



FIVE ACRE WOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Thursday 15th January	ASD parent forum (individual appointments)
Thursday 22nd January	SLD/MLD parent forum
Tuesday 10th February	PMLD forum
Weds 1st April	Easter Fair

A MESSAGE FROM PEGGY...

WINTER 2014

Happy new year to you all! I hope you had a lovely Christmas and a nice break.

In this newsletter you can read about the many festive events that took place last term, in addition to a Harvest Festival report, class and sixth form updates and the latest fundraising news.

Since the last newsletter, there have been some changes to the Senior Leadership Team. The updated SLT job titles are as follows:

- **Peggy Murphy** (Principal)
- **Tim Williams** (Head of Primary)
- **Richard Dalton** (Head of Secondary)
- **Catherine Marshall** (Assistant Head of Primary)
- **Kirstie Hemingway** (Assistant Head of Secondary)
- **Michael Garcia** (Assistant Head of Wellbeing)

I would like to welcome Richard, who joined us at the start of January, and Kirstie, who has moved over from our sixth form at Aylesford. We also have some other

new staff who have started this term; Emma Athwal is the Sixth Form Key Stage Leader and Lou Brough and Becky Mackley have started as Teaching Assistants. We wish them all the best in their roles.

The change in roles for SLT means that some of the phase leaders have changed. Catherine will still be responsible for PMLD but Tim will now be the ASD phase leader while Richard and Kirstie will be responsible for MLD/SLD.

As we offer regular parent forums, we will continue to offer a forum for each of the phases every term. In addition, we will now be offering behaviour forums which will give parents/carers the opportunity to book a 1:1 appointment with Michael to discuss any behaviour issues/concerns. We will soon be sending out an updated forum booklet, which will give the list of dates and information.

Following my last update, we have been informed that the new build works have been delayed. Further building work should commence in July 2015. I will keep you updated with any further developments.



I am pleased to announce that Five Acre Wood School has been confirmed as the first Special School in Kent to become an Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Centre of Excellence, making it only the seventh Special School in the UK to receive the award. Just 59 schools in the UK have Centre of Excellence status. This is a fantastic achievement and I would like to thank Ashley Blackett and Natalie Chalmers for all the hard work they put in preparing for the assessment.

Finally, as a school, we are continuously trying to improve and your views are very important to us. We would be grateful if you could complete the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. The link is on our website at www.fiveacrewood.co.uk.

Many thanks, I look forward to seeing you soon!

Peggy

HALLOWEEN

For Halloween this year, pupils and staff had the option of coming in wearing fancy dress.

It was a spooky day at Five Acre Wood as we were surrounded by witches, spiders and ghosts!

However, lots of fun was had by all and classes took part in their own Halloween activities, which included 'Along came the spider' and anticipation work.



CHILDREN IN NEED



On Friday 14th November, pupils and staff took part in Children in Need day to raise money for disadvantaged children and young people in the UK.

This year we held a 'bring your teddy to school or dress as a teddy bear' day!

Teddy bear parties were held in the morning for Primary pupils and there was a Secondary school disco in the afternoon.

A good time was had by all and a total of £154 was raised. Thank you to everyone who took part, organised and

SPARROW CLASS UPDATE

Sparrow class have been working very hard this term, with each pupil focussing on a different target.

These include working in the stander, using

the eye gaze machine and learning to ask for more. Other pupils have been working hard on various things including relaxing the body, moving one foot at a time and learning to use our hands.



HARVEST FESTIVAL

This year's Harvest Festival performance was held on Wednesday 1st October at The Vine Church.

Pupils performed in their class groups, dancing, singing and signing to songs, including a performance of 'Food Glorious Food' from Oliver by Elm class!

A generous amount of food donations were brought along

and donated to the church by the pupils.

Parents and carers were also invited along to attend the performance, which everyone seemed to enjoy!

Thank you to everyone who helped organise this event, to the Vine Church for the use of the hall and also to everyone who donated items.



CHRISTMAS FAIR

To prepare for Christmas this year, Five Acre Wood School held a Christmas Fair and invited parents and carers to join us.

