

# Newsletter

24/10/19

Happy, Caring, and Inspiring!



Autumn Term No 3

## Aims and Vision

A big focus for us as a school this year is to revisit our aims and values. School inspections are moving away from focusing on SATs scores and data and moving towards looking at the breadth and depth of the curriculum offered by schools.

That is not to say that pupil outcomes won't play any part in judgements about a school's standard of education, but that the quality of the curriculum measured by looking at lessons, seeing pupils' work and talking to children and parents will play just as an important part in assessing the work of the school.

At Garden Fields we pride ourselves on our rich curriculum full of exciting moments and opportunities for our children and therefore the shift towards focusing on the wider curriculum for us is a welcome one.

Our curriculum is not a narrow one solely consisting of work in English and Maths. In fact we believe that it is through the application of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum in real life contexts. In say Geography, DT and Science, that these skills become more purposeful for our children.

We are however really delving into our curriculum this year to ensure that our teaching builds on prior learning so that we are sure that our children develop the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary as they progress through our school in each subject area.

We began looking at this in the summer term but it soon became apparent that in order to fully ensure that our curriculum was right for our children we needed to go right back to our aims and vision for our children at Garden Fields.

As teachers we have asked the question 'What values and learning attributes do we want our children to leave Garden Fields with at the end of year 6 that will equip them for their secondary schooling and on into their adult life?'

We know that children's experiences and memories of their primary school provide an essential foundation for their whole future.

The review of our aims, values and curriculum has led to some fascinating discussion. It is not to say that we are completely changing direction—much that we do is already strong. It's about thinking how we make our school even better.

As always, do come and talk with me and share your thoughts.

## Home School Agreement

You will receive the updated Home School Agreement from us to sign and return to us after half term. As I mentioned in my last newsletter, the agreement has been updated and approved by governors. All schools are required to have one and we believe that the revised agreement is a good reflection of the positive relationship that we wish to forge between the school, children and parents.

Please can you return a signed copy as soon as you can after half term.

We have also updated our school Communications Policy <https://www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk/policies/> which just clarifies the ways that we communicate with you and expectations around things like email, for example. I think it lays out sensible arrangements for communication in our modern world of email, blogging and social media.

## Year 2 in Space!

After their study of David Bowie, including the song Space Oddity, there has been a natural progression in Year 2 into their topic on Space.

As part of this we had 2 special visitors join us recently.

One of these was children's writer D'Arcy Lewis, author of Goodnight Starry.

D'Arcy not only read the book but also taught the children lots of fantastic facts about space as well as using his interactive website which is all about the planets in order to illustrate his points.

He also spoke to our Y1 and Reception classes as well.

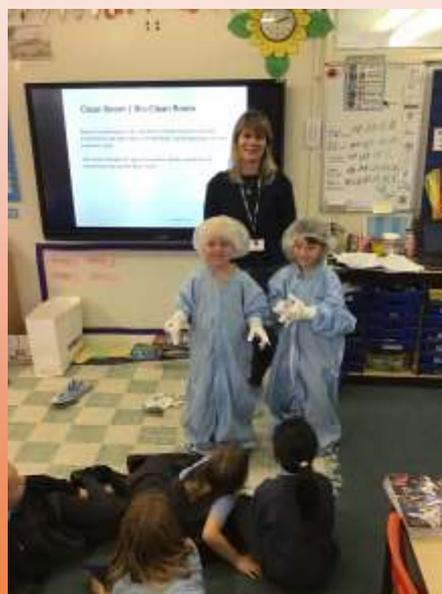
Many thanks to D'Arcy and also to our parent Jemma Scanlan for making the introduction!



Our second visitor was none other than Garden Fields parent Beatrice Alix-Bendaoud. Beatrice is currently working on the unmanned Mars Rover that is due to descend on Mars in July 2020. What a wonderful opportunity for our children to experience first hand what it is like to be a scientist working in the space industry!

Beatrice told them all about her work.

She also got some children to dress up in the special clothing that the scientists have to wear whilst working on the craft in order to avoid bacteria going into space.





## Harvest Festival

On Friday 11th October we had our Harvest Festival assembly.

I discussed with the children about how fortunate we are that with modern refrigeration and transport methods we aren't, at least in this country, as dependent upon the weather for our food as we once were. We also spoke about why in this country we traditionally celebrate Harvest in September/early October as this is the time when in this country that many of our crops are harvested.

