



December 2016

# Headteacher's letter

Dear parents, carers, colleagues and friends,

A well respected and highly knowledgeable visitor to the school remarked that anybody wishing to get a real sense of what Grange Park School does should come in at lunchtime and sit with the pupils eating lunch. They wait their turn, make their choices, eat their food and talk to each about a range of issues some funny some serious. If I were to voice one grumble about the recent Ofsted report it is that much of what they looked at was what the school does rather than what the **pupils** do. As disappointed as we were to only come out with *good* it was heartening to receive so many positive comments from parents; in my mind these are far more significant because you see the real impact of what the school does.



I have always maintained that Grange Park should be judged not just on exam results but on how well pupils are prepared to face the challenge of the outside world and how well we support our pupils on the path to adulthood. This isn't just about the *academic* versus *life skills* argument, it is about helping pupils to cope with all the unexpected things that life throws our way: the craziness of random events or the unexpected animosity of some individuals. Things don't always turn out the way we want them to and, as difficult as this sometimes is, we all have to cope with that.

What parents and carers can appreciate is what sort of effort, determination and sheer courage it takes Grange Park pupils to achieve something which looks quite simple and straightforward. For some pupils in this morning's church service, it wasn't the actual reading out of a text or the singing of a carol that was the difficult thing, it was the anxiety caused by being off timetable and in a strange place – and how magnificently they overcame that anxiety!

At Grange Park we work hard to involve pupils in the way they learn by delivering lessons at the right level, in an appropriate way and, whenever possible, in a fun way. Those of you with older children will be more aware of the increase in the range of vocational subjects such as construction, motor mechanics and hair and beauty as well as the courses on offer at the college partnerships. Inside this newsletter you will find information about Outdoor Learning for Key Stage 3 pupils which isn't solely designed to get pupils wet and muddy (!) but encourages them to think creatively, tackle problems in a practical way and learn about themselves in relation to the natural world. Also the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award which provides other levels of practical challenge for pupils and students.

I do hope, at this hectic time of year, that you and yours can enjoy and appreciate time together. Please be reminded that possibly the most relevant learning your child has done at school is how to wash and dry up!

## Upcoming Events

20th December—Christmas Jumpers and Christmas Dinner

21st December—Christmas Cinema Trip

21st December—Last Day of Term (taxis at normal time)

3rd January—INSET Day Wrotham site (no pupils in school)

4th January—First Day of Term for Pupils (Wrotham site)

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## Message from the Chair of Governors

Christmas seems to come around more quickly every year – even though we know the date remains a fixture on our calendars!

So much has happened in school since summer – a new intake of pupils who are settling in, an Ofsted Inspection and our Co-operative Trust moving forward which, together with the general busyness of school have made the time fly by.

In October the Inspector arrived from Ofsted and judgement made. We remain in Ofsted terms a 'Good' school but viewed through my eyes I believe we are a very good school with many outstanding features. It was a disappointment not to be awarded an 'Outstanding', however, the goal posts have moved since our Ofsted four years ago and the 'Good' we have just received is based on a far more exacting criteria than that of 2012. The school has moved onwards and upwards, the expectations of our pupils are higher and their achievements are greater. Our teaching and non-teaching staff are highly motivated and this encourages pupils to do their very best.

The Governing Body is twelve governors strong but at the moment we are one governor short and have a vacancy for a Parent Governor. The Full Governing Body meets 6 times a year, Teaching & Learning Committee 6 times a year and Resources Committee 3 times a year. Meetings last approximately 2 hours and usually begin at 3pm. If any parent or carer is interested in becoming a governor, please get in touch with either Mr Wyatt or myself for more information.

I would like to wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a splendid New Year..

Sue Murray

Chairman of Governors



## Summer Exam Results

A big well done and congratulations to last year's Year 11 pupils and Key Stage 5 students for their exam results. Year on year the number of GCSEs and the grades that the pupils and students are achieving is getting higher and this year is no different with a bumper crop! A special mention needs to go to Paddy for achieving a grade A in GCSE Art; Alex for achieving a B in GCSE History; to Jack J for achieving a Grade C in GCSE and to George for achieving a C in Art.

These results are testament to the amount of hard work that the pupils put in both during lessons and in revision sessions and the fact that they want to achieve the best that they can.

