

December 2020



CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

Headteacher's Letter

This has been the most unusual and extraordinary year. Our school community has rallied together to ensure the best learning opportunities for our pupils. Covid has had a more significant impact than we could have ever anticipated, stretching all of us. Pupils have shown resilience and adapted well to all the changes, and we know this is something that challenges many of them. Staff have worked with the aim of providing consistency and stability for our pupils, and I want to take the opportunity to thank the staff for their hard work and dedication. Also, as a parent, I fully understand the pressure many of our parents have faced in trying to support home and blended learning. You have been great and have excelled, even when it has been a steep learning curve. We are here to support you and want to help if it is needed.

Seeing pupils in school learning, interacting and developing makes me so happy and reinforces my passion for providing high quality education. A school is not the same without pupils and I look forward to a time when we can come together as a school community without concern for our wellbeing and health.

Despite Covid, the school continues to move forward and we welcome three new staff to our Stansted provision in January. We have been awarded Advanced Status from the National Autistic Society, one of only 36 institutions in the world. In term 2 we were awarded the Leading Parent Partnership Award and we are now a UNICEF Rights Respecting School being awarded Bronze status following our application in Term 1 with the aim of achieving Silver later this year.

Sadly, our achievements have been overshadowed by the tragic news of Julia Twohey's death. Julia was a committed environmentalist and was passionate about all things scientific. Having worked with Julia for a number of years, I convinced her to join us teaching Science and developing our Forest School. Julia loved being outdoors with the children and enjoyed sharing her knowledge and expertise with our pupils. When I received the sad news, all the staff were 100% committed to keeping the school open and being here to support the pupils and each other. Thank you to those parents who have sent messages of condolence, I have passed these on to her family. When it is safe, we will come together to commemorate Julia and we will launch an environmental award to ensure that her hard work in school continues.

I hope that you all have a restful break with your loved ones. I look forward to welcoming the pupils back to school on Monday 4th January and I hope to visit our pupils at college as soon as it is safe to do so.

Best wishes

Renukah Atwell
Headteacher

Upcoming Events:

Monday 4th January : First day of term at Wrotham and Stansted sites

Monday 11th January - Friday 15th January: Year 10 EHCP Meetings

Monday 18th January - Wednesday 20th January: Year 8 EHCP Meetings

Message from the Chairman of Governors

It seems a very long time since I last wrote a piece for our newsletter and so very many things have happened in all our lives.



The restrictions placed on everyone, whether child or adult, have been a challenge at times and I believe that our pupils and our staff have risen to the challenges of innovative ways of delivering the curriculum superbly. The care and support given by our staff to families and pupils throughout this pandemic has been, and continues to be, second to none.

With the ending of Lockdown 1 and our pupils at last able to return to school, staff and governors were pleased to note the confident way our students returned and how they had adapted to on-line teaching. Lessons via Zoom not only helped a number of our pupils but have given food for thought as to how to adapt teaching methods in the classroom incorporating this technology. Governors were also pleased at how quickly staff identified where pupils had gaps in their knowledge caused by the lockdown and how to remedy these shortfalls in knowledge.

I have met very regularly with Miss Atwell, sometimes face to face but mainly virtually via Zoom. All governing body meetings have been held virtually since March and will continue to meet virtually until April at the earliest when it might be safer to meet in person.

Tragedy has visited the school in the sadness and shock at losing Miss Towhey to Covid and once we reach safer shores, we will be able to celebrate just what a wonderful person she was.

This Christmas time, I wish you and yours keep well and safe but that some sparkle and joy also enter our lives.

Sue Murray

Stansted

Year 6

Over the last two terms, Year 6 have looked at the Vikings. We now know a lot more about the Viking life as well as what they believed.

We did 2 projects over the course of the two terms.

The first was creating Viking Long Ships. We used cardboard and paint to design the ship and the shields.



We then designed a pattern for our sails before putting it all together using a hot glue gun. Please see some pictures of our finished Viking Long Ships:



The second project was to create a Viking board game named Tafl. We created counters from clay and painted them. We then created the board game board before spending a lesson playing the game in pairs. It was so exciting to try something that the Vikings actually played!

