

# PARKEND NEWSLETTER



Issue 62: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our Special Federation write-up celebrating 'FUTURE ME DAY'.



Just before half-term, on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February, we were delighted to welcome children from across our Federation to celebrate 'Future Me Day'. It was an inspiring occasion, giving pupils the chance to explore future aspirations, learn about the skills and knowledge needed for different careers, and build friendships across our school communities.



The day opened with a shared assembly in the main hall at Yorkley, where we were thrilled to welcome Onika Venus. Originally from Jamaica, Onika now lives in the Forest of Dean and spoke to the children about her journey as a musician.

children can achieve anything they set their hearts on.

We were especially moved by a song she performed about believing in yourself and your dreams, a perfect reflection of our Future Me Day message that

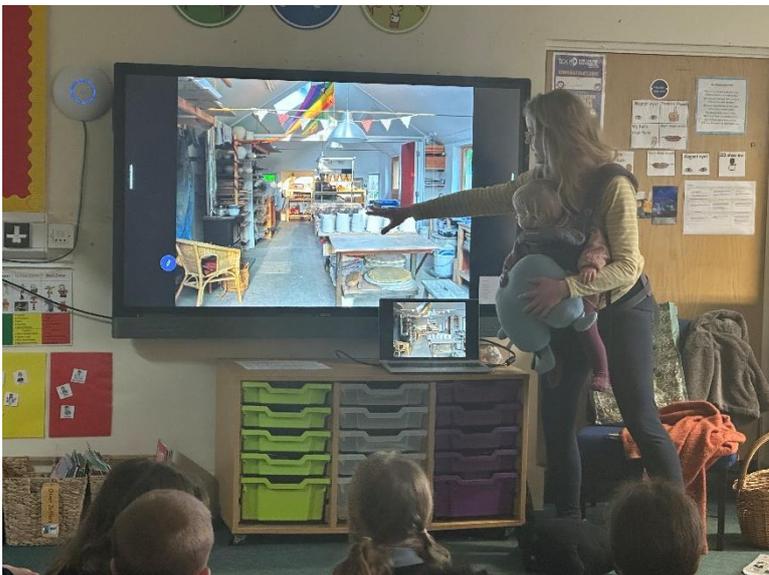


Blending reggae, pop and soulful melodies, Onika's music captured a real sense of optimism and confidence. Alongside songs by Bob Marley, which the whole school loved joining in with, her performance set a positive and

inspiring tone for the day and showed how passion, creativity and perseverance can shape a future career.

After this shared start, children were mixed into year groups across both schools, giving them the opportunity to work with and make new friends from the wider federation. Throughout the day, each group visited a range of speakers, all representing very different jobs and career pathways.

### Fleen Doran - Self-Employed Potter



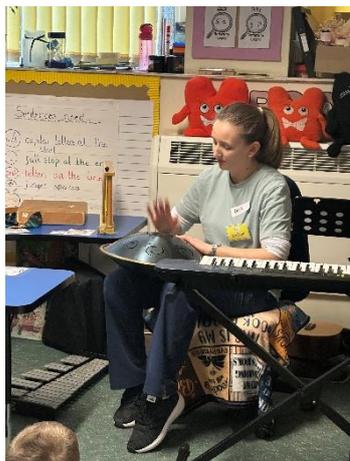
Fleen shared her career journey through a talk and presentation, showing the children where she has worked and how she developed her craft. Children then had the opportunity to experience pottery for themselves by making a clay pot, gaining a real hands-on insight into creative skills and being self-employed.



*"Learning about pottery was really interesting. It made me go home and ask my Mum if it was something we could try" - Tilly*

### Emily Grant - Music Therapist

Emily demonstrated how music can be used to support wellbeing. With the help of the children, in each new session she composed a song together and showcased a range of instruments and sounds used to calm, energise or change mood. The session highlighted listening skills, teamwork and creativity.



*"The music therapist helped us to make our own song up, it was fun" Hattie*



*"I really enjoyed 'Future Me Day' because when we saw the music therapist, I thought it might be something I would want to do as a job because I love music and want to make the world a better place." Abigail*

**Lizzie Youens - Veterinarian**

Children learned about the role of a vet, including caring for animals and developing practical medical skills in Lizzie's session. They practised suturing, examined X-rays, dressed up as vets and learned how to bandage animals, which was a particular highlight for many.



*"I love animals and seeing the Vet demonstrate how to bandage and sew, this is something I'd like to learn more about"*

**Hannah Beasley - Basketry Tutor**

Hannah demonstrated the traditional craft of basketry. The children thoroughly enjoyed learning about natural materials and the history behind the skill. The children were then able to have a go themselves by making a willow wand, discovering the patience and dexterity needed for this skill.



*"My favourite was the weaver, as we got to weave whatever we wanted. Weaving is an old tradition and it is on the edge of becoming extinct"* Pippa



## Richard Hingston - Geologist / Railway Engineer

Richard shared photographs from places he has worked (including caves!) and talked about how geology links to engineering. Children dressed up in hi-vis, goggles and helmets, and were fascinated by the various rocks Richard brought. They loved being able to hold and examine them while learning about problem-solving and scientific knowledge.



