

THE FRIDAY POST



READY, RESPECTFUL, SAFE, CURIOUS, INDEPENDENT, CONFIDENT, INVOLVED

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: PETS AS THERAPY

We are fortunate to host Ian and Katashi for weekly Pets As Therapy sessions at Aldersbrook. Ian and Katashi were recently highly commended for The Animal Award from BBC Make A Difference. We are so proud that they are both a part of our wonderful Aldersbrook community.

Pets As Therapy uses the unconditional love and gentle nature of pets to bring warmth, companionship and therapeutic benefits to individuals in a wide range of settings.

At its core, Pets As Therapy is about creating meaningful connections. Dedicated volunteers, along with their carefully assessed and friendly dogs or cats, visit establishments across the UK. At Aldersbrook, we use PAT to provide children with more opportunities to read, improving literacy through reading programs, and fostering empathy. This happens in one-to-one sessions, family groups & small groups.

The impact of Pets As Therapy can be both far-reaching and deeply personal. The benefits observed are numerous and scientifically supported to:

- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Improve mood and mental wellbeing
- Enhance communication and social interaction
- Increased empathy and responsibility

"I enjoy Pets As Therapy because I don't own a dog. It calms me down and Katashi makes me feel safe and relaxed. He is such a nice dog and is supported by a nice man in Ian. I would recommend!" - Tessa

"I liked touching and feeding the dog while listening to a story." - Ariyah

"I liked how furry the dog was, it was so cute. It was fun reading to Katashi!" - MJ



The Power of the Sketchbook

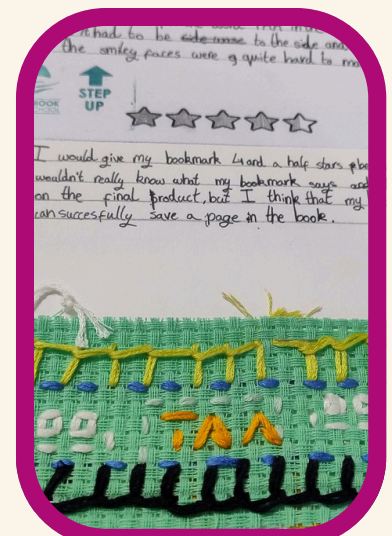
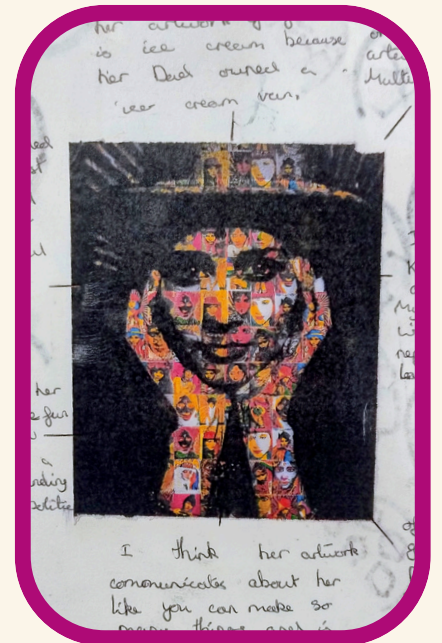
At Aldersbrook Primary School, art is an important part of how we help children grow as curious, independent, confident and involved learners. One of the ways we do this is through the use of art sketchbooks. Unlike exercise books, which are often replaced each year, our sketchbooks stay with the children until they are completely filled. This means every page tells part of their story as an artist. You can see the progression of skills, ideas and confidence over time, a visible record of their creative journey.

A sketchbook is far more than a place to draw. It is a space for thinking, exploring and experimenting where children can test ideas, make mistakes and find new ways to express themselves. Research into art education shows that when children can revisit their earlier work, they develop a stronger sense of reflection and ownership over their learning. It encourages them to see that progress comes through curiosity and persistence, not perfection.

This way of working also links closely to what is expected at secondary school and beyond. In secondary art education, sketchbooks play a key role in showing how students develop ideas, respond to challenges and reflect on their process.

By building these habits early, we are helping our pupils learn to think like artists and creative thinkers who are confident in expressing their ideas and involved in shaping their own learning.

