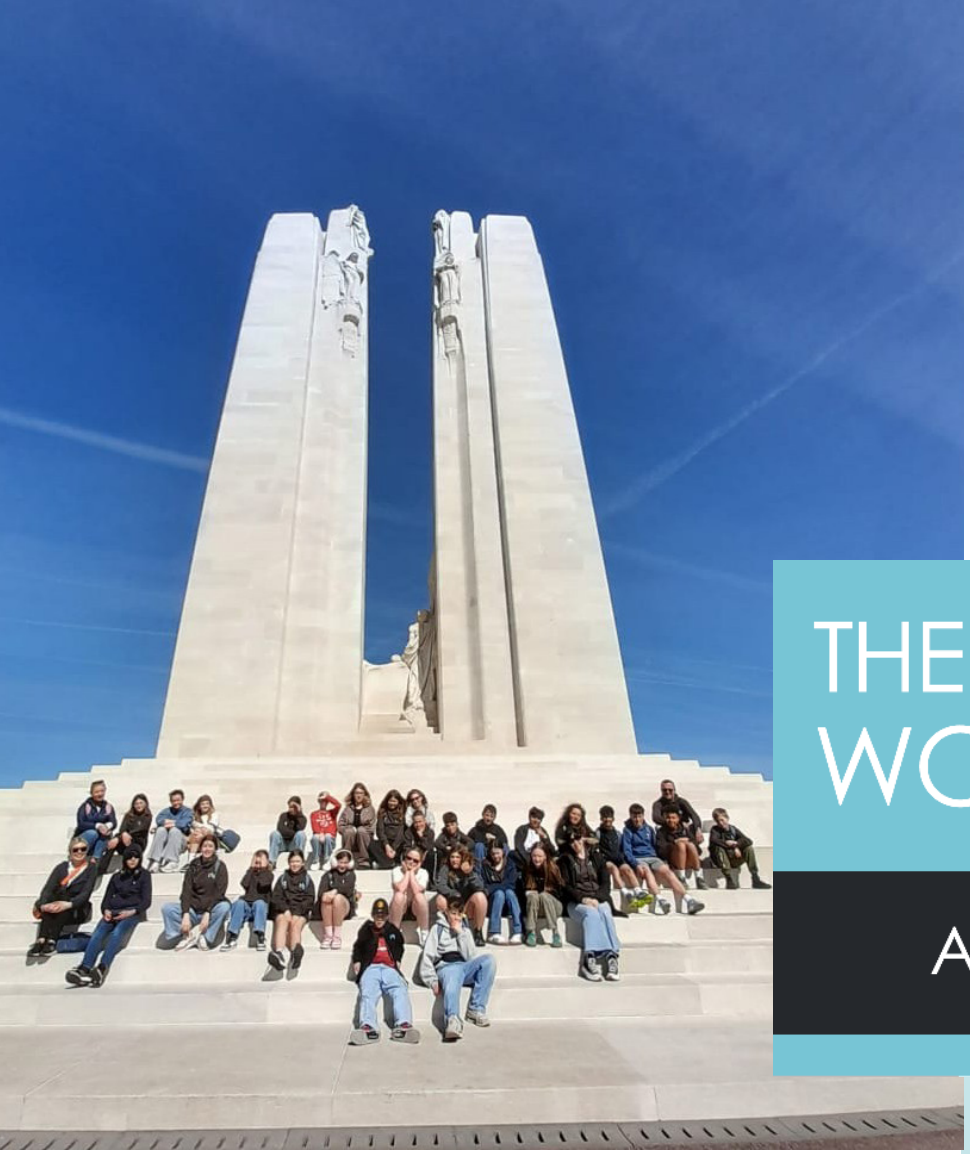

THE OLD WOLVERNIAN

ISSUE 2

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The Value of School Trips: Reflections on Our Opal Coast Adventure.

There's nothing quite like a school trip to bring learning to life, and our recent long weekend on the Opal Coast was no exception. For our Year 6, 7, and 8 pupils, this journey to Boulogne and beyond wasn't just about sightseeing, it was about experiencing a new culture, embracing independence and making memories that will last a lifetime.

