

March 2016



# EASTER NEWSLETTER

## Headteacher's letter

Dear parents, carers, colleagues and friends

It does seem sometimes as though Christmas and Easter are merging into one, certainly the remaining copies of the last newsletter are only just beginning to curl up at the edges on the school reception desk.

As ever, the last two terms have been busy and, most importantly, productive. I am reminded about the proverb that says: *"What I hear, I forget; what I see, I remember; what I do, I understand."* At Grange Park we are promoting **Active Learning** as a useful way to engage pupils. A glance at some of the activities set out in this newsletter hopefully provides a flavour of that.



Staff at school have been working hard to develop our vocational offer, enabling pupils to learn practical skills which can help them on the pathway to employment. We access vocational learning at a number of offsite centres but have also increased the range of activities within school. We only have a small site but we try to pack in as much as possible.

The big focus for Year 11s has been on their preparation for their exams this summer. Some of the work has had to be methodical and workmanlike, making sure that pupils acquire and are able to use the necessary knowledge to be successful. Within that body of work there are often levels of personal achievement that are worthy of a special mention and in this issue we have featured some outstanding Year 11 art work.

Helping pupils to achieve academically is vitally important for their future prospects at college and beyond. Seeing our young people achieve in terms of their personal development is our privilege.

I am pleased to report that Miss Atwell was appointed as Deputy Head last week. I am sure that she will continue to be a great asset for the school. We are losing Miss Campbell, who will be missed, but we will be gaining Ms Hughes who, I am sure, will do an excellent job in her place.

I was very grateful to the eight pupils who took part in the Deputy Head interviews last week. They asked the candidates questions they had prepared but followed these with supplementary questions based on the candidates' responses. They can all be extremely proud of their performance.

Finally, I would like to share part of my vision for the school:

That Grange Park be a place where, every morning, children are stepping into an environment which is welcoming and safe, meeting people who understand, accept and support them.

Have a good Easter.

### Upcoming Events

Thursday 24th March — End of Term 4 for Pupils

Tuesday 12th April — First day of Term 5 for pupils

Monday 2nd May — May Bank Holiday

Friday 27th May — End of Term 5

## Welcome from the Chair of Governors

I would like to tell you something about my role as Chairman of Governors. I have been a governor of the school for five years and was elected Chairman last July. I have regular meetings with Mr Wyatt and as well as chairing the Full Governing Body meetings, I also "sit" on our two committees; Teaching & Learning and Resources. Earlier this year I attended a Parent Support Group morning and found it helpful and supportive.

There are other meetings to attend - District Governors, Chairs Conference and County Assembly where it is good to meet with fellow governors and share experiences and thoughts. The main topic of discussion at many of these meetings has been Ofsted and how best to prepare ourselves as a governing body and to help us in this quest, we have had bespoke training.

Grange Park is one of 10 schools that form KsENT (Kent Special Education Needs Trust), a co-operative trust to further the aims and needs of special schools. I am a member of the Executive Board and the launch of KsENT is due to take place in early July – watch this space for further details.

I enjoy meeting with all our pupils and find my involvement with the school an enriching experience.

Sue Murray, Chairman of Governors



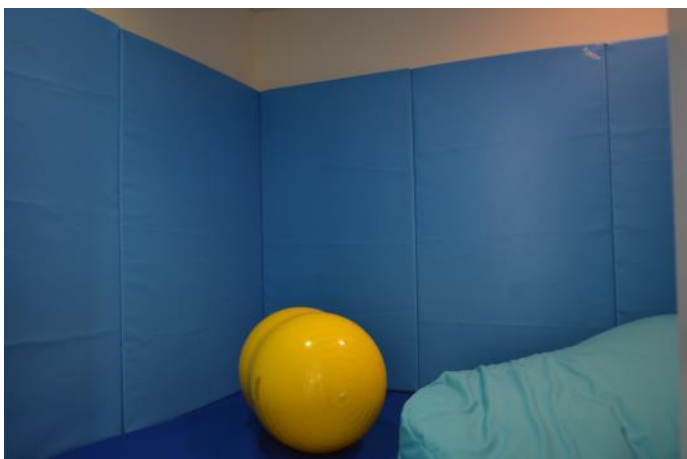
## Grange Park News

The school environment is just as important to pupils' learning as the subjects that they cover in class and, as parents will know, we are always updating the facilities on offer in school to ensure that they complement what is happening in the classroom.

