



Newsletter

July 2015



Vision: Making a difference today, for tomorrow

Dear Parents and Carers

What an incredibly busy term we have had. There have been numerous highlights, including an outstanding residential trip to Freshwater - many thanks to staff who give up their time willingly to make this happen, and to the Freshwater Committee for making this possible.

Other highlights are: Oak going to both Kingcombe for work experience and WOEK for Outdoor Education opportunities; Willow's fantastic French day; Cedar's regular trips to the park and local eateries; Maple enjoying extra sessions at Magdalen Farm; Acorns' trips to the Donkey Sanctuary and RDA; and all the groups enjoying the Sea Life Centre.

Despite all of the above, the pupils have been working really hard in school too. The topic has been 'Under The Sea', and they have studied various sea creatures, coastal communities and geography, short novels by Ted Hughes, cooking, including fish pie and kedgerree, singing, sea creatures and pollination, just to name a few.

Pupils in the Sixth Form have also worked hard to gain further qualifications, which is really exciting for their future.

Fond farewells go to four of our pupils, who are sadly leaving at the end of this term. I wish them all of the luck in the world for the next stage in their lives, and hope they keep in touch and let us know how brilliantly they are doing.

We have also had great news regarding our kitchen plans, as the local authority has agreed to provide us with one. As yet, I have no schedule of work, but will let you all know as soon as I have. Roll on lots of yummy and healthy lunches!

Thank you to those parents who signed the letter regarding potentially Mountjoy increasing their offer and looking to provide education until 25. We are working hard to try to persuade the powers that be that this would be a good move for them and especially for some of our pupils. We will carry on pursuing this as best as we can. Again, I will keep you informed.

We have arranged some exciting training for September which will enable Sandra to then deliver training to parents on having those, sometimes awkward, conversations about sexual health with their children, hopefully equipping you with confidence so that you can easily answer those tricky questions!

Also, I need to thank the Friends of Mountjoy School, for the tireless work that they put into fundraising. We await the arrival of Rumble the Wonder Horse, a mechanical horse which will live in its "stable" just outside Acorns' classroom. Also, we have playground markings being provided, and other outside developments, which will hopefully include a sensory walk, storyteller's chair and seats and more musical instruments. In addition, we plan to develop a horticultural area, accessible for all.

We have a holiday club running this summer and I hope many of you have taken advantage of this. We are also working hard to try to help resolve the issues around respite and short breaks. Again, if we hear anything, we will keep you all informed.

Other groups to thank are the children and young people who are utterly inspirational, work incredibly hard and are a joy to be around. They never cease to amaze me with their positivity. Also, the Governors, who provide guidance and support and the fantastic staff members and volunteers, who consistently go the extra mile to ensure that all of our young people get the very best deal that they can and are afforded every chance to reach their potential.

So again, thank you, and happy holidays to you all. I look forward to welcoming you back in September.

Jackie Shanks, Head Teacher

Please see new guidance from Dorset County Council regarding Parental Responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour on our website. Dorset County Council have now employed someone whose role it is to implement the new policy, which does include fines, so please see Sandra (FLO) for further information.

Quick reminder that pupils return to school on Thursday, 3 September.

Curriculum

Summer is here and this term all the pupils have been learning about 'Under the Sea'. This has been a great topic with most pupils visiting the Sea Life Centre and enjoying coastal walks. Pupils have been looking at and learning about rocks, plant life, the beach, fossils and enjoying lots of water - a few changes of clothes have been needed!!

There has been some great art work and creativity going on, including weaving on the fence outside. Pupils have contributed to some fantastic displays throughout this topic and these are a real celebration of the hard work of all.

We have had a great year with lots of hard work from all pupils and staff. Pupils have enjoyed lots of off-site visits which have given real-life experiences for pupils to learn. These have included regular visits to Magdalen Farm, the Kingcombe Centre, coastal areas and the local community of Beaminster and Bridport. Younger pupils have enjoyed horse riding with the RDA and the Donkey Sanctuary, whilst older pupils have enjoyed horse riding in Crewkerne and visiting WOEC.

