



Ayleen



On Tuesday I had just finished writing a school newsletter, and we were making final preparations for the Year 6 camp the next day, when the world turned upside down.

I have worked at this school for 23 years and I have been the headteacher for the last 10 of those. My greatest fear has always been a child dying. I always imagined that if the worst was to happen it would always be somewhere remote not here in front of us.

This has been an incredibly tough year for the school. At the start of the year Mrs Roberts was diagnosed with breast cancer and has subsequently been undergoing treatment. In the autumn, a parent died and then Mr Reddick suffered a significant head injury from which he is still off work recovering. However, Ayleen's death has left the whole school community with an unprecedented sense of devastation.

As a result of Mr Reddick's absence, I have been Ayleen's teacher for around half of each week since October. Ayleen was always cheerful, kind, polite and hardworking. Her parents have repeatedly told me how much she loved coming to school. But when I started writing this I realised that I am not the person best placed to tell you what she was like and that the people best qualified for that job were her classmates. Her friends.

***Ayleen was always sharing and was there for you when you were sad. She loved dancing and sports. I will miss her so much and she will forever be in my heart.***

***Ayleen was a kind, sweet, pretty girl. She was brave, confident and fearless. She was like my little sister.***

***Ayleen was a such a nice girl and she loved being at school and sometimes she got the chance to take a day off and straight away she would say NO! She loved being outdoors and her favourite sports were football and dodgeball.***

***She was such a lovely person with so much empathy and perseverance to keep on trying even when things were tough.***

***The whole class was her friend and everybody liked her.***

***Ayleen had long curly hair and when I sat next to her, she always spun her hair in my face. It was irritating but it was really funny and she always said sorry.***



*Ayleen was an amazing and caring friend who always made people smile and laugh.*

*Ayleen was an angel. She was like medicine that you need every morning*

*Ayleen was every emotion apart from sadness*



I have always loved working at this school and I am proud to be the headteacher. An incident such as this reinforces the strong community we are. Tuesday's tragedy saw best aspects of this. Whether it was the staff who attended to Ayleen when the incident happened, the way the staff calmly and quickly helped the children leave the site or the many messages of support we have received since from parents and the wider community.

I feel I need to highlight the efforts of 4 staff members. Mr Tiritanou, Coach Claire, Steph Winters and Su Flower. These staff members administered CPR and the defibrillator and fought tirelessly to save Ayleen's life until the paramedics and then the air ambulance arrived. The chief doctor on site commended their actions as they gave the medical team a chance to save her.

At the centre of all this though, a child has died and a family is grieving. Our thoughts first and foremost are with Ayleen's parents Fatima and Zubair, and her sister, Sofia. They will always be part of the school community and in time we will consult with them to find a way to permanently mark what has happened.



It was nice to welcome the children back today and to break the overwhelming and unnatural silence that has hung over the school for the last two days. We will take the half term's break to grieve and reflect on Ayleen's death. After half term, we will monitor the children who are most affected by it (class 3 and those who were on the field with her at the time) and Waltham Forest have assured us that there will be support for staff or children that need it going forward.



## Yardley Primary School Newsletter May 2026



I have talked to all the children from Year 1 upwards in assemblies to honestly explain to them what happened on Tuesday and to try and reassure them that what happened is incredibly rare. I have told them it is OK to feel sad and that the sadness might come and go. We all shared a minute's silence to remember Ayleen.

If your child is struggling over the half term then <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/> has a lot of advice. You can also phone 0800 02 888 40 and email their helpline [ask@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:ask@childbereavementuk.org)

I wish everyone a safe half term. Give your children extra hugs.

Mr Evans  
Headteacher

