

Principal's update

Spring is in the air finally and hopefully you and your children will be able to get out and spend more time enjoying time outdoors and being active.

I have been talking to the children in assemblies about healthy eating recently. I have also shared with them my concerns about some of the packed lunches I see in the canteen which can be full of unhealthy options and not have the balance children need to grow up fit and healthy. I also appreciate that it can be hard to think of different healthy options to put in lunch boxes. I found some useful tips on the NHS website and thought they may be useful to share.

Dates for your diary

Term Ends;
Friday 27th March 2026

Easter break
Monday 30th March to Friday 10th April 2026

Term starts;
Monday 13th April 2026

Bank Holiday;
Monday 4th May 2026

Attendance

The class with the best attendance this last week was:

1st place: 6GD
2nd place: 6KB
3rd place: 2ZA

It was a non-uniform day for 6GD on Friday 20th March, well done!



DIY lunches

Wraps and pots of fillings can be more exciting for kids when they get to make them. Dipping foods are also fun and a nice change from a sandwich each day.



Cut back on fat

Pick lower-fat fillings – like lean meats (including chicken or turkey), fish (such as tuna or salmon), lower-fat spread, reduced-fat cream cheese and reduced-fat hard cheese. And try to avoid using mayonnaise in sandwiches.

[See more healthier swap ideas](#)



Mix your slices

If your child does not like wholegrain, try making a sandwich from 1 slice of white bread and 1 slice of brown bread.



Always add veg

Cherry tomatoes, or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5 A Day. Adding a small pot of reduced-fat hummus or other dips may help with getting kids to eat vegetables.



Ever green

Always add salad to sandwiches and wraps too – it all counts towards your child's 5 A Day!



Cheesy does it...

Cheese can be high in fat and salt, so choose stronger-tasting ones – and use less of it – or try reduced-fat varieties.



Cut down on crisps

If your child really likes their crisps try reducing the number of times you include them in their lunchbox, and swap for homemade plain popcorn or plain rice cakes instead.



Add bite-sized fruit

Try chopped apple, peeled satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, halved grapes or melon slices to make it easier for them to eat. Add a squeeze of lemon juice to stop it from going brown.



Switch the sweets

Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits for fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit (fresh, dried or tinned – in juice not syrup).



Yoghurts: go low-fat and lower-sugar

Pop in low-fat and lower-sugar yoghurts or fromage frais and add your own fruit.



Get them involved

Get your kids involved in preparing and choosing what goes in their lunchbox. They are more likely to eat it if they helped make it.



Variety is the spice of lunch!

Be adventurous and get creative to mix up what goes in their lunchbox. Keeping them guessing with healthier ideas will keep them interested and more open to trying things.

Well-Being:

5 steps to mental wellbeing
Evidence suggests there are 5 steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing.

If you give them a try, you may feel happier, more positive and able to get the most from life.



Give to others

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with people around you.

Volunteering

- Volunteer at Graduation or at Open Days
- Volunteer at the Harris Garden
- Volunteer in the local community by contacting [Reading Voluntary Action](#)



Take notice / be mindful

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or chatting to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Our green campus

The Whiteknights Campus has won a Green Flag Award, the international honour for high quality parks and green spaces.

Chaplaincy

The University has a multifaith Chaplaincy that provides space for people to practice their religion and spirituality.

Take time out

Take a walk around our wonderful campus – visit the Harris Garden, walk around our lake.

The SportsPark offer yoga classes each day.



Be active

Swap your inactive pursuits with active ones. Go for a walk. Step outside. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Walk or cycle when making short journeys. Being active makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Join:

- The SportsPark – staff membership has been reduced to student prices. Play with your friends and colleagues, go to the gym or try one of over 200 group exercise classes.

Get active on campus

- Have a walking meeting
- Take a walk around our wonderful campus – visit the Harris Garden, walk around our lake
- Walk / cycle to work
- Use the stairs not the lift

NEW VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE!
Employees can now get two paid days approved per year to carry out volunteering activities.

GYM NOT YOUR THING?
Check out some of our walking routes on the map overlay.