We have enjoyed visitors throughout the year; the Explorer Dome, the Life Education bus, Action Van, Darrell, the artist, and, of course, the chocolatier. There have been some great learning opportunities for all pupils.

Sadly, we say goodbye to three pupils this year. We are looking forward to their leaving tea party on the last day and wish them all well in their next steps.

I hope you all have an enjoyable summer break!

Helen Farnell, Deputy Headteacher

Acorns

Acorns have had a fabulous half term looking at our topic, 'Under the Sea'. We have focused on the book, 'Commotion in the Ocean', and looked at lots of different sea animals including turtles, mermaids, jelly fish and crabs.

We enjoyed our trip to the Sea Life Centre and did some great work about the animals we saw whilst we were there. The children have also really enjoyed all the water play, bubbles and sand. Thankfully, we have had some great weather to have this both outside and inside the classroom.

Thank you everyone for a good year, and we look forward to things continuing in September.

Natalie and Acorns Team

Willow

It has been an exciting half term for Willow. The older Willow students went to Freshwater for their residential week, and each and every one had a wonderful time, enjoying swimming, bowling and the evening entertainment.

Willow also turned 'French' for the day. The classroom was decorated in a French design, and students and staff dressed for the occasion. They all enjoyed sampling the French food and speaking the lingo. In other subjects, the class has been looking at the Vikings in History and growing in Science, with some excellent cress and runner beans being grown in the classroom. In PE, we have been practising for sports day and learning the throwing event, javelin (foam javelins), and finally the relay event, for which Willow have a better baton exchange than the England team! The last weeks will be busy with sports day and trips so, if we don't see you before, we hope you all have a lovely summer.

Sue, Lesley, Taryn, Dawn, Hollie and Kim - Willow Team



Maple

This term, Maple Class has been lucky enough to continue working at Magdalen Farm every Monday. As well as feeding the pigs and chickens, we have been spending some time with a volunteer called Charlie, who has brought along two of her ponies for us to groom and lead. One day, we took Harry on a treasure hunt and used maps to find his bag of apples. We have learned to recognise how Tinkerbell and Harry are feeling through their body language. We have also had lots of fun, river

dipping, finding plants that have interesting natural inks in their leaves and petals and searching for small creatures under stones and pieces of decaying wood.



We had a fascinating trip to the Sea Life Centre in Weymouth where we enjoyed the shark tunnel best of all.

We have done lots of cooking on a fishy theme, including smoked cod chowder, fish pie, tuna pasta bake and kedgeree.

In Art, we have been learning about famous artists and having a go at reproducing some of their work. We have also experimented with lots of different types of weaving on both a small and large scale. We have had regular Wednesday outings to local beaches to look at cliff erosion.

Some pupils from Maple class and Davina spent a day coarse fishing recently on a lake near Shaftesbury, along with some students from Oak Class. There was much joking on the bus about who would catch the biggest fish. Everyone caught lots and lots of fish! Before long it was time for a BBQ lunch. Being out in the fresh air had made them all very hungry. After a presentation of certificates and medals it was back to the bus for the return journey to school. It was a lovely day and a great time was had by staff and students alike. We wish to say a big **THANK YOU** to the Masonic Fishing Charity for giving the students this enjoyable experience.

Julie, Davina and Bryony - Maple Team



Cedar

Cedar 1 students have been working hard this term on their personal targets across the curriculum.

We have explored 'Plants' in our science sessions; growing sunflowers, broad beans and cress from seeds, visiting Groves Garden Centre and collecting and sorting leaves.

As much as possible, we have used the outdoor play areas and especially enjoy the outdoor musical instruments.

We have been actively involved in making decorations for one of our classmates who leaves us in July.

