



Mountjoy School Newsletter



Head Teacher

The second part of the Summer Term always offers us a chance to look back at the year and take stock of what we have all achieved. As always, there is so much to celebrate and be proud of.

We celebrated our 50th Birthday (or possibly 51st, hey who's counting?!). The Bells played, Beaminster School sang, the Bubble Man blew and Billy Bragg opened the celebrations. Old pupils visited and a jolly good time was had by all.

Only the week previously, we had run our first Tea Dance for many of the older community members in Beaminster and beyond. This was again a great success and thanks need to be portioned to Maple, Oak and, of course, the passionate Carol. Two separate bands played, tea, cake and dancing was enjoyed, and our pupils really helped to make our visitors feel welcome.

What is really thrilling for us is that our data this year has never looked better. Huge thanks must go to Rachel and Julie for the fantastic interventions that they continuously carry out, ensuring that, wherever possible, no child fails to make progress.

Beach School and Forest School have gone well and pupils have had amazing experiences, working and learning about different environments.

Staff have been trained in Elklan - speech and language, Rebound, Sensory Integration, Maths Mastery, Attachment Awareness, SIMS, Health and Safety and Beach Schools, as well as many other areas. We are always keen to ensure that our staff are well trained, well qualified and, where possible, having lifelong learning opportunities.

Over the summer, we will have lots of work going on to improve our outside areas. We have wet pour coloured pathways going in, allowing us to use the field throughout the year, alongside a Knights Castle being erected in the Acorns area, and more sensory equipment being added to the main playground. Ideally, next year, we are hoping to bid for some grants to allow us to put in a wheelchair roundabout.

From September, the school will be taking over two of the transport runs; we have never taken on anything like this before, but are hoping that those children and young people that we transport will benefit from the familiarity of some of our staff.

The music room will be relocated into Beaminster School's grounds by next June, which again will allow for an increase in numbers. Currently, we have 62 pupils on roll, and this has grown by 50% since I have been here. There are so many pupils needing special school places, who deserve the opportunity of coming to somewhere like Mountjoy.

The sad part of this time of year is saying goodbye to some cracking pupils. We fondly wish four of our sixth form pupils the very best of all things. You have all become remarkable young men and are a credit to yourselves, your families and Mountjoy School; please keep in touch and go out and make your mark on the world.

As ever, I wish you a safe, happy and fulfilling summer and look forward to an exciting Autumn Term ahead.

Jackie - Head Teacher

Deputy Head Teacher

This year has been amazing!! Busy, challenging and interesting for me as my first full year as Deputy Head! I have progressed almost as well as our children, who have made great progress again this year, both academically and personally, in so many ways. We have also been lucky to welcome many new children to the school this year, although it is with proud but heavy hearts that we say goodbye to our Post 16 leavers. We look forward to hearing about what they get up to next!!

We have been able to provide a wide variety of extra curricular activities this year, which all children have benefited from. Some have taken place in school like Rebound therapy, hydro therapy, Rumble, music therapy, massage, tennis and cricket sessions, and a range of activities provided by Action Van, including the skate park. Offsite activities at Magdalen Farm and WOEC have been as popular as ever, as have horse riding and Donkey Sanctuary sessions, and our week's residential at Freshwater was a big success, despite the weather. Well done to Maple Class for doing Mountjoy proud, as classes always do.

Our Mountjoy bell ringers have been active within the community as always and are in high demand at a variety of events. Mountjoy's community profile has increased as a result of our bell ringing activities, and also due to the community events held in school like the recent, very successful, tea dance, which all the children enjoyed with our visitors to the school. Next year, the bell ringers will be able to travel in style with the purchase of our new school bus.

I wish everyone a very happy end to the summer term, and hope that we all enjoy a restful, fun and sunny summer holiday! I look forward to seeing everyone back in September.

