

December 2017



# Christmas Newsletter

## Headteacher's letter

Dear Parents, carers and friends

This is the time of year when we remember so many different traditions such as buying gifts, setting up trees covered in lights and tinsels and keeping an eye out for any passing reindeer. At Grange Park, the end of Term 2 is a busy time and the last week has a more relaxed feel to it: a church service, a whole school trip to the cinema and, of course, the Christmas Dinner. For many pupils, Christmas can be problematic so we try to ensure that changes to the timetable are communicated clearly and information about what a trip actually involves is shared. In this way, we try to reduce the anxiety that any change brings with it and promote that "I can do it" attitude that is so very helpful. This is what school should do. What makes the job so much easier is the role of the pupils themselves. I never fail to be impressed with the profound ways in which pupils support one another. This is sometimes done actively through conversation and specific guidance, at other times we all seem to be swept along in a general wave of enthusiasm. One of the new pupils this year was delighted by the fact that he was *accepted* so readily by his peers. Grange Park prides itself on being a warm and welcoming place and this is very much down to the behaviour and attitude of the pupils.



If there is a theme which sums up the content of this newsletter, it is how well the pupils and students "get stuck in" to the range of activities and challenges put in front of them. Despite the cold and damp, Forest School remains a favourite lesson for Key Stage 3 pupils where new skills are learnt as well as developing the ability to take responsibility for each other and work as part of a team. Looking at the pictures of armour clad pupils at Bodiam Castle, the home-made bows being used in Forest School and the links with Brompton Barracks- should I be worried?

For older pupils getting out into the wider community provides the opportunity to learn about the world of work and is an important step towards adulthood. And then comes the challenge of college, where the environment is hectic and the demands are diverse both on campus and when engaged with work experience. All these activities require the participants to show a determination to succeed. The evidence is that they are doing just that! Well done all.

I couldn't finish this page without referring to what is now a well-established Grange Park tradition, particularly at this time of year: the leaking roof! As I write this, the indoor waterworks feature is in full flow. On the positive side, the pupils deserve the utmost praise for their tolerance of drips, buckets in corridor, enforced room changes and so on. Visitors often comment on how lovely the building is and I never fail to reply that the building isn't the school, the school is the pupils and thank goodness for that!

This year my special mention and gratitude goes to the whole staff team for pulling together so brilliantly.

Lastly, I wish you and yours a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas break.

### Upcoming Events:

Monday 18th December—Christmas Cinema Trip

Tuesday 19th December—Christmas Dinner and Christmas Jumper Day

Wednesday 20th December—End of Term 2

Thursday 4th January 2018 & Friday 5th January 2018—INSET Day (Wrotham) No pupils in school

Monday 8th January 2018—First Day of Term 3 for pupils

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## Chairman of Governors Christmas Wishes

As ever, Grange Park School has been a hive of activity since the start of the school year with our new intake settling in and settling down as they begin new routines and meeting with their teachers and getting to know their classmates.

This time last year I wrote about how we had fared in our Ofsted Report and, whilst we are nowhere near to being Ofsted again, I am pleased to report that we have continued to thrive and build on the recommendations made in it. As governors we do keep a close eye on progress made by all our pupils and are very pleased with the results of various interventions to ensure all our pupils, whether they are in the main school site at Wrotham or in Key Stage 5 at college, get the very best they can from the courses on offer.



Grange Park is one of the 24 special needs schools that make up Kent Special Education Needs Trust (KSENT) and the Trust recently formed a Governor Forum, which met for the first time in November. One of its aims is to increase participation of parents, stakeholders and pupils in the Trust so I imagine I will be writing to you separately on what the Trust can offer you in the months to come. From a governor point of view, one very good thing to have come out of the Governor Forum is bespoke training for governors of special schools. Frequently when we attend courses they have no relevance to special schools and so I am looking forward to attending a course tailored to special schools needs.

We continue to have a vacancy for a Parent Governor and in the New Year we will be asking parents to consider putting their name forward to join the governing body.

