

To celebrate the arrival of two almost identical paintings, both known as *The Guitar Player*, at Kenwood House, Year 5 spent the day being art detectives!



# Year 5's trip to Kenwood House!



November 2025



Signed by Vermeer



Unsigned

Then we learned how to spot **signs of conservation** in paintings. We went on a **UV-light tour** of the artworks at Kenwood House to see if we could find evidence of restoration. It was really hard to notice any changes without the UV light to help us!



When we arrived, we learned that one painting is signed by the Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer. The other painting, which looks very similar, was borrowed from the Philadelphia Museum of Art—but it doesn't have an artist's signature. The big question that puzzles art experts is: **who painted the second version?**

There are only **37 paintings** known to be by Vermeer, so finding another would be a big deal!

For the first time in **300 years**, these paintings are being displayed side-by-side so that experts and the public can compare them.

After lunch, we thought more about which painting was the 'real' Vermeer. Was Vermeer himself making a copy of his own painting? Or was someone else?

To help us explore how artists work, we tried **different copying techniques**, including the grid method, tracing and drawing it just by eye. Then we had a go at making the special ultramarine colour used in the Kenwood painting, but we mixed it using indigo and ochre instead—cheaper pigments like the ones artists sometimes used in the past.



Just like the experts, we started our day by closely comparing the two paintings. We found differences in the woman's hairstyle, the colours and the quality of the materials used.