Stansted

Year 6 were very lucky to be able to meet an author. We spent some time reading her book and completing activities including a story necklace. Karen Littlewood, the author, was amazed by our pieces of work. We also had a chance to do some drawings while on the zoom meeting with her.

Here are some of our amazing pieces of work:



Year 4 & 5

This term we have been doing lots of exciting things together. In Science, we have been exploring Earth and Space and reconstructed the solar system on the field and use Lego figures to explore shadows created by the sun.



We have been learning about the Anglo-Saxons where we loved designing and making Amulets using Clay. In Drama, we have been exploring freeze frames and role play around the topic of Anti-Bullying.



Whilst in Maths we have showed excellent team work when finding clues and solving problems around school. In English we enjoyed becoming entrepreneurs and pitched our Robot ideas to Dragons Den with lots of success in gaining investments.



Autism Accreditation Advanced Status

In October, Grange Park was re-assessed by the National Autistic Society and were awarded Advanced Status by the Autism Accreditation committee.



The committee stated that:

“The assessment report provides compelling evidence that Grange Park School offers highly personalised support for autistic young people rooted in a robust understanding of autism specific best practice approaches. Access to high quality continuous CPD ensure that staff are well trained in these approaches and they implement them with a commitment to supporting each student to achieve their full potential. Students are provided with meaningful and engaging activities which enable them to become more confident in their social skills and functional life skills and increasingly more independent as they transition towards adulthood. Many strengths are highlighted in the report including the outstanding Sensory Provision and the effective use of Zones of Regulation and SCERTS. Ofsted confirm that the overwhelming majority of students in the school exceed expected progress and that staff carry out safeguarding duties ‘exceptionally well’. In confidential surveys carried out by Accreditation, over 94 per cent of parents rated the support their child received as always good whilst over 88 % of autistic pupils themselves consider that staff consistently understand their needs.”

Grange Park School has been accredited since 2000 and to be awarded the Advanced Status is a wonderful achievement. Thank you to all those parents / carers who provided feedback. The full report is available to view on our website.

We are becoming a Unicef UK Rights Respecting School!

Grange Park School aims to be a place where children’s rights are at the heart of our ethos and culture, to improve well-being and to develop every child’s talents and abilities to their full potential. As part of this plan, we are working towards recognition as a ‘Rights Respecting School’; an award given to schools on behalf of Unicef UK.



Year 8 & 9 Art

I am very pleased to say that artwork by year 8 and 9 is now on display in the Take One Picture exhibition at the National Gallery. The exhibition runs until the 31st January 2021 and is held in the Sunley Room.



Congratulations to the students for all of the work that went into their projects, and we are delighted to be able to finally showcase and celebrate their work in the exhibition.

We know that we won't be able to go to see the exhibition at the Gallery this year, so the Gallery has included as much information online as possible. The following link will take you to the 'Explore the exhibition' page, with information, photographs and a video which shows what some children think about *Men of the Docks*:

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/exhibitions/take-one-picture-2020/explore-the-exhibition>.

A PDF of all the works in the exhibition can be downloaded via this link:

https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/media/1wlneixu/take-one-picture-2020_works-in-the-exhibition.pdf

A video tour of the exhibition will be made available soon, where you will be walked through the space and told about some of the themes, and shown examples of projects from this year.

Well done years 8 and 9—this is an incredible achievement!



Year 10 Art GCSE

The Year 10 art group have made an excellent start to their GCSE course work and have produced some creative pieces.



Year 11 Art GCSE

Year 11 art group are continuing to enhance their coursework. Emmanuel and James have produced some excellent drawings. A special mention should go to Brynne for the extensive amount of work he has completed at home. Well done Brynne!



BTEC Cookery

There has been a very festive theme in cookery this term!