There were a number of stalls selling festive gifts and treats which had been made by pupils. Items for sale included cakes, biscuits, Christmas decorations, reindeer food, calendars and candles. There were also competitions including decorating jars, Guess the

Sweets and Guess where Santa is.

Lots of people came along to the fair and some stalls completely sold out of items! All money raised was split between classes to buy presents for pupils.

Thank you to everyone involved in organising the Christmas Fair and also to everyone who attended and made the event so successful.



SURPRISE VISIT FROM SANTA

Pupils were delighted when they arrived for school on Thursday 18th December to find that not only it was snowing but also Santa was there to welcome them while playing Christmas songs!

Everyone was so excited and we hope that Santa manages to come along again next year!



CHRISTMAS DINNER

This year's Christmas dinner was served on 17th December to all pupils in two sittings— one for primary and one for secondary.

Pupils got into the festive spirit by pulling crackers, wearing Christmas hats and tucking into a turkey dinner with all the

trimmings. There was even Christmas music playing throughout the dinner.

The pupils really enjoyed it and we would like to thank everyone involved in organising, setting up and serving the dinner— it was a success!



CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

This year we decided to design and send out our own personalised Five Acre Wood Christmas cards.

We held a competition for pupils to draw a picture and the chosen winners would see their picture on the front of the card. The cards were then sent to pupils, staff and external contacts.

We received lots of entries and it was a very difficult decision to make. The winners chosen were:

- Max (Badger class)
- Martin (Wren class)
- Isabel (Wren class)
- Catherine (Elm class)
- Catriona (Elm class)
- Sparrow class

Here are the winning entries! We are sure you will agree that they were very worthy winners.

We will now be making this an annual competition!



CLASS CHRISTMAS PARTIES

During the last week of term before Christmas, classes held their own Christmas parties.

Pupils dressed up, enjoyed party food and played festive games in their classes.

There was also a visit to Santa for primary pupils.

Pupils (and staff!) had a great time at the parties!



CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

On 17th December 2014, Lower School pupils at Five Acre Wood took part in a nativity performance to celebrate Christmas.

All pupils contributed in various ways, from singing to signing, dancing and dressing up in costumes.

This year, classes were split into two performances and lots of family and friends of pupils came along to watch and support them.

Some classes narrated the nativity while other classes performed

songs including Little Donkey, Twinkle Twinkle and Away in a Manger.

The Christmas Nativity was very well received by the audience and it was clear to see how much effort went in to organising, rehearsing and preparing costumes.

Five Acre Wood School would like to thank everyone involved in organising the nativity performance and to all those who came along to support and encourage our pupils.



FUNDRAISING UPDATE

LATE SUMMER FAIR

Our Late Summer Fair was held on the 20th September. We were very lucky with the weather after panicking about thunderstorms! The event was really well attended – thank you to everyone who came – and raised £1,200.

Attendees at the Fair enjoyed stalls with a variety of games such as bob-a-duck, hidden treasure and a crockery smash and there



were also stalls with lovely handmade items from independent sellers. A therapy area proved popular, offering Gong Therapy in the tipi and Indian Head Massage. There was entertainment throughout the day, with the five piece band The Connections performing music spanning the decades and a young solo artist James Sharp performing more contemporary music. The Five Acre Wood Signing Choir performed and the Harmony Variety Group sang and danced for us.

Also present were Kent Police, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Snapbros novelty photo booth, a racing party bus and a popular land train.

We also had a BBQ, bouncy



castle and ice cream van. We were supported by The Walnut Tree Pub who hosted a beer and refreshments area for us, Maidstone United who ran Beat the Goalie and a Speed Shoot, The Golden Boot who donated a Welly Wanging game with prizes, and Geering & Colyer estate agents who marketed the event for us through displaying advertising boards locally.

We would like to thank all parents, staff and friends who gave up their free time to help us at the event to make

it a wonderful day for our students to be proud of. Based on feedback that we have received, next year we are planning on holding an event earlier in the year. We will be holding a May Fair on Saturday 16th May 2015.

Please contact Jane Gardiner if you would like to get involved in any way at all with this. If anyone knows any Morris Dancers or has any contacts for anything that could be associated with a May Fair, please do let us know.



