

Garden Fields School Newsletter

Happy, Caring, and Inspiring!

Autumn Term Newsletter No 2
28th September 2018



School Development Plan 18/19

As the new academic year is now well and truly underway, I thought that it would be a good time to introduce some of the key aims of our new school development plan.

The plan, or SDP as we refer to it, maps out our aims and objectives for the year.

Our key aims for this year are to:

- *Develop a whole school summative assessment system for the non-core subjects (subjects other than Maths, English and Science)*

This was one of 2 development areas detailed in our Ofsted Report (March 2018) and is about **how we assess and record our judgements about our children's attainment in non-core** subjects such as Geography, Music, Art and PE.

- *Improve phonological awareness and other reading/writing strategies across the school in order that children make excellent progress, including those with Specific Learning Difficulties*

Basically we are revamping the way that we teach English for our younger children, particularly from Reception to Year 3. We are making the learning experience more rich by for example introducing guided reading in Reception. But we are also expanding our repertoire of strategies for the teaching of reading and writing and improving the way in which we deliver it in order to make it both more stimulating for our children and also to better match their needs (see more on page 2). Our standards are high in English at Garden Fields but we are always seeking to continually improve and ensure that more and more children make the very best progress that they can.

- *Develop mathematics subject leadership in line with current English model*

This is basically expanding our subject leader team so that we have 2 leaders for English and 2 for Maths: a KS1 subject leader and a KS2 equivalent. The leads for English will be Mrs Walker at KS1 and Miss Ellwood at KS2, with Miss Jones leading Maths in KS1 and Mrs Huntley at KS2. Mrs Reynolds will also be a key part of the leadership of these areas in our Reception classes as EYFS/Y1 phase leader.

- *Review/revamp ICT to meet the needs of learners. Improve audio visual infrastructure and telephony*
 - *Develop the pastoral aspects of phase leadership*

This means that phase leaders are now the key port of call for children who may need support with their behaviour or who have anxiety or personal difficulties.

- *Begin the due diligence process with a view to potentially finalising joining Alban Academies Trust (AAT)*

We have entered a period of what is known as due diligence with the AAT. This means that both we **and the Trust examine each other's organisations, structure, finances and operations. We will also** be scrutinising the structure and terms and conditions of the new trust to ensure that they are compatible with our own vision going forward.

- *Review premises needs going forward and look at bidding processes*

We have a real ambition to create world class facilities for our children and also ensure that with our growing numbers they can continue to enjoy excellent technological, musical and sporting facilities.

- Continued development of lettings and hirings in order to generate extra revenue for the school

We are very fortunate to have a very talented and innovative staff team who continually strive to improve the whole school experience for our children. I will explore some of these areas over the next few pages and others in future editions of our newsletter, returning to them over the year to review our progress.

New Reading and Writing Strategy for our Infants

With the advent of the new primary curriculum in 2014, there was a raised expectation in terms of what children were expected to achieve by the end of KS1.

As a consequence, we began the process of broadening our Read Write Inc programme to include guided reading in Years 1 and 2, which we are now extending into Reception this year.

We will also be giving our children greater spelling and reading strategies, in terms of for example the learning of key non-phonetic sight words through puzzles and games, learning days of the week and months of the year and learning letter names alongside sounds.

We are very fortunate to have the skillsets of Inco Miss Palmer and dyslexia teacher Mrs Kemp-**Robertson at Garden Fields, who are both experts in the development of children's writing. Over the summer they have devised a whole programme for the development of children's writing** from the Reception year onwards. It was an incredible amount of work and we are very thankful to them for putting it together!

Not only have they devised a progression of learning for teachers to follow but they have also **developed packs at each level, full of activities for teachers to use to develop their children's skills. They have also improved our benchmarking of children's ability and currently many of our children** are being re-assessed to ensure that the books that they are given to read and the strategies used to teach them are at the right level.

In this way we hope to ensure that all children, of whatever ability, are better placed to make great progress in reading and writing, and that all children will get the necessary grounding in the basics that will enable them to flourish, including our dyslexic children too.

