

July 2017



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Headteacher's letter

Dear Parents, carers and friends,

*"Have you seen the weather?"
"Yes, I think it's outside."*

This used to be a favourite joke. Unfortunately, at Grange Park the weather is often inside! The roof leaked (yet again) but this time onto an electrical distribution box which we had to isolate. This meant all six classrooms had no electricity for a week. This could and should have been a real drama/crisis but the pupils and students took it in their stride. Despite some forced room changes and some lessons going on in rather dim lighting, everything ran smoothly. As somebody wiser than me said: *'Happiness is not the absence of problems; it's the ability to deal with them.'* The big buzz word in Education this year is "resilience" – the capacity to bounce back when things go wrong – and pupils in school have shown that they have it in bucket loads. It is sometimes easy to forget how much effort it can take someone with autism to get through an "ordinary" day, how stressful it is when the signposts you were relying on are suddenly changed, when the rules are ignored, when the promise is broken. These things happen, of course, but knowing that doesn't help, especially when you are already struggling to cope. So having resilience is an important life skill – it gets you through difficulties and out the other side ready to try again.



This has been another busy year reviewing our practice and working hard to meet pupil aspirations – giving them the opportunities to achieve both now and in the future. Part of the reviewing process was an audit of our safeguarding practice carried out by the Local Authority. The Safeguarding Officer looked at our policies and files before talking to pupils and staff. I am pleased to report that Grange Park has been recognised as "a very safe environment for children..." and "safeguarding arrangements are compliant with current guidance".

Inside this edition there is a focus on art: Mrs Hayter has been working enthusiastically to unlock pupils' artistic talent with a range of activities both in and out of school. She gets a big "well done" for making use of the kiln for the very first time. There are also articles about outdoor activities: Carroty Wood and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. I don't think Mrs Hughes **meant** to choose the wettest night in months to send the D of E group off for their overnight expedition but they all came back smiling! Well done to all the staff who gave up their time to enable those activities to happen.

Finally, I have to say "fare thee well" to our leavers. On behalf of the staff team I wish you all the very best for your futures. You will be much missed but thank you for what you have given the school in your time here. It has been a privilege to have worked with you and watched you grow.

Robert Wyatt

Upcoming Events:

Friday 21st July —End of Term 6

Thursday 24th August—Exam Results Day

Friday 1st September—Staff Development Day (no pupils in school)

Monday 4th September— First Day of School for Pupils

Message from The Chair of Governors

The end of the school year is one that is always packed with activities for our pupils and students to enjoy but it is also a time for change whether moving up a year group, moving on to college or leaving Grange Park School (GPS) for further education or the workplace.

The governing body has remained fairly stable this past year with one new governor, Debbie Fernandez, who joined us as a Community Governor in the Spring. We are still short of a parent governor and will be canvassing for such a governor in the Autumn.



As governors we have concentrated on the School Development Plan, ensuring targets are set and subsequently met. We can and do ask some challenging questions of Mr Wyatt and his Senior Leadership Team. We are also very aware of our Safeguarding responsibilities to ensure that every child feels safe in the environment of GPS.

In previous newsletters I have spoken about Kent Special Education Needs Trust (KsENT) a group set up some three years ago to act as an umbrella organisation to represent the 24 special schools in Kent. Over the past two years I have been actively involved in this process and from September the partnership "proper" begins.

Not all 24 schools have joined KsENT, Academies, legally, cannot be members and a few others are happier to be partnership schools rather than full members. With an ever-changing education scene, it is my belief that KsENT will provide all Kent special schools with the necessary tools to remain independent in a partnership rather than become a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) where, I believe, identities and ethos can be lost.

KsENT will be a partnership committed to an evidence based and self-improving public service education system: best value and best practice in every teaching and learning situation: developing resilient and sustainable learning communities: securing recognition for outstanding teaching and learning provision.

Exciting times as all this beds in!

Sue Murray

Update on Education Health Care Plans

Over the last two academic years, we have been converting Statements of SEN to Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) as part of the Annual Review process and I am pleased to say that we have now carried out the meetings to transfer all Grange Park pupils to the new system. This is ahead of the KCC deadline of April 2108. I realise that there are some plans which have still to be issued by KCC but we are doing all we can to chase these up and make sure that they are a true reflection of the pupils' needs. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for your understanding and patience during the process as it has been a huge learning curve for all those involved. Hopefully the process is now embedded and we can look forward to the next challenge of ensuring pupils succeed with their outcomes and achieve their aspirations.