As many of you will know, Robert Wyatt has recently been unable to be in school on a full time basis and I have now granted him compassionate leave until the end of term. Robert is fine in himself but he is caring for his partner who needs his support at this time in her life. He has been able to come into school on a random basis and I am hoping that he will be able to return to school full time in the New Year.

I wish everyone the joys of Christmas time.

Sue Murray

Chairman of Governors

## Summer 2017 Exam Results

Last summer saw Grange Park pupils sitting the last of the old style GCSE exams along side the new style exams in English and Maths and the results across the board were very positive. The average number of qualifications each Year 11 pupil achieved was 3.73% with the average number of GCSES per pupil being 3.18%. Five pupils out of the class of eleven achieved a GCSE in both English and Maths.

Sitting exams is always a stressful experience and perhaps even more so for our pupils. The fact that the results were so positive is down to all the hard work that the pupils have put in over the last few years. A very big well done to all those pupils in Year 10, 11 and KS5.



This year Grange Park had a real mix of performing pupils, ranging from Year 8 up to Year 11, all showing off their amazing drama skills.

Rather than last year's tragedy, we opted for the exciting comedy of "A Taming of the Shrew". We rehearsed with fun and laughter, with all pupils adding in their own ideas for their characters.

My favourite scene was the wedding scene where they all congaed their way round the stage, as it just summed up the enjoyment that they had, echoing the pre and post-performance party in the dressing room.

## KS3 Forest School

As the winter months draw in, we are very grateful to the pupils who want to get the fire going and keep us warm. The woodland changes so much with the seasons and many pupils have enjoyed the autumn term in the woods. We have continued to experiment with our cooking on the fire with chicken curry and macaroni cheese being very popular meals. The pupils are very eager to get out into the woodland and as there is plenty to explore nearby, we are hoping to venture further afield with those who wish to do so. Some pupils have spent a lot of time on their dens and they are really coming along well. What always amazes me in Forest School is how often there are opportunities for the pupils to develop in unexpected ways – in kindness, helpfulness and bravery. New friendships are formed and there are lots of firsts in new experiences.

Mrs Dawes



## Thinking of Others

One of the things that Grange Park pupils are very good at is thinking of the others who are more in need than themselves and the fundraising and charitable events that go on in school are always popular. This term alone has seen pupils raising money for Children in Need and McMillan and putting together shoe boxes for Love in a Box.

### Children in Need—November 2017

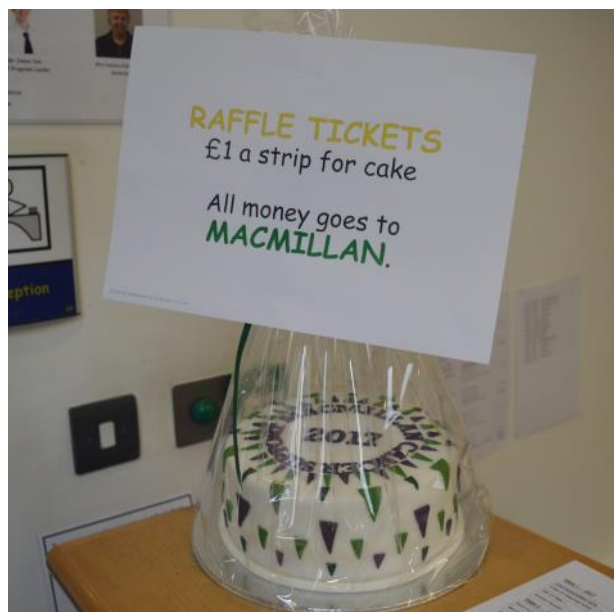
The whole school came out in style to raise money for Children in Need on the 17th November. Staff and pupils dressed in fancy dress and took part in a Children in Need quiz in the hall. Key Stage 5 also had a great time baking and selling cupcakes and they really appreciated all of the wonderful cake contributions that were sent in from home! Between the cake sale, the raffle and the smarties-guessing game, Grange Park managed to raise a massive £467.95 for Children In Need. Well done to all who helped out!



