



## HEADTEACHER NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2022

Imagine Believe Persevere Achieve

### DEAR PARENTS

At the end of every month, except in short terms, I send out a newsletter which gives an overview of what the children are learning in school, major news and events and clarification over issues which may be helpful. Many parents now access the school Facebook page and we send out regular parentmails when news is urgent, but the newsletter aims to set out wider school information.

### NEW YEAR, NEW TERM

The children have settled very well at the start of the new school year. After the many upheavals of the past three school years, it feels good that we are in what feels like a traditional school year. Foundation Stage have done really well getting used to their new school and have already been in full time for the past two weeks. Those Year 6 children who took the Medway Test or the Kent Test, did so really sensibly and we are really proud of how well they coped. We know all our Year 6s will go on to great things regardless of the school they go on to in Year 7.



### MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING



We really enjoyed having parents in to our Macmillan Coffee Morning and it was great to reintroduce the event which we hope can now return on an annual basis in order to raise money and awareness of this important charity.

### BADGES

I have been asked recently if I can remind parents of the Headteacher's Badge system which we have had running in the school for the past six or seven years. The badges were introduced in order to recognise those children who produce good pieces of work, who try really hard, who do something really polite or helpful, who go over and above and also those children who come in every day and put in a shift. There may only be one bronze badge given per year group each week. Once the children have obtained three bronze badges (which may take years or they may never quite make it), they get a silver badge. Once they have got three more bronze badges, they get a second silver badge.

With three more bronze badges, they earn a third silver, which means they would get the mythical gold badge. In all the years of giving the badges, there has only been one gold badge awarded, last year.

The badges are nominated by year teams and teachers and occasionally I will pick an exceptional pupil myself. When children get a silver badge they are meant to trade in their bronzes, but this doesn't always happen as the badges can be very well used. We keep a record of bronze and silver badge winners, so it doesn't matter if they lose the actual badge, we know they have earned them.



Teachers also nominate children for red badges if children have achieved something special as an individual, outside school.

More often than not, news of this nature is acknowledged in class or in the year group, rather than with a red badge, when parents or children let them know. But on occasions, the teacher will nominate a child for a red badge. Red badges are not part of the bronze, silver and gold system, as that is for good work and behaviour, in school.

### **DOGS, VAPES AND CLIMBING**

A polite reminder that we don't allow dogs on the school site and ask that they are always kept under control near the school. Some children find dogs scary, as much as some children love them. It isn't fair to say that a dog that can fit in a coat or can be held is ok, as that wouldn't be fair on other dog owners and may result in rottweilers being slipped into cagoule, which could end in disaster!

We are a non smoking and no vaping site, at all times. Including for outside events.

Separate reminders have been sent, but can I remind parents to keep their children with them at all times, and not allow them to be running around or climbing on equipment, before they are released into the care of staff, or after they have been handed over by staff at the beginning and end of the school day. This is to keep the children under supervision and prevent accidents. The children get plenty of time to play and use the equipment in the day and the park is always an option after school if they need to use up some energy.

### **FOUNDATION STAGE**



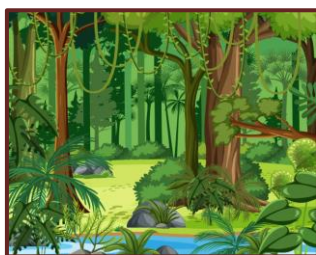
Foundation Stage have had such an exciting first few weeks in school. The children have adapted so well and have been working so incredibly hard. Our Topic "All about Me" has given us lots of opportunities to make new friends and learn lots about each other. Next week we are going to be talking about our families and attempting to construct our own self-portraits outside. Towards the end of the term we will be focussing on healthy eating, we will be planting seeds in an attempt to grow our own veg ready for spring.

### **YEAR 1**

In year 1 it has been busy and exciting start to the year. We have been exploring the school and local area. We have been finding out about the different place in the school and finding these on maps. While doing this we have learnt about the school community and all the people that help us in school. We are working very hard with our reading and writing, making up sentences and trying to write these every day as well as our daily RWI lessons. In maths we are working with small numbers, recognising and thinking about how they work together with our next focus being addition and subtraction.



### **YEAR 2**



Year 2 are enjoying their Explore project using the question "**Do we always appreciate what we have got?**". They are looking at Brazilian Rainforests and comparing to woods in Parkwood. The children are looking at animals and their habitats, locally and across the world. In art, they are recreating Henri Rousseau's 'Tiger in a Tropical Storm'. In the STAR studio, the children are designing and creating rainforest dioramas. So far, it has been lots of fun!

### YEAR 3

Year 3 are loving their Explore project this term. We have read *The Tin Forest* by Helen Ward and discussed the concepts of belonging, dreams and resilience. The children will be writing a recount of the story and then publishing it over the next couple of weeks. In Science, Year 3 have been investigating plants, what they need to grow and their life cycle. In Design Technology we are learning about hydropower and will be designing and producing our own working water wheel. We are having lots of fun in music learning body percussion and we are becoming rhythm experts in activities like "Pass the cup". If you greet us in French we will be able to reply and tell you how we are feeling too. What a great start to Year 3!