Exam Results Day– Thursday 24th August 2017

Grange Park School will be open from 10.00am to 12.30pm on 24th August for pupils to collect their results in person. If pupils are away on holiday or are unable to come into school on the 24th, results can be collected by:

- Sending in a self addressed envelope with sufficient postage on it before Results Day. Results will then be posted on the afternoon of the 24th August.
- Sending in a letter prior to Results Day, giving permission for someone to collect the results on the pupil's behalf. The person collecting will need to have a copy of the letter and photographic identification with them when they collect the results.
- Results can be collected when school starts again in September.

If you have any queries with this, please contact the Exams Officer, Pauline Lowman.

Science

Once again pupils have grown plants as one of their science projects.

KS4 pupils carried out field trials on the effect of environment on plant growth, for their GCSE coursework.

KS3 pupils grew plants to brighten up the school environment or to sell to raise money for seeds and compost next year .

So far, the sale of plants has raised just under £160 (target £250). Many thanks to all who have supported the pupils by buying the plants, and in some cases, making a donation.

Year 7 pupils entered the sunflower growing competition which was won by Brynne, who kept a detailed diary of the development of his sunflower as it reached a majestic height. The runners up were Rhone, Nathan, Daniel, William, Kian and Emmanuel who all demonstrated their ability to care for sunflowers.

Well done all!

Mrs Taylor



Year 11 Trip to Tate Britain

Peter's Experience at Tate Britain

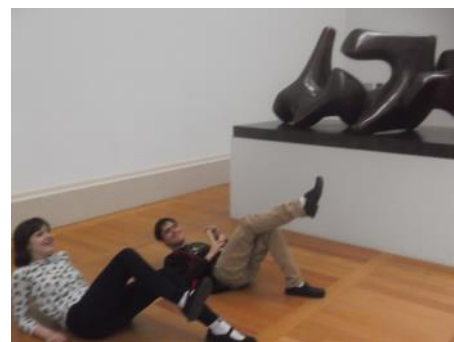
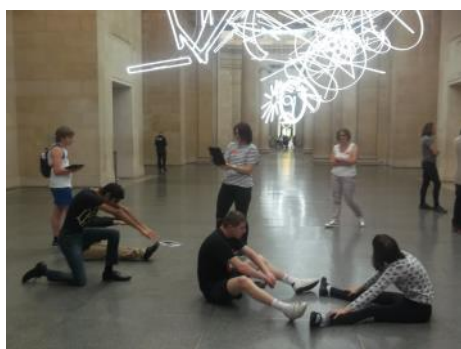
"At Tate Britain all of us in Year 11 walked up the stairs and saw a sculpture and Mrs Hayter told us to make shapes of the fireworks patterns with our bodies.

We all went into another room surrounded by paintings and statues and we tried to trace or draw the shapes on one of the paintings.

After that we went into another room and looked at some statues and tried to mimic it. Then we had lunch.

After lunch we went into a room full of lights and listened to the music.

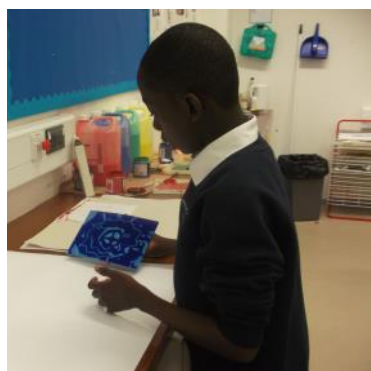
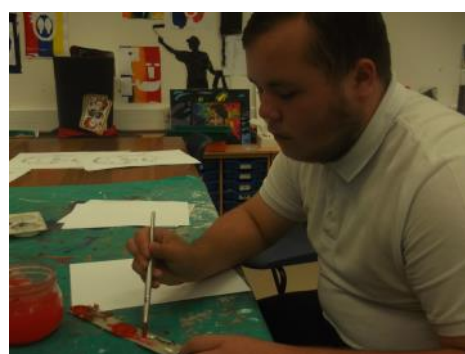
After that we all went into the shop and looked around. Then we went into the last room full of more paintings and statues."