Well done!



## Grange Park School Guinea Pigs

Science welcomes two new arrivals to the department. They are guinea pigs called Honey Monster and Jessie Boy. Both the guinea pigs were donated by someone who had moved house and was unable to take them with them. The guinea pigs are very friendly and are used to being handled and as you can see, they are very popular with the pupils.

Mrs Taylor



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## Active Learning

### French Residential Trip to Hardelot—July 2016

Right at the end of the summer term, after the last newsletter went to print, a group of pupils from Years 7 to 11 spent 3 days in France practising their French language skills under the watchful eye of Mrs Mundy.

The trip started with a picnic and visit to the Nausicaa Aquarium in Boulogne where pupils had the opportunity to stroke rays and large fish and watch the sea lion display. We then drove to The Hardelot Centre where pupils sampled some French food and mint cordial, before preparing their rooms at the chalet and exploring the woods and facilities on the site.

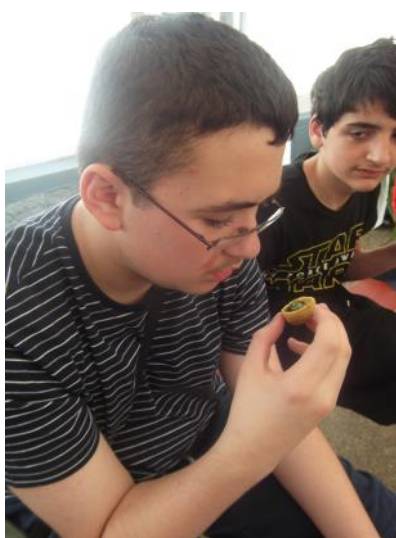
The next day we visited a village bakery where we made croissants before heading straight on to a snail farm where we had the opportunity to handle and sample the goods. Some of the snails seemed a little too keen on the final destination! The day's activities were rounded off with a fascinating and tasty visit to a chocolate factory.

In the evening a number of pupils made a quick visit to the beach to enjoy the last of the day's sunshine.

On the final day we visited the old, walled town of Boulogne and pupils had the opportunity to practise their French and money skills in the shops.

All in all it was a very successful trip enjoyed by all pupils and staff.

Mr Sim





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## Active Learning

### Forest School

Forest School is a new addition to the curriculum at Grange Park School and is an excellent way of putting the skills learnt in the classroom into practice along with learning survival skills and life skills.

Pupils from Years 7 to 9 all have Outdoor Learning lessons at various points throughout the week and even with the winter weather now settling in, lessons don't stop. Outdoor learning happens whatever the weather!

Pupils have been exploring some more of the woodland around the school grounds and beyond. Year 9 have even discovered a small stream which they climbed in, walking the rest of the way in water.

The school have been given thirty five trees by the Woodland Trust. The pupils have enjoyed planting these knowing that they are going to be able to watch them grow for a few years and that they have left their mark on the environment.

Pupils have done all sorts of activities this term including hanging hammocks and making emergency shelters and natural water filters. They have even made their own woodland creatures with googly eyes.

There are so many more adventures to come.

Mrs Dawes



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## Active Learning

### Duke of Edinburgh Award

From September 2016, pupils and students in KS4 and KS5 have been working towards their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. Like the Forest School this is a new addition to the Grange Park curriculum and offers pupils and students the opportunity to develop their independence and confidence as well learning new skills.

In order to achieve the Award, pupils have to learn a new skill, take part in some physical activity or sport and do some voluntary work. They also have to complete a one night expedition which they organise and plan themselves with the support of Grange Park staff.

At the moment, the pupils are working towards the physical section and are working on their cycling techniques at the Cyclopark in Gravesend. They have been getting to grips with the tandem bikes and balance bikes and some of the more adventurous of the group have even been doing a bit of mountain biking!

For the skills section, pupils have been given a choice of what they would like to do. Choices include amongst others: photography, learning a musical instrument and animal care. You never know we may have some budding rock stars or David Baileys in the school!

As for the volunteering section, the group are looking to volunteer at a local park or wildlife reserve in the new year.

The expedition itself will be later in the year with a practice hike in February. Pupils will be learning all about map reading and putting tents up in school before venturing out into the local area with the support of staff from school.