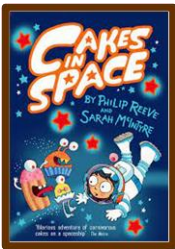
### YEAR 4

Year 4 have had an exciting start to the year and have continued to impress us with how well they have settled in. Ukulele lessons are in full swing and swimming lessons started last week too. In Geography, children are exploring the question 'Is it our responsibility to look after the environment?' and concepts of sustainability, responsibility and change by analysing satellite images of the local area, thinking about how land is used. In English lessons, children are engaging with the text 'The Wild Robot' by Peter Brown and have even designed their own robots and written instructions for how to look after their mechanical helper. Well done, Year 4, keep up the great work!



### YEAR 5

In Year 5, this term's 'EXPLORE' topic is centred around USA. Our reading text is *Cosmic* by Frank Cottrell-Boyce and *Cakes in Space* by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre. Our chosen art topic is graffiti art which we are confident the children will enjoy in the coming weeks.



In science, we have been studying a space theme which we have embedded across our curriculum. In our geography lessons, we are comparing the life and physical geography of the two countries.

### YEAR 6

So far this term Year 6 have explored the world of volcanoes and earthquakes. Much of their learning has come through their Reading and Geography lessons but the children have enjoyed painting watercolour volcanoes and practicing earthquake drills. It's incredible the amount of staff that have commented on how much more mature the children seem now that they have stepped up in the role of being the top of school and being role models to the younger children.





## STAR STUDIO

From this term, we have introduced the 'Star Studio', so that large groups of children, from every year group, can immerse themselves in creative arts sessions. The studio is managed and run by Mrs Miller and Mrs Orridge. It's a lovely place to learn.

Classes have visited the studio for a tour and taster session where they took part in either a music or drama activity. These ranged from generating comical 'Freeze-Frames' and a thought-provoking 'Conscience Alley' to playing percussion instruments to accompany 'I'm a little teapot'.

The studio is a bright and rhythmic learning space in which Instruments, music notation, rainforest dioramas, contrasting collages, lightning strike art, singing and improvisations are currently thriving.



## COATS

As we approach the Autumn months, can I ask that children come to school with a coat and when it turns colder, hats and gloves as necessary. We like to keep the children going outside wherever possible and it's always best when they are wrapped up warm. Please remember to name all items.



## WINTER AND THE WAY OF THE WORLD

As a school and as individual people, all of us at Parkwood realise that the vast majority of our families are going to find this winter very challenging in terms of the cost of living, energy prices and rising interest rates. We are here to help and listen and support as much as we can and work with our families in order to get all our children through this difficult time. Sometimes it isn't easy to say when things are a struggle, but we are here to help.

## PARENT COUNCIL

Prior to the pandemic, I met regularly with parents to essentially get a parent voice and listen to ideas. This was a group of parents who acted as a think tank, sounding board and second opinion. In a world of WhatsApp groups and social media, it is still the best way to talk to people. Ideally the group would be for about 8-10 parents, from across the school, who would be able to meet with senior leaders, once a term, on a Wednesday afternoon from 2 until 3pm.



Parents involved would be expected to be talking generally on behalf of parents and would not be representing the views or needs of their own child.

It would be for positive and helpful contributions and to play a part in school improvement and gaining parent views in a number of ways. If you would be interested, please email the office for my attention and once I know numbers and interest, I would get back to parents with future dates. It will be good to get this up and running again!

### **GOVERNORS**

Governors have continued to be active in the school this term, both supporting and challenging in order to be reassured that Parkwood continues to move forward. These visits have included monitoring Foundation Stage and Phonics and working with Subject Leaders. The Governing Body will be meeting together again, later in the term.

### **PSA INFORMATION**

After a fairly hurried, post covid, regeneration of the PSA last school year, we are looking forward to holding many more fundraising calendar of events for this year (with a more streamlined cashless ticketing system!).

We have already held our first meeting for the new school year with lots of plans already underway but will need more members/helpers to ensure we can carry everything out - any parent or staff member of the school is entitled to be a member of the PSA. We will be sending out a letter very shortly, with an events diary, links to our school lottery and Amazon Smile account, requests for event helpers, etc.

The PSA continues to focus fundraising efforts for the school minibus and replacement technology, especially interactive whiteboards for classrooms - one of which we have already funded, just from the few events we held in the last two terms. Looking forward to lots of events for the children to enjoy and also have dates planned for some non-children community events such as a quiz night in November.

**Suzanne Emson PSA Chair**

Thank you for your ongoing support and for the brilliant way the children have started the school year.

**Mr A Moir**  
**Headteacher**

### **DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR**

13 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Foundation Stage welcome meeting 2.00 – 3.00pm (PSA Event)
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Foundation Stage parents in school – reading 2.15 – 2.45pm
18 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Foundation Stage parents in school – reading 2.15 – 2.45pm
20 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Infant Halloween Disco Years 1 – 3 3.30 – 5.00pm (PSA Event)
	Junior Halloween Disco Years 4 – 6 5.30 – 7.30pm (PSA Event)
21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Pumpkin Competition
	Swimming – Year 4
	End of Term 1
31 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Start of Term 2 – Children back to school