Art Round Up of the Year

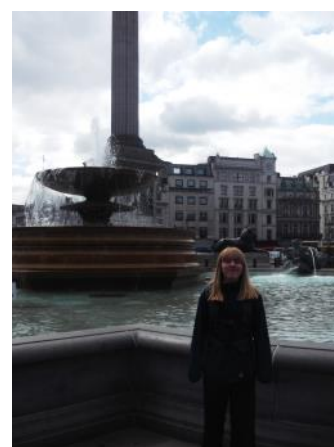
The art department have had a very busy year this year with the introduction of a new art curriculum for KS3. Topics include investigating patterns and influences from the around the world, drawing projects which looked at perspective, still life and portraits and creating drawings and sculptures using natural forms as the inspiration.

Year 7 and 8 have been using lino, block printing and screen printing to make patterns as well as making decorative plaster casts and drawings looking at seasonal subjects connected to the sea, beaches and nature. Year 9 have been creating sitting portraits influenced by the artist, David Hockney.



In addition, as art is not all about being in the classroom but about getting inspiration from the world all around, several year groups have been out and about visiting art galleries and museums.

The KS4 GCSE group started their GCSE Portraiture project after Christmas and they visited the National Portrait Gallery to get some ideas and to take part in a workshop led by the resident artist. As it was one of the pupil's first ever visit to London, they also managed to fit in a visit to Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery while they were there.



Art Round Up of the Year

Year 8 visited The Wallace Collection where they explored the museum investigating patterns, admired the art-work and took part in a printing workshop.



As part of their alternative timetable, once the exams were over, Year 11 went on an interactive trip to Tate Britain. They took part in a range of activities including mimicking sculptures using their bodies and using different types of media to look at the artwork, all of which were aimed at introducing different ways of viewing and responding to art.



We were also excited to get the kiln up and running for the first time. This was installed 7 years ago but up to now there has not been the opportunity to use it properly. We have certainly put it to good use this term though. Year 7 have looked at Gainsborough's "Mr and Mrs Andrews" and created some clay hats and Year 8 responded to Fragonard's "The Swing" producing some lovely clay shoes. Year 9 also made some ceramic cakes in the style of pop artist Wayne Thiebaud.



Of course, we could not round up the year without mentioning "Art for Autism". We were delighted that some of our pupils' work was selected to be on display at the Stephen Oliver gallery in Dartford.

Mrs Hayter

Carrotty Wood Residential—26th June to 28th June

This year we took a group of Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils and students to Carrotty Wood in Tonbridge for a residential trip.

The trip was very successful, everyone had a wonderful time and the pupils behaved impeccably throughout the 3 days. We followed a programme of team building activities and social skills development. The pupils also carried out duties such as making their own beds, washing up and drying up the dishes, taking the rubbish to the bins and setting up tables, chairs, cutlery and putting them away again.

I was impressed with the pupils' commitment to their duties and in particular, with the way in which they helped each other out if they were struggling to understand what they needed to do in any of the activities.

It was an action packed few days and we were on the go all the time with activities such as archery, low ropes, relay, high ropes, mission impossible, bush craft fire training and swimming. Pupils challenged themselves to take part in activities which they had never done before and even if they were feeling anxious, they were still willing to give things a go. They coped extremely well and had fun. A great time had by all!

Mrs Brooks

Progress Leader for Key Stage 4



Carrotty Wood Residential—26th June to 28th June



Duke of Edinburgh Update

The first Grange Park School Duke of Edinburgh group have only gone and done it...they have just passed their Bronze DofE award!!! The award consists of 4 sections which pupils had to spend between 3 and 6 months completing each one in order to pass.

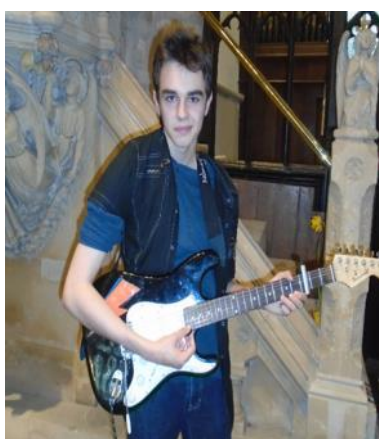
Pupils began their journey by completing 3 months of cycling at the Cyclo Park for their physical section. They received specialist coaching and learnt how to change gears properly, how to corner and all improved their cardiovascular fitness.



Next they began their volunteering section where they worked at Fort Amherst clearing some of the grounds to make them more useable for members of the public.



For the skills section, pupils chose from a large list something that they wanted to improve on. Our pupils chose among others learning to play an instrument, gardening, animal care and photography.



Duke of Edinburgh Update

Along the way pupils had to undertake some expedition training which involved practising navigation skills, cooking their own food and putting up their own tents.