*"Before, I thought being a Geologist wouldn't be that exciting, but I really enjoyed looking at how different all the different rocks and stones were and the caving looked really fun. It made me think it might be something I would like to do when I'm older." - Harlow-Blu*

## Brent and Paul Screen - Heating Engineers



Brent and Paul spoke about working in the trades, sharing "tricks of the trade" and explaining how plumbing skills are used every day. Children enjoyed handling tools and bending pipes while learning about practical skills and teamwork. They particularly enjoyed hearing the banter between father and son.

*"The plumbers talked to us about how they connect two pipes together, and how they bend pipes" Leonardo*

*"AI can't replace a plumber, I think this is a safe job to have in the future"*



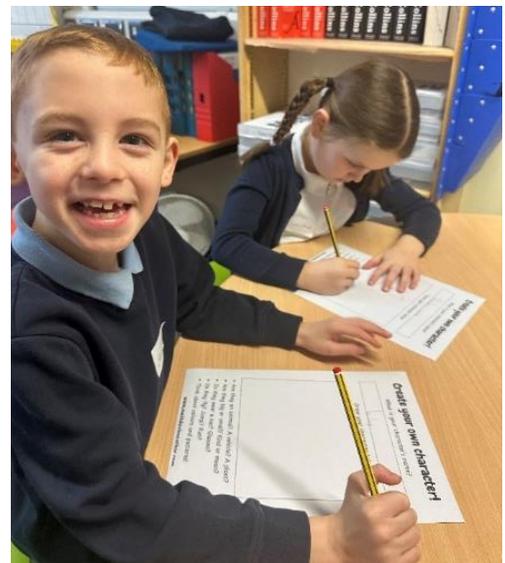
**Matt Davies - Author**

Matt talked about what it takes to become an Author, the skills needed for writing, and the journey from ideas to published books. He shared some of his published work, inspiring children to think creatively and confidently about storytelling. Books he has written include 'Inspector Earwig and The Garden Thief' and 'Beyond The Hive'.



*"The author inspired me most because I've started writing my own stories at home."* Eeve

*"What I loved about Future Me Day is that we got to mix with Yorkley children and make new friends."* Sophie



Future Me Day was designed to help children understand that there are many different pathways into work, each requiring a mix of skills, knowledge, creativity and determination. Just as importantly, it was a wonderful opportunity for children from both Parkend and Yorkley Schools to learn together, collaborate and build new friendships across our federation.

We are incredibly grateful to all of our visitors for giving their time and inspiring our children, and we are proud of how confidently and enthusiastically the children engaged throughout the day. Special mention to Miss Screen and Miss Sime for organising the event.



Kind regards,

*K. Burke*

Mrs K Burke

Executive Headteacher  
Forest of Dean Community Schools Federation

**IMPORTANT DATES:** We will add new dates each Newsletter in red

Spring Term 2	
Thurs 26 <sup>th</sup> February	Reception, Year 1 & 2 Early Maths Parent Workshop 3.20pm
Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Look Who's Talking KS1 Winner - at St Whites School
Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Secondary School Allocation Day
Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Look Who's Talking Lower KS2 Winner - at St Whites School
Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Year 1 Parents' Phonics Information Session - 3.20pm
Wed 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Look Who's Talking Upper KS2 Winner - at St Whites School
Wed 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Panathlon Event at Hartpury College
Thurs 5 <sup>th</sup> March	World Book Day - Letter to follow
Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> March	Reception Parent Engagement Morning 8.50am
Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> March	Wellbeing Champions to Viney Hill
Tue 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Reception Parents' Phonics Information Session - 3.20pm
Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> March	Red Nose Day - non uniform with cash donation
16 <sup>th</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup> March	Big Walk and Wheel fortnight
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> March	Mother's Day - (Hedgehog Class) Share a book with a special person
Tue 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Parents' Evening 3.30-5.30pm
Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> March	Parents' Evening 3.30-5.30pm
Thurs 19 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 4's In the Net at Yorkley School *Details to follow*
Fri 27 <sup>th</sup> March	End of Term 4
30 <sup>th</sup> Mar-Fri 10 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Easter Holidays
Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> April	Start of Term 5 - Children in
Thurs 16 <sup>th</sup> April	September Reception Allocation Day
Fri 24 <sup>th</sup> April	Wellbeing Champions to Viney Hill
Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> May	Bank Holiday
Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> May - Thurs 14 <sup>th</sup> May	KS2 SATs
Fri 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	End of Term 5
Mon 25 <sup>th</sup> - 29 <sup>th</sup> May	Half Term
Mon 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Start of Term 6 - Children in
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup> - Weds 17 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 5 & 6 London Residential - Federation
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Father's Day - (Hedgehog Class) Share a book with a special person
Tues 30 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 5 Taster Day at The Dean Academy
Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup> July	Wellbeing Champions to Viney Hill
Fri 17 <sup>th</sup> July	End of Term 6