MAJOR SERIES AND MARATHON

By Victoria Wood

I would like to say a huge thank you to my team of friends and family, who joined me to complete the Major Series mud challenge held at Eridge Park in October.

Despite the rain making it muddier, we all slipped and slid our way around the park, making for an enjoyable day.



Before

In addition to the Major Series, Kate then went on to run the Cornish Marathon in November, in aid of Friends of Five Acre Wood School. Both events amassed a total sponsorship amount of £1629, including gift aid.

These funds will be used towards the charity's current play equipment project.



After

MICHAEL'S NEXT CHALLENGE

As you know, Michael Garcia completed a gruelling sea marathon in a Kayak last year to raise an impressive £840 for our students.

How could he possibly top that this year, I hear you ask? On 7th March 2015 he is going to abseil down the Arcelor Mittal Orbit at the Olympic Park in London. At 376ft (114.5m) high it's the UK's tallest sculpture. It is 22 metres taller than the Statue of Liberty and almost 6 times taller than the Angel of the North.

Anyone wishing to support Michael in this terrifying feat should visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MichaelGarcia1>, or simply search 'Michael Garcia' on the Virgin Money Giving home page.



FUNDRAISING UPDATE

MORRISONS LET'S GROW



Thank you to everyone who sent in their Morrison's Lets Grow vouchers to us.

We have used them to place an order for lots of cooking equipment for our students' kitchen.

SPONSORED WALK

During the summer holidays Les Apps, husband of one of our TA's, Lynn Apps, organised a sponsored walk along the river from Maidstone to Tonbridge.

The money raised from this event was donated to us and to the Peggy Wood Foundation.

We were delighted to be given a donation of £1,020.

Thank you to everyone involved!

LLOYDS COMMUNITY FUND

Thank you so much to everyone who voted for us in the Lloyds Bank Community Fund 2014.

We are very pleased to be able to let you know that we won the vote and have received £3,000 from the fund as a result.

This is an amazing achievement as there were 4,500 applications made, with 4 shortlisted in each of the 352 communities. The public then voted and the money was split with £3,000 for first place, £2,000 for second, £1000 for third and £500 for fourth.

This money will go towards a new adventure trail on the school field.



LLOYDS BANKING GROUP
COMMUNITY FUND

NEW PLAY TRAIN

We were awarded £2,500 by the Cobtree Charity Trust toward a play train, which we have had installed this term.

The train was also funded by sponsorship money that we have received from supporters undertaking sponsored events for us, and a £759.90 donation from Alan Firmin.

Alan Firmin have a scheme where they donate a percentage of the profits from their overnight pallet business to a charity each quarter. Charities have to be nominated by employees of

Alan Firmin and we are grateful to have been nominated by John Williams, Dad of one of our TA's Rachel Williams, and Mick Brooks, Grandad to one of our pupils. The photo below shows Mick and John presenting the cheque from Alan Firmin to us.

It was brilliant that John and Mick were already aware of our school and our amazing students and were able to nominate us to receive this donation.

We would love to hear from anyone else who has any links with companies who might wish to support us.



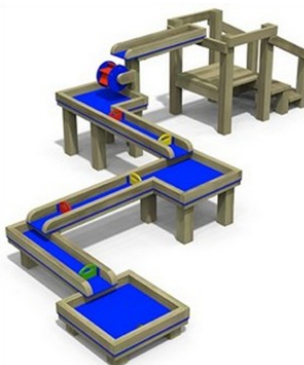
SOUTH EAST WATER COMMUNITY CHEST FUND

We were successful in our application to the South East Water Community Chest Fund for £2095 to purchase a Niagara Water Tray for our students.

This lovely piece of equipment will be used by our students to support learning whilst having fun.

Through play, the Water Table will inspire scientific discovery as students discover key mathematics and science concepts.

This will help them to learn in a fun way about space, volume, weight and measurement through manipulation of the water.



CONTACT US

If you would like to help support Five Acre Wood School, please contact our Fundraiser, Jane Gardiner on:

jgardiner@five-acre.kent.sch.uk or phone on 01622 743925.

