



GREAT KINGSHILL

Church of England Combined School



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19th July 2024

Aspiring to be our best with kindness, respect and faith

Message from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

It is hard to believe that it's that time of year again where we have reached the end. Each year I spend at Kingshill, I never cease to be amazed by the incredible children, families and staff that make our school such a special place.

There have been so many highlights this year - what I write over the next few paragraphs just won't do it justice to celebrate the truly extraordinary place that is GKCS.

If I think back to the autumn term, we began the year with our wonderful mosaic project which created eight permanent pieces of artwork to capture the school's values and vision. We launched the new reward system with badges for each value, 'Good Samaritan' badges and recognition awards for the number of Dojo points achieved. Year 5 went on residential to Liddington and conquered their fears, learnt that it was okay to be scared and achieved things that they didn't think were possible. The term finished with wonderful Christmas celebrations, including the singalong from Preschool, nativities from Reception and Year 2 and our church service led by Year 5, not forgetting the carols round the tree event which enabled our whole community to be together.

At the end of November, we experienced our SIAMs inspection, which focused on how well the school was able to demonstrate that it lives up to its Christian vision. The inspector shared many strengths that she had witnessed during her day within the school, including that she felt that the Christian vision of the school of 'aspiring to be our best with kindness respect and faith' was understood by all and fully embedded. She described our school as a place where both adults and children flourish, where joy is evident, and where the work of the school is transformational in the lives of its pupils. The staff team had worked exceptionally hard and were rightly proud of their achievements, and appreciated the recognition that the school was celebrated for the wonderful place it is.

As we moved into the spring term, it felt (as always) like we were getting down to the business end of the academic year! The children were settled in their classes, they knew their teachers and we saw the greatest amount of progress. Highlights from the spring term included our first trip to Norfolk Lakes with the Year 6 pupils; I think it was safe to say that the trip was enjoyed by everyone and was a huge success! To close the spring term, our Year 1 pupils led the Easter service and allowed the whole school community to reflect upon the Easter story.

Before we knew it, we had reached the summer term and the end of the school year was within touching distance. The summer term always passes by in a flash of happiness, hard work and sunshine. Unfortunately this year, the sunshine has been missing for the majority of the term, but this has not dampened our spirits!

The final term of the year has been packed with so many wonderful experiences which allowed the children to create memories that will last a lifetime. We were visited by an external advisor who reviewed the quality of education within the school. During the visit, they spent time in classrooms reviewing the work of children and speaking to both children and staff. It is safe to say that, as with the SIAMs inspector in the autumn, they were thoroughly impressed with what they saw. They two commented on the school being a place where joy was evident and where everyone flourished.

Our 150th birthday celebrations have been a particular highlight of the year; it is hard to believe that there has been a school on our site for that long! The celebrations last week provided a wonderful opportunity for our whole community to be together and celebrate the uniqueness of our school.

I am so proud of how the children conducted themselves during the service of thanksgiving, the support the parents showed by attending our birthday party last Friday, and the pure joy that was seen during the 'Colour Run' yesterday. This milestone for the school will go down in history and I am proud to say that we were there!

When I look back, the children and the staff have given this academic year their very best. They have worked hard, they have been kind and they have been respectful of each other.

As we reach the end of the year, I would like to thank the whole school community for the continuous support they show, for their commitment to being Good Samaritans, their willingness to support our overall aims and objectives, but most of all their desire to achieve their best. I think it is fair to say that our staff, our pupils and our families really do aspire to be their best in all they do.

As the headteacher, I am fortunate to be blessed with the most amazing staff team: the love, dedication and determination to provide the very best for the children in their care is something that I am exceptionally proud of. As a result of their hard work, our children really do flourish; in each respective year group they have grown not only in knowledge, but in confidence, independence and their ability to keep going - even when things are hard.

I would like to thank the parents for their continued support, for embracing everything the school is trying to achieve, and for continuing to trust us with their children because without the children, there would be no school.