Tracey - Deputy Head Teacher

Governors

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends

I continue to be impressed and very gratified to see the continuing success at the school. There are very many areas within school where progress is happening. For example, the curriculum is getting broader, pupils are often out of the classroom, and more clearly tailored to the needs of individual pupils. New ways of managing behaviour are being explored. The food on offer at lunch time is much improved now that we have our own kitchen. All of this is resulting in happy, stimulated pupils who are making great progress.

I have been particularly impressed this term with the impact that we are having in our local community. We invited people to join us for a tea dance that was very well received by the people who attended. We celebrated 50 (or possibly 51) years of Mountjoy's existence as a school with Billy Bragg as our special guest. With the help of the Friends of Mountjoy School, we ran a very successful Fun Day. This week, I had the privilege of hearing the Mountjoy hand bell ringers perform at the Beaminster Festival. As usual, they mesmerised the audience with their concentration, friendliness and, of course, musicality. The Festival Director was clearly very moved by the performance. Where to next with this group? Another person in the town talked to me about his wish; a group of local businessmen to learn more about the school, having heard great things. I have no doubt that there are other examples too. These community links are extremely valuable. On behalf of the Governors, I would like to thank all those who are encouraging this.

John Ryde – Chair of Governors - J.Ryde@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

Acorns

Acorns have certainly been making the most of the extreme weather!! During the lovely hot days we have been cooling ourselves with lots of water play outside! Pupils especially enjoyed using the hose with the sprinkler, and sitting in the cool water with a bowl, splashing! We were learning about what sinks and what floats in water and the patterns water makes on the ground. During wet days we have dressed up in our waterproof gear and our wellies and splashed in the big puddles, and everyone enjoyed it as it was so warm.



This term, we have been thinking about 'New Life' and we have to congratulate one pupil and his family on the arrival of a new baby sister. We have been thinking a lot about babies and pupils have been looking after babies in our role play area, which we turned into a doctor's surgery. We have really enjoyed our special book, 'Owl Babies', and pupils have been answering questions with the iPad about the story. We have also been looking at the 'Jungle' this term, using lots of green colours, mixing different green shades and tearing green paper, and thinking about what animals live in the jungle and what sounds they make.



Our trip this term was to the Wildlife Park near Axminster. We all had a great day out together. We saw lots of different birds, the kookaburras made a really loud noise, and the white peacock was beautiful and he even put on a display of his huge feathers. We saw lots of different animals; zebras, otters, kangaroos to name but a few, but we could get so close to see them. Everyone enjoyed our picnic together, then a run around the playground before it was time to go back to school. The day passed by too quickly; we will have to visit again soon!!

The Buddies group have spent lots of time in Acorns, exploring and enjoying all the different activities and getting to know the staff, ready for when they start in September.

It has been a busy but fun term! We wish everyone a really good summer, and all the best to all our little Acorns who are moving on to new adventures!

Vicki and Acorns Team

Maple

This term has been packed with lots of interesting activities.

In June, we went on a residential to Freshwater Park. The weather was awful, particularly the day we arrived, when the heavens opened just as we got out of the buses and into the caravans. However, we enjoyed all the indoor facilities, including the swimming pool, water slide and bowling alley. We took part in Sports Day and completed a Treasure Hunt on probably one of the windiest days of our visit, with the result that some papers blew away! The Freshwater Committee gave us a party and were very sad to announce that this was the last year they would be providing this tremendous opportunity for our children. Mountjoy have been invited to participate in this residential week for the last 20 years or so. Our week away ended with a lunch at Oh Crumbs! in Bridport, followed by ice creams as the final treat. The children, both residential and day visitors, thoroughly enjoyed the experience and behaved extremely well.

This half-term Maple are using the facilities at Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre. To date, we have participated in rock climbing, using the tunnels and kayaking with more activities to follow.

We have welcomed a new pupil into our class.

Maple Class have also moved classrooms and can now be found in the old Ash Class at the bottom of the corridor. All pupils are involved with setting up the new space and making it our own.