Year 10 Cookery Groups made some excellent Christmas Cakes. Elsie and Harry are to be particularly commended for their decorative skills



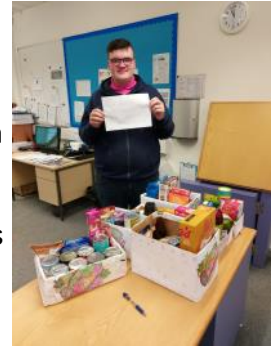
Harvest Festival



The collection for Harvest Festival this year has been amazing, thank so you much to all our students and their families for all your contributions.

This year due to the pandemic we have been unable to take part in our annual Harvest Festival at our local church. Yet we still wanted to make the students aware, design boxes and donate locally. We had a range of year groups decorating and filling boxes from both our Wrotham and Stansted site.

Thank you again for all your contributions, they will go a long way!



Remembrance Day

This year Grange Park School worked together to create a lovely display for Remembrance Day on the 11th November. Daisy, Cody and Erin made wooden poppies for all students to decorate with colours and quotes of remembrance. Chris made our giant cross and Lucy made her first wreath in floristry. Excellent designing and creativity skills from our year 10's. KS5 students worked well putting the displays together at the entrance of the school. Kieran also made a poster showing the flags of all the countries involved in both wars.

Well done for all students involved and the respect shown by all of our pupils.



Stansted Mentor



Max from Key Stage 5 has been appointed as our Stansted Mentor for Grange Park School. Max will work with our Stansted pupils as a role model, visiting them regularly and encouraging their development and education.

College Partnerships

Grange Park have Key Stage 5 students studying at our College Partnership Sites at Mid Kent and Hadlow Colleges.

Some of the pupils who have joined us this year, have written about their first few terms at College.

My name is Luke I started at Hadlow College on a Level 2 Animal Management course in September 2020. I have settled in really well and I am enjoying my time here, I really love working with all animals but my favourite ones to work with are the reptiles.

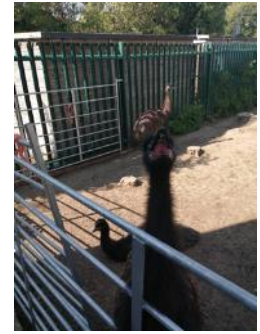


During a GCSE English lesson Luke was asked to write a short passage about being trapped, this was entered into a creative writing competition and has been chosen for publication in a young writer's anthology.

What a fantastic achievement Luke!



Hello, my name is Sam, and I'm at Hadlow College. I'm really enjoying working at P.C.F. I love working with all the animals. My favourite animals are the emus and barn goats. We work with a lot of animals such as goat, alpaca, ponies, ferrets, ducks, geese, chicken, cows, pigs, rabbits and guinea pigs. We do written work as well!



Fundraising - Children in Need

This year for Children in Need we chose to fundraise for others in a different way. Although we missed our usual magnificent cake sale and fayre, we enjoyed taking time to be ourselves in what has been a challenging year. We did enjoy a delicious donut at breaktime!

Thank you to all the parents, pupils and staff for your generous donations. Even without our usual variety of events we were still able to raise just under £500 for this incredible charity.

Moodle

We would like to thank everyone for their support with the introduction of Moodle as our virtual learning platform.

Moodle was always a direction of travel we were in as a school, in order to support blended learning and the transition into Post 16, as most FE colleges including our partner colleges use Moodle.

Our original plan was to pilot Moodle with our Year 11 cohort as part of their LifeSkills sessions but due to circumstances we were faced with, we took the decision to roll Moodle out to the whole school. We are proud of all of the staff, pupils and parents in how we were able to set up, roll out and use such a platform within a matter of days.

We appreciate that with a new system it will take a little while to embed and any feedback is warmly welcomed. Further training and support will be available in January but please do look at the Moodle section on the school's website for further instructions and a support video.

Parent Mail

We are now using Parentmail more frequently to communicate with Parents and this is how we share the most up to date information with you. Should you not be receiving the emails and text messages, please contact the school at office@grangepark.kent.sch.uk and we will look into this for you.

Virtual Meetings

Annual Reviews and other parent meetings will now be held over the Parent's Evening booking system by video. There are instructions on our website under the Parent section of our website, or if you would like some additional support, please email the school office at office@grangepark.kent.sch.uk.