For more fundraising updates, please visit our website, www.fiveacrewood.co.uk

SIXTH FORM UPDATES

CHILDREN IN NEED



The School Council organised a Sandwich Café to raise money for Children in Need.

The students made the lunch and profits were donated to Children in need.

EMPLOYABILITY LESSON

By Stephanie Benstead

Every Wednesday we come in smart clothes for our Employability lesson. This lesson includes things like practicing for a job interview.



DUKE OF EDINBURGH

By Connor Hollamby

The Duke of Edinburgh group Volunteered at Bedgebury clearing weeds.

We had to pick out all of the weeds so they do not kill the species of trees.

We were even featured in the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum newsletter!



HALLOWEEN

By Luke Friend

On the 31st October we dressed as monsters and we celebrated doing spooky dances and done apple bobbing, again raising money for Children in Need.



BOCCIA TOURNAMENT

By Mikey Horton and Casey Hudson

Some Acreside and Sixth form went on a Boccia tournament to compete in the YMCA centre in Maidstone.

Every mentor time we practiced with the Aylesford students every week.

We played other schools and we played in teams of three.



KCC YOUTH ELECTIONS

By Christopher Benstead

The KCC Youth Elections were held and we voted for candidates in the Maidstone area.

We chose our favourite candidates.



MAIDSTONE SCHOOLS 2K RUN

By Tony Cheshire

We took part in the Maidstone District Schools Cross Country 2K Run.

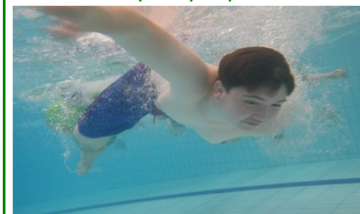
This was the first time that a special needs school has competed.

It was a long run but good fun.



SWIMMING

By Luey Sayer



I did good swimming and good listening to the swimming teacher.

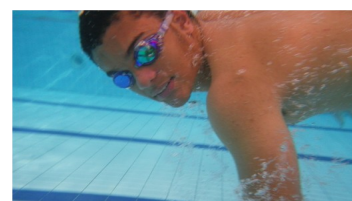
By Jack Wiltshire



I did front crawl in the swimming pool.

By Mikey Asekome

I am swimming under the water front crawl. I done forty lengths.



SIXTH FORM UPDATES

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

On Tuesday 16th December 2014, the Sixth form Christmas choir performed at the Aylesford School Sports College Christmas concert, which was held at Aylesford church.

On Wednesday 18th December, the choir also performed as parents and carers arrived to the Five Acre Wood nativity, which was held at the Vine church next to the main school site.



PANTOMIME TRIP

By Evie Hannah



Acreside, Woodside and Oakside went to the pantomime in Maidstone. It was Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Some of us went on the minibus and the public bus and then we walked to the Hazlitt Theatre. We waited for our friends to arrive and then we gave the tickets to the staff who work there.

The show started at 10.30am, we have to be quiet for the

show. We all danced and clapped along with the songs. We shouted 'He's behind you' and 'Oh no he's not'. The Double Troubles came on and one of them sang about ice cream and put it in his face. I think it was hilarious. And they sang Let it Go from Frozen.

Ian 'H' Watkins was Prince Charming. The seven dwarfs were brilliant.

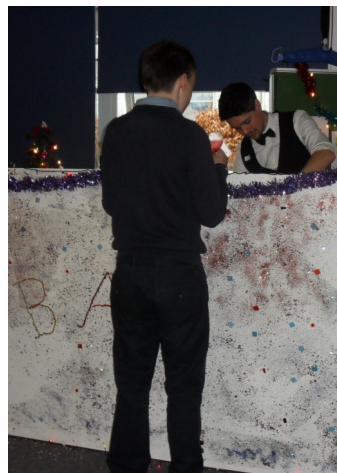
The show finished at 2pm and we came back to Aylesford. We all had a good time at the pantomime.

CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL PARTY

To celebrate Christmas this year, the sixth form organised and hosted a Christmas cocktail party.

Students made their own bar and helped create the non-alcoholic drinks that were served.

There was also a buffet for everyone to enjoy, followed by a disco.



Everybody had a great time and it made a nice change from the usual traditional dinner!