Our learning has been very broad with lots of different topics in Science, History and Geography. We are currently participating in Health and Fitness Week, where we have whole school activities and will learn about staying fit and healthy. The week finishes, weather permitting, with Sports Day on Friday.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish those leaving Maple Class well. September will bring new classes, new teachers, and new experiences and challenges, which I have no doubt all those concerned will rise to.

Have a good holiday everyone.

Bev and Maple Team

Cedar

Cedar students have been very busy this term, and taken full advantage of the better weather to learn about the outdoors.

In Science, we have explored pushing and pulling on the outdoor gym equipment and learnt to sign and symbol familiar things we might see when outside on a walk, in the park and around school.

We like to practice our skills in school first and then put those skills into action and learn through a range of sensory experiences, for example, knowing and feeling the wind and trying to fly our kites on the back field.

Some of us have had the opportunity to go kayaking at WOEC and we loved it!

We also really enjoy visiting local cafes and try really hard to wait for our orders and sit nicely.

In Maths, we have been learning about opposites and measurement, such as long and short, empty and full, and heavy and light. We always sing a maths song to make it fun for everyone.

We do a lot of therapy throughout our day - it helps us stay regulated and keeps us well, which is why we have such good attendance in Cedar!

A big thank you to parents and carers for supplying sun cream, hats and money for our regular outings.

We hope you all have a great summer holiday and look forward to welcoming you back to school in September.

Richard, Tracey and Cedar Team

Ash

The summer term has seen two pupils welcomed into Ash Class. While the weather has been all over the place, the students have consistently given their best this summer.

Academically, all students have made really good progress on B Squared (subject to ratification by Cheryl!). The Arts Award group are closing in on completion and the six students who started in September have all passed their ASDAN Personal Development Programme at Bronze level. It was good to compare their work with mainstream schools at the moderation meeting (we were better!).

Following the joint rendition with Beaminster students of "One Call Away" in Assembly last term, Ash organised a tea party for them, as part of the ASDAN course. Their planning and social skills were impeccable and we all had a lovely time. It is terrific that one pupil has joined the Beaminster School choir from this. Talking music, Ash formed a strong part of Carol's Bell Ringers' acclaimed performance in the Beaminster Festival.

The class have enjoyed their visits to WOEC for climbing, kayaking and a memorable sailing session in Weymouth Bay, where everyone had a turn steering. Visits to Magdalen Farm have included pond dipping, bird box making and animal care.

Our daily morning five minute run/walk has been maintained and, as I write, the team are super fit and looking forward to Sports Day.

As term draws to an end, we are preparing for next year. Ash and Maple will be swapping classrooms. 3 pupils will continue their development by moving up to Oak Class, while we will be welcoming 3 pupils from Maple.

Nigel and Ash Team

Oak

Oak Class has been celebrating some splendid achievements in all subjects over the summer term – role play in Literacy, handling money in Maths, cooking, plant identification and shape photography to name but a few!

Carol and I have been welcomed very warmly into the class and hope that we've managed to help sustain the class's great reputation for hard work and co-operation.

With departure in sight for a few of our students, we've concentrated on gaining as many life skills – which, of course, translate in OCR awards – as possible. The emphasis has, therefore, been on giving students as much independence as we can. To that extent, we have had students devising our Thursday menus, directing the shopping at Lidl and organising the cooking operation once we're back at school. Work experience opportunities have also continued to be followed up.

In Maths and Literacy, we have endeavoured to include a broad range of learning, so as to consolidate all aspects covered already over the year. Additionally, in Maths, we have looked in more depth at recording data through charts and graphs. In Literacy, we've given particular attention to Speaking and Listening activities,

recreating, as far as possible, real life situations in which students will need to communicate.

Maths and art work have extended to our Outdoor Learning, which has included measuring and drawing plants. We have also had a go at constructing shelters and learning a range of knots.

