



Mountjoy School Newsletter



Head Teacher

With Christmas nearly upon us, now seems a good opportunity to reflect back over the term. We have again seen many changes, including an increase in our pupil numbers - we currently have 55 on roll and many more requesting places. Our Acorns group is growing fast and Willow and Maple have never been more popular!

Our wonderful new kitchen has opened and Trish is doing a superb job of providing quality daily meals for all of our pupils - the uptake is fantastic, from around 22 pupils a day requiring lunch last term, to now around 37 every day.

We still have no firm date for the Beaminster music room to relocate, but I am ever optimistic that by September 2017 we should also have this space to use. This is great news as I am aware, and very thankful for your patience, that the current Community Room can be a little snug at times and has resulted in our reviews being less comfortable for those in attendance - again, thank you, and there is light at the end of the tunnel!

We also, through the brilliant Friends group, have opened up our horticultural area. Hillie is working hard to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to grow fresh vegetables, which they will then have the chance to cook.

Other exciting aspects are that we now have a full-time pool manager - welcome, Richard. This means that hydro takes place all day, every day and there will even be extra opportunities in the early evenings and during some holiday periods. Bespoke music lessons are also now part of many pupils' curriculums and it would seem that we have some very innovative musicians in our midst.

Further staff changes include Sarah C replacing Tessa as our new Finance Officer. Sarah is a great addition to Mountjoy. She is totally solution focussed, skilled in her role and ensures that her welcoming nature gets the very best from those around her.

We have also been working very hard with our local community and Oak class are planning to arrange Tea Dances for some of our older citizens next term. We hope, in this way, that our pupils gain a wealth of knowledge from those older than them and the dancers have a wonderful and convivial afternoon!

A selection of Key Stage 4 pupils are involved with the Arts Award and have already produced some marvellous sculptures in the style of Henry Moore. They will also visit potters and glass artists over the next few months. We have also re-launched ASDAN, which means pupils now have greater opportunities to accredit their learning, skills and experiences.

We have also celebrated Children in Need and Diwali, which was particularly thrilling, with special foods and dance workshops galore!

As I write this, the Christmas Play - "A Christmas Carol" - is having its first rehearsal. The play has been re-scripted and parts allocated. We will, of course, include a variety of cameos from Mountjoy's Got Talent, and I truly hope that you can all make either the viewed dress rehearsal or the actual day. Staff and pupils work hard to produce a play that will entertain, educate and enthrall you!

Please do be aware that we are running a holiday club over Christmas and we will continue to offer these over the coming year. We are hopeful that the Potens Short Breaks home in Crock Lane will be opening shortly, which will offer our families greater support.

I do wish all of you, and all of your loved ones, a truly magical Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Thank you for all the support that you offer to the school, and see you all in January.

With kindest regards

Jackie - Head Teacher

Deputy Head Teacher

The Autumn Term has been another busy, fun time!! Especially for me as my first full term as Deputy Head! It has been great to see all the children returning to school in September and enjoying their new classes. The curriculum has been as full and busy as ever with lots of extra curricular activities going on too - groups of children have enjoyed visiting Magdalen Farm, Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre (WOEC), and we have had in - school visits from Fun Science, Dorset Music Services and Action Van Rebound Therapy. Wherever possible we are making full use of our TA's talents, Holistic Massage sessions with Fran, and music sessions (including individual piano tuition) with Sarah K.

As the festive season approaches we are preparing for our Christmas performance of "The Christmas Carol". Rehearsals are well underway and the children are very excited about their respective roles.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our 2 performances and lets keep everything crossed they go well!

Have a great Christmas!!

Tracey - Deputy Head Teacher



Governors

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of Mountjoy

I would like to introduce myself as the new Chair of Governors.

Firstly, I would like to say a massive 'Thank you' to Tracy S. She has served the School brilliantly for a number of years as the Chair until September this year. Through her skill, humanity and sheer hard work, she has helped to steer the school through a period of transition that has seen Mountjoy grow from strength to strength. Her contribution cannot be underestimated. I have learned a tremendous amount from her for which I am very grateful.