Connect

... with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Join one of our many Societies/Clubs/Associations:

- Friends of the Harris Garden
- Staff Common Room
- Friends of the University

Join one of our many networks:

- LGBOQA+ Staff network
- The Staff Disability Network
- Assessment Peer Support
- Wellbeing Peer Support
- Parent and family network
- BAMS Network
- Staff Forum
- Women at Reading

WHAT'S ON?

Check out the monthly 'In Brief' email and seasonal Events Diary for a wide variety of enriching events.

Did you know?

Our campuses are filled with great places to eat, and you can find a wide variety of food, including some great healthy options. Whenever you are on campus, there is sure to be somewhere near by to grab a coffee and something to eat:

Cafes

- Agriculture
- Breakfast Box
- Dolce Vita
- Enterprise Cafe
- Henley Business School Cafe
- Library Cafe
- Cafe Tricolore

Food Outlets

- Park Eat
- Eat at the Square
- Park House Bar and Dining
- And more!

See University of [Reading Hospitality and Reading Students' Union](#) for further details

Y Look for this icon on the map to find your nearest places to eat and drink.



Keep learning

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Visit one of the University's Museums:

- Lise Museum
- Cole Museum
- Museum of English Rural Life (NB: not on WK campus)

Public Lectures

Attend one of Public Lecture Series that showcases research highlights from across the University. See the [Events](#) page.

Did you know?

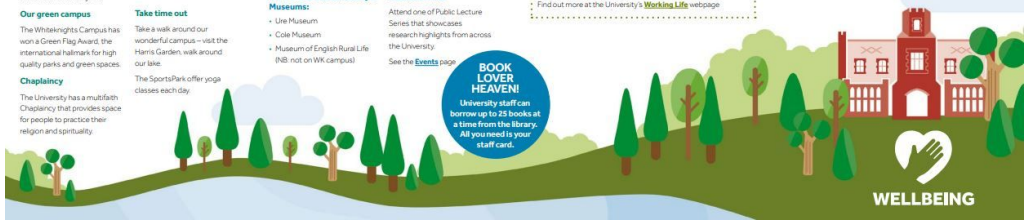
Staff can enjoy the following benefits:

- Discounted bus passes
- Cycle2Work scheme
- Season ticket loans
- Health Cash Plan
- Career development opportunities
- Employee Assistance Programme
- On-site nursery
- Discounted membership rates at the Sports Park

Find out more at the University's [Working Life](#) webpage.

BOOK LOVER HEAVEN!
University staff can borrow up to 25 books at a time from the Library. All you need is your staff card.

i For more information and resources see our [Health and Wellbeing](#) page.



Mindful March 2026

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

1. Set an intention to live with awareness and kindness	2. Notice three things you find beautiful in the outside world	3. Start today by appreciating your body and that you're alive	4. Notice how you speak to yourself and choose to use kind words	5. Bring to mind people you care about and send love to them	6. If you find yourself rushing, make an effort to slow down	7. Take three calm breathes at regular intervals during your day
8. Eat mindfully. Appreciate the taste, texture and smell of your food	9. Take a full breath in and out before you reply to others	10. Get outside and notice how the weather feels on your face	11. Stay fully present while drinking your cup of tea or coffee	12. Listen deeply to someone and really hear what they are saying	13. Pause to watch the sky or clouds for a few minutes today	14. Find ways to enjoy any chores or tasks that you do
15. Stop. Breathe. Notice. Repeat regularly	16. Get really absorbed with an interesting or creative activity	17. Look around and spot three things you find unusual or pleasant	18. Have a 'no plans' day and notice how that feels	19. Cultivate a feeling of loving-kindness towards others today	20. Focus on what makes you and others happy today	21. Listen to a piece of music without doing anything else
22. Notice something that is going well, even if today feels difficult	23. Tune into your feelings, without judging or trying to change them	24. Appreciate your hands and all the things they enable you to do	25. Focus your attention on the good things you take for granted	26. Choose to spend less time looking at screens today	27. Appreciate nature around you, wherever you are	28. Notice when you're tired and take a break as soon as possible
29. Choose a different route today and see what you notice	30. Mentally scan your body and notice what it is feeling	31. Discover the joy in the simple things of life				



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together



Self-confident Trustworthy Ambitious
Respectful & Responsible Supportive

Safeguarding: A parent's guide to county lines

As young people become more independent and spend more time with their peers and away from home, parents might worry about them becoming involved in drug dealing and violence associated with "county lines". For many young people, becoming involved in county lines happens because they are being exploited by others.

