



## St Peter's Church of England (VC) Primary School

Mount Pleasant, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7BE

### Newsletter

**September 2018**

#### Welcome Back

I hope that you all enjoyed a wonderful summer. For once August gave us some lovely weather, instead of the usual early introduction to autumn. Hopefully you all enjoyed some very enjoyable time with your children, wherever you ended up.

I'm looking forward to the coming year and taking the school onward after all of the foundations which were laid by the staff and governors last year. As parents, you may not always be aware of all the improvements which are made to the school's systems and procedures, so I would urge you to come along to the **governor forums** to find out what is happening on that front. The next one is at **7pm on Wednesday 3rd October**.

Over the coming weeks we will be updating the website, adding to the curriculum information which is on there. It will contain far more detail about what the children are studying in the different subjects and year groups. Hopefully this will allow you to support your child at home to a far greater degree.

If you have questions about how to do this, please come along to the **Meet the Teacher** sessions which are taking place, for Years 2—6, next **Tuesday 11th September**. Your child's teacher will explain how they are organising their classes, what the focus will be in English and Maths etc, and will provide you with an opportunity to ask any questions about the coming year, including how you can help support the child at home. You will be informed about the set times for each class meeting, as we are timetabling them to try and avoid those of you with more than one child having to be in two places at once.

You will have noticed the physical changes to the site. The sloping playground has been resurfaced and we will now get it marked with new games for the children to enjoy. We will also install some physical play equipment, but unfortunately the slope limits what type we can have. We will try to find the most exciting and adventurous equipment possible. The flat playground now has a special sports surface which has been coloured and marked. We are awaiting confirmation that we are allowed to install netting around the perimeter. Once installed it will be more effective as a teaching area for PE. The reception and nursery play areas have also been resurfaced and again, we will mark these with appropriate games and activities.

Let's look forward to an exciting and productive year for everyone associated with St Peter's.

#### Dr Paul Richards

Those of you whose children sing in the church choir will already know Paul. The church appointed him to start and lead a choir for local children and since the beginning of summer he has been working at this very successfully. Paul came into our school and conducted a very high energy taster session to enthuse our children to join the choir.

I am pleased to say that Paul will now be joining the school as well, to take over the role vacated by Mr Kitching. He will be coming into school every Thursday afternoon. From 12.30-1pm he will lead a music activity club for children in years 1 and 2, before delivering music lessons for years 3, 4 and 5 from 1-3pm.

After school he will run another music activity club for children in KS2. We are very fortunate to have Paul living in the village. He is a talented, professional musician and an experienced teacher who has his doctorate in music. He has some exciting ideas about the scope of the lessons he wants to deliver to our children and type of activities he wants them to complete. He will be supporting our KS1 nativity as well as working with Year 6 to produce a musical production for the end of the year.

### **Mrs Atkinson**

I am very sorry to say that Mrs Atkinson will be leaving us at the end of this month. She has worked at St Peter's for the last 12 years and we have been extremely fortunate to have benefitted from her professionalism and dedication. We thank her for all of many hours she has put into building our school up and wish her every success and happiness as she begins the next chapter of her working life, enjoying a new challenge at a new school. Thank you Mrs Atkinson and our best wishes.

We will inform you of Mrs Atkinson's replacement once the recruitment process has been completed. We are currently advertising two office administration roles on the Kent Teach website.

### **Tennis**

A reminder that tennis lessons start next Wednesday, so please make sure that the children have their PE kits on that day. The lessons are being delivered by professional coaches who will spend the entire day at school. Children in years 1 and 2 have the opportunity to join a tennis club which will run before school starts. Separate details will be sent out at the beginning of next week. Later on in the year, we will be organising a representative team of older children who will compete in local competitions.

### **Residential Visits and the Erasmus Project**

A reminder for parents of children in years 5 and 6 that I will be running an information session about this year's residential visits straight after the Meet the Teacher sessions next Tuesday. The residential information meeting will take place in the hall at 6.40pm. If you are possibly interested in having your child participate, then come along.