Over the course of our trip, pupils immersed themselves in the sights, sounds, and tastes of northern France. From exploring the historic streets of Boulogne-sur-Mer to visiting local markets and trying out their French with native speakers, they stepped out of their comfort zones and grew in confidence. A highlight for many was our visit to Vimy Ridge, where pupils gained a deeper understanding of history and remembrance. We also visited a war cemetery, providing a poignant moment of reflection.

The itinerary was packed with engaging activities, including a tour of a local chocolate factory and a traditional bakery, where pupils saw French craftsmanship in action (and sampled some delicious treats!) A town trail encouraged exploration and teamwork. Evenings were just as enjoyable, with fun activities led by our enthusiastic French animateur, helping pupils to further immerse themselves in the language and culture in an interactive way.

Beyond the educational aspect, the trip strengthened friendships and built resilience. For some, it was their first time away from home, learning the importance of responsibility and teamwork. The chance to experience French culture first-hand was a source of great excitement and plenty of laughter.

Welcome

School trips like these are invaluable. They remind us that learning extends far beyond the classroom walls. They instil curiosity, foster independence, and create bonds that unite us as a school community. As we return to our daily routines, we do so with a renewed appreciation for the world around us and the incredible opportunities that travel provides.

Here's to more adventures ahead.



Mrs Jodie Bond
Deputy Trip Lead

Shrek Jr The Musical

Heathfield Knoll School's inaugural three-show run of "Shrek Jr. The Musical" concluded with resounding success, transforming the school into a vibrant shade of green.



After six months of dedicated rehearsals, the sold-out performances showcased the remarkable talent, resilience, and teamwork of the pupils. From intricate costume changes and microphone tweaks backstage to the electric atmosphere onstage, the production was a testament to their hard work.

The entire Heathfield Knoll School community extends heartfelt thanks to the cast, crew and dedicated adult volunteers. The polished performances, filled with fun and dedication, left audiences captivated, and the school eagerly anticipates future productions.

Little Cedars

We hope you are enjoying the early indications that spring is on its way, with some sunny skies and slightly warmer temperatures. We are delighted to share the news from the Spring Term and an overview of future developments in the Early Years.

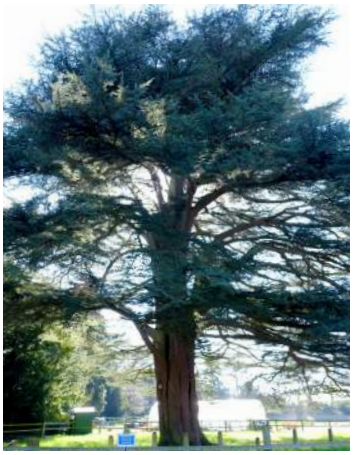
Following our return after the Christmas holidays, we received 'the call' from OFSTED which ultimately found our Early Years provision to be 'GOOD' in all areas. This positive outcome is a testament to the care and commitment of our staff, the support of our parents and carers, and of course, a celebration of our wonderful children.

With this to build upon, we are excited to share our plans with parents regarding future investment, the development and rebranding of our new early years nursery, Little Cedars. Current and prospective parents of children in Early Years have been invited to a meeting on the 9th April 2025 to share designs and plans. On these pages, we are pleased to share a range of designs and visuals that will help give an impression of the new setting, within the current Cedar building.





Our Cedar Tree



Cedar trees have a rich history covering ancient civilisations - for example, the Cedars of Lebanon were used by the ancient Egyptians to build ships and the Native Americans revered the Western Red Cedar as the 'Tree of Life'. Cedars are symbolic of strength and immortality across cultures, featuring prominently in mythology and national identities.

The Cedar of Lebanon was introduced into Britain by Edward Pocock around 1638 and it soon became a symbol of prestige and beauty. In the 1700s, Cedars were commonly planted in country house gardens, often as focal points. Whilst unsure of the age of the Cedar tree at the end of our school drive, it is likely to be around 200 years old (and is of 'mature' years, according to our tree survey.)