I have been a Governor for 3 years now, the last year as Vice Chair and Chair of the Pupil and Curriculum committee. Being involved with Mountjoy has restored my faith in education. It truly is an inspiring place to be. The pupils and staff are amazing.

My wife and I have lived in Beaminster for almost 4 years. For many years I was a Secondary Science and Careers Teacher in Somerset before moving overseas to work with Burmese refugees and other tribal people groups in Northern Thailand. Currently I work for a company that works with adults with learning disabilities based in South Somerset. Seeing people realise their full potential has long been a passion of mine so I feel very privileged to be able to make a contribution to the work of Mountjoy. In my free time I enjoy music. I play bass guitar and sing in an acoustic 'pub' band and also sing with the Beaminster Singers. It has been lovely to see some great music taking place in the school.

Should any of you wish to contact me, this can be done through the school office.

John Ryde - Chair of Governors

Acorns

All those in Acorns have been busy little bees. We've all had lots of walks to the park and enjoyed the good weather and fresh air. We've explored other parks at West Bay; everyone wanted to ride on the long rope swing!! We also had fun at our first 'Beach School' with Emily; the sun was shining and everyone searched for different items on the beach to make musical instruments; it was great! We finished the session throwing stones into the sea and no one managed to get too wet!! Now the weather has changed, that hasn't stopped everyone in Acorns using our outside learning space, dressing up in our wet weather gear and splashing in huge puddles!!

Our topic this term has been 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story. Everyone gets very excited when it's time to read our special story.

Everyone gets involved!! We have been focusing on the caterpillar's colours, red and green. Have you seen our display outside Acorns? We've used different techniques to make patterns; sponge painting, rollers, using different sized brushes and collage. We have been learning our numbers by counting all the food the caterpillar eats.

This term, we have had some great sessions at the Donkey Sanctuary. Everyone benefits from the whole experience. On our journey, we talk about what we see out of the window. At the centre, we explore the inside and outside learning space, then it's hats on, ready to go on the donkey! Everyone sits well on the donkey, listening to the volunteers from the centre. They have a ride around the paddock a few times, then outside there's lots of other animals to see and, of course, lots more donkeys!! If the weather is warm enough, we sit outside for a picnic; we were even sat outside in the sunshine in October!! We then explore other parts of the centre before it's time to go back to school.

This term, everyone's confidence has improved so much during our hydrotherapy/swimming sessions. During rebound therapy, the team have been very impressed with everyone's progress. In our cooking sessions, we have been repeating our recipes, cakes and toast. Our spreading and cutting skills have really improved, and of course the best bit is tasting our achievements!

I want to thank all the children and staff in Acorns for a fantastic term!

Vicki and Acorns Team

Willow

As usual, Willow Class has been very busy this term. We have had a few outings and some exciting learning.

In Maths, one group have been looking at fractions and using a pizza as a resource, which proved very popular. We have a new swim and maths lesson, which the pupils are enjoying. It is being taught in the hydro pool twice a week. The children have made progress in retrieving numbered sticks and their general swimming.

In English, we are continuing to look at traditional tales; we are now reading The Three Little Pigs. The older age group within the class have worked on sentence formation, while the younger group have done some drama and all taken turns at playing the pigs and wolf.

Horticulture is a new lesson to Willow. It is being run by Senior TA, Hillie. The students are taken in small groups or one to one for this. It is helping them gain the new Mountjoy Outdoor Learning

Award, to achieve awareness of self and the environment. Our students have already ticked off many of the sections working towards the award.

In Design and Technology this half term, we are making our own sandwiches, which we look forward to enjoying and eating!

In Art, we have been making colours lighter and darker, and mixing paint to achieve this.

We are working on the school Christmas production, where we hope to see you all.

We would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sue and Willow Team



Maple

Maple Class have seen some big changes with both staff and pupils this term . We have welcomed two boys from classes within school plus two new boys, all of whom have settled in well and seem to be enjoying the Maple experience.