Over the half term holiday in February, the quiet rooms had a major facelift to make them a much more calming and relaxing place to be. They have been painted and new flooring and wall coverings installed. We have also purchased big new bean bags, body socks and peanut balls. These are all designed to help pupils calm when they are feeling anxious.

As part of our drive to increase active learning and vocational pathways, we have made a number of changes. The second courtyard has had an overhaul and a big new greenhouse installed in it. This will be used mainly by the Science Department to support the Land Based Studies course. We are also planning to move the poly tunnel from the far side of Wrotham School closer to our main building. This will make it far more accessible and the next step up for the young plants in the greenhouse.

We have also installed some raised beds at the far end of school which will be used by students studying horticulture to grow fruit and vegetables. It is hoped that much of the produce will end up as part of the Food Technology lessons.



## Autism Awareness Week

During this term, Grange Park School has been creating a short film for Autism Awareness Week (14<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> March).

This short film was created to educate others about Autism. Furthermore, it shows how Autism affects our pupils and how Grange Park School caters for the needs of the pupils.

Pupils participated in interviews where they answered questions about what their Autism means to them, specific challenges that they may face and how Grange Park helps them to deal with these challenges. The film also demonstrates the importance of structure and visuals in order to create an environment that enables learning.

The pupils also wanted to showcase in the film the different activities and facilities that Grange Park has to offer such as: various group work activities; Design and Technology projects; Food Technology work and the sensory room.

Along with the interviews, pupils were involved in choosing the scenes and making commentaries. All the pupils who participated in making the Autism Awareness Film showed a high level of creativity and professionalism.

We are working on setting up a link on the school website so that parents will be able to watch the film.



## RE Trips

RE is a compulsory subject in schools but in order to make it more "real" to our pupils and students, we have based the programme of study on visits to different religious centres including churches, temples and mosques. As part of this, earlier this term, KS4 and KS5 visited a Synagogue in Rochester and a Mosque in Tunbridge Wells. The pupils and students were able to experience for themselves what the centres were like and had the opportunity to ask questions to the Rabbi and the Imam. The pupils and students found the visits interesting and enjoyable.



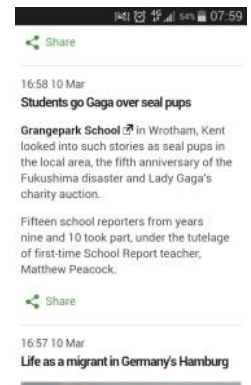


## Key Stage 4 and 5 (Wrotham) Exam timetables

The timetables for the exams have now been published and can be found on the school website under both the pupils and the parents sections. Individual timetables and some general exam instructions have also been sent home with the pupils. Along with the timetabled exams, there will also be controlled assessments and deadlines for course work to be completed from the beginning of term 5 until the beginning of July. It is important therefore that all pupils and students in Years 10, 11 and Key Stage 5 are in school during this time.

## BBC School News Report

On Thursday March 10th, pupils in Years 9 and 10 took part in the BBC School News Report. This is the second year that we have taken part and pupils covered a variety of stories including seal pups and Lady Gaga's charity auction. A live link to the school website was available on the day from the BBC School News Report website and the news reports that the pupils wrote are still available on the Grange Park School website under the News and Events page so do take time to have a read.



## Carrotty Wood Trip

On a very cold Monday morning during half term, a very dedicated group of staff and pupils put aside their fears of heights and all things outdoors and headed out for a day of team building and adventure at Carrotty Wood Outdoor Activity Centre. The group took part in a range of activities including high ropes, archery and ab-seiling. These are all designed to challenge the pupils individually as well as encouraging them to work as part of a team and develop confidence and resilience. The pupils and staff all had a great day and returned to school, exhausted and muddy but happy and high on adrenaline! We are now looking forward to taking Year 11 there on a residential trip once the exams are over.



## Sports Relief 2016

Sports Relief is always one of our most popular fundraising events and this year was no different. On Monday 21st March, pupils, students and staff took part in a host of sporting activities throughout the day. These included classroom competitions, walking or running a Sports Relief mile for sponsorship and a staff netball match which the pupils cheered on whole-heartedly. Pupils and staff also came into school either dressed as their favourite sports star or in non-school uniform, paying a "fine" of £1 for the privilege.