County lines is when gangs and organised crime groups exploit children to transport and sell drugs, normally between big cities where the exploiters are based to smaller towns, sometimes across county boundaries but also locally and within the borough. The children have dedicated mobile phone 'lines' for taking orders for drugs; children are used as they are less likely to be stopped by police, allowing adult dealers to avoid the risk of arrest. County lines is a form of criminal exploitation; this occurs where a person or a group of people takes advantage of their contact with and influence over a young person to coerce or manipulate them into carrying out a criminal act.

If you're worried that a child might be at risk, it's a good idea to:

- Look for changes in your child's behaviour – if you see anything, speak to them about it and explain why you're worried.
- Approach the situation with compassion – if they're involved in something, consider how the situation might have happened.
- Show your child that you are keen to understand and help.
- Ask a trusted adult to have a chat with them.

Know the signs to spot.

County lines gangs use children and vulnerable people to courier drugs and money. A young person who is involved in county lines activity might exhibit some of these signs:

 <p>Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area</p>	 <p>Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones</p>	 <p>excessive receipt of texts or phone calls</p>	 <p>Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association</p>	 <p>Leaving home or care without explanation</p>
 <p>Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries</p>	 <p>Parental concerns</p>	 <p>Significant decline in school performance</p>	 <p>Significant changes in emotional well-being</p>	

Family Support Worker Focus:

Social prescribing

What is social prescribing?

Social prescribing is designed to support people with a wide range of social, emotional or practical needs. It can help to strengthen personal resilience and reduce health inequalities by addressing the wider determinants of health, such as debt, poor housing and physical inactivity, by increasing people's active involvement with their local communities. It particularly works for people with long-term conditions (including support for mental health), for people who are lonely or isolated, or have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing.

Social prescribing seeks to empower people to take control of their health and wellbeing in a holistic way by giving people time to focus on what matters to them and by connecting people to community, statutory and voluntary groups and services for practical and emotional support.

Social prescribing in Hillingdon, often facilitated by H4ALL(H4ALL is a partnership of five major charities in the London Borough of Hillingdon—Age UK Hillingdon Harrow & Brent, DASH, Carers Trust Hillingdon, Harlington Hospice, and Mind in Hillingdon) and local GPs, connects residents (18+).

Prescribing initiatives in Hillingdon include:

Community & Social Support: [Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent](#) provides social activities like knitting, walking, and "Vinyl Club" to combat isolation.

Health & Wellness Activities: [Hillingdon Council](#) offers less mobile activities, memory boxes, and games to help with frailty.

Practical Support: Referrals for assistance with housing, debt management, and benefit claims.

Specialized Services: Support for carers, including specialized assessments by the [Carers Trust Hillingdon](#).

Digital Inclusion: Assistance with learning to use technology for online banking or job searches.

These services are accessed via GP, nurse, or pharmacy referrals, or by contacting voluntary sector partners



Family Support Worker Focus:

You can get gym discounts, along with reduced-cost swimming or exercise classes, through social prescribing in the UK.

Here is how it works and how to access it:

How Social Prescribing Gym Discounts Work

NHS Exercise Referral Scheme: GPs or healthcare professionals can refer patients to a "Link Worker" or a local exercise referral scheme.

Subsidized Membership: This referral usually provides a discounted, part-funded membership at a local partner gym or leisure centre (such as Better Gyms) for an initial period, typically 12 weeks.

What is Included: These programs often feature personalized, low-cost exercise plans designed for people with long-term health conditions, mobility issues, or mental health struggles.

Free Sessions: Some initiatives, such as those partnering with ukactive, offer free, initial fitness sessions for residents.

Who Can Get It?