Our learning experiences have included taking responsibility for the school guinea pigs once a week although admittedly, we do have extra cuddles when we can. Everybody has been involved with the feeding and cleaning out of the cages which is always followed by taking turns to cuddle them. Those who were a little wary at first appear to have overcome their worries or anxieties and have joined the guinea pig fan club!

Horticulture has been introduced this term and will be expanded over the following terms. We have a polytunnel on the school field which will be used to grow fruit, vegetables and plants which will be a great sensory experience for all. Our Magdalen Farm visits in the past will encourage us to look after all the plants as we know what they need for healthy growth.

We have had singing with Jane on an almost weekly basis since the beginning of term. She

provides a multicultural session where the pupils are taught songs from around the world and use percussion instruments to accompany the songs. We are also hoping to reinstate weekly music inclusion with Beaminster School next term.

In Science we have been learning about animals and habitats with Caroline and the Digestive System with Bev. English has included reading Treasure Island and one of the Beetle and Max books. Maths has shown us how to collect and display data including tally charts, pictograms and Venn diagrams.

We have celebrated Children in Need and Diwali and are currently working hard on preparations for the Christmas extravaganza. It is great fun and gives all the pupils a chance to take part in a whole school production rather than a class activity.

Christmas and the last day of term is almost upon us, so may Maple Class take this opportunity to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and Happy New year.

Bev and Maple Team

Cedar

This term we welcome three new pupils to Cedar Class. They are settling in really well and enjoying their time learning with the other Cedar students.

It has been a very busy term! We continue to use the hydro pool three times a week and love doing communication and Maths work in there.

In Food Week, we made smoothies (very healthy!) and did a Cedar version of 'Bake off'. It was great fun and some of us were brilliant at kneading our bread.

In PE, we explore the apparatus and climbing equipment, following directions and instructions.

When the weather is okay, we walk to the park and Beaminster cafes. A large part of our learning is knowing how to behave in the community, so visiting shops and cafes are important skills!

We are now looking forward to getting into the Christmas spirit and practising our school play with our friends.

From all in Cedar, Merry Christmas.

Richard, Tracey and Cedar Team



Ash

Starting with Ash class in September has been an amazing experience for me! In such a short time, the class have welcomed me into their community. Every morning, we start the day with a "wake and shake" session that sets us up for the day, and the enthusiasm for learning carries on until home time.

In English, we have worked on the skills of punctuation and connective words, and also developed arguing a case and story writing. We all enjoyed reading a Twelfth Night story, which we developed into a performed play. In Maths, we have particularly worked on different areas of measurement that supported our Food Technology lessons – with yummy results.

In Science, we studied plants, which informed the students for the Horticulture work they have taken part in. From there, we went on to look at animal habitats and the human skeleton and muscles. For the ASDAN Bronze Award, we focussed on hygiene and a balanced diet.

We were really fortunate, in the first half of term, to go to Weymouth Outdoor Activity Centre for kayaking, climbing and tunnelling, which the class loved. Every member of the class met the challenges with their very best effort.

The Christmas break for the class will be well deserved so that we return ready to wake and shake in next year.

Nigel and Ash Team

Oak

We have really enjoyed our busy Autumn term in Oak class!

We have been out and about to lots of wonderful places, including trips to different colleges, to see what the future holds, work experience at Oh Crumbs, Chancery House and around school, regular trips to Lidl, to buy ingredients for our lunch, and some nice trips to down to West Bay, Bridport Leisure Centre and local food banks.

Our weekly trip to Magdalen Farm is proving to be a big hit and it's great to see all of our group getting hands on and having a go! We love feeding the pigs, especially when we get to collect apples for them. Making reindeers was great fun and tested our wood working skills, pizza making fuelled us with a hard earned, delicious snack and walking the goats provided endless giggles.

We are making great progress with our curriculum, especially with our OCR Life and Living Skills Course. We have completed several units already and will be ready to submit some of our work at the start of next term, making us well on the way to gaining those qualifications!

We would like to thank everybody who has helped to make our term so exciting and fun packed, and a huge thank you to our ever supportive families!

