

December 2015



CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

Headteacher's letter

Dear Parents/Carers, Colleagues and Friends,

The weather is warm and wet so it must be winter. Welcome to the winter edition of the newsletter.

This is a time of massive change in education: Assessment Levels have gone, Statements of Special Needs are on their way out, Education Health Care Plans are on their way in, there is a new emphasis on Vocational Courses, safeguarding and Britishness, new regulations on Medication Training, First Aid Training and so on.

So what isn't changing? Well the pupils (for one) and the desire of the staff at Grange Park to provide the very best for them (for another).

And the good news is that pupils are doing well as the school continues to improve. Who says so?

Autism Accreditation in their full report (please find it on the school website) congratulate us on how well we have improved our practice since 2012.

School data tells us that academic progress has also improved. The website has information about the increased number of GCSEs pupils have achieved. There are more students in our College partnerships than ever and one of these started a university course this year.

And you, the parents. In the last Parent Questionnaire your feedback was incredibly positive. Thanks to all of you who filled in those forms. The full analysis is on the website. Please have a look.

Feedback about the new website has also been positive. There is a link on the website to Parent View. Ofsted does take note of parent feedback so do please post a comment or two. If you do not have access to the internet and want any information, please give the office a call. They will be only too happy to provide hard copies.

One highlight this term was Shakespeare for Schools. This time a stunning King Lear with samurai warriors. What was especially pleasing was the sheer number in the cast. Involving 25 pupils is good inclusive practice but it also put more pressure on the actors to show self-discipline, manage the times when they were waiting for others to perform and maintain the highest levels of behaviour. They did this superbly.

Sadly we are losing two teachers this term – Anne Baker and Teresa Ostridge. Both have come through the ranks and done wonderful service for the school for more years than I care to remember. I wish them every success for their futures.



Upcoming Events

Thursday 17th December—Christmas Cinema Trip

Friday 18th December — End of Term for Pupils

Tuesday 5th January 2016—First day of term for pupils

Thinking of others

Thinking about others is an important part of learning about ourselves as individuals, our place in society and how we interact with others. Here at Grange Park, charitable work and fundraising is an integral part of the curriculum and pupils and students have had a busy term raising money for good causes.

Harvest Festival

Every year Grange Park School take part in the Harvest Festival Service at St George's Church in Wrotham and this year was no different. In the run up to the event, students and pupils collected donations of dried and tinned goods from friends and family and created hampers which they presented to St George's Church during the Harvest Service. The donations were then distributed to good causes in the local community. It was lovely to see so many friends and family at the church for the service and thank you too for all the kind donations.



Remembrance Day

On the morning of the 11th November the whole of Grange Park School took part in a special Remembrance event.

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. All members of the school came out and planted their cross on the mound at the side of the school building, creating a field of crosses. At 11am the whole school took part in the 2 minutes silence.

Sharon Brooks

Teacher of Design and Technology



Thinking of others

Key Stage 5 Charity Fundraising

This year our Children in Need fundraising day was a great success! Pupils and staff were dressed up as their childhood heroes. We had activities such as face painting, nail painting, cake sale, disco and a raffle for a wonderful Pudsey cake made by Jenny.

Thanks to all of Group 2, we raised an amazing £420.60.

Group 2 also raised money for Macmillan Cancer Support by running a cake sale and raffle for another spectacular cake, special thanks to Jenny again. Everyone in the school wore green shirts/casual wear. We raised £170.28.

Our grand total for both events was £ 590.88. Thank you to all pupils, students and staff who took part and helped.

Thanks again.

Jordan A (Group 2)



Kwik Cricket

On Tuesday 1st December, a group of pupils went to the Stour Centre in Ashford to take part in the first Kent Reliance Disability Cricket Open Day hosted by the Kent Cricket Community Team.

It was an enjoyable day involving over 100 players, teachers, carers and pupils from all around Kent. The pupils had a great time taking part in a wide range of activities that were designed to help and improve the skills needed to play cricket.

They are looking forward to putting their newly learnt skills into practice at future Kwik Cricket tournaments.

Science Trips

At Grange Park we believe in doing practical activities to re-inforce the lessons that we learn in class, and field trips play an important part in this. The Science Department in particular has been busy this term in getting out and about...

One of the Year 11 groups went to Wildwood Trust at Herne Bay to carry out some experimental work for their Environment Land Based studies GCSE course. Although pushed for time, they did manage to survey two different habitats and log the difference in the invertebrate populations so that they could write a report afterwards.

Year 7 also went to Wildwood Trust but their focus was different. They went to look at the wide variety of British and European animals that are endangered.

