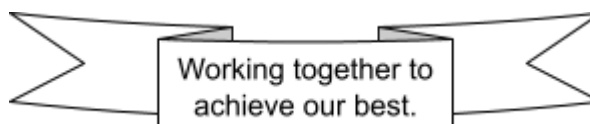




Newsletter

Issue No 15
Date:-20th February, 2023
www.firslower.co.uk



Chair of Governors: John Ashley

Governors: Annette Anderson, Franco Cameli, Adam Campbell, Kerry Mercer, Stuart Hobbs, Grant Chaney and Claudia Wallis.

Dear parents/carers,

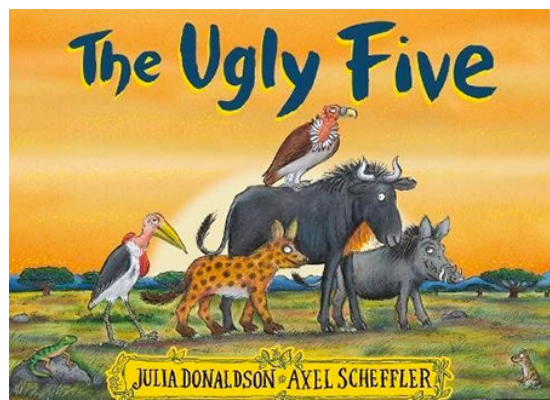
Children's Mental Health Week

The week before half term was **CMHW**. Children's Mental Health Week 2023 took place from 6-12 February. This year's theme was Let's Connect. Let's Connect is about making meaningful connections. People thrive in communities, and this connection is vital for our wellbeing. When we have healthy connections – to family, friends and others – this can support our mental health and our sense of wellbeing.

Each year group has written a summary to set out how they marked CMHW:

Pine:

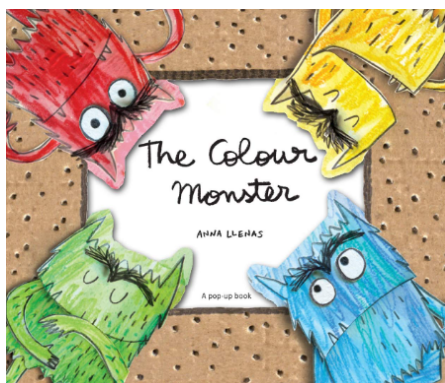
We read *The Ugly Five* by Julia Donaldson, which is all about how some animals who feel different than the other animals in the Savannah join a club but then realise that everyone loves them after all even though they are different. We shared our All about Me books and talked to each other about our pictures and photos from home. We made a chain of paper dolls to show how we all link together and we drew pictures in a mirror frame about what we like about ourselves and how we are all special.



Year 1:

We looked at good feelings and bad feelings and how it's okay to have bad feelings, with an understanding that we can't always be happy! We have been doing mindfulness activities, such as drawing and colouring and listening to calming music. We've also been doing some singing and dancing! We've thought about the people we love and how they make us happy, as well as making Valentine's Day poems to give to the people we love.

We read the book 'Climb', which teaches children that we all have different talents, and that we are all special in our own different ways.



Year 2:

We have been reading a story based around mental wellbeing everyday- *The Colour Monster*, *Ruby's Worries*, *Giraffes Can't Dance*, *The Problem With Problems* and *The Worry Monster*. Children rewrote the story *The Colour Monster* and thought about what colour they are feeling. The children also enjoyed making their own worry monster!

Year 3:

Year 3 children took part in a number of 'mindfulness' activities - e.g. breathing exercises, yoga, colouring. We had class discussions about feelings and the importance of looking after everyone's mental health.

We also did a positive self esteem activity - where children each had an A3 poster filled with a positive statement from each member of the class to keep and remind them of all the lovely things their classmates think about them.

Year 4:

We used a powerpoint (from the [Place2Be](#) site) focussing on this year's topic 'Lets connect'. There were really useful links to videos from the Place2be site, showing children sharing their experiences and thoughts.

We had a class discussion (during our community time) discussing feelings and we thought about our own 'Class Connections,' encouraging pupils to look at the different ways they are connected to members of their class.

We also practised breathing techniques (Classroom Zen (<https://classroomzen.com/>)) providing children with a coping mechanism when they feel stressed.



Parent Forum - Reminder

We would like to remind you that the next Parent Forum event will take place in The Hollows on Tuesday 28th February.

The meeting will take place just after drop off (from just after 9:00 am) and as usual, there will be a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits as well of course!

The Forum meetings are a really important opportunity to share your views about the school, what is working well and what we could improve. Please make a date in your diary, so you can pop along and make your voice heard!