Whenever your child brings their sketchbook home, take a moment to look through it together. Talk about what they have discovered, how their work has changed and what they are proud of. Each page is a snapshot of their curiosity and growth, and a celebration of their journey as a young artist at Aldersbrook Primary School.



A few highlights from Week 7

Massive Congratulations To Our Sporting Stars!

The girls' football team delivered an incredible performance in the RSSC Football League, winning three and drawing one of their matches! Their teamwork, determination, and work ethic were outstanding throughout.

We wish them the very best for the next round!



Rockstars in the Hall!

This week brought a real buzz to our assembly as our first Rock Steady classes began. Pupils took their first steps into forming their very own bands, learning how to work together on guitars, drums, keyboards, and vocals. From my office above the hall, I could hear the sounds of music taking shape: guitars strumming, drums beating, keyboards playing, and voices finding their rhythm. What stood out most was the teamwork. The children listened to one another, collaborated, and built something together. Watching and hearing that respect and cooperation develop was a real highlight. This is a new experience for us at school, but it is already filling our Thursdays with energy and joy, not only for those taking part but for everyone who gets to enjoy the music drifting through the building.



Strategic Updates

This week we held our first governors' meeting of the school year, welcoming both new governors and those continuing their service. It was a valuable opportunity to discuss the school at a strategic level and reflect on our priorities for the year ahead. Our governors meet formally every half term but their involvement goes much further. They also visit the school twice a year for individual opportunities to meet with leaders and pupils and to see day-to-day learning in action. We are very grateful for the time and commitment they give to supporting our school community. This week we have also been recruiting for a new Assistant Headteacher, who will oversee teaching, learning, assessment, and outcomes. This follows the departure of our previous Assistant Headteacher, Mrs. Hart. The recruitment process included pupil engagement, learning walks, formal interviews, and even a visit to the shortlisted candidates' own schools. We look forward to sharing more information soon.

The bugs are back in town

As the autumn sets in, we are once again seeing pupils off sick with various viruses and common childhood illnesses. From stomach bugs to colds and coughs, these can spread quickly through a classroom. It can be difficult to decide whether to keep your child at home when they are not feeling their best, especially during a busy morning. The general advice is to keep your child off school if they have a high temperature or if you think they may have a contagious illness, such as a stomach bug, chickenpox, or cold and flu symptoms that include a high fever. The NHS has issued [guidance](#) to help parents make this decision.

SOMETIMES CHILDREN FEEL WELL ENOUGH TO COME TO SCHOOL WITH A MILD COUGH, RUNNY NOSE, OR HEADACHE. THIS IS FINE AS LONG AS THEY DO NOT HAVE A HIGH TEMPERATURE.



We remind pupils to cough and sneeze into their elbow if they do not have a tissue and to wash their hands regularly throughout the day. Please remind your child to wash their hands for 20 seconds using plenty of soap and to throw away used tissues straight after use. We will contact you if your child begins to feel worse during the day and may ask you to collect them. The NHS website is also a helpful place to check symptoms of other [childhood illnesses](#), such as Strep A and Scarlet Fever. It includes photographs that can help you compare symptoms

Stomach bugs and chickenpox

When it comes to stomach bugs, the Public Health Agency advises that children should stay home for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. You can read the full guidance [here](#).

Chickenpox can be harder to manage because it is contagious before the spots appear. Children may have a fever or reduced appetite before small blister-like spots develop. If you notice spots that appear suddenly, please visit the NHS website to [compare photos and check symptoms](#). Children should remain at home until all the spots have scabbed over. Because chickenpox can be dangerous for anyone who is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, please let us know if your child has it. We will inform our staff of any confirmed cases.

Medication and care in school

We are always looking to improve how we support children who are unwell. We can safely store and administer medicine in school, including those that need refrigeration. Once you have completed the Medical Permission Form, available [here](#) we can administer one dose of medicine per day. Several members of staff are trained to support pupils with asthma, and we are working towards becoming an officially accredited Asthma and Allergy Friendly School.

When to inform the school

If your child has suspected Scarlet Fever or has been diagnosed with Strep A by a GP, please let us know. We monitor transmission across the school and must notify Public Health England if cases reach a certain threshold. There are other more serious illnesses that we are also required to report, including Mumps, Meningitis, and Measles. If you believe your child may have a serious contagious illness, please contact your GP or call 111 for advice, and keep us updated on their progress.