Lastly pupils had a practice expedition followed by their qualifying expedition. On the qualifying expedition pupils were assessed throughout to ensure they met the standards set by DofE.



All seven pupils have shown grit and determination, particularly when the elements were against them! They have persevered through rain, wind and 30 degree heat and despite it all, have come through smiling. They can all be incredibly proud of themselves!

Well done team!

Mrs Hughes

PE

Tag Rugby

During terms 5 and 6, Grange Park welcomed Darren Reeves, an experienced RFU rugby coach, to come in and deliver some Tag Rugby coaching sessions to Years 7, 8 and 9. Darren is employed by the RFU to promote tag rugby amongst Special Needs Schools across Kent. The sessions were pretty intense but also exciting and lots of fun. Everybody joined in and improved their skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of rugby.

For those pupils who wanted to experience more, there was a Tag Rugby Festival which took place at Aylesford Rugby Club with a number of other schools. The pupils who went enjoyed the skill practices before competing against other schools' teams. They all came back tired but triumphant.

Well done to all pupils who participated in these events.

Mrs Hughes



Sports Leaders Award

For the first time at Grange Park, Year 11 have completed a sports leaders qualification. Throughout the year pupils have learnt about the skills and behaviours required to be an effective leader, developing their communication, organisation and confidence along the way. All pupils had to plan and lead three different sports sessions as well as being able to lead in a variety of different situations. The pupils who completed the Level 2 Award also planned and led a basketball tournament as well as helping to deliver Key Stage 3 PE lessons.

Well done to all Year 11 pupils for completing this qualification.



Key Stage 5

It is that time of year when we look back over the year and also have to say Goodbye to those students who are moving on from us into Post 19 provision, employment or to one of the Grange Park College Partnerships. Here are a few of their best bits:



I like Rectory Close, White Rocks and Pepenbury because they are brilliant. I liked my printing on a Friday. I have made loads of friends. MC

I've enjoyed seeing my friends each day and getting to use the gym at Larkfield. GW



I like using the school's art and music facilities to improve my skills. GO



I enjoy going to the Holiday Inn and White Rocks for work experience, and I also really enjoy going swimming. WB

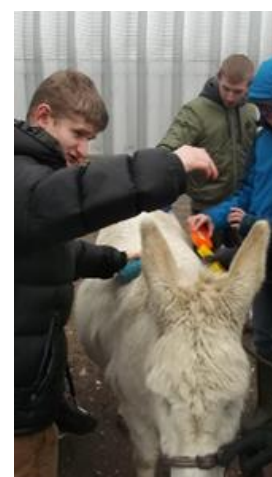
I made loads of new friends and I enjoy going to Pepenbury and working as a team to look after the animals. GB



I enjoy work experience at Communigrow because it's quiet and peaceful. JS



I liked learning to look after the chickens, going to White Rocks and going swimming on Tuesdays. SP



Key Stage 5

Driveability

It was really exciting for Grange Park to be invited to join in a brand new venture set up in partnership with the NHS Mobility Driveability Charity. This brand new project is designed to give KS5 students the opportunity to learn to drive. Being able to drive a car would help our students gain independence and support the transition to adulthood and employment. This is the first time that this has ever been done and is going to be shared with Mobility centres nationally as good practice.



Over the last few weeks, students have been assessed by clinicians who have looked at their cognitive ability and response times, decision-making, attention and self-control to drive. Students with provisional licences have also had a practical assessment. Following their assessments, the students get a report which says if they will be able to manage the requirements needed for driving as well as any adaptations they may need.

The next stage, which we are just about to embark on, involves the driving lessons themselves. We are delighted that Driveability have agreed to match the cost of commercial driving instructors and will provide instructors with an awareness of autistic students additional needs. After 10 lessons, a clinician will sit in the lesson, assess progress and recommend any additional adaptations/support needed to ensure good progress.

Driveability are also keen to support with theory assessment, but at the moment this is still in the planning stages as it has never been done before. We are hoping that this is something which we can offer during the next academic year. So far, 15 students have been or are awaiting their assessments and we look forward to seeing the first students gain their full driving licences soon.

Work Experience

Two of our KS5 students have successfully started work placements at Coronation Garage, Wrotham and the Co-operative store in Borough Green.

GW has been travelling independently since the end of June to the Co-op to organise his placement and then to start working at the store. He's completed two independent days and has learnt to "front" shelves where products are brought to the front of the shelves so customers buy them first. He has also taken responsibility for letting staff know where he is and keeping them informed about his progress.