The pupils, students and staff all had great fun getting stuck in and having a go at the various sporting activities on offer. We are still collecting sponsorship money so at the time of printing, the total amount raised is not known. We are hoping for a record breaking amount though.



## Kent Choices

Kent Choices Live is a careers festival run by Kent County Council that showcases the wide range of educational and career choices available to young people in Kent. More than 100 employers and educational providers exhibited at this year's event which took place at the Kent County Showground on the 16th and 17th March.

As part of our work in enabling our pupils and students to make informed choices about their future, a group of Key Stage 5 students visited the show on the 17th March. They enjoyed the live demonstrations and in particular, the flight simulator. More importantly though, they came away from the day with lots of useful information about the options available to them as they move towards adulthood.





## Focus on Science

There have been many additions to the science department this year. As well as a massive investment in new and updated laboratory equipment so that we can teach higher level science, we have taken delivery of a new greenhouse. The greenhouse, which is on the Grange Park site, means that the pupils have been able to plant the seeds already. If all goes well, we should have lots of plants to grow on and nurture and some spare to sell. More importantly, the Year 11 pupils who are studying for the 'Environment Land Based studies' GCSE were able to use the greenhouse to undertake their research on the impact of different growing media on plant growth in February, when it was not possible to grow anything outdoors.



We have also introduced 'pets' to the department. The hamster, who has had many names but seems to have ended with 'Nibbles', is very popular amongst the pupils. More surprisingly, the stick insects that I thought pupils would shy away from, are a particular favourite of the Year 7 pupils.



Year 11 are busy working towards their GCSE examination and I am very proud of the pupils who gave up their holiday time to attend science revision sessions during the half term. It is an indication of their determination to succeed!

Mrs Taylor

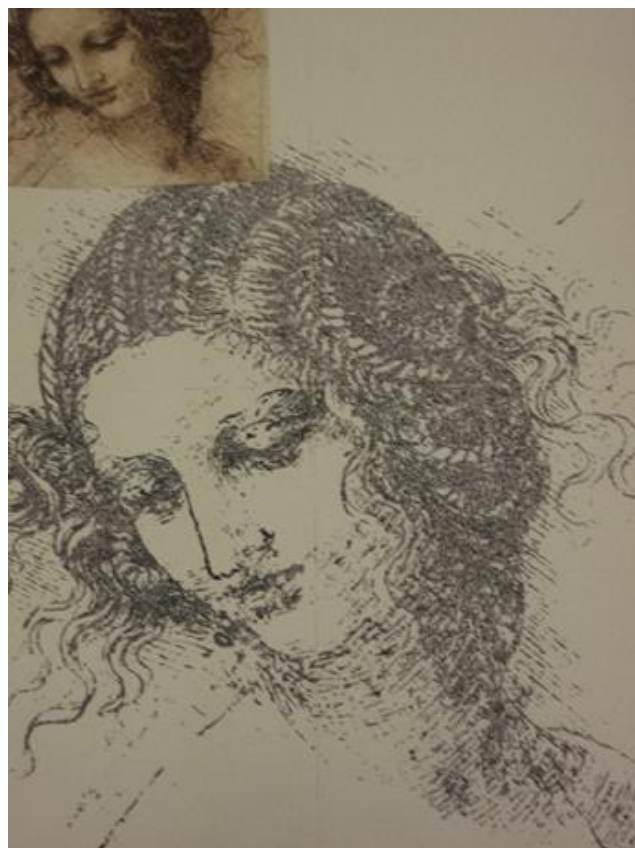
## GCSE Art and Design

Two Year 11 pupils have produced some outstanding work as part of their GCSE Art project. The topic is "Changed" and involves looking at a variety of artists to produce at least eight different pieces of art each.

So far Paddy and George have produced work in the style of Andy Warhol, Leonardo da Vinci, Gary Hume and Nikos Gyftakis. Paddy has also completed a study of renowned artist Francis Bacon. Both pupils have worked with dedication and talent, trying new techniques and media with exciting results.



George—  
Gary Hume  
study



Paddy—Leonardo da Vinci study



Paddy—  
self portrait  
in the style  
of Andy  
Warhol



Paddy—Charcoal study



George—Charcoal study



## Key Stage 5 (Wrotham Site)

The KS5 curriculum is all about preparing for adulthood and working towards independence and an important part of this is our vocational work placement programme and Independent Travel Training. Consequently, these are areas which we are always looking to expand and develop on so that the students gain as wide a range of experience as possible.