At the meeting, I am also going to provide you all with information about the **Erasmus project**. I mentioned this project in one of the newsletters last year. This is an EU funded project which will involve us working with a school in Belgium, a school in Germany and one in France. We will have week long stays at each school. Two of our staff and 6-8 of our children will be involved in each stay and it is likely that we will take different children on each trip. The children will be working on a project reflecting on the centenary of the end of World War One. All of the trips are fully funded and won't cost parents or the school anything. Even if you aren't considering sending your child on our normal residential, but are interested in learning more about this incredible opportunity, then please come along.

### **Ypres visit**

We also have a day visit to Ypres and Tyne Cot cemetery booked for Friday 9th November. We will be visiting the World War One museum in Ypres and the Menin Gate, before going onto the small but extremely moving museum at Tyne Cot cemetery, where we will also lay a wreath. Next week children in KS2 will receive a letter about this trip. I understand that some parents have been reluctant to sign up for the other trips across the channel which we have proposed, because they have wanted to know more information. I will try to give you as much information as possible on the letter I send out next week—but if you ever want to know more then please just ask me.

I appreciate that you aren't used to travelling abroad at St Peter's and hence it is going to cause concern amongst some parents. I apologise if I have been lax in providing you with sufficient detail. I have been leading school trips to the continent for over 20 years and hence it is something which I consider a normal part of primary school life. I will try to outline as many details of the trip as I can and if you still have unanswered questions then please ask me. I would hope to allay your fears sufficiently that you allow your children to participate in trips such as these, which can be truly life changing.

## Punctuality

As we start the new year, can I make a plea that you do everything possible to get your children to school on time in the morning. We have a real issue with the number of children who arrive late each day.

The school day *starts* at 8.40am. We expect the children to be in class and settled by that time. We register them at 8.40 and they then go promptly to the act of worship. If you just scrape onto the school site at 8.40, your children are already late. If you want to catch an 8.40am train, you'd be on the platform for 8.35. If you walk onto the platform at 8.40, you can expect to see it slowly pulling out of the station (perhaps not in the UK, but certainly in those countries with a reliable railway system). Please try to arrive at school at least a few minutes before 8.40am. It unsettles the children if they start their day flustered and rushed.

## Parking

In July I had a number of conversations with irate residents from the houses and flats at the bottom of Mount Pleasant. They were complaining about parents parking in the small car park which serves their properties. This is a private car park and is solely for their use. Apparently not only are some parents parking there, but when challenged by the residents, some of our parents have used foul language. Can I ask that you don't use this car park. I appreciate that Mount Pleasant is extremely congested, but if you struggle to park, please use the free public car park which straddles the main road.

## Headlice

Last year I wrote to say that if we found live head lice on your child, we would have a policy of telephoning and asking you to collect your child so that you could treat them. Obviously it is problematic to have a child in class with head lice. Firstly, it is extremely uncomfortable for the child themselves and if other children notice the lice, there will also be the inevitable embarrassment and stigma. Finally, we also wish to minimise the possibility of lice spreading to other children. So please, if you are telephoned because this situation arises, and you are able to collect your child, we would strongly request that you do so.

However, we also realise that this may not be possible for working parents. If it is impossible for a child to be collected—and we won't pressurise you to do so if you are at work—then we will simply take subtle steps to try to minimise the possibility of the lice transferring to other children. But can I ask all parents to check your child's head regularly and to treat your child promptly and thoroughly if you find any lice or eggs.

## Creative Homework

We had some lovely entries for our creative homework project last term. The children really showed their inventiveness and the range of their interests. If they wish to take part this term, our value is Hope. The children can produce any type of work, in any format, as long as it relates to Hope. They will need to complete it by **Monday 8th October** so that they can be shown to their classes that week. Class winners will then show their work to the whole school in the assembly on Monday 15th October.

## Conkers

The hot summer has greatly reduced the conker harvest this season. However, I would like to have a conker championship this year for all those who wish to participate. If your child would like to take part they will need half a dozen or so conkers, all drilled with a hole. We will end up with class champions who will then fight it out to be crowned conker champion of St Peter's—and then they will take on the staff champion in front of the school. So get collecting.