Spring Term Date List

We sent out a Spring Date sheet before half term and we hope you find this useful. If you want to access it again, it is available in the 2022-2023 [Letters Home](#) section of our website.

Book Fair at The Firs - Note date change - 1st session now Thursday 23rd

As part of our celebration of World Book Day, we will be holding a Book Fair at The Firs on the following dates:

- Thursday 23rd February
- Friday 24th February
- Tuesday 28th February

From now on we are going cashless and parents will need to scan the code provided in the hall to make payment on the Traveller Books website.

Internet Safety Day

Last week, we also celebrated Internet Safety Day. ISD is marked nationally with celebrations and learning this year, based around the theme '**Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online**'.

Coordinated in the UK by the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#), the celebration sees thousands of organisations get involved to promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for children and young people.

Each year group has written a summary to set out how they marked ISD:

Pine:

We read the story 'Hanni and the Magic Window' and talked to each other about who we can speak to if we feel worried or upset by anything we might see that we didn't like.

Year 1:

We have been watching the clips of Jessie and Friends, from the [ThinkYou Know](#) website, where Jessie encounters several issues using the internet e.g. seeing something she doesn't like on her tablet.

We learnt that you can always speak to a grown-up who will be able to help you and help you get rid of something if there is anything you see or hear online that makes you feel worried, scared or sad.



I would like advice on...



[Home](#)

[Get advice](#)

[Concerned about your child?](#)

[How to get help](#)

[Home Safety Activities](#)

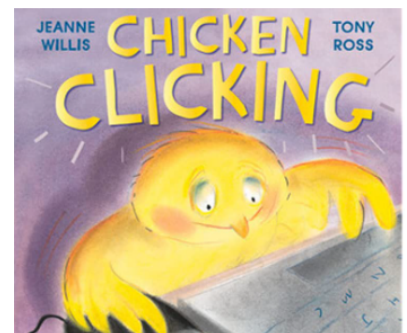
[#AskTheAwkward](#)

Watch Jessie & Friends: online safety education for 4- 7 year olds



We also talked about why we shouldn't share pictures online and how images can get shared more widely than you first expect, and the importance of consent. We lastly talked about that when playing online games they should keep their personal information private, only talk to people they know in real life and that they can tell an adult they trust if anything happens that makes them worried.

We read the book 'Chicken Clicking' which warns children that what we see online may not be the reality, which Chick learns the hard way when she goes into the forest to meet a new friend who turns out to be...a fox.



Year 2:

We looked at a Presentation exploring online safety, with the help of fairytale characters. The children then went onto design SMART posters.

The SMART guidelines are as follows:

- S for Safe: Keep personal details away from strangers.
- M for Meet: Don't meet people that you know online unless you're with a trusted adult.
- A for Accept: Don't click any links that you're unsure about. Ask a trusted adult.
- R for Reliable: Don't believe everything people tell you. Always check trusted sources to find the truth.
- T for Tell: If you see something online that upsets you, tell a trusted adult straight away!

We also spent some time looking at the story '[Hani's Magic Window](#)' to support children to understand the importance of being safe online.

Year 3:

We used a presentation called - 'Keep it to Yourself'. This covered a number of different safety messages including the importance of using a strong password that you change regularly in order to keep your personal information safe. We also touched on 'Stranger Danger' and how this can relate to our lives online, when there is the possibility of meeting people we do not know.

We used a word search to improve our understanding of the technical vocabulary, talking about the meanings of the words involved. We also did an exercise called 'Cyber Security Guards' about staying safe online and made up our own online safety rules based on what we had been learning about.

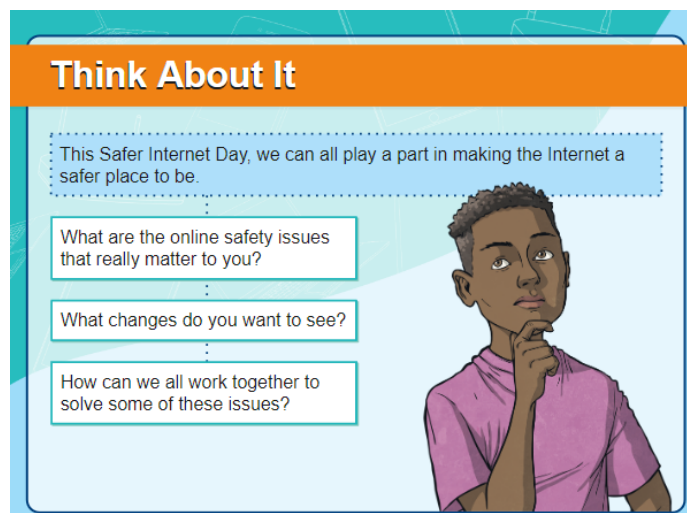
Year 4:

We used a presentation exploring the steps to take to ensure that we stay safe online. We talked about how

important our online life is to people these days, including how we shop online, pay for things using online transactions, book events and holidays online, play and talk with friends online and find out information online.