Richard, Rachel and Carol - Cedar 1 Team

And so ends an amazing term!! Cedar Class has really enjoyed our Under the Sea topic, particularly our visits to our local beach and the Sea Life Centre. We have learned all about different sea creatures, different types of rock, the environment and how to keep it looking as beautiful as it is. In addition, we have also continued with our regular visits to cafes and shops - all the children do Mountjoy proud on each visit and we are getting very good at making choices from menus and using money.

This term, we have welcomed two new pupils to the class it is great to have some new friends!!

All in Cedar Class wish everyone a very happy and safe summer and we look forward to seeing everyone in the autumn term.

Cedar 2 Class staff - Tracey, Helen, Jeanette, Lorraine, Paula, Lauren, Emily and Karen

Oak

Firstly, thank you for supporting our activities this term, both those in school and beyond. We've had a very busy term with some or all visiting local colleges, working for the Dorset Wildlife Trust at Kingcombe, going to the Outdoor Education Centre in Weymouth, cooking next door at Beaminster School with Mrs Gibbs, creating beach art, visiting the Sea Life Centre, working with Harry, the Caretaker, working with the youngest pupils in Acorns, helping on reception, having support sessions for emotional needs or literacy or maths, enjoying hydrotherapy, going to the Fitness Suite, having singing sessions, starting a carwash mini-enterprise, gardening, going to FireWise at Weymouth Fire Station, taste testing fruit and vegetables, going fishing, working with pupils at Woodroffe School and taking part in our Sports Day. I think everyone needs a bit of a holiday after all that!

We'll be saying goodbye to two of our classmates this year and all of us wish them well for what they do next.

Have a good summer break.

Kevin, Hillie and Julie - Oak Team



E-Safety

Just a reminder for those of you who use Facebook, I have ordered some updated guides, together with a Twitter and Snapchat guide, which I will send out as soon as I receive them. Social media is changing constantly and it is important that we keep up to date to keep not only our children safe but ourselves as well.

Cheryl - ICT Systems Manager

School Council

The School Council has been deciding this term what to spend its budget on. Each class put forward their requests and, between the group, they voted on what was the most appropriate way forward with the money. It was decided that new board games for wet play was the top vote, with remote control cars coming second. At our last meeting, we looked at which games best suit the school's needs.

We have also been to West Bay for a photo to go in the Bridport News reporting on the Autumn start of the new phase at West Bay Park, in which the school council have been heavily involved.

Taryn (Co-ordinator - School Council)

Governors

I cannot believe that a year ago we were looking forward to starting a new academic year with a freshly appointed Head Teacher. Over the past 10 months Mountjoy has undergone many improvements and successes under the extremely hardworking leadership of Jackie and Helen. Governors have worked hard to keep up with the senior leaders and staff as they raced ahead with introducing great new ideas. As a Governor, it has been an honour to witness such enthusiastic, dedicated and motivated staff and to celebrate some wonderful pupil progress.

It was a privilege for me to be in the audience of the production of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which was brilliantly performed by pupils and excellently produced by talented staff.

We, the Governors, are confident that Mountjoy no longer requires improvement.

Finally, I wish all the staff and pupils a well-earned, restful summer break.

Tracy Scammell - Chair of Governors

I recently had the amazing experience of sitting in on an eye-gaze session at Mountjoy, organised for me by Natalie Rashleigh, and taken by Senior Teaching Assistant, Maria Lloyd.

Eye-gaze technology has been around for some while, being primarily used in the research field, but now, however, dramatic cost-reduction has enabled this technology to be used in the classroom. Eye-gaze technology can be used to assess, include, engage, and empower children and adults with complex physical, communication, and learning needs. The technology comprises of an 'eye-tracker' access device which,

combined with specialist software, tracks where your eyes are looking and turns that into computer control. Whatever you can do with a mouse, you can do with your eyes!

The software also provides teaching staff with various easy-to-use tools (such as heat maps) to analyse and assess progress, gain insight into a pupil's thinking process, and importantly to share progress with family or carers.