In ASDAN, 4 pupils have passed their Entry Level 2 Employability Qualification. Well done to them! 3 pupils have been making great efforts with OCR Life and Living units to reach their target levels. More excellent work!

We have had 2 new pupils who have joined Oak and the whole class continues to work successfully and co-operatively together.

We would like to wish our departing students well – this is a big step for them. We look forward to welcoming 3 pupils from Ash next week. After that, let me wish everyone a delightful and restful summer holiday.

Matthew and Oak Team

Willow

A warm Willow welcome to summer and it's already been a warm start to this season. Willow are having a busy end to the school year; we have had a few new faces join us within the staff crew and students. We wish them all a fantastic Mountjoy career.

In Literacy this term, the students have all enjoyed Roald Dahl's 'George's Marvellous Medicine'. The fun of actually making the medicine and Gran blowing up caused great excitement among all the class. Maths focus has been on doubling and halving, full and empty, and on Fridays our usual Numicon, where all our students are pushing for extension work each week. History with Julie is now exploring castles and knights, which is making a nice end to each week. In Sport, Willow have all enjoyed the chance to shine. Cricket coach, Ross, has been coming in on Wednesdays, and a big well done to the team who wore the Mountjoy new sports kit at the Special Schools tournament; they performed fantastically. We now turn our attention to Sports Day and hope to win the Sports Day title from the Cedar Class. We all loved our Jungle week and now look forward to Health and Fitness Week. Our attention turns to visiting our new classes and inviting the new Willow students into class, to get to know our September groups.

On that note, we wish all those leaving Willow a big farewell, and hope you carry on the great attitudes and want to learn within your new groups. Also, we welcome the new group, whether old or new, and look forward to a fun-packed learning year. Willow team would like to wish all our families a wonderful summer.

PS Any families wanting to make holiday diaries, we would love to see these in September to see what our pupils have been up to during the holidays, and help with remembering those long six weeks.

Sue and Willow Team

Juniper

This term in Juniper we have been focusing on the theme Jungle. The children have enjoyed learning about the different animals through our stories, 'Animal Boogie' and 'Rumble in the Jungle'. We have done lots of work on moving like the different animals, animal sounds and art work, which has all gone towards our classroom display. Our maths song has been about crocodiles catching the five monkeys in the tree and we have also been singing Animal Boogie, which the children love with the different actions to each verse. Here they are, holding hands, ready to sway together for the final verse.

Other exciting things we have been doing this term include some of the children going to WOEC for the first time kayaking, music therapy with a harp, Donkey Sanctuary and regular out and about visits to the shops, park and beach.

Have a lovely summer, and we look forward to it all starting again in September.

Natalie and Juniper Team





Family Liaison

Welcome New Families - It has been really lovely to see the school expand with quite a lot of new pupils joining us. I have been out to visit some of you and the welcome I have received is always great. The starter check list I use is so I can ensure that you are aware of some of the support that is available and that you are receiving the main entitlements for your children/young people.

Visits with Parents / Carers - I am hoping to identify and organise trips to specific provisions and conferences and these may be age specific. Also, I hope to organise an event for all families to meet up; if any of you have time to spare and are interested in helping with this please get in touch. We really want to ensure all the parent/carer voices in Mountjoy are heard.

Summer Holiday Club Fully Booked - The holiday clubs are becoming fuller every session. Unfortunately, we have a limited number of spaces so this does mean there may not always be a space available for your child/young person. The Dorset Arts Development Company, who manage the bookings, do try to ensure that if you miss out on a holiday club, you are put on the waiting list and offered spaces on the following workshop.

My details are Sandra.Hutchings@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk, and my Direct Dial is 01308 861925. Please contact me if you need any information or have questions regarding your child/young person.

Wishing you all a sunny summer holiday.

Sandra

Friends of Mountjoy School (FOMS)



This term we held our annual Summer Bonanza on 17 June. We had glorious weather and managed to raise £1,142.40.

We had a fantastic array of fun and games. The Bubble Man and Face