Becki Chafe from Christ Church in New Greens came to speak to us too. She explained about the work of the Food Bank that runs from New Greens every Tuesday afternoon from 1.00pm until 3.00pm.

Thank you for your kind contributions



## Year 5 at Sea City Southampton

George and Keira from Moorhen class told me about their recent trip to see the Titanic Exhibition at the Sea City museum in Southampton.

As well as seeing the exhibits, they had a tour and their guide was someone who was a relative of the youngest survivor of the tragedy who was only 9 weeks old at the time.

They looked at a display that stretched across one of the wall with lots of grey photos (lost at sea) and orange photos (survivors).

They had a workshop in which some of the children dressed up as people on the ship.

They also went into a room which used to be a Southampton Court and had audio transcripts of the Titanic inquest playing over the speakers.





## Reception Dress Up Day

Our reception children's topic over recent weeks has been 'People Who Help Us'.

As part of this they have enjoyed talks from people from such organisation as the fire service and police.

Today they came dressed up as someone who helps us and we had an array of lovely costumes!



## October Achievements

George and Keira from Y5 Moorhen for their excellent writing about The Titanic.

Thomas and Max - from Y1 for asking for donations to the food bank instead of presents at their birthday party and then helping out there!

Oscar from Y2 for competing in his first ever Taekwondo tournament - the English Taekwondo Tournament. This is a nationwide competition where members around the country are invited to compete. He won a Bronze trophy for the *pattern* category and a Silver medal for the *sparring* category.

Well done to you all!





## **Governor Update**

**We have had some changes in our Governing Body this term.**

**Sadly, Peter Jones has stepped down as our Chair of Governors and will be leaving our governing body at the end of term.**

**Peter has made an excellent contribution to our Governing Body and will be missed greatly.**

**I would like to thank Peter for all of his hard work as a Garden Fields governor.**

**I am very grateful that Gary Kellett, a very experienced governor himself, has stepped up to take on the role as our new Chair of Governors.**

**We also welcome two community governors, Paul Greatorex and Tolu Airede, as well as new staff governor Mrs Kemp-Robertson who replaces Mrs Huntley who has stepped down. Thank you Mrs Huntley also for your hard work on the committee over the last 2 years.**

## **Christmas Dates**

**As with last year, we will be having two Christmas performances with our combined Reception and Y1 classes in December in our Upper School Hall.**

**Our Year 2 children will put on a big production in the summer term in the same way that last year's Year 2 classes did so successfully our last academic year. They will also still enjoy lots of Christmas activities and festivities over the last part of the term.**

**Our Key Stage 2 children will again perform with Miss Wray at Christ Church in High Oaks and as with last year they will be split by age and house. Due to church activities this year these will be held over three days in the week beginning Monday 16th December.**

### **RECEPTION/YR 1 CONCERTS**

**(please note different classes will perform on different dates—letter to follow)**

**Thursday 12th December at 2.00 p.m.**

**Friday 13th December at 9.30 a.m.**

### **CHRIST CHURCH CONCERTS (all families welcome)**

**Monday 16th December at 11 a.m. : Children from Y3 and Y4 in Townsend and Waverley**

**Monday 16th December at 2 p.m. : Children from Y3 and Y4 in Batchwood and Harpenden**

**Tuesday 17th at 11 a.m. : Children from Y5 and Y6 in Townsend and Waverley**

**Wednesday 18th at 2 p.m. : Children from Y5 and Y6 in Batchwood and Harpenden**



## Children in Need

Our Junior Leadership Team have met to discuss how they would like to mark Children in Need on Friday 15th November.

They would like children, who wish to, to wear their school uniform but with one item that is either red or spotty.

So it could for example be a pair of school trousers and a red jumper or school jumper and spotty trousers.

If you would like to make a small donation to Children in Need then you may if you wish.



## Safety in the car parks

Please note that when our children come into school to The Hub or for morning clubs and also at the end of the day when they leave clubs or the Hub, there are cars entering or leaving the car-park.

Please could you ensure that you stick to paths and to the zebra crossings that we have put down.

I was leaving one afternoon recently and a very young child, who had been picked up from The Hub, was running in front of the adult who was supposed to be with him, right down the middle of the car-park with a car coming towards him. This is really dangerous.

**Have a great half-term everybody!**

**We will see you back on Monday 4th November**