### Macmillan Coffee Afternoon

On 27th September, KS5 held a coffee afternoon to raise money for Macmillan cancer support. Parents and friends of Grange Park School pupils and students were invited into school for the afternoon to buy a cup of coffee and a piece (or pieces of cake) to raise money for the charity. KS5 did a great job of making lots of delicious cakes and serving teas and coffees to our guests. A cake was also raffled off during the afternoon and the Maloney family were the lucky winners.

Thank you to all those who attended and donated cakes for the sale. Overall £243.90 was raised for this very worthy cause.



## Thinking of Others

### Love in a Box

Grange Park supports the Rotary Club with this campaign annually. Year 10 took on the responsibility this year as part of their Citizenship lessons.

First, the pupils researched Love in a Box to understand why it is such an important annual event. They then packed over 20 boxes with gifts such as notebooks, colouring pens, toiletries and sweets! They also put in Christmas cards as they wanted to wish the recipients a Merry Christmas.

The Year 10 pupils impressed me with their mature attitude and development of empathy for children who do not have as much as they do. Here are some pupil reflections about the campaign:

*Reuben: "Love in a Box is an important charity because we need to help people who are poor".*

*Jack: "I felt proud doing this".*

*Regan: "The thought of children not having any fun at Christmas upsets me and it's really unfair so I think it's good that we do this".*



### Harvest Festival

Every year, Grange Park holds a Harvest Festival service at St George's Church, Wrotham. Families and staff at Grange Park are always very generous when sending in donations of food, and this year was no different! Year 8 then did a great job of making and packing the donation boxes to take to the church.

On the day, the whole school then visited the church for the Harvest Festival service and many pupils were kind (and brave!) enough to volunteer to do readings or play the piano. It was great to see so many families and friends of Grange Park also being able to join us for the service. The food donations were greatly appreciated by St George's Church, and by those in need who they were handed out to.



## Year 8 Hever Castle Trip

As part of their studies on The Tudors, Year 8 visited Hever Castle. They were given a guided tour, where many pupils were able to apply their knowledge of King Henry VIII and his wives to answer questions. The tour guide was very impressed with the knowledge that the pupils showed! After the tour, Year 8 had some fun trying to find their way out of the Hever maze and exploring the castle play area. Pupils said about the trip:

Callum: "It was brilliant!"

Emmanuel: "I liked the pictures and the artefacts."

Carmen: "It was big and really cool. I learnt that Henry VIII's bed cover was made out of rabbit."



## Year 7 Bodiam Castle Trip

Year 7 have been learning about castles in term 2 of History. To help their understanding and to see some of the castle features they have been learning about, they went to Bodiam Castle.

Pupils were amazed by how vast and beautiful the castle was on the outside, only to find a ruined castle on the inside! The pupils listened to the history of the castle and could see what rooms would have been in the castle by looking at digital designs. Pupils were also able to take part in an 'Armed and Dangerous' session where they learnt about and tried on armour.

As you can see from the pictures, it was an enjoyable trip and a brilliant learning experience for all!



## Royal Engineers Museum Collaboration

As part of their studies on World War One, Year 9 went on a trip to the Royal Engineers Museum. They don't usually open on a Monday but they opened just for us so we had the run of the place! We had a tour and spent time in a World War One trench. Year 9 enjoyed handling objects and trying to guess what they were for, some of them were over one hundred years old! We then had some time exploring the WW2 galleries as that is our topic next term. We looked at a real V2 rocket and then had the chance to build our own rockets and launch them. A great day was had by all.



This is part of a larger project where Grange Park is working with the museum to ensure that their displays and learning resources are 'autism friendly'. Mrs Dawes has visited the museum on several occasions to evaluate the displays and has been acting as a consultant to the education department. We have also hosted visitors from the museum here at Grange Park so that they can get a taste of working with children and young people with autism. This is an exciting project that we are delighted to be part of and we look forward to seeing how it develops in the future.

## Grange Park Football Team

The Grange Park Football Team has had a busy term taking part in the Kent FA Interschools Disability Football League. Below are reports from both days.

### Tuesday 7th November 2017

The Grange Park football team did exceptionally well in the first football tournament of the season. The tournament is part of a huge league with multiple schools all taking part. All pupils showed great sportsmanship throughout the day, and they represented our school to a very high standard.