The Kent Community Health Foundation Trust

Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT) has added an additional way for parents and others to contact the school health team.

The emotional health consultation line will support parents and carers who have concerns about their children's emotional wellbeing. Parents can speak to a trained school nurse and get immediate strategies to support their child or be referred for ongoing support or counselling if needed.

Visit www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/school-health/education-support/ or call **0800 011 3474** for more information on the support available to schools, families and young people from the school health service.

Have you noticed a change in your child's behaviour and worried they may be experiencing anxiety?

They may be:

- getting angry, upset or irritable more easily
- having trouble going to sleep or staying asleep
- seeking reassurance or saying they are worried.

If you feel your child is struggling and needs extra support, call the emotional health consultation line on **0800 011 3474** to speak to our team (option 1 then option 2). A school nurse will listen to you, provide basic coping strategies and if needed, support with a referral to the children and young people's (CYP) counselling service.

Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT) provides support for children and young people's physical and emotional health needs, including the CYP's counselling service.

More information on all our support can be found at www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/school-health or www.kentyouthhealth.nhs.uk

Do you have feedback about our health services? Phone: 0300 123 1807 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
Text: 07899 903499 Email: kentchft.PALS@nhs.net Web: www.kentcht.nhs.uk/PALS If you need to speak to someone about your appointment, please contact the service directly using the details at the top of page one. Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust Unit J, Concept Court Shearway Business Park Folkestone.

Severe Snow/Ice Plan

How will we let you know that school (Wrotham site) is closed?

If we do experience severe snow/ice resulting in hazardous conditions, Miss Atwell may have to take the decision to close the school. Once this decision has been made, we will notify parents via the Kent Closures website.

To determine whether Grange Park School is open or closed, please visit www.kentclosures.co.uk. Search for the school in the search box. The Kent closures website may also be used to find out if other services in Kent are open or closed, such as nurseries, children's centres and libraries.

We also recommend parents sign up for Email alerts on the Kent Closures website. This service will send an email alert to let parents know if Grange Park School is closed. Local radio will sometimes provide information of school closures.

We will also endeavour to inform you via our text messaging service (Parentmail), so please ensure we have your current mobile number.

How will we let you know if the college is closed?

If we do experience severe snow/ice resulting in hazardous conditions:-

Parents can directly contact Lee Cooper at lee.cooper@grangepark.kent.sch.uk or Jean Moule at jean.moule@grangepark.kent.sch.uk.

Parents and students should follow the guidance from the college site that their son/daughter is currently attending.

Due to the varied locations of each campus, the college may make a decision to close, one site or all sites, or remain open, dependent on the severity of the weather at each campus.

Parents and students should go to Google, log on to the main MKC or Hadlow home page, the college will provide information should it be open or closed, this is usually highlighted in yellow, at the top of the page. The college will update the information on a daily basis.

Tutors will email students with set work to be completed at home for each snow day.

What can you do to help?

Please visit www.kent.gov.uk/winter for more information about gritting routes and travel issues around Kent so you can plan your journey.

Don't forget suitable warm clothing – gloves, hats, scarves, wellies etc. or even a change of clothing.

If you are a working parent or feel you may have a problem with a sudden earlier pick up or early arrival of your child at home, please could you put a back-up plan in place with another family member or parent and inform the college. If your child travels by taxi, then we will inform you that the college will be closing early to ensure you are fully aware that your child will be arriving home early. This will allow staff to leave earlier for their safety if weather dictates.

Grange Park School Term Dates 2020-2021

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.

Thursday 17th December 2020	End of Term 2 (school closes at 1.30pm Wrotham & 1.00pm at Stansted)
Monday 4th January 2021	Start of Term 3
Friday 12th February 2021	End of Term 3
Monday 22nd February 2021	Start of Term 4
Thursday 1st April 2021	End of Term 4
Monday 19th April 2021	Start of Term 5 for Pupils
Monday 3rd May 2021	Bank Holiday
Friday 28th May 2021	End of Term 5
Monday 7th June 2021	Start of Term 6
Wednesday 21st July 2021	End of Term 6



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Grange Park School.