

Garden Fields School Newsletter



Autumn Term Newsletter
No 4
November 2018

Happy, Caring, and Inspiring!

Christmas Fair and Christmas Events

One of our most acclaimed Garden Fields community events, the Garden Fields Christmas Fair takes place a week on Saturday 1st December, from 12 noon until 3 pm.

We are looking for as many volunteers to help as possible. You only need to sign up to one slot and this enables everyone to be able to go around and enjoy the event with their children.

Please sign up via [PTA social](#).

There is a range of excellent hot food available, a vast array of stalls and Miss Wray will be leading our musical entertainment starring our very own Key Stage 1 and 2 choirs. Our orchestra and Suzuki violin group will also be performing.

For more information and also the timing of events, our brochure is online at:

<https://tinyurl.com/y7j25ska>

Also over the next few weeks our children will be taking part in an array of **performances and concerts. We have changed our 'model' for junior performances this year** with our Year 3s taking part in the Christ Church Music concerts for the first time. Year 3 will also be creating their own drama performance later in the school year which I am sure their parents will enjoy.

We will also be running our Christ Church performances differently this year. Instead of being organised just by year group, they will now be organised according by house group. We have spent a lot of time thinking about how we organise our Christmas performances as we continue to grow in size and we believe that our house group system presents us with an ideal way to organise them. Because siblings are always **put in the same house it also means that parents can see all of their children's** performances in one day. We do apologise that we have therefore changed some of our information and timings on our website, but it has taken a great deal of thought and discussion to get to a point where we feel that we have a workable solution and once this model becomes established it will be easier to announce dates in good time going forward.

The children who remain in school while the others are at Christ Church will be taking **part in a house sports event run by Mrs Johnson. This is a 'virtual sports event' in** which they take part against another school online!

It is a rather unique concept and I will report back to you on it in a future edition!

House Competitions

Using the house system is something that we are really developing going forward. We have already re-organised our achievement assemblies on Fridays into house groups.

We have also given our house captains more opportunities to develop their leadership roles.

As part of this our house captains have come up with two competitions for all of our children to participate in.

The first one is a cake baking competition for which your children are welcome to bake cakes and bring them in on arrival at school Friday 30th November to the Upper School Hall.

These will then be judged (bagsy be on the judging panel!) and **then the remaining pieces sold at Saturday's Christmas Fair.**

Secondly, the House Captains have organised another competition which is to design a motto for their house.

I can't wait to see the suggestions!

For further information on these and other school events have a look at our events webpage at:

<http://www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk/events-list/>

Governors' Day

Our governors came to visit the school and see the school at work last week. They join us each term in order to focus on different aspects of the school. We are fortunate to have governors who are so willing to give up their time in order to contribute and take part in school life in what is, after all, a voluntary role.

During their day they assisted in lessons across the school in the morning, getting a real feel for teaching and learning within the classroom, met with the Junior Leadership and School Captains and questioned and explored with the **leadership team aspects of the school's work.**

Our creative curriculum and how it works across the school and behaviour were the two key aspects of the school that they focused on.

Our chair of governors Peter Jones fed back to staff with the following:

“As usual it was a delight to come in. What comes out so strongly is the professionalism and engagement of the team with children. Care for the children really is at the centre. We saw children beaming with delight after being spoken to by teachers, many times over the day.”

Remembrance and Poppy Unveiling

A fortnight ago we finally unveiled the huge poppies that our Year 5 and Year 6 children had been making with local artist Michelle Dibden.

We had a special outdoor assembly towards the end of the school day and we were delighted to have had a large number of parents who also joined us.

Earlier in the day our Year 6 had attended a special remembrance service for all of our local schools at St Albans Abbey to commemorate the centenary year of the end of the First World War.

As part of the service our Year 6 children also wrote peace pledges which they read out at our afternoon service.

They also spoke about the poppy project and how they were made.

Lucas then beautifully read out the First World War poem
On Flanders Field by John McCrae.

Many thanks to Michelle Dibden and all of the parent helpers for working with the children to produce such a fantastic memorial.

Thank you also to Mr De Bruin for all the hard work that he put into digging the holes and cementing the poppy supports into the ground.

Thank you to Mr Hogan for playing the Last Post too.

Thank you also to everyone who gave in bottle tops and to Mrs Huntley for obtaining 4000 plastic bottle tops from Freshways Dairy Suppliers in Acton.

And finally, many thanks to Mrs Girdwood for masterminding the whole project!



Parking on the Batchwood Drive Service Road

On the same side of the road as our school field on Batchwood Drive runs a service road on which some of our parents park.

A number of cars may legally park there (although there are no actual spaces marked out). The only issue our neighbours have is when people park either fully or partly across our drives, meaning that they cannot leave their own homes!