Social prescribing is designed for individuals who might benefit from improved physical activity to manage health conditions, including:

High blood pressure, diabetes, obesity (BMI >30, or >27.5 for certain ethnic backgrounds).

Depression, anxiety, or loneliness.

Musculoskeletal issues like arthritis.

Rehabilitation from injury or illnesses like Covid-19.

How to Access It

Ask your GP: Speak to your GP, nurse, or receptionist and ask about "social prescribing" or the "GP exercise referral scheme" in your area.

Contact Local Leisure Centres: Many local authority leisure centers, such as **Better**, offer "Physical Activity Referral Schemes" (PARS) for discounted access.

Check Local Council Services: Local authorities often list social prescribing options, such as walking groups or "green gyms". Although some services are free most referrals provide a discount rather than a completely free membership.



Curriculum Showcase:

Events

Hello everyone

My name is Adam Syed and I attend Cranford Park Academy.

I would like to share some happy news with my school. On Sunday 8th March, I won 1st place in an MMA National Championship.

I have been training every day with my coaches at Simac Mind, Body and Spirit Academy. I feel very happy and proud to win the tournament.

I have also been selected for Team GB to represent my country in the European Championship in Berlin, Germany in August 2026.

I will keep working hard and I hope to win a gold medal and make my team, school, and family proud. Thank you for reading my news!

Adam Syed



Curriculum Showcase:

Garden Rooms

We created beautiful collages to celebrate Eid. The children really loved this activity and it was great to see how much independence the children were able to show throughout.



Curriculum Showcase:

Nursery

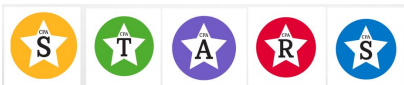


With the weather beginning to brighten, the children have been making the most of our outdoor space. From exploring, playing and enjoying fresh air with friends. It has been wonderful to see their curiosity and energy shine outside. We look forward to many more sunny days of learning and fun!

Curriculum Showcase:

Reception

This half term, our Reception children have been immersed in the enchanting world of fairy tales, with a particular fondness for “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” The children transformed into detectives, embarking on an exciting quest to uncover evidence left behind at the bears’ house by Goldilocks herself. This imaginative play not only sparked their creativity but also encouraged critical thinking as they devised clever traps using the most appealing porridge ingredients that Goldilocks simply couldn’t resist. Through this engaging detective work, the children have produced some wonderful writing. They have explored various forms of expression, from crafting their own stories to writing recipes, all inspired by their adventures.



Curriculum Showcase:

Year 1

Year 1 have been learning about how to keep healthy and safe in our PSHE lessons. One lesson the children particularly enjoyed was learning about road safety and how we the rules behind keeping ourselves safe when crossing the road. Jigsaw Jack needed the children to help him learn these rules, so we took him out onto the playground and showed him how to keep safe when crossing the road. We had lots of fun and learnt important lessons about safety.



Stop



Look to the right



Look to the left

Curriculum Showcase:

Year 2

Germ Busters: The Power of Soap

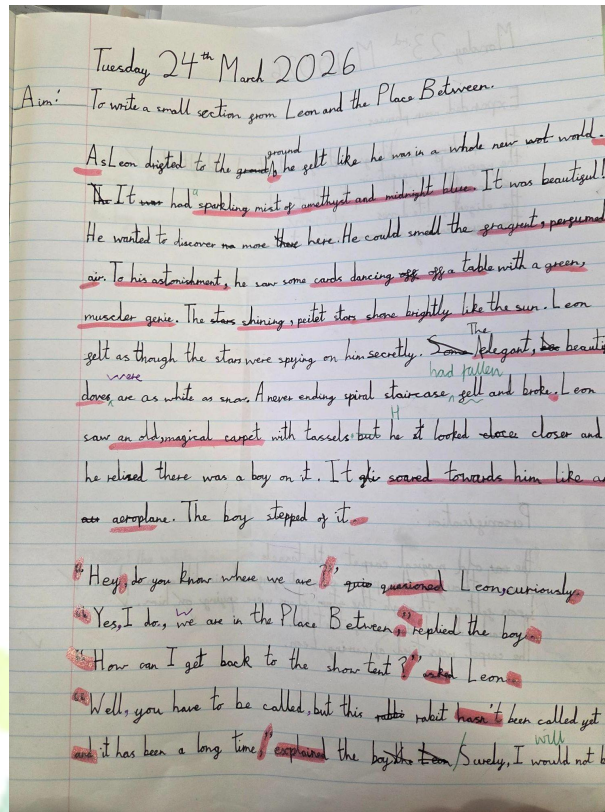
In Science and PSHE, Year 2 have been learning about how to stay healthy and the importance of good hygiene. This helped us understand why washing our hands with soap is so important—it helps remove germs and keeps us healthy.