All the footballers became incredibly camera shy and refused to take a whole team photo, however Kane, our football sports photographer, managed to get some amazing shots of them during the day.

Well done to all of the team: Henry C, Harry, Kane, Emmanuel, Kian, Regan, Harry and Connor. A good start to the league.

### Thursday 7th December 2017

Rain, rain and more rain! The Grange Park football team endured a full days' football tournament in extremely cold, wet and windy weather for the second fixture of the season. The team did not shy away from the horrid weather and took part in an hour long training session with Mr Lowman prior to leaving school. We arrived at the football ground and attempted to take shelter alongside parents, however the rain was determined to get everywhere it could, even preventing the team's sports photographer, Kane, from taking photos! The two teams (ages 12-15, ages 16+) did exceptionally well, displaying excellent sportsmanship and scoring lots of goals; Jordan scored an incredible goal whilst goal keeping! It was a brilliant day, regardless of the weather conditions and walking back into school with our clothes dripping wet made everyone chuckle. All staff and pupils had big smiles on their faces throughout and spoke highly of the day! The team can be very proud of themselves, I certainly am.

KS5: Jordan, Tom, Ethan. YEAR 11: Harry E, Harry S, Henry, Connor. YEAR 10: Max, Regan, Kane. YEAR 8: Kian, Emmanuel, William.

Miss Wilson



## Transition to KS5

The transition from Grange Park to Mid Kent College was really nerve wrecking because I did not know what to expect from the college until my college induction that I had. I started to make some new friends who were from another school and some from the college.

I did not know as much information about this college until I had a meeting with Mandy about the college and in the classroom during my induction I was told all about what the college expects from me and the college rules.

I really enjoyed my first work experience in performing arts, we were painting props for the show in December. I really enjoy doing performing arts lessons every Thursday with Maxine. I have enjoyed making new friends in performing arts. I have enjoyed working with the staff because they were really friendly and helpful. PY

*"Although the first couple of months at Grange Park have been stressful, they have been fun. Probably the thing I have enjoyed the most is being able to cook. I am not sure what I am looking forward to most, as there's a lot coming up and going on."* KL

*"I've found my first term at Grange Park quite good, nice and interesting. I've really enjoyed making new friends. I also enjoyed going out and doing activities and making things in Food Tech etc". I am looking forward to work experience at the Holiday Inn and getting some extra qualifications."* E K-B

*"It's been alright at Grange Park School so far. I've really enjoyed making new friends and getting to know people. This year I hope to improve my grades and progress onto college."* RC



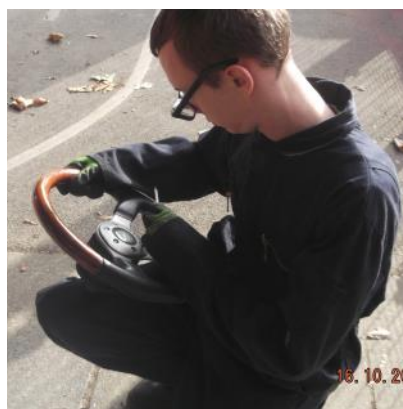
*Painting Props, GP @ MKC Medway*



*Painting Props, GP @ MKC Medway*



*Looking after the animals at  
KS5 Wrotham*



*Motor Mechanics*



*KS5 @ MKC Gillingham*

## Work Experience

Work experience is an important part of the curriculum in Key Stage 5 as it not only gives students the opportunity to gain an insight into the sort of careers that they might like to look at in the future, but it also is an opportunity to gain some independence and learn life skills that they can take with them into adulthood.

Below are some of the students' comments about their work experience placements:

*I enjoy holding the piglet called Jessie and White Rocks. SS*

*I enjoy going to White Rocks Farm on Wednesday. I like feeding and looking after animals because I like learning about animals and learning something new about them. GE*

*I like to work at Coronation Garage because I like working on cars. GL*

*I like selling vegetables to people at Communigrow and I enjoy going to White Rocks Farm. JM*

*I like working with Paul and Rochenda at Communigrow. RC*

*I enjoyed working at the Co-Op, stocking up the shelves, putting price tags on and working behind the till. MD*

*My favourite job was picking up the piglet at White Rocks. KH*

*My favourite thing has been working at the Holiday Inn. EB*

*I like feeding the pigs on Wednesday mornings at White Rocks because they are always happy to see us and it's fun. KL*



*Selling vegetables at Communigrow*



*Picking apples at White Rocks*

## College Partnerships—Work Experience

### Child Care Placement

This is what I do at Smarties Nursery, I look after younger children aged between 3-5 years old. Normally when I first get there, I have to sign myself in using the signing in folder.