Sometimes people park partly blocking the driveways, so the only way that our neighbours can get on or off is to manoeuvre on the pavement area which is extremely dangerous when there are children about.

Recently we have heard from residents that some parents are waiting in the middle of the service road for their children. They then have to turn round to let people who have parked legitimately drive away, and again end up driving on the pavement. There have been a number of near misses as a result.

We have also heard from one of our neighbours that one parent actually parked on their driveway!

Please be considerate when parking and think of our neighbours.

Thank you to our Christmas Fair Sponsors

We had a key sponsor pull out from our PTA Christmas Fair this year but we would like to thank the following people who have stepped in and **generously given us sponsorship for this year's event.**

We would like to say a massive thank you to Beechcroft from the building development up the road, Matt Niel and to Anny Hooper who has donated on behalf of her company PHP Services.

Thank you also to Eimear Andersen who unfortunately cannot be with us but who has also made a very generous donation!

All of these people have given us enough donations to make up for the money we lost.

A big thank you to you all!

Online Safety

Richard Maskrey, the former county lead for E-Safety and also our Data Protection Officer came in this week to give two assemblies - one for younger children and one for older children - on the subject of E-safety.

If you have any concerns about online safety and want practical advice then an excellent website is:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

There is advice for parents here including advice for parents on gaming as well as social media.

There is also advice for children (at different age levels) including cartoons that you can watch with them which show how to stay safe online. There is also a link for reporting any online abuse or other online matters of concern.

These can be reported directly by going to CEOP at:

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Odd Socks Day

Also as part of anti-bullying week, Year 4 on Wednesday wore Odd Socks for the day! It was a fun opportunity for the children to express themselves and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique!

The message was that we may all be different but we all have the right to the respect of others.



Celtic Harmony

Year 3 came back after half term and went straight out on an exciting trip to Celtic Harmony to learn more about ancient Britain as part of their Stone Age topic.

Oliver, Samuel and Khalil came to my office last week and told me all about it and about what they learnt including how to weave with wood from trees to make fences and also how they took part in a Stone Age trading game!



Tring Natural History Museum

Year 2 are currently studying the Arctic and also a lovely story about a Polar Bear called Lars.

So, as part of their studies, they visited the Natural History museum in Tring and learnt lots more about the habitat of both the Arctic but also Antarctica.



Farewell Mr Farrell



Sadly Mr Farrell left us this month to take on a new venture closer to home. We would like to thank Mr Farrell for his great contribution to Garden Fields both as a teaching assistant but also as a sports coach. Mr Farrell was popular with children, parents and staff alike and he received a number of gifts, cards and books made by our children as part of a special whole school assembly last Friday. We wish Mr Farrell all the best for the future!

Attendance

We have had some very encouraging attendance this term so far. At my last full governors meeting earlier this month I fed back that our most recent school census data is for the summer term 2018 and showed our overall attendance as 96.65%. Our current absence level for the period from the start of term up until half term is 97.15%. Both figures are above the national average of 95.8%. Mrs Dicks reported to me that on one day last week only 2 children were absent from our whole school population of over 500 children! Your cooperation in not booking holidays in term time is most helpful in our aim to keep attendance above 97%, which is our target.

Achievements

The following children came to see me over October to show me some **fantastic work and receive the Headteacher's Award sticker.**
In my next newsletter I will include those for November.

THAMES

Paige – an excellent Stonehenge booklet
William – an amazing Stone-Age style pick axe
Aurelie – a super Stone Age clay pot
Amaia – a very informative Stone Age facts poster
Nathalie – a well presented Stone Age facts poster
Albert - for an amazing Stone-Age style pick axe

VER

Khalil – brilliant Stone Age creative writing
Chery – a fantastic box model display about rocks
Hania – an excellent model Stonehenge made out of corkscrews
Mia – a great Stonehenge booklet!
Hollie – an amazing spear!
Ellen – for an amazing rock poster with actual rocks
Imogen – providing a great piece of lava from Iceland for her class topic!

LEA

Ollie – **a Stone Age axe covered in 'blood'!**
Daisy - made a great clay pot and sabre tooth tiger tooth
Eva – a well made Stone Age clay pot
Ada - **a beautiful clay pot with 'pearly' paint**

MEDWAY

Elettra – all round excellent literacy work
Eva – excellent Victorian work (about the workhouse)
Charlie – for an incredibly long (in length) Victorian time line!
Hal - Great map of the Medway area and super Victorian writing about the workhouse
Thomas - really thoughtful writing about the Workhouse
Bella - impressive writing about the Workhouse
Ernie - well-organised writing about the Workhouse on the computer
Joseph – a very interesting account of the Victorian Workhouse

TRENT

Emma – a great circus facts poster
Alfie – for his amazing Maths work
Luke – a brilliantly put together spear