This year is the first time that the Duke of Edinburgh Award has been run at Grange Park so we are hoping it will be a success that we can build on in future years. The experiences and skills that the pupils and students will gain by taking part are all things which they can include on their CVs and will hopefully help them along the path to further education and employment in adult life.





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## Active Learning

### Visit to Bodiam Castle

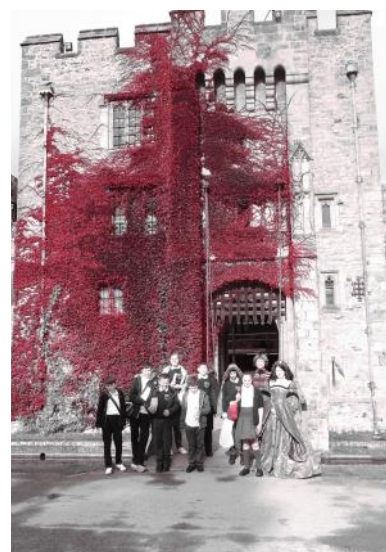
Year 7 had a brilliant day at Bodiam Castle! Pupils were able to see and experience many of the defensive features of castles that they have been learning about in History. They also participated in an activity called 'Armed and Dangerous'! This was a hands-on learning experience where all pupils were able to try on the armour that a knight would have worn. They also had the opportunity to handle some of the weapons that might have been used.



### Visit to Hever Castle

Year 8 visited Hever Castle as part of their history studies. They have been learning about the Tudors during Terms 1 and 2. Visiting Hever Castle was a great opportunity to learn more about King Henry VIII and his family, as well as to get an experience of what life in the Tudor times might have been like.

We were given a guided tour of the castle where the pupils asked lots of questions and had the chance to apply some of the information they had learnt in their lessons. After the tour, Year 8 had lots of fun exploring the castle grounds and attempting to find their way out of the maze!



## Active Learning

### Visit to Dungeness Power Station

On 24<sup>th</sup> November the Year 11 science GCSE group went on a tour of Dungeness Power station to see how electricity was generated using nuclear power. This is what they had to say about the trip....

"Such an awesome experience at the Dungeness Power Stations, to be shown and told how it all works" Jack

"It was really amazing and outstanding to see Dungeness Power Station" Katie

"I really enjoyed the Dungeness Power Station experience because I loved watching the big machines work and the 3D drawing of the tardis" Peter

"It has been the best trip we have been on EVER." Josh



### Shakespeare for Schools

This year Grange Park decided to perform Julius Caesar for the Shakespeare for Schools production; a tragedy about a conspiracy in the Roman Senate. The pupils attended a workshop on stage at The Woodville in Gravesend, practising performance techniques, and looking at initial scene ideas. They then gave up two lunch breaks a week to devise and practise each scene. After weeks of rehearsing the day had come to perform at the theatre.

We had a technical run through on stage, practising where to stand and deciding which lighting looked best, then performed a dress rehearsal in front of one of the other schools. Everyone performed brilliantly, remembering their lines and knowing when to come on and where to stand. During our tea break, we even had an extra party outside the theatre when we discovered that the Gravesend Christmas lights were being switched on, and danced for half an hour to clear away the nerves. Excited and ready to perform, we returned to the dressing room to put on costumes and wait for our call to the stage.

Unfortunately, due to a gas leak in the theatre, we were evacuated out of the building and the show didn't proceed. We will however be given a revised performance date for the new year, and the show will go on!

Mrs Freeman





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## Remembrance Day 2016

With such a huge success of our Remembrance Day last year, we decided to repeat this event again, only this year we arranged our crosses in the shape of a giant cross.

On the morning of the 11th November the whole of Grange Park School took part in planting their crosses on the school mound. Pupils and staff were supplied with wooden crosses which had been made using the laser cutting machine in the technology workshop. Pupils and staff wrote messages on their crosses and decorated them with their own handmade poppies.

At 11am the whole school took part in a 2 minutes silence.

In addition to this Year 9 also made some ceramic poppies. They skilfully used clay to create some beautiful and elegant poppies.