Little Cedars Nursery

We hope that Little Cedars Nursery is associated with strength, endurance and vitality of the Cedar tree. The design of the new logo, featuring a smaller Cedar tree alongside one fully grown, represents growth and development. The colours are from the Heathfield Knoll School colour palette and signify that Little Cedars Nursery, whilst operating as largely standalone within the Cedar Building, remains within the school family.



Little Cedars will benefit from new learning environments. The woodland theme will be extended into the indoor spaces in both the choice of colours, murals and solid wooden furniture (sourced from a sustainable manufacturer.) The intention, with time, is that the entirety of the Cedar building will be a specialist Early Years hub. This will follow the move, started last summer, of Preschool. Consequently, there will be increased capacity across all our age groups up to Reception age. It is our aspiration that this will support growth in the lower years of the school and through into our Junior School.

Nursery Room Designs



Baby Room

3-4 Years Room

In preparation for the expanded provision, additional staff will continue to be recruited. In support of best practice, staff have recently attended a number of training events to promote progress and good outcomes for children. The Early Years staff have recently attended training on ***Delivering a High Quality Bespoke Curriculum in Early Years*** and will shortly be attending a CPD event on Maths in the Early Years (delivered by Worcester University, with whom we are a Partner School.)

There remains much planning and physical work to complete ahead of the Open Morning on **Saturday, 16th August** and the opening on **Tuesday, 2nd September**.

‘It’s good to share’

Research consistently demonstrates[1] a strong link between school wellbeing and children’s mental health. Good mental health makes you feel happy and improves your mood. Our positive state of mind affects others around us and gives us life satisfaction.

[1]Read for example, https://www.place2be.org.uk/ or Wellbeing and mental health: Applying All Our Health, Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (2022)

At Heathfield Knoll, we aim to improve and sustain the wellbeing of the whole school community. Pupils are encouraged to share ideas for school improvement with members of Pupil Parliament - these are debated, with many subsequently implemented. It gives pupils a feeling of belonging and a voice in their school. Recent discussions have involved increased numbers of water fountains and improved sports facilities (including solutions to footballs being kicked over the astro perimeter fencing and on to the Cedar roof!)

A group of Year 9 pupils, following presentations in their geography lessons, successfully pitched the idea of a new viewing platform (overlooking the school playing field) to the KSI Board. Planning for this is now underway and is expected to be complete later in the summer term. This term, the RotaKids have collected children’s books for Africa and the Peace Pole was formally unveiled in the adventure play space at the rear of Cedar.





The Anti-bullying Ambassadors meet and raise issues that are affecting their peers. They recently marked Children’s Mental Health week (Feb 3rd-7th.) On Monday, pupils watched some positive mental health films. Tuesday was a firm favourite with hot chocolate, ‘squirty’ cream and marshmallows served to the whole school at morning break. It certainly warmed everyone up! On Wednesday, everyone planted 2 sunflowers into a pot as this year’s theme was Know Yourself, Grow Yourself. Some of the seeds made it home, others are growing on windowsills around the school. Thursday’s activity was mindfulness colouring and the week ended with the Ambassadors running a tuck shop for the rest of the school.

Building Success





Our school improvement plan was recently shared and is available using this link (www.hkschool.org.uk). The Haven moved to its new home in late February and the team has quickly settled and given the space ‘a homely touch’. The new space offers a much improved ‘hub’ offering increased rooms, office space and a kitchen. The Haven is now better located within the centre of the school and, importantly, can be accessed by all without the need to climb the stairs (as was the case previously.) The Haven is popular with all of our children, including the playing of board games at lunchtime and the use for interventions and stretch activities during the school day. Work has now started, and in some earnest, on the full refurbishment of Fellows. When completed, the building will offer a new common room for Year 11, sixth form tutorial spaces and direct access to the pond and nature space at the bottom of the school site. As a consequence of the above, the maths department has relocated to the upstairs of the House. This is part of a wider strategy to make increased use of this historic building.

“Delight in the little things”

(Rudyard Kipling)