GL has also been very impressive and after a short initial visit, is now staying at the garage independently. He is completing the tasks set for him and learning new skills such as using air tools and, more importantly, how to make a good cup of tea. Apparently he is already very good at consuming them!



College Partnerships

Work Experience at Little Fant Farm

"After being given jobs at Little Fant Farm that I did not like, I was surprised that I was given a job that I liked - looking after a baby duck named Bean.

We don't know if it is a boy or girl yet we have to wait until it has grown a bit. It likes to go and have a splash and I make sure the ducks or geese don't get too close and try to attack the duckling.

If it is too hot I go to sit under a tree and Bean follows me and sometimes sits on my lap. I hope the next time that happens it doesn't poo on my lap.

Lately something has changed, he seems to go near others and sometimes acts like I'm not here and just runs off. I don't know if he is playing around but if he is serious about running off he could get hurt by the bigger animals.

The other jobs that I do are cleaning the chicken bowls and putting food or water in them. Also I put in fresh hay in the chicken coops and if there is eggs I take them to Sonya the lady who owns the farm. The hay that we get out of the coop goes to the muck heap."



Animal Care at Hadlow College

"I enjoyed this year because I got lots of help, understood the work and my colleagues were a laugh.

We studied subjects I enjoyed like biology where we looked into the internal systems and structures of different animals (e.g. mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates) I also feel like I can be more independent when out and about or while working. I think that I worked hard, especially recently when I found out I would get a merit overall for this year's work, which made me proud of myself."



My First Year at College

"When I first started college I was very shy and quiet, I only had a couple of friends. I struggled sometimes in practical lessons as I didn't always know what jobs I had to do and didn't have the confidence to ask. It was difficult to walk to my lessons at the time as I had fractured my foot a week or two before. By Christmas I could walk a lot easier and I had become more confident talking with the people in my group.

When I came back in January I had made a lot more friends within the college and had more confidence to speak my opinions.

I'm working really hard in my practical lessons now and always ask a member of staff if I'm not sure about something. I get on really well with the people in my group now, we always look out for each other and make each other laugh."



Art Exhibition

Paddy, Jack and George have all shown their artwork at The Mid Kent Exhibition and Paddy also had his art composition in the style of Angie Lewin chosen to be displayed at the Maidstone Community Centre. It was one of only three to be chosen out of the whole class.

Outreach

Visit from Paul Isaacs – Autism and Sensory Issues

On Thursday 29 June 2017, Grange Park Outreach hosted an event with Paul Isaacs, who came to speak to us and our colleagues from mainstream and other special schools in Kent.

His talk provided the audience with a unique insight in to what it is like to be a person on the autistic spectrum with a focus on the sensory issues that different individuals face.

Paul firmly believes in retaining the ASD acronym. He says there should not be a negative stigma around the word 'disorder'. His message was that Autism is a complex mix of ability and disability and that each and every person with autism (and all people) should be a valued member of society.

75 people attended the twilight event and Paul was described as 'brilliant', "inspirational", "amazing, "enthusiastic" and "engaging".

Here's a few photos of Paul in action:



Our next Outreach event will be on Wednesday 4 October 2017 from 4.30pm-6.30pm with Sarah Hendriks who will be talking about Classroom Approaches to ASC. This event is free.



You can register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/classroom-approaches-to-asc-with-sarah-hendriks-tickets-35369593406>

Alternatively, email outreach@grangepark.kent.sch.uk to register.

And finally...

Everyone who has had the opportunity to visit Grange Park over the last few weeks cannot have failed to see the polytunnel and shed which moved to their new home on the grass bank by the carpark earlier in the year. It has been one of Mrs Taylor's missions this year to brighten up the outside spaces around the school with the help of the pupils and they have certainly succeeded. The shed is looking resplendent with a riot of colour from all the flowers that are now covering it and a new pond is in the early stages of being established.



We hope you have a lovely,
restful summer!



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.

Monday 4th September	Start of Term 1 for pupils
Friday 20th October	End of Term 1
Monday 30th October	Start of Term 2
Wednesday 20th December	End of Term 2
Monday 8th January	Start of Term 3 for pupils
Friday 9th February	End of Term 3
Monday 19th February	Start of Term 4
Wednesday 28th March	End of Term 4 for pupils
Monday 16th April	Start of Term 5
Friday 25th May	End of Term 5
Monday 4th June	Start of Term 6
Friday 20th July	End of Term 6