



Orchard Primary and Nursery School

Head Teacher Mr R Cook

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Orchard Primary School Newsletter (31.1.19)

School life remains both busy and eventful at Orchard. I firmly believe 2019 promises to be yet another really good year for both the school in general, but also for the children, families, governors and staff who continue to make our school the special place that it is, always has been and always will be. There is so much that is happening in school at present that I wanted to make you aware of, it seemed quickest and easiest to write to you all in the shape of this newsletter. Please feel free as always to speak to me by phone, by appointment or by just catching me on the playground if you wish to discuss any aspect of school life or your child's education.

Great Fire of London Day/Go Orange for Muscle Wasting Conditions Day - What a day!

Friday 1st February 2019 has long been selected to be our KS1 'Great Fire of London' day where the Year 1 and 2 children get themselves totally immersed in their studies by dressing up in role and taking on the character of a child who was there in London in 1666 when London burned. About a fortnight ago I spoke to Ollie Hynd, ex Orchard pupil, paralympic swimming champion and current world record holder. Ollie is a regular visitor to Orchard, albeit it has been a while since his last visit. I believe that he is a great ambassador for his sport and I know how much our current Orchard pupils look up to him and are inspired by his achievements, considering that he once sat in the same assembly hall as they do now. I was more than happy to invite Ollie into school this week to talk to the children, because I know how much it raises their aspirations for life. I was also more than happy to get involved with the 'National Go Orange for Muscle Wasting Conditions Day' which is also on Friday 1st February. I hope that as always our wonderful Orchard parents will rise to the occasion, particularly in Year 1 and 2 where we'd like the children to come dressed in Fire of London role, but maybe with a bit of orange on them somewhere if that is possible. Ollie will speak to all of the children on Friday, including those from Year 1 and 2 so that they don't miss out. He will talk to them about their aims and goals in life and how they can increase the likelihood of achieving them. It really promises to be an amazing day in so many ways. Thank you in anticipation of your support!

Attendance and Punctuality

A great big thank you goes out to all of our pupils and parents for working closely with us as a school to improve attendance and punctuality at Orchard since January 2019. This makes such a positive difference to both the learning and the life chances of all pupils. The current national average for attendance in UK primary schools stands at 96.0%. During autumn term 2018 Orchard's average attendance rate was actually 0.2% below this figure at 95.8%. I appreciate that we are only a few weeks into spring term 2019 but the Orchard average attendance rate since January has risen to 97.6% (1.6% above national average). This represents 223 extra sessions attended by Orchard pupils in the first three weeks of spring term. In addition, the number of pupils arriving late for school in the morning has dropped hugely. Both of these factors (eg improved attendance and punctuality) are vitally important in improving the learning opportunities for all of our pupils.





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Whilst talking about attendance and punctuality, I am indebted to a couple of our parents who noticed an error in our attendance policy. Because of their alert eyes and supportive nature I have been able to correct this error. It concerns fines for parents of pupils who miss more than six half days (unauthorised absence) in any six week rolling period. When we as a school make Notts L.A. aware of a breach of this limit, the fine imposed by Notts L.A. is not £120 per pupil, reducing to £60 per pupil if paid within 21 days as reported in the summary attendance document sent out before and after Christmas 2018. In actual fact, the fine imposed by Notts L.A. is £120 per pupil per parent, reducing to £60 per pupil per parent if paid within 21 days. I apologise that we did not pick this up ourselves and thank those two parents for spotting this error and ensuring that we are able to pass this information on to you. Clearly this would mean that a family would be fined £240, reducing to £120 if paid early for one breaches of the limit, double what had previously been reported. I have amended the Attendance Policy in line with the above. Just a reminder to parents that if you are considering taking your child out of school during term time that you will need to complete and return to school a Leave of Absence Form (available from the school office or from the school web-site).

Parents Evenings (Spring 2019)

Just a reminder to make sure that you have booked your parents' evening slot for either Tuesday 5th or Thursday 7th Feb 2019. Please aim to arrive ten or fifteen minutes before your appointment time to ensure that you have opportunity to look through your child's work and books prior to your appointment.

Ashfield Sports Forum

Out of the forty or so primary schools in the Ashfield area who compete in the Ashfield Sports Forum Orchard are currently sitting in fourth position overall in the medals table having gained a total of ten team and/or individual medals already since September 2018 (three gold, four silver and three bronze). Even more pleasing is the fact that Orchard is sitting at the very top of the table for schools which have competed in the highest number of different sports and team events since Sept 2018 (a total of 21 different sports and events). I am deeply indebted to Mr Davis, Mr Jackson, Mrs Bailey and a number of other members of staff who have trained our children and then taken them to compete in the events, often after school. The eight schools who achieve the highest position in both the medals and number of events completed tables are invited to take part in the end of year Ashfield Games, which is an all-day sporting festival similar to the Olympics to find the number one sporting school in the area. We finished third overall in 2017-18 and we hope to improve on this in 2018-19. Well done to all concerned! The result is all of our children being really fit and enjoying taking part in many different sports and competitions.

Music, Dance and Performance at Orchard

Music, dance & performance, always a strength at Orchard, are currently more popular than ever.

- 122 pupils are learning to play a musical instrument (19 clarinets, 19 percussion, 38 guitars, 19 saxophone, 27 recorders). Piano tuition launches before Easter.





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- All Year 3 & 4 pupils receive weekly music tuition. This half term they are learning the keyboard. During autumn term they were taught to play percussion and the ukulele.
- 14 of our Year 6 children sang at the Arena in Sheffield along with thousands of other children as part of the Young Voices choir.
- Our Year 1 and 2 children will have the opportunity to sing along with hundreds of other KS1 children at Festival Hall Kirkby as part of the Little Sing choir in April.
- During autumn term The 'Believe Academy' came into school and delivered a ten week programme of dancing tuition to our KS1 pupils.
- We will perform to parents our second ever Music Showcase in the school hall in June. All elements of this presentation will be organised and arranged by the pupils and it will involve our choir, dance troop, young voices, musicians etc.
- On 14th Feb twelve of our KS2 children will compete in the 'Great Big Dance Off' at the Albert Hall in Nottingham against a number of other dance troops.
- Our KS1 dance club will run after school throughout the summer term.
- In November Jack Burrows (Mansfield Palace Theatre) led a very moving day of singing, dancing and drama to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.
- 'Pint Size Theatre Company' came into school in January to perform their play with a message 'Abigail's Story' to our pupils. The message behind the story was all about on-line safety.
- At Christmas our nursery & reception children performed the nativity to parents. Y5 pupils led the amazing Christmas Carol Service at Hill Methodists to a packed congregation. Our KS1 pupils delivered their Christmas play 'Prickly Hay' showing great confidence and ability.
- Later this term our Year 3 and 4 children will perform their production of 'Cinderella Rockerfella' and in July our Year 6 pupils will perform their usual highy quality summer production.

What a wonderfully talented group of children we have at Orchard. Thanks must go to the staff for giving so freely of their time to encourage our children to develop and showcase their many talents.

Thank as always you for your continued support. Please feel free to contact me at any point if you wish to discuss any aspect of school life or your child's education.

Rob Cook

Headteacher