With all the challenges that being a school leader or working in education presents, it is sometimes easy to forget that the most important people in everything that happens is the children. They are the reason we do what we do and for the most part, why we love what we do. I still, after all these years, feel grateful that I get to do the best job in the world! I get to spend my days watching our future leaders, athletes, politicians, doctors, authors, mathematicians, financial advisors and (hopefully) teachers being inspired to work hard to achieve their goals and dreams.

Finally, I would like to say to our Year 6 pupils and our families who will be leaving us for the last time today after many years of being members of our school community, that GKCS will always be a place that you can call home; you will always be welcomed back with open arms. The children now have the tools now to go on and grab their dreams. As they leave here, they need to continue to work hard to try their best, be kind and show respect. I hope they remember that by being a Good Samaritan, they can make a difference.

On behalf of the whole school team, I would like to wish each and every one of you a wonderful summer break. I hope you find rest, relaxation and some sunshine.

Thank you for another wonderful year and we all look forward to seeing you in September.

Education is the greatest gift we have. Our children at GKCS are lucky to have an education that is built around so much more than academics; it is an education that is fun, challenging but most of all, inspiring.

With my very best wishes,

Suzanne Best

A Big Thank You

I would like to say a huge thank you to Florrie and the Friends at Play team.

We know that for many families over the years they have provided parents with essential care and they have also provided children with a safe, fun and nurturing environment.

Everyone at GKCS would like to send our best wishes to Florrie and the whole team.

Mrs Best x

News & Highlights

Just a final few thoughts and messages for the end of the year...

- Thank you to the Year 6 team and children for the amazing 'Colour Run' yesterday! It was a fantastic event which all the children loved, and was the perfect way to round off the school year.
- Thank you very much from Mrs Garner and Mrs Marks to our outgoing group of ambassadors. You have all done a fabulous job of helping and supporting the younger children, and we are very grateful for your hard work. We are now looking forward to working with a new group of ambassadors in the new school year.
- Classes on Class Dojo are in the process of being archived and advanced. As a result of this, it will not be possible for you to contact any member of staff via Dojo during the summer holidays. New classes will be uploaded to Class Dojo upon our return to school in September.
- Should you need to contact the school in case of emergency between now and the start of the new academic year, please call the school's emergency phone on 07921 394998, or send an email to safeguarding@gkcs.school
- A reminder that the PTA meeting will take place on Wednesday 11th September at 19:00.
- Finally, have a wonderful summer, everyone!

2023-2024 Fundraising

Thank

You

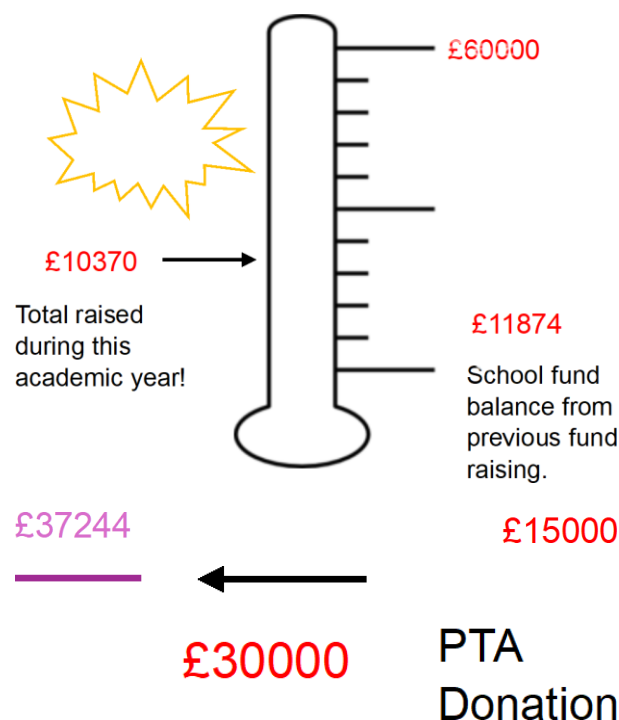
After 20 years, we finally need to replace our Muga surface. Whilst it has lasted for longer than expected, it is now in desperate need of replacement, and the cost to do so will be £60,000. We are planning to install a new 3G multi-purpose playing surface, which we are hoping will be available for both school and community use.