Maria demonstrated eye-gaze with the help of three young people who had all had previous experience of using this technology. The first young person was wheelchair-bound with PMLD, with obvious respiratory distress, but what was amazing to see was how his breathing settled down as he used the eye-gaze. The fact that he found eye-gaze stimulating and absorbing was confirmed as the end of the session provoked a bit of a temper tantrum which Maria handled brilliantly.

The other two pupils were both older and less physically disabled, but with obvious communication difficulties. They were both able to use the system, either by touching the screen, or by using an iPad, and both showed they had their favourite games and videos.

I found the session stimulating and thought-provoking, and was only sad that most of the children only have access to eye-gaze once or twice a week, due to the sessions being labour intensive.

Heather Giles - (Co-Opted) Governor

Family Liaison



Summer is almost here and a lot has happened over the past year. Most of you are aware we now have a Facebook page, shown above (find us by searching Mountjoy School), and it is really great that we are getting so many likes and reviews. Please keep it up and tell friends and family to like our page too. I hope this is giving you a real sense of your child/ young person's school day, including seeing their educational visits and school achievements.

We also have our first school club, since moving to the Beaminster site, at Mountjoy School during August, and I want to thank all of you who have signed up for this. We hope it will be the start of more holiday activities at Mountjoy, keeping your children in safe hands with our Mountjoy staff. **Please remember to send a snack and drink in for your child/young person if they are attending.**

The coffee mornings are set from September 2015 – July 2016, and you can find the dates and venues in the coffee morning leaflet on our school website www.mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk under About Us - Family Liaison Officer and scroll to the bottom of the page to find the link.

I hope you all enjoy the summer break - see you next term.

S Hutch

Sandra Hutchings - FLO

Friends of Mountjoy School

On Saturday, 20 June we held our first Summer Bonanza in the school playground. A fun afternoon was had by all. Attractions consisted of a children's entertainer (Strawberry Jam Entertainments), bouncy castle, fire engine (kindly manned by our local fire crew), rolling horse, human fruit machine, face painting, coconut shy, crafts, lucky dips, tombolas, BBQ, cake stall (all donations were gratefully received) and many more games.

All of our fantastic raffle prizes were kindly donated by local businesses, staff, parents and friends of Mountjoy. I would like to thank all parents/carers, staff, and friends of Mountjoy who gave up their time before and on the day. Without their help, this event would not have been possible.

Our profit for the day was £660.19, which was fantastic. This will be put towards an Equicizer, which is a mechanical horse, which will be used for training, exercise and therapy. The Equicizer is non-motorized and is controlled by the rider's own movement.

Our next fund raising activity will be at the Salt House, West Bay on Tuesday, 4 August, where we will be selling cream teas, and selling some of our books, bric-a-brac, etc left over from the Summer Bonanza. Look forward to seeing some of you there.

Cheryl - Chair of Friends of Mountjoy School



Sports Day

On Tuesday, 7 July we held our annual Sports Day.

Congratulations to those pupils who received an award.

It was a lovely afternoon with lots of parents attending and cheering the pupils along.

Followed by the awards ceremony afterwards.



Dates to Remember 2015

| | |
|--|--|
| Friday, 17 July | Last day of term |
| Monday, 20 July - Thursday, 3 September | Summer Holidays |
| Monday, 20 July | Staff Training Day |
| Tuesday, 1 September & Wednesday, 2 September | Staff Training Days |
| Thursday, 3 September | Pupils return to School |
| Tuesday, 8 September | Parent/Carer Coffee Morning - 9.30 am - 12.00 pm Mountjoy School - Community Room |
| Friday, 2 October | Parent/Carer Coffee Morning - 10.30 - 1.00 pm Molly's Den |
| Monday, 26 October - Friday, 30 October | Half term week |
| Monday, 2 November | Pupils return to School |
| Tuesday, 3 November | Parent/Carer Coffee Morning 9.30 - 12.00 pm Poundbury, Dorchester |
| Friday, 4 December | Parent/Carer Coffee Morning 9.30 - 12.00 pm Mountjoy School - Community Room |