They had an opportunity to see at close hand a bear, wolves, Konik horses and lots of other animals. They also found out about the different endangered animals programmes Wildwood was set up to address, including captive breeding.



Shakespeare for Schools

This year's Shakespeare for Schools festival was another great success for the pupils of Grange Park. We performed King Lear, one of Shakespeare's greatest, yet most challenging, plays. Pupils did a tremendous job of learning their lines and working through the plot. They really enjoyed the use of Japanese 'Kabuki' face paint and were professional and disciplined on the night of the performance.

It was a pleasure to see so many pupils take part this year - 27, our largest troupe yet! Well done to each and every one of them.

Mr Peacock



Welcome to Year 7

Welcome to Year 7

The Year 7 class have settled into the school now and have coped well with all the changes from Primary School into Secondary School. They have been supported not only by the staff but also by older pupils who act as good role models. It has been lovely to see them talking and playing with other pupils and staff at break and lunchtimes. They have had a successful trip to visit Wildwood in Herne Bay despite the awful weather and coped well with their first trip to the church for Harvest Festival.

Before the end of term we will be busy decorating our classroom, going on the Christmas Cinema trip and to St George's for a Christmas service.

Happy Christmas from everyone in Year 7.



Grange Park School Girls' Group

Grange Park Girls' Group runs every Monday lunchtime. We get together for a chat and some fun activities. We play games, listen to music, look at magazines and take part in arts and crafts activities. We like all different types of music and we take turns to choose our favourite songs and artists. We also play on the Wii and try to help each other with the games. We recently made some for things for Christmas that we will be able to take home at the end of term.



French Breakfast

As part of the Modern Foreign Languages curriculum, the languages department hosted a French Breakfast for the rest of the school. Pupils, students and staff all had a taste of the continent with a choice of warm croissants, pain au chocolats and French bread with hot chocolate or orange juice served throughout the morning. The tables were decorated with placemats made by the pupils of famous French landmarks. It wasn't all play and no work though as in order to get a pastry and a drink, pupils, students and staff all had to speak in French to place their orders!



Food Technology

The Year 10 Food Technology option group have been following the Level 2 Jamie Oliver BTEC Home Cooking course since the beginning of the academic year and their cooking skills have been improving dramatically. As part of their coursework, they have made and decorated Christmas cakes, and as you can see from the photographs below, some of the results are outstanding.



Key Stage 5 Group 1

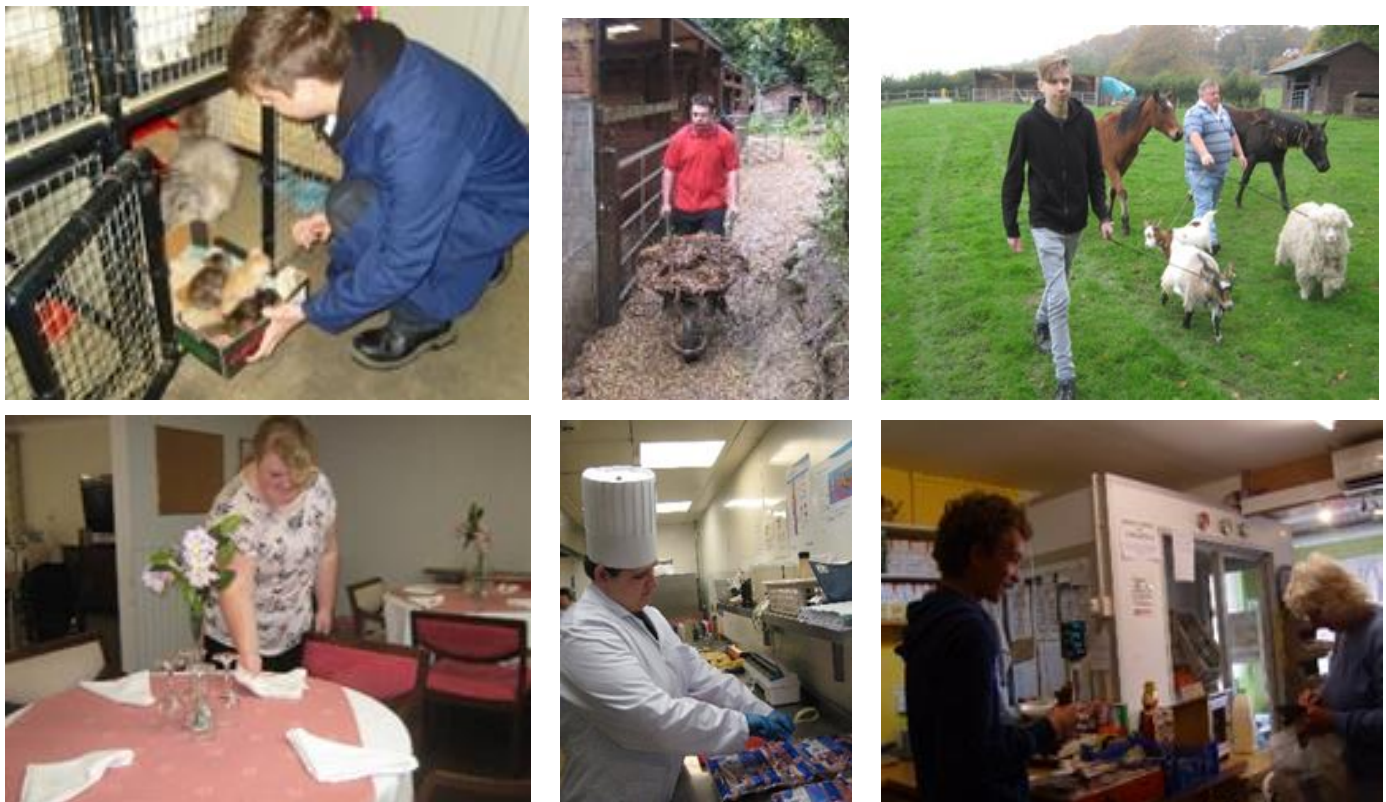
Group 1 have had a very busy and successful term, they have been practising their money skills, being safe in the community and road crossing. In addition to this, they have been continuing with their work placements at Pepenbury as well as starting at new placement at St Jame's Café where they have been preparing hot and cold drinks, serving customers, stock taking, clearing and laying tables and handling money. All of this promotes thinking of others and the wider community.