We are aiming to be able to reach this target as soon as possible and this year we have made a fantastic start. Below is break down of all the money that has been raised this academic year. We are so grateful for your generosity!

Total so
far!



Event	Amount Raised
The Colour Run	£4397
150 th Birthday Celebration	£1979
Anniversary Tea-towels	£669
Anniversary T shirts	£59
Anniversary bake off	£405
Old Library books sale	£181
Summer Term Disco	£995
Donation at Matilda	£284
Donations at Christmas performances	£1401
Total	£10370



Thank you so much for your support! In the new school year, we will be looking for other ways we can add to the fund; ones that doesn't just rely on the kindness and generosity of parents. We will be looking for grants, match funding and sponsorship or donations from beyond the school. So, if there are any parents out there who know anyone who could help us, have experience sourcing grants or sponsorship, or work for companies who do matched funding, we would warmly welcome their support or advice. Please get in touch via the office or using Dojo. The PTA have also committed to giving us £15,000, with the hope that with a new team, they would be able to add to this going forward.

Forest School

Forest School News

How is it the end of the year already? It has been another successful year up in the woods, and I have to say, I have enjoyed every second of it – even the freezing, torrentially wet ones! The last few weeks have been a bit mixed, and I would like to thank you for your understanding when other school activities must take precedence. It would have been unfair to have the children miss out on all the fun and celebrations just to come home baked in mud.

We are still so lucky to have this area available to us, and long may it continue. The pond has been a particular highlight this year and is bursting with life. The pond weed is growing, which helps to start the circle of life with larvae, skaters, snails and newts. The children are still fascinated whenever they have caught a “wiggler”!

Much to our disappointment, we have had to put 'Shrek's Armpit' out of bounds due to it just being too stinky and horrible. The decomposing wood material in there is doing its job, and I need to work out how to get this area doing something again. Maybe build something over the top...we will see how busy the summer is looking!

The mud kitchens (yes, we now have several) have been a constant source of fun, exploration and learning for the children, and we are extremely grateful for the donations of previously loved ones that will be given a new lease of life in our forest.

Next year, we will be continuing with Forest School, much the same as this year. The timetables have not been fully finalised yet, but we will let you know as soon as we know.

Thank you to everyone for your kind gifts and messages - it is lovely to hear the kind words from parents and children. We do Forest School because we love it and put a huge value on outdoor learning; building confidence, resilience and social skills.

To our Year 6 leavers, we hope you will take some of the skills and knowledge you have gained with you throughout life's journey. You have been an absolute riot to have in the woods, and we will miss you loads. Best of luck for the future!

Have a wonderful summer break and enjoy the warm weather when you can.

Mr Smith and Mr Nixon

Autumn 1 2024 Dates

Monday 2 nd September		INSET DAY
Tuesday 3 rd September		INSET DAY
Wednesday 4 th September	08:30	School opens for autumn 1
Tuesday 10 th September		11+ practice test (Year 6)
Thursday 12 th September		11+ test (Year 6)
Tuesday 17 th September		4W begin swimming
Tuesday 17 th September	14:00 & 18:00	EYFS & KS1 reading workshop for parents
Wednesday 18 th September		Individual photographs
Wednesday 2 nd October	14:30	Y3 Harvest Festival
Tuesday 8 th October	15:30 – 18:30	Parents Evening
Wednesday 9 th October	15:30 – 18:30	Parents Evening
Thursday 10 th October		Y3 trip to Henley River Museum
Wednesday 16 th – Friday 18 th October		Y5 residential to Liddington
Wednesday 23 rd October	15:15	School closes for half term