Year 2 had a fantastic time being scientists and learning how to look after themselves and others!



Curriculum Showcase:

Year 3

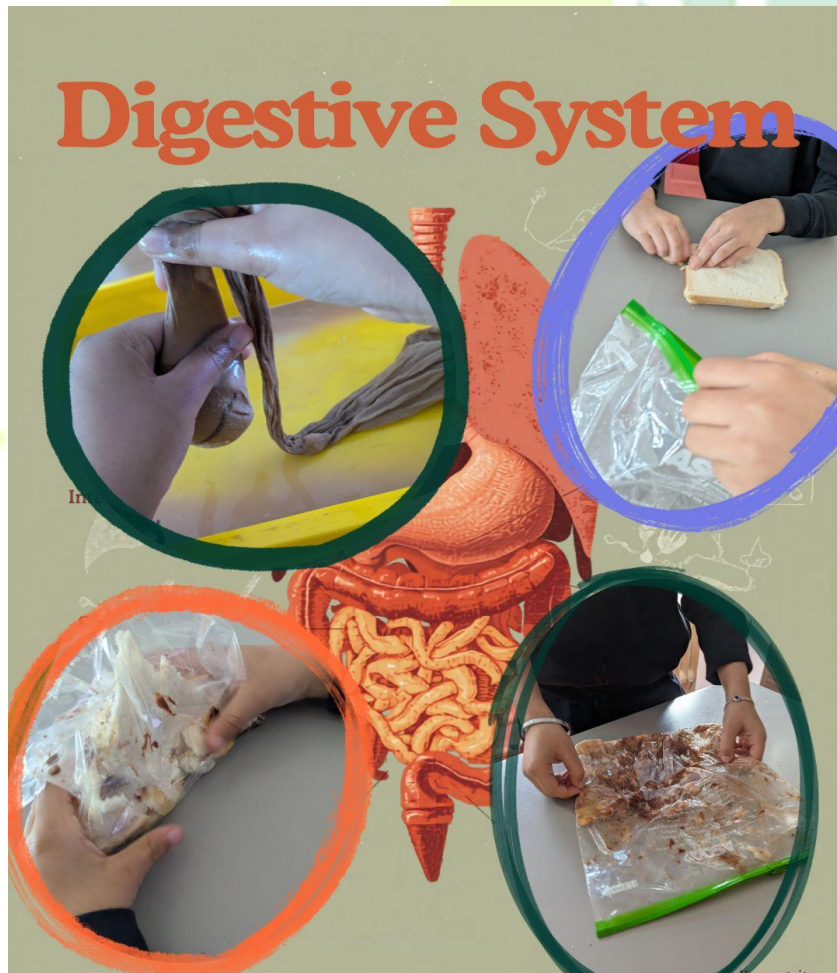


One of the texts Year 3 focused on this half term was 'Leon and the Place Between'. The children had to create a setting description on the Place Between, ensuring they used figurative language, such as similes, personification, metaphors and onomatopoeia. After carefully planning and writing down their ideas, Year 3 have written some fantastic setting descriptions and here are some examples of their amazing work!

Curriculum Showcase:

Year 4

Year 4 have had great fun in Science this term looking at the digestive system. The unit finished with the children recreating the digestive system in class. They started by "chewing" a sandwich and "swallowing it" before it was "digested" inside a sandwich bag. Finally the end of the digestive system was recreated...much to the amusement of the children alongside some laughs, giggles and squeals. We hope this experiment was as memorable for the children as it is for the teachers.