Mrs Brooks and Mrs Hayter



## Harvest Festival

In October, Grange Park went to St George's Church, Wrotham, for our annual Harvest Festival service. As part of their learning about active citizenship, Year 11 pupils helped with the planning of this event. They researched Harvest Festival, created eye-catching posters to inform people about the event, and even organised and delivered an assembly to the whole school. We received lots of food donations which were displayed in wrapped boxes and presented to the church. Pupils from Years 7 to 11 volunteered to read at the service, and it was lovely to see them do this with such confidence. Thank you for the kind donations, and for so many parents and family members also showing your support by joining us at the service.

Miss Wilkins





## Key Stage 5 Wrotham

### Charity Fundraising

It has been a busy term for Key Stage 5 with their fundraising efforts. Since September, they have arranged a cake sale for the big Macmillan Coffee Morning and organised a jeans day for Jeans for Genes. The term's activities culminated with Children in Need whereby staff and pupils came into school either in own clothes or dressed as a superhero, bought cakes donated by staff and pupils and let their hair down with a disco in the hall.

So far, we have raised £60.50 for Jenes for Genes, £122 for Macmillan and £333 For Children in Need.

Thank you to all our parents and carers for their sponsorship and donations for the various events and a special thank you to Jordan A (KS5) who always puts in an extra effort to help raise money.



### Communigrow

Communigrow is a community growing project based in East Malling. East Malling Research allocated an acre of land to Joining Hands, a local social enterprise group, so that they could create a community growing project for young people and families interested in growing their own produce.

Key Stage 5 students have been accessing Communigrow and have been working hard harvesting and selling produce to the local residents. They work at the project two mornings a week and it gives them an opportunity to learn about the process of growing; planning, managing and delivering projects and working together to achieve common goals and gain communication skills. The students have also been able to use the produce that they have grown to make healthy meals during their cooking sessions.



This photo was in the local Kent Messenger newspaper and students felt very proud of themselves for all their hard work.

Mrs Large

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## Key Stage 5 - Reviews of College Life

In September, we welcomed a group of last year's Year 11s to the colleges. Below are some accounts of how they have found their first term at college.

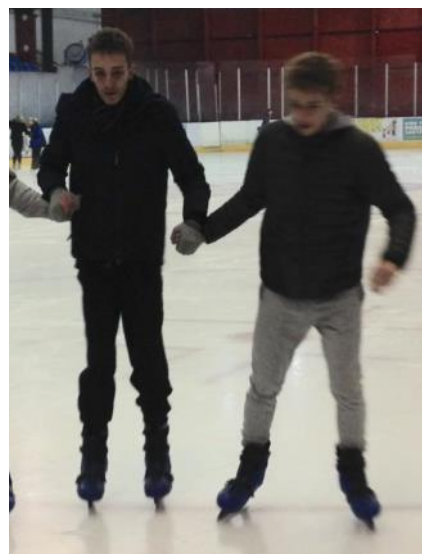
"I am doing a Level One motor vehicle, and I am really enjoying it. I'm liking college because you are a lot freer than at Grange Park and you have more space. I also like it because you get to choose what you want to do unlike school, the only things I don't like are the fact that we have personal study days and the fact that we have different rules to everyone else for e.g. going out at break but it's not that bad.

It's not too bad once you get into the flow of it all. The first few weeks are bad and it seems big but when you have been here a while it seems small and easy. There are still things that I could improve on but not much." Ben

"The course I am doing is Level 1 Sport and Public service, I am having fun and enjoy being on this course. Life at college is amazing you get treated like a young adult and can fun in your break time. I enjoy being at college with all my friends. I went on an ice skating trip. We went to Gillingham Ice Rink.

I was alright at ice skating, I had to hold on to the side at the start because it was my first time ice skating. I was good at going around the side, but I kept holding on to the side because I nearly fell over lots of time. But two people in my course Jack and Aaron helped me by taking me around and holding on to my arm. I did that a few times and got good at it. Then someone else helped me in my course, Alice, she told me how to push and glide. I never fell over; I came close to falling over many times

I would want to do Ice skating again, I enjoyed it for my first time." Jordan



"I like college because I feel responsible for myself at college and people around too.

And in college I feel like I'm learning more thanks to the help I get. Also I make loads of friend and they are very funny friends I ever had. And I feel more confident at college too.

