Wednesday 24th September 2025

The morning started with our normal early morning wake up call from the herd of elephants stampeding down the corridor, remarkably later than we originally thought. On poking my head out the door, I was laughed at instantly for my bed hair, which is apparently something teachers don't get! After drinking gallons of water, as though they haven't done this consistently since our arrival, it was time to settle into the morning with some time in their rooms before breakfast. Breakfast was another veritable feast which is always buffet style, and, in all honesty, it can be quite alarming to see the quantity of food devoured by 30 little humans but also the interesting combinations – yoghurt on toast was the most bizarre of all today!

Our first activity of the day had changed and was now raft building. The children were split into three equal groups of ten and given some small equipment (which was to replicate the main equipment that they would be using) to try and design and build a miniature version of their raft. They had 6 barrels, 6 long poles and lots of rope! Wilfred's mind instantly started his engineering thought processes, and his team were the first to finish with a great design. Others had some great ideas but putting them into practise was slightly harder to achieve. My personal favourite for ingenuity was created by Marcus' team who decided to pile a barrel on top of another one in the hope that they would be able to float more. Once we had assembled our mini rafts and drawn our designs, we once again donned our water gear (thank goodness no wetsuits and luckily, I am avoiding them again tomorrow too!) and headed down to the water's edge… minus our plans and losing track of any vague ideas we might have once had. When we got down there the competition started… between the instructors. Katie, John and Tasha threw themselves into helping their team to create the best rafts with Team Cheeseman, Team Good and Team Howfur all showing fantastic teamwork skills. Katie and I did feel a little let down by Team Cheeseman when they were asked 'what noise do trucks make when they move slowly so that people know they are travelling' and the response from all ten children was a low hum with a bit of revving. They then had to be told that Katie meant when it reversed… their beeping whilst moving the long poles safely left a lot to be desired. The instructors pushed the rafts into the water, and all the children climbed aboard before using their paddling skills!!! to make their way to an orange buoy. I am pleased to report that these skills have improved slightly from Monday, and it did not take the rest of the day to get there. The children took part in races before catapulting themselves off the rafts again – the staff are still unsure why they have an obsession with getting in the cold water when every time they get out the ask why they are cold. I'm not sure they are learning the cause-and-effect relationship related to cold water! After a fantastic time splashing about on the reservoir, whilst Mr Furey and I enjoyed the wind blowing us off our feet on the banks, the children came back ashore and dismantled their rafts. My hopes for no more wet hugs after Monday unfortunately did not come true with a torrent of children throwing themselves at me – thanks to Monday's ringleader! After a very wet hug and a lot of screaming and trying to get away, we made it back up to get warm and dry before our hearty lunch of Mac and Cheese.

This afternoon we split into three groups to take part in a selection of different activities, including axe throwing, crate stacking and the climbing wall. My team started with axe throwing and after a strong start, I lost my way somewhat and don't think I have fallen from adoration and chanting to being 'trash talked' about my skills (or lack of) in such quick succession. My delightful team all took great delight in telling me that I was 'really really really… rubbish' At least I know axe throwing isn't my forte and I have the opportunity to redeem myself on Friday with my

annual archery skills coming out. Our crate stacking was fantastic and made me so proud to witness the ongoing support and care that the children showed. All of the team had a target number of crates they wanted to reach and each and every one did it with pride and enthusiasm. A special mention to Miro and Shaarvi who were nervous about the activity but persevered and showed true resilience in amazing TWFS style.

Team Howfur started with the climbing wall. Imagine, if you will, a giant obelisk with the most unstable foot and hand holds that you can imagine and children being tied to ropes as they try to reach the top. The children approached this challenge with grit and determination, as did the adults with Mr Furey and Mrs Howden racing their way up and Mr Furey even breaking a nail. Tragic! There were arguments about which side was harder, so the competition was rerun (with Mr Furey having won round one) and this time he managed to fall off the wall and break another nail! Olivia was described as a mini–Indiana Jones, zipping up to the top in record time. The axe throwing consisted of both one- and two-handed throws. Now, we know what your thinking, what were doing giving Bannister class axes… this thought also went through our heads, but John reassured us that we weren't totally crazy. The kids got two shots on bullseye and despite their best efforts (and a respectable score which was up in the 90s) they did not beat Team Cheeseman with their overall score. We are yet to hear about the final team and will keep you posted on who will take the victory!

Team Good won the raft building this morning and started the afternoon with crate stacking. This involves being hooked up to ropes and having your friends place old milk bottle crates on top of each other for two of you to climb. An incredibly random activity when you break it down and think about it! The ultimate target was 12 and although nobody got there, they did manage 10 almost 11. Their comradery was astounding with cheers of support echoing round the woods and the repetitive screams and crashes of tumbling towers followed by laughter was quite a sound to hear. They then moved on to the climbing wall with Katie and had an excellent time racing each other up the wall with the wedgie masters and sat navs down below trying to navigate them to reach the top.

After spending a long time waiting for the last group (who were already in the dining room with everyone) dinner could finally be served and the children once again devoured the lot. This evening has involved lots of 'speed walking' up and down the corridor, screaming over a crane fly and the games room! Despite being absolutely exhausted (and that is mainly the staff), the children went to bed and have been up and down with some quite fanciful stories about what is going on in rooms with one child declaring Edward had jumped out of a window (through a locked window that couldn't be opened) and then when it was explained the window was locked a 'magical hammer' was in use to secretly smash the window. Even when tired their imaginations never cease to amaze us. We have spent hours laughing and joking with the children today and created some brilliant memories. The wait for sleep is still ongoing…

I hope you are all sleeping well… from some very tired but happy teachers and children.

Good Night!