

# Garden Fields J.M.I School

Townsend Drive  
St. Albans  
Herts  
AL3 5RL  
Telephone 01727 890440



Growing Hearts and Minds

Headteacher : Ms R. Palmer

- ◆ E-mail : [admin@gardenfields.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@gardenfields.herts.sch.uk)
- ◆ Website : [www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk](http://www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk)



26<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Dear Families,

## Consultation about School Day

As you are aware, we have been in consultation to change our school hours slightly to meet government expectations that all schools should deliver a school week of at least 32.5 hours.

We put forward a proposal that we are confident would be the least disruptive to parents and of course, the most favoured as far as children's learning is concerned.

We understand that we are stuck between a rock and a hard place as we cannot put into action something that will please everyone. If we bring forward the start time, some parents will find that tricky and if we extended the end of the day some parents will find that tricky. We have looked carefully at the small number of responses we have received and shared those with our Governors. We know that children learn best when they are fresh in the mornings and less so when perhaps they are tired in the afternoons. As we already open the doors at 8:40 am and the majority of children are in at this time, we felt this would be the most favoured option for our school.

We are therefore amending our school hours with effect from **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June**, straight after half-term. We will follow this pattern:

- **8:40 a.m. Open classroom doors**
- **8:45 a.m. – 8:55 a.m. Registration**

Like with any change, we are expecting a few teething issues but are confident that we will all adapt to the change over time.

## What has been happening at Garden Fields?

It has been a very busy time for our Year 5 pupils since I last wrote the newsletter. As I mentioned, I went with the children to Hooke Court in Hook, Dorset, where we all learnt lots of new things and packed a lot into our three days.





The children spent time learning about where our food comes from, seasonality, nutrition and carbon footprint in a fun way through a series of games, visuals, tastings and visits. They learnt how to cook from scratch, weigh out ingredients and follow a recipe to make seasonal soups, bread rolls, fruit scones, home-made butter and jam.

They also learnt how to gut, clean, stuff and cook trout from the local trout farm, and

how to press apples from the Hooke Court orchard and taste the juice, followed by a tasting session of all the food cooked that morning. Our next adventure will be Junior Master Chef!



The children and staff are now requesting that we buy our own apple press at Garden Fields as we have apple trees on the 'top playground'. Let me know if you think it's a good idea, especially if you have apple or pear trees in your gardens that you would be happy to donate the fruit from for our first pressing!

Other adventures during our time there were a **visit to the local dairy farm**, where we learnt what it's like to be a dairy farmer, met the bull and watched the herd being milked.



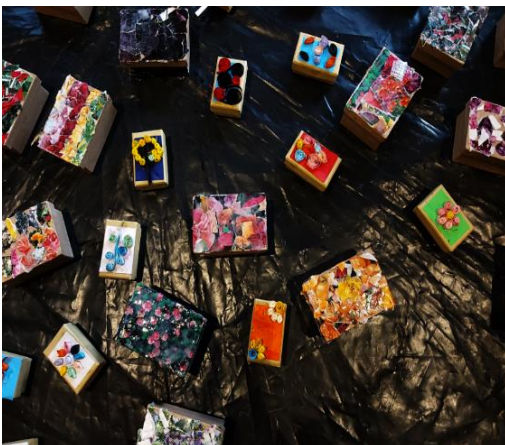
**We built a temporary home** - the children worked in teams to build a home good enough to sleep in.

**On the final night we had a camp fire.** One of the Hooke Court tutors lit the campfire and entertained the children with magic. Children joined in by singing songs, telling stories and jokes as well as acting out little sketches. It was great to see that the children can entertain themselves without the use of modern-day technology!

**Our Junior Editors interviewed the children for their take on the trip...**

### **THE YEAR 5 TRIP**

Today, we interviewed Matilda and Sadie about their school trip to Hooke Court! Let's take a look at what they had to say...



#### **What activities did you do?**

"We went to see a farm, a polytunnel and built shelters in the woods, then we did cooking and a bonfire. We also did team building crafts decorating boxes with decoupage and quilling."

#### **What did you do in your free time?**

"We had so much fun, ran around and went to our dorms. We also told scary stories."

#### **How many nights did you guys stay for?**

"We stayed for two nights and three days."

#### **Did everyone sleep well?**

"Yes, bedtime was 9pm but most of us stayed up later!"

## Forest School

In the last newsletter, I spoke about the tree surgeons visiting to help renovate the Forest School Area. They have now visited and it is beginning to look a lot better. It is like our very own 'Secret Garden' and is slowly coming back to life.

My junior editors have spoken to a Year 6 member of the Eco-School Committee to hear about their plans for the area.

**This week, we interviewed Isabella, Year 6, Osprey. We asked about what they are planning to do for the nature area renovation. This is what they have thought of so far.**

**What plans have you got to change in the Nature Area?**

"We are going to be building bug houses, and we are going to make a new outdoor learning area so that little kids (like Reception) can go in there to learn."

**How do you feel about being able to rebuild the area?**

"It's very good because the nature area is very messy and it needs a lot of care. It will just make it a lot better for the students."

**What work have you done so far?**

"Well, we have been doing a lot of planning on the bug areas, thinking about what resources to use."

## A sad, but fond, farewell to Governor, Sunny Grewal



As a school, we would like to thank Sunny for his unshakeable dedication to the school. His stalwart presence at every Governors morning and event has helped our children, teachers and staff feel supported and valued. Thank you Sunny, you will be missed by all.

### A word from our Chair of Governors

'Sadly, our Vice-Chair of Governors, Sunny Grewal, has stepped down from the Governing Board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for being such an excellent a member of the governing body and giving up so much of his time to help improve the education and school experience for our children. His knowledge and guidance have been vital over the last 7 years and he will be missed. I know the rest of the Governing Board; the staff and parents will join me in thanking him for his service and wishing him all the best for the future.'

**Joanna Lockwood, Chair of Governors**

Lastly, I wanted to thank you all for the support you have shown to me and the staff this term; we hope that you all have a lovely week together, making memories and enjoying the sun.

**Happy half-term!**

**Ms Palmer and the Garden Fields Team**