And In my GAP group I feel confident with my mates too." Reece

"What I think about college is that it's nice and big plus it has more space than at school.

But what I like about it is that we can be more independent then school really. We only have 2 maths lessons and not 5 anymore which is a good thing. And the atmosphere feels more independent to which is also a good thing.

We can listen to music during our break times in the canteen area on the big screen in there.

And there is more space around us being at college I think and the reception area is a lot bigger as well so the receptionists can have some room to move around which I think is a good thing for them.

And I like our lessons here they are nice and the rooms are a lot smarter as well.

But plus the college is not that far from my house so it does not take that long to get here now which I think is good."

Plus, the rules here are a lot stricter here which is good so no one can disobey the rules and lose their place at college.

Plus the rules are a lot smarter as well which I think is a good thing". Michael



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## Key Stage 5 - Reviews of College Life

"At College, I am doing a CVA course (Creative Visual Arts). I am trying to learn how to Photoshop, but it's pretty difficult to use and I'm not really used to it, but hopefully I will one day.

I think it's a bit better than Grange Park School, it has more freedom.

I am enjoying some of the Media lessons, but sometimes there are a few difficult things in the Media course... doing Photoshop is one of them.

It's pretty good at College at the moment, but there were a few problems I had here with a few people. But I did make a few friends here but not a lot as Grange Park.

Being at College is kind of different compare to school. Because you have to be independent on time."

"My name is Dylan and I go to Mid Kent College in Maidstone, I am doing a Level 1 Catering and Hospitality course and am enjoying it immensely. In my course I have learnt about general food safety and cooking techniques, cooked various foods and have done some internal work experience at the new restaurant and at the course PPD lessons we've been working on CVs and Job requirements.

When I joined the college a whole new world had been opened to me, I had began to expand on my social life and had already become friends with a number of people. Other lessons are fun as well, I'm doing a GCSE level in English and a Entry Level 3 warm up for Level 1 Maths."

"I am a student at Mid Kent College studying the Level 2 Extended Certificate in IT. I am really enjoying the course at the moment. We are currently revising for Units 1 and 2 (The Online World and Technology systems), and we are also looking at Unit 10 (Database development) and Unit 8 (Software development). There are other units for the course.

I receive support from Grange Park, and the TA's are really helping me as well as the tutors whenever I need it. I am on a "no homework" policy and so I do my "homework" during my Personal Study sessions. That gives me time to revise for exams at home, which I will need to do because I have two really important exams coming up for Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Overall, I like MidKent College because of the support, quality of teaching and how good it looks I also like the fact that we do Kahoots (quizzes written by a tutor that we do on a computer). The only downsides of college are: A) I don't get to see my friend Ethan as often as I want to, and B) there are no Apple Mac computers to use. Downside B is something that really needs to be sorted out to improve an already good experience for me at college." Andrew

"Me and my friends at my college went to a place called Cooling Green and Pleasant when we got there we had to wait for a while then we had to wait for someone who will show us the birds.

It took a while but the man his name was Alfie and he gathered the birds there were lots of birds like Kestrels, and Falcons. But first we had to put gloves on that he called gauntlets. Then we got to hold some of the birds and I got to hold a falcon named Chunk.

We even got to see a falcon named Arrow and how it hunts in the air. Alfie showed us with a lead that made Arrow think it was a pigeon." Lewis



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## And Finally

### Year 10 Christmas Cakes

In keeping with the Christmas theme, Year 10 have been busy baking and decorating Christmas Cakes in their Food Technology lessons. They have worked hard showing off their decorating skills and I'm sure they will enjoy sharing the cakes with their families over the festive break.



## Grange Park School Term Dates 2016—2017

Wednesday 21st December	End of Term 2
Wednesday 4th January 2017	Start of Term 3 for pupils
Friday 10th February 2017	End of Term 3
Tuesday 21st February 2017	Start of Term 4 for pupils
Friday 31st March 2017	End of Term 4 for pupils
Wednesday 19th April 2017	Start of Term 5 for pupils
Friday 26th May 2017	End of Term 5 for pupils
Monday 5th June 2017	Start of Term 6
Friday 21st July 2017	End of Term 6

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.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year  
from  
Grange Park School