We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Emma and Oak Team



Juniper

We have settled well into our new class this term.

Our focus has been on food and colour. This has included exploring hot and cold, solid and liquids and themed weeks on red, green, blue, yellow and purple. We have explored the colours through all aspects of the MSI curriculum.

Each week, we have been going out and about, focussing on Beaminster park, Steak Out café and shopping in various shops. The shopping has related to the ingredients needed for our cooking sessions, which we have focussed on making toast for the first half term and sandwiches for the second.

All in all, a great term in Juniper.

We would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Natalie and Juniper Team

Family Liaison

Family Liaison – Sandra.Hutchings@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

This year has seen many changes and one of those, the introduction of our "out of school clubs", has proved to be a huge success. We have been able to achieve this with partnership working between The Arts Development Company and The Bridport Round Table.

It is lovely being central in the school and it means that I get to see more of your children and young people; some pop into see me regularly, which is lovely.

The next coffee morning will take place on Tuesday, 14 March, from 10.00 am - 12.00 pm, in the Community Room at Mountjoy.

This year, our Christmas meal is at "The Olive Tree" in Bridport, and I am really looking forward to it, especially as I couldn't make it last year. I know the evening will be full of fun and enjoyment; for those of you who were unable to join us, there is always next year.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Sandra - Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

Sandra



We still have a Parent Governor vacancy. If you are interested, please contact Vicky Reed (Clerk to Governors) for more information on 01308 861155 or clerk@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk



Friends of Mountjoy School (FOMS)

I can now report that our Summer Bonanza made £829.39 profit.

During the summer holidays, our Horticultural area project was started, and completed in September. Horticulture is now timetabled throughout the week. This project was funded by the Friends.



In July, we had a Cream Tea Event at the Salt House in West Bay. It was lovely to see so many parents, carers and staff. The weather was definitely with us on that day, which helped to make the day a great success.

This term, we have been busy organising our annual Christmas Fayre, which was held on 26 November. The Fayre was a great success, with the attendance of Father Christmas and the children’s entertainer, Strawberry Jam.



We had lots of lovely stalls; there was a wonderful cake stall, fabulous craft stall and many more games, tombolas, etc. Hot dogs and hot chocolate were on the menu. We exceeded last year’s profit with an amazing total of £1,400.

Our AGM will be held at Mountjoy School on Thursday, 16 March 2017 at 7.30 pm. Please come along and lend your support to this wonderful school. All welcome. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided.

Cheryl – Chair of Friends of Mountjoy School (FOMS)

Our wild and wacky Head Teacher is at it again!

From 2 December, Jackie will be attempting to run **101** half marathons in **100** days, finishing with a full marathon! **WOW!!** Jackie is raising money for Cancer Research and The Friends of Mountjoy. She will be running a total of 1323.1 miles - that is the equivalent of running to Romania!

Please support Jackie via her Justgiving page (Justgiving Jackie Shanks 101 half marathons) for Cancer Research, or via the school through our Jingle Jars for the Friends of Mountjoy School.



Mountjoy School

Tunnel Road
BEAMINSTER
Dorset
DT8 3HB

Phone: 01308 861155
Fax: 01308 861929
E-mail: office@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

Making a difference today for tomorrow



Dates to Remember - 2016/17

Thursday, 8 December	2.00 pm Christmas Performance Hall
Friday, 9 December	2.00 pm Christmas Performance Hall
Friday, 16 December	Last day of term
Monday, 19 December - Tuesday, 3 January 2017	Christmas Holidays
Tuesday, 3 January 2017	Staff Training Day - school closed to pupils
Wednesday, 4 January	Pupils return to school
Friday, 3 February	School photographer coming to Mountjoy
Friday, 10 February	Last day of half term
Monday, 13 February - Friday, 17 February	Half term week
Monday, 20 February	Staff and pupils return to school
Friday, 7 April	Last day of term
Monday, 10 April - Friday, 21 April	Easter holidays
Monday, 24 April	Staff Training Day - school closed to pupils
Tuesday, 25 April	Pupils return to school