As a reward for all of their hard work, it was decided that they could buy the Christmas tree for the school this year. Whilst at work experience at Pepenbury on a Thursday, Group 1 had seen all of the Christmas trees being sold and they decided that's where they wanted to get their tree from. The group also went shopping in Tonbridge to buy some decorations for the tree.



Key Stage 5 Group 2

A big part of the curriculum at Key Stage 5 is preparing our students for the workplace and future employment and this term, the work experience programme has developed into the most diverse we have ever had. All work-placements are linked to accreditation and students are encouraged to gain experience in a variety of work-placements; this helps with future aspirations and adds to their list of skills for their CV. Below are just a few photos from some of the placements that have happened this term.



Grange Park at Mid Kent College and Hadlow

The partnership sites at the colleges are going from strength to strength and this year we have our biggest cohort of students spread across three sites, Mid Kent College Medway, Mid Kent College Maidstone and Hadlow College. Students are studying a range of courses including Carpentry, Creative Visual Arts and Animal Care. Below are a selection of photographs showing the students at work and play as well as some comments about their time at college.

"College has helped me with my confidence. I'm really enjoying my course and learning how to play lots of instruments that I wouldn't know to play before." Keighley

"So, second year of college has gotten off to a wild rocky start. I have made friends outside of the Grange Park system. My Maths is starting to get better. I have a much, better teacher." Ryan

"Doing the practical is really good as I like sketching the project and then making it out of wood." Thomas

"I like college because the courses are good and it's easy to get on with the teachers. I like the social zones around college and it is simple to find your way around the college." Callum H



Parents' Group

This term has been a busy term for the Parents' Group. The topics we have covered include Behaviour, Occupational Therapy and Transport as well as coping techniques for the Christmas holidays. A past student also visited us to talk about life after Grange Park School. We have alternated the days we hold meetings this term so that as many parents and carers as possible have the opportunity to join us. This is something which we will try to continue in the new year.

The first meeting of 2016 will be on the 27th January from 10am to 12pm and Steve Vincent from Autism Specialism Outreach will be joining us to talk about Social Stories.

The Group is open to all Grange Park Parents and Carers and we can offer a friendly ear as well as a great cup of tea and biscuits.

Merry Christmas from the Grange Park School Parents' Group.



Grange Park School Term Dates 2015—2016

Friday 18th December	End of Term 2
Tuesday 5th January 2016	Start of Term 3 for pupils
Friday 12th February	End of Term 3
Tuesday 23rd February	Start of Term 4 for pupils
Thursday 24th March	End of Term 4
Tuesday 12th April	Start of Term 5 for pupils
Friday 27th May	End of Term 5
Monday 6th June	Start of Term 6
Friday 22nd July	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
Happy New Year
from
Grange Park School