This term, students have been taking part in a new work placement at Communigrow. This is a project based at East Malling Research Centre. Students have been sowing seeds, harvesting vegetables and making veg bags that are then sold around the local community.

Group 1 have also been busy travel training as part of their Personal and Social Development. All students have been very confident travelling on the bus and purchasing their own tickets.

Thank you too for all the bulbs which were kindly donated back in the Autumn. These have all now been planted and are beginning to come into bloom. As you can see from the photographs below, the pond area and gardens are looking stunning. We will also be planting the vegetables that were donated in the new raised bed area in the next few weeks.



## £10 Challenge

As part of their studies in IFS, KS5 have taken the £10 Challenge. They have split up into small groups and each group has been given £10 to set up a business. Students decide themselves what sort of business they would like to do and the aim is to see which group can make the most profit by the end of the academic year from their initial £10 start up money. The fledgling projects are now up and running and include at the moment: car washing, running a snack shop for pupils and students and making personalised bracelets.

We are looking forward to seeing how the businesses and the money grows and whether we have any potential Lord Sugars or Baroness Bradys at Grange Park.



## A Special Mention

Congratulations to Cameron in Group 2 who has been awarded his Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate. Cameron has been working with Mrs Hazelden in the Grange Park School kitchen helping to prepare the school meals and refreshments for meetings for the last two years. He has also been revising every week for the theory section of the test which he passed.

Miss Baldock





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## 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 all three sites, Mid Kent College Medway, Mid Kent College Maidstone and Hadlow College. Practical and vocational placements give students experience that they need to gain employment. Below four students report on the sorts of things that they are doing.

### Dog Grooming by Megan B (GP @ Hadlow)

"At dog grooming this week, I hoovered up the dog's fur from the floor to put in the bin near the door. Then I hoovered the classroom floor. I used the same bin to put the fur in that was sitting near the door. After I had done that, I got to wash one of the dogs. I had to put some shampoo on them, rub it in here and there and rinse it off using cool water.

After that was done it was time for me to finish so I said my goodbyes. It was good because I got to work with the dogs and do different things and have the experience I need."



### Bug House building by Alan S (GP @ Hadlow)

"We built a bug hotel for the Jim Green competition. We first had to make a design and then planned on what size it had to be. Then we started making the frame by measuring the wood to the right size and cut it. We fill each area with different materials like a brick, bark, bamboo and plant pots.

And we got first place at the Jim Green competition."



### Farm Trip by Sam B (GP @ MKC Medway)

"On Wednesday I went with my animal care group to Badger Hill farm. We cleaned out, fed and watered the chickens. Cleaned up the horses' stable, fed the pigs their food. Before lunch I had to wash my hands to clean out the dirt and muck. I enjoyed my day. "



### Eco-build by Thomas W (GP @ MKC Medway)

"I went to the Eco-build, what I saw at the Eco-build is some of the many works in the building industry. I also got to see the Dulux Paint dog in person. The name of the dog was Herbert.

Some of the things that I did and some of the others did was getting the free stuff. In all we had a good time at the Eco-build."



## Kent e-safety—Safer Online

Cybersense – New App for Parents/Carers from Internet Matters

CyberSense is Internet Matters new app designed to help parents and carers talk about online safety issues with their children to ensure that they make smart choices to stay safe online.

The app is aimed at children to help them think about what they would do if they were faced with different situations online; from cyberbullying to sharing content with someone they don't know.

The App includes a quiz that is played on a tablet with a split screen. This is mainly to encourage parents/carers and children to answer the questions at the same time to help create talking points around different e-Safety scenarios. At the end of each quiz, depending on how many questions have been answered correctly, you are rewarded with a specific amount time to play a fun game together.

The app is a great way for parents/carers to get talking with their children about practical ways to be resilient and get the best out of the internet.

The app can be downloaded for free on the iTunes app store and Google Play store.



## Parent Group Meeting Dates

The dates for the Parents' Group in Terms 5 and 6 are:

Tuesday 12th April (12.30—2.30)

Wednesday 18th May (10.00—12.00)

Tuesday 28th June (12.30—2.30)

Make a note of them in the diary and details on topics and speakers will be emailed nearer the time. All Grange Park School parents and carers are welcome.



## Grange Park School Term Dates 2015—2016

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.

## Happy Easter from Grange Park School