Research shows that on average six children out of every class of 30 are likely to show the traits of the dyslexic learner. Out of these six, three will have more severe traits.

Therefore, in our school of over 500 children, we could expect over 80 of our children to experience these difficulties.

As a consequence, the programme devised by Miss Palmer and Mrs Kemp-Robertson seeks to meet both the needs of the whole class and dyslexia learners as well, as it is impossible for them to work with such large numbers of children all of the time.

In any case, with the new programme that they have devised, these children will have the opportunity to work through appropriate programmes of work in their daily class work which is what they need. It will also upskill our teachers and teaching assistants to create truly dyslexic friendly classrooms.

All our dyslexic pupils will receive either a programme devised by Mrs Kemp-Robertson and delivered by the teacher or a trained teaching assistant, or for children with more extreme difficulties they will receive this same support but supplemented by sessions from Mrs Kemp-Robertson.

In this way we seek to meet a greater number of dyslexic needs but also provide an even better classroom experience for such children across the week.

Currently, many children are being assessed or re-assessed to establish exactly what level of need they have, before Mrs Palmer and Mrs Kemp-Robertson knows the level of support that they will provide this year.

In the meantime we thank you for your patience. We are incredibly lucky to have such strong expertise in this area. Few schools have their own Dyslexia teacher, particularly in the current financial climate.

Research Funding through the Sandringham Research School

We have successfully won funding for two major research projects at the school.

Congratulations and thanks go to Miss Palmer and Mrs Kemp-Robertson for a research programme that they will be **carrying out in Year 1 to develop children's literacy skills.**

We also congratulate Miss Cole for winning funding for a reading fluency project that has been devised by Herts for **Learning, which aims to develop children's reading in the later part of KS2 to enable them to meet the increased demands** of the new curriculum by enabling them to read the more traditional style stories which are being used in the KS2 Reading SATs.



All the Fun of the Fair!



Our fantastic circus workshops and events at the beginning of the term continue to inspire some amazing work from our children. Today I saw a **fabulous display of children's work go up in our Breakout Space.** Many thanks to our whole school community for getting behind such an amazing event!



Harvest Festival

Many thanks to everyone for your great generosity in providing such a vast **array of food for this morning's Harvest Festival.**

Louise from St Albans and District Foodbank spoke to the children about the work of the foodbank and was very grateful for your donations. Many thanks indeed!





September Achievements

The following children came to see me to show me their brilliant work over the first few weeks of term.
They were...

FROM WILLOW

Phoebe – amazing facts about the circus
Sam Co – amazing facts about the circus (with great use of full stops!)
Marni – for a great circus tent – beautifully coloured
Sammi – for a great circus tent. Lovely colouring!
Samuel - a great circus tent. Super colouring!
Hugo – lots of fantastic information about circuses

FROM THAMES

Ewan – For amazing homework on his visit to Stonehenge

FROM MEDWAY

Hal – for excellent homework about the Victorians with a very informative timeline

Maths Quiz Success!

We have a very strong record at Garden Fields in local school quiz competitions and I remember reporting on quite a few successes last year.

We have only been back at school for a few weeks and already we have taken part successfully in a quiz and this time the subject was Mathematics, in which around fifteen local primary schools competed in the Marlborough School maths challenge.

We entered two teams into the competition. Well done to Freddie, Louis B, Louis H and Ewan who came joint third and to the overall winners Anna F, Summer, Toby W and Lucas H.



New EYFS Outdoor Furnishings

Many thanks to both Mr de Bruin and also to one of our parents, Chris Griggs from Griggs Homes, for helping to make improvements to the EYFS outdoor area outside our Reception classrooms over the summer.

It looks great out there!

We have a new shed, a telephone box, outdoor storage and a fully enclosed sandpit. These make welcome additions to the canopy which was provided last year by our PTA.

Many thanks for your hard work gentlemen!



Wool!

We would welcome any donations of wool for our forest school learning. Please bring to the school office. Thank you.

No Dogs Please

Please note that dogs are forbidden on our premises. This also includes being attached to our school gates and trees. We know that most are well behaved but we cannot take chances and they can scare our children. Thank you.

Have a great weekend everybody!