Curriculum Showcase:

Year 5

Y5 team embraced World Book Day. It was lovely to see the children and adults sharing their enjoyment of reading!

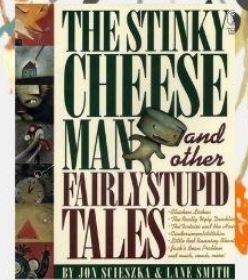
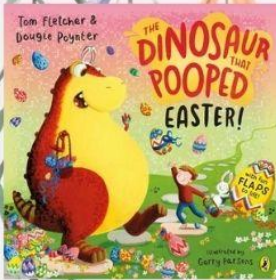


Curriculum Showcase:

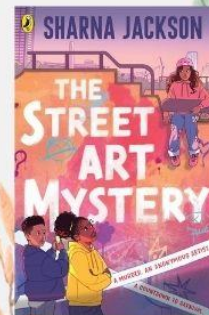
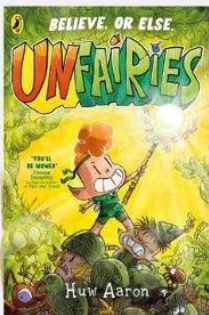
Year 6



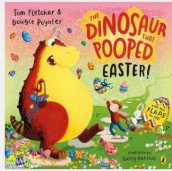
In DT this half term, year six are currently designing and then making a fairground ride which must use rotating parts. They will need to apply their understanding of what they have learnt about electrical circuits in Science earlier in the year to ensure that their fairground ride moves. Here they are building their prototypes. We can't wait to see how the finished designs come together.



Mrs Matthews'
RECOMMENDED READS



EARLY YEARS

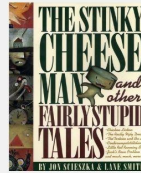


The Dinosaur That Pooped Easter by Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter

Danny and Dino's big Easter tradition was hunting for eggs on a chocolatey mission. This year they were looking in Fairytale Land. They needed some eggs for a feast they had planned!

Danny and Dino are searching for Easter eggs in Fairytale Land! They hunt up beanstalks and inside the houses of the three pigs, and soon they have plenty of chocolate treats. But when they take an egg from a magical cave, they get into trouble with the cave's owner... a grumpy dragon! Can Dino's quick thinking and rumbling tummy save the day?

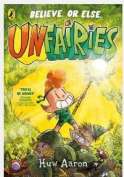
KEY STAGE 1



The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales by Joe Scieszka

Jon Scieszka introduces some really stupid off-the-wall fairy tales including: 'Chicken Licken', 'The Princess and the Bowling Ball', 'The Really Ugly Duckling', and 'Jack's Bean Problem'.

LOWER KEY STAGE 2



Unfairies by Huw Aaron

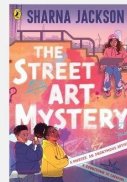
Some stories will tell you fairies are sweet, kind, magical creatures. Well, those stories are **WRONG**.

It's time everyone knew the truth: fairies are sneaky, violent and about as magical as slugs.

Join our **RECKLESS, FEARLESS** and, well, **CLUELESS**, hero Pip on a breakneck adventure among the warring unfairy tribes of The Garden.

Expect sinister plots, dubious ancient prophecies, thrilling centipede chases, a bit of bug-bum honey... and a hero who doesn't give two hoots about anything.

UPPER KEY STAGE 2



The Street Art Mystery by Sharna Jackson

Margot, Wesley and Josephine have got an awesome weekend mapped out for the end of the holidays before they start high school - and they don't want anything to stand in the way of their BIG plans in London. But when they are staying with Margot's mum and her new boyfriend Teddy in Notting Hill, something happens that they just can't ignore...

Join the kids as they follow the case across wild West London, following the trail of a super creative murderer as well as some epic street art. From skate parks, tower blocks and canal towpaths they end up on a float at the colourful Notting Hill carnival - the biggest party of the year! How will they piece together the evidence to solve the mystery at the heart of London's coolest sights?