After that I join the children and help with the children's activities they are doing. Normally when I first get there, they are doing their indoor activities, before they get ready to go outside and do some outdoor activities like ride their trikes round the playground space they have got, or build nice sandcastles using the sand table and they can draw using the drawing table too.

Then after that I go for my lunch at 12 o'clock. I am allowed to eat in the staff room they have got. I normally talk with the staff there, and to Jane who supports me while I am there.

Then after that it is snack time, which is one of my jobs to do, I help make the snack table ready for the children, then I go round asking the children if they would like a snack, I have 4 children at the table at the time, I help them cut or peel their fruit.

When snack time is finished I have to wash up all the plates and bowls used at the sink, making sure it's all clean for the next time they need to use them. When I have done this it's usually time to leave and go back to college. MB



### Hospitality and Catering

I am currently doing 100 hrs of external work experience at the Hilton Hotel in Maidstone. I arrive at The Hilton Hotel at around 9:00 every Monday morning and work for 5 hrs until 2:30 in the afternoon.

There are other students doing work experience there and I enjoy talking with them. Some of our duties depend on who we are partnered up with for the day. When I work with the barista I mostly serve tea and coffee and other food and beverages to customers.

When I'm with the kitchen staff, I set up tables and prepare the eating area for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Sometimes I even help cater for meetings and events in the hotel. DB



### Thank you to all our Work Experience Partners

Coronation Garage, Wrotham

Holiday Inn, Wrotham

Newsstand Comics and Candy, Dartford

Co-op Store, Borough Green

Chappell Coach Works, West Kingsdown

Communigrow, East Malling

WHSmiths, Dartford

Thank you to all those companies who take on students for work experience.

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## Life after Grange Park

It is good to hear of our previous students' successes and what they are doing now. Mr Sim recently had the pleasure of speaking to Reece who left us in July 2017 to find out how he is getting on with life after Grange Park.

What did you study at college?

I studied motor vehicle and repair. Grade 1 and Grade 2

What is your job?

My job title is Site Co-ordinator at Beadles Skoda in Aylesford.

I have to keep the customers cars accessible for them to pick up. I also drive all over the place to pick up customers' cars, recently I have been to Cornwall, Edenbridge, Dartford and Dover to pick up and drop off cars for customers.

How did you find the job?

It started when we had a Careers Day at college, I went to Beadles on work experience, doing 3 days at College and 2 days at Beadles in their workshop doing car maintenance along with the technicians there. I learnt of a job coming up, with the help of Jean ( Mid Kent College) I applied for the job and got a trial then was offered the job.

What is the best thing about work?

Being paid for the work

Is there anything you don't like about work or would change?

Lack of input being a junior.

What is the coolest thing you have bought with your pay?

A Skoda Octavia VRS and a project car to race at Brands Hatch.

What do you have planned next?

To get my project car race ready and take part in track days at Brands Hatch.

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## Grange Park School Term Dates 2017-2018

Please note that the term dates for Grange Park @ MKC and Grange Park @ Hadlow may differ slightly from the above. Term dates for the partnership colleges can be found on the Grange Park website.

Wednesday 20th December 2017	End of Term 2
Monday 8th January 2018	Start of Term 3 for pupils
Friday 9th February 2018	End of Term 3
Monday 19th February 2018	Start of Term 4
Wednesday 28th March 2018	End of Term 4 for pupils
Monday 16th April 2018	Start of Term 5
Friday 25th May 2018	End of Term 5
Monday 4th June 2018	Start of Term 6
Friday 20th July 2018	End of Term 6



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year  
from  
Grange Park School