



GREAT KINGSHILL

Church of England Combined School



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Great Kingshill CE Combined School 4th
December 2024

Aspiring to be our best with kindness, respect and faith

December has arrived!

The advent calendar is in the staff room, 'Away in a Manger' is being sung in Collective Worship, and our Christmas Tree is standing proudly in the foyer, which can only mean one thing...December (and all the excitement it brings) has come to GKCS!

It will be a busy few weeks as we head towards the Christmas holidays, and as ever, there will be plenty for the children to do. Year 6 kicked off the festivities last week with a trip to St. Michael's in Hughenden for 'Christmas Unwrapped'. This week, it will be Preschool bringing the Christmas cheer with their performance to parents, before the school is transformed for 'Carols Around the Tree' tomorrow night. We are very much looking forward to it, and can't wait to welcome you all for what should be a wonderful evening.

After that, it will be full steam ahead with Christmas activities: 'Elfridges' on Monday, Christmas Jumper Day & Christmas Lunch on Wednesday, and the church service, led by Year 5 on Friday! More information about the plans for the church will be sent out at the start of next week.

Thank you to everyone who organised, volunteered, helped or 'DJed' (Mr O'Callaghan!) the discos last Friday. As always, they were a huge success, and the children had a brilliant time.

A reminder that Friday is an Inset Day, so there will be no school for any year groups.

With my best wishes,

Mrs Best

Management of information on Arbor

Before the end of the autumn term, we will be asking all parents to log on to Arbor to update their contact information, including addresses, contact numbers and additional priority contacts.

Parents will also need to update their permissions. Whilst we collect these from parents when their child is admitted to school, it is good practice to update these permissions periodically.

The permissions should be updated for each of your children individually. This is because (depending on your age of your child), not all permissions are required. An example of this would be walking home, which is only applicable to children in years 5 and 6.

At the start of the spring term, a pupil data sheet will be sent home with your child(ren), and you will be required to sign this and return it to school. This will be to confirm that the information the school holds on you is accurate.

It is vitally important that the information we hold on your child is accurate, especially the medical information and the emergency contact information.

If you are unable to log on to Arbor, or haven't logged in for a while, you should be able to reset your password here:

<https://login.arbor.sc>

We are hoping that this will make it easier for parents to keep their information up to date.

Parking

We are sending out our first 'Travel Plan Newsletter', and I hope that all parents will take the time to read it. The newsletter includes a range of information about the initiatives we are going to be working on as we endeavour to make travelling to and from school safer and more sustainable for everyone.

Since the end of October, I have received over 20 complaints, from both parents and local residents, about the behaviour, or the inconsiderate or unsafe parking of parents at drop-off and pick-up time. This is not acceptable, and I ask once again that parents park where it is safe and allow sufficient time to park a little further away from school and walk.

In the past week, I have noticed a number of parents are starting to park on the junctions and bends between Cryers Hill Road and Cryers Hill Lane; this is unsafe and creates an obstruction for both pedestrians and other road users. The highway code clearly states that vehicles should not be parked within ten metres of a junction, unless in an allocated parking bay. Therefore, parents should not be parking past the marked driveways on Cryers Hill Lane and the junction with Cryers Hill Road. It is not safe!

I have also had repeated reports and frustrations raised by parents about cars that are parked outside The White Lion pub, which are parked on or blocking the path. This is forcing parents and children into the road to get past your cars, which once again is unsafe. This is also causing an obstruction to anyone who is pushing a buggy or using a wheelchair. If you can not park outside the pub without blocking the path, please have some consideration for others and park elsewhere.

The use of the visitor car park at the front of school can only be used by parents who have a blue badge, or whose child has a blue badge. If this applies to you, please inform the office and we will liaise with you about using the front carpark. No other parents should be using the front car park to pick up or drop off at anytime; this includes when using breakfast or afterschool

club. We often have meetings in the evening after school and need the carpark to be free for visitors.

Local Academy Committee

Our Local Academy Committee are looking for Foundation Members. The LAC are a small group of individuals who work closely with the school and Kings Education Trust trustee board. Their work focuses on exploring the key themes of:

What does it mean to be a child at Great Kingshill?

What does it mean to work at Great Kingshill?

What does it mean to be a member of the Great Kingshill community?

Foundation members are those who are appointed by the Oxford Diocese Board of Education and the Trustees. They will be nominated and support by a church leader and are there primarily to protect and champion the school's distinctly Christian ethos. Whilst we are looking for members with a Christian background, we are also looking for members who have a background in education (for example a previous teacher or school leader); a background in health and safety; an interest in road safety and road planning.