We talked about the fact that some of us were doing a lot online already and some of us were not but that as we got older our online presence would grow and we needed to start learning about how to be safe. We talked about the advantages of the internet and some of the problems this can create for us such as:

- We talked about what the internet was and how it worked.
- How amazing the internet is and how it allows us to do so much and how we can get information so quickly from it.
- Being careful to protect our personal information.
- Being careful what we post online.
- We talked about what fake news was and how we could decide whether to trust / test the accuracy of something we see online.
- We talked about online scams and how we all had to be careful online.
- What to do if we saw something that worried us:
 - Stop - Stop what you are doing, don't click on the page or reply to any messages
 - Close - close the laptop or put the phone or tablet down
 - Tell - tell a trusted adult
- Cyberbullying, what it was and what to do if we needed some help.



We spent some time thinking about what we thought were the main safety issues and we designed a poster highlighting the key safety messages we feel people should know about staying safe online.

Staffing Update

Mrs Gaulton:

We said goodbye to Mrs Gaulton in assembly on Friday 10th. Mrs Gaulton had been continuing to do some support work for us as SEND-Co following her official leaving date at the end of last term and this was a chance to say thank you to her for this extra support, to reflect on the huge contribution she has made to the school during her time with us and to wish her well as she starts her new role.

Ms Victoria Gamble: (Our new SEND-Co)

Following the completion of our recruitment process last week, I am delighted to let you know that we have appointed a new SEND-Co Victoria Gamble. She has a wealth of teaching experience, including working as a SEND-Co and working for the Restorative Foundation, providing behaviour support to schools in Milton Keynes. She is passionate about meeting the needs of the most vulnerable pupils and we have no doubt that she will make a fantastic contribution, as part of the Senior Leadership Team, to supporting our continuous efforts to develop and enhance the provision we make for children at The Firs.

Although we were not expecting a new SEND-Co to be able to take up the post until after Easter, we are very pleased that Victoria will be able to spend some days with us each week in the lead up to Easter, complementing the work being done by Mrs Freeman (who is very kindly supporting our SEND provision, during this transitional period) and getting to know us all as she begins to take on her new role.

Debbie Davanna and the new KC team!:

I am very pleased indeed to announce that Debbie Davanna has taken over the role of Kids Club Leader and will be supported by Michelle Kensall who has been awarded the Deputy Leader role. If you have any queries, you should continue to use the Kids' Club email address and this will be operated by our new

recently appointed Kids' Club Administrator Sarah Bowes-Phipps. It is fantastic to see such a strong team at the helm in Kids' Club going forward!

Michelle Watts our new Saplings SEND-Co:

I am also very pleased to let you know that Michelle Watts, who is already a very experienced member of staff and as Deputy Leader, integral to the Saplings team, has been appointed as Saplings SEND-Co. I know Angie, our hardworking Saplings Leader and all the team are delighted with this development and together, they will ensure that The Saplings continues to develop and go from strength to strength!

World Book Day and Book At Bedtime - 2//3/23

As we said in our last newsletter, we are inviting children to dress up as their favourite book character on World Book Day, which is on **Thursday 2nd March**.

As usual we would love it if the children could bring in a copy of the book, their character comes from to support their work in school on the day.

I am sure the children will thoroughly enjoy the day and when they come home they will all be issued with a World Book Day book voucher.

We will also be working with the PTFA to hold our ever popular **Book At Bedtime** event again on the evening of the 2nd March at 5.15pm.

This is always a really popular event with children loving the chance to come back into school for a bedtime story from one of the school staff.



There will be a letter giving more information sent out this week about 'Book at Bedtime'. Thank you in advance to the PTFA and to all the staff giving up their time to make this possible. We hope to see lots of children come back to school for this event at 5.15pm.

Plea for tools!

The children in Pine really enjoy taking on roles such as a mechanic or an engineer. Using real tools as opposed to plastic tools makes the experience feel more authentic and they last longer! If you could donate any of the following tools, we would be very grateful!

- measuring tape
- spanner
- screwdriver
- pliers
- hand sized spirit level

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Adam J G Campbell'.

Adam J G Campbell