We have a full complement of parents represented on our LAC, and are therefore looking for other members of our community, for example grandparents or other people you may know, who may have the time and an interest in getting involved with the school.

There is a time commitment involved, but we aim to work flexibly with the members to work around their other commitments. The time involved is approximately three hours per month. This includes a termly meeting of the full LAC, and the remainder of time would be spent in school or meeting with leaders on a particular focus.

We are really hoping that there will be members of our wider community who are willing to get involved. Whilst we have a number of vacancies at present, due to the specific nature of the work the LAC does, we are looking for those who have the aforementioned skills.

Thank you to Peterley Manor Farm!

A huge thank you to Peterley Manor Farm for the donation of the Christmas Tree. The children have been busily decorating it this week with their Christmas prayers and wishes. And thank you to Mrs Garner and Mrs Marks for putting on the lights!



Forest School News

The signs of winter coming are manifesting themselves in our forest, with beautiful autumnal colours littering the floor and branches becoming more bare by the day. The cold, the snow, the rain and the occasional bout of blue heavens make it a lovely experience in the woodlands. The children have really taken to the fungi fiesta around the woods, spotting new ones and watching how they are developing. (There is a lovely Bjork-narrated documentary about fungi on i-player at the moment – check it out!)

Preschool have been enjoying the games and exploring our woods, climbing the trees and swinging from various items to improve core strength and coordination, whilst also building small homes for Hattie the Hedgehog and her friends. They love the experience and are getting better at putting all of their forest kit on each time.





Reception made the most of the brief flurry of snow we had the other week by sledging down the mound, and some thought it would be a bit faster to use the slide, too! Loving the bravery, and I loved seeing their faces as they slid down on the snow making use of the lessened friction. For some, it may well be their first memorable experience of snow, so we couldn't let them miss out.

Key Stage 1 have been enjoying playing games and identifying the trees, but also developing their independence, teamwork and resilience. They are so good at pushing themselves that little bit further and are getting much better at turn taking, sharing and knowing that the games are about enjoyment rather than winning, but being accepting of the fact that they can't win every time. Also, loads of worms!



Key Stage 2 have been loving our “Drumstalker” game, which is a cross between Grandmother’s Footsteps and Hide and Seek, but with an upturned wheelbarrow and a couple of banging sticks! They have had to plan routes, think tactically, build hiding places in the best spots and be aware of their surroundings. We have also continued with our mallet making in Year 6, as well as preparing the kindling and the site for the campfires.

In addition to this, we have been conducting our Fire Safety sessions with the children in preparation for when we have our fires. The more we cover this, the more they will remember, and hopefully continue to be safe. With regards to this, if your child has any updates on dietary requirements (vegan, vegetarian, allergies, halal etc.), please let the office know so we can update our information. We have vegan marshmallows and gluten and milk free biscuits to go along with the other ones, so we are catering for all.

The next couple of weeks are likely to be cold, frantic and a bit changeable due to the Christmas season, so please look at Class Dojo messages about any potential events and changes that will affect the timetable.

Can I also ask that the children bring in their kit for each session, as our supplies of spares are depleting and not always making their way back. If you do have any at home, could you please send them in with your child. Or, if you have any waterproofs or socks that your children have grown out of, they are always welcome!

One last thing – thank you to all of the parents who have volunteered their time to help out in the forest – and keep coming back! We must be doing something right. Those extra eyes free us up that little bit more to do more exciting things with the children.

Please do keep an eye out on Dojo for any updates or changes to our timetable, and remember that we will be switching classes again after the Christmas holidays.

Mr Smith & Mr Nixon

SuperKind and Good Samaritan Awards

We are delighted with how everyone has responded to our SuperKind challenges, and it has been wonderful to hear about the varying ways the pupils have been working hard to make a difference in the world around them. The SuperKind initiative is helping us to develop opportunities for pupils to explore global issues, so that they are equipped to learn about social justice around the world.

As well as our donating and fundraising events, pupils have been taking social action by raising awareness and sharing information with others, designing anti-bullying posters, and volunteering their time for litter picking within the wider community. Please see the poster below for examples of social action which may help to get you inspired.

Social Actions Ideas © 2024 SuperKind Education C.I.C. all rights reserved

Every social action, no matter how big or small, makes a difference. You are probably doing many already but as the benefits of social action to young children are huge, we hope that you take on the challenge to do as many as possible! Please see below a list of examples for social actions to help get you inspired – but feel free to be creative with the actions that you choose.

<p>Volunteer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter picking Tree planting Distributing meals to homeless people 	<p>Make a Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a school assembly about water scarcity Make a presentation for parents about gender equality Speak to your class about climate change 	<p>Raise Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share your experiences of inequality with your class Educate your family on the carbon footprint of non-local food produce Tell your friends about plastic pollution 	<p>Protest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Lives Matter Schools Strike for Climate Local protests
<p>Make a Poster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw a poster about hand washing Design a flyer to promote reduced energy consumption Paint a poster about water consumption 	<p>Petition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Petition for the school canteen to have 'Meat free Mondays' Petition for more trees to be planted in the local council Petition local shops to reduce plastic usage 	<p>Write a Letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email the school head to ask for the school canteen to be vegetarian once a week Write a letter to the local council to ask for more cycle routes 	<p>Fundraise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cake sale Sponsored run Read-a-thon
<p>Organise an Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help organise a Summer or Christmas Fair Rally Friends together for a charity 5-a-side football tournament Run a second-hand swap 	<p>Donate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food (e.g Harvest Festival) Books Toys Clothes 	<p>Start a Club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead a litter-picking club Take part in Model UN Bring friends and staff members together to form a gardening club 	<p>Change Your Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk to school instead of driving Go vegetarian for one day a week Choose short showers instead of baths

SuperKind works alongside our school vision of “Aspiring to be our best with kindness, respect and faith” and pupils may still earn Good Samaritan Dojo points or certificates for acts of kindness that show they have gone above and beyond every day kindness.

Mrs Gandini 😊

Year 5 pen pal video call



On Friday 29th November, supported by Mrs Fabre, Year 5 took part in their first video call with their new pen pals in France. This is our second year of partnership with a primary school in Dijon, alongside trainee teachers from the University of Burgundy. During the afternoon, the children spent 90 minutes conversing in both English and French. They introduced themselves and talked about their siblings and pets. There was then time for some ‘free chat’, where they discussed favourite sports, colours, food and of course, the weather! Year 5 will have their second video call in the spring term, but for now, they are busy preparing festive Christmas cards to post abroad.

'Sunflowers' - Holmer Green Baptist Church



HGBC Sunflowers is an inclusive, safe space for children with hidden disabilities to come together for fun, support and nurture.

HGBC Sunflowers stems from the vision of Kerri Fabre (primary teacher and mother of a wonderful neurodiverse child) to grow a network which celebrates the unique and diverse hidden disabilities community.

We invite children aged 7-14 and their parents from this special community to join us at **Holmer Green Baptist Church** for our launch on **Saturday 25th January**, from **10am-12pm**, followed by the 4th Saturday of each month thereafter.

At HGBC Sunflowers you can expect free flowing activities, crafts, structured games for those who wish to participate, plus a space for parents to have a cuppa and chat.

To register your interest, or if you have any questions, please email: sunflowers@holmergreenbaptist.org.uk

Autumn 1 & 2 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)
Tuesday 10 th September	15:20 – 16:00	Meet the teacher
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
Friday 18 th October	14:00	'The Tiger Who Came To Tea' – Reception Tea Party to parents
Wednesday 23 rd October	15:15	School closes for half term
Monday 4 th November	08:30	School opens for autumn 2
Monday 4 th November		Year 6 trip to Imperial War Museum
Monday 11 th November		Flu vaccinations
Monday 11 th November		Year 4 trip to Verulamium Museum
Friday 15 th November		'Children in Need' – York House charity day
Monday 18 th November		Reception trip to Bracknell Lookout Centre
Friday 22 nd November		Year 6 heights & weights
Wednesday 4 th December	14:00	Preschool Christmas Performance to parents
Thursday 5 th December		'Carols Around the Tree' (timings tbc)
Friday 6 th December		INSET DAY
Monday 9 th December		'Elfridges'
Wednesday 11 th December		Christmas jumper day and Christmas lunch
Thursday 12 th December		Y5 Victorian Day
Thursday 12 th December		Reception Christingle (children only)
Friday 13 th December	am	KS2 Christmas Church Service (timings tbc)
Monday 16 th December	14:00	Year 2 Nativity to parents
Tuesday 17 th December	18:00	Year 2 Nativity to parents
Wednesday 18 th December	09:30 & 14:30	Reception Nativity to parents
Friday 20 th December	13:30	School closes for Christmas holidays

Please note that these dates, along with additional information regarding school events, can be found on our school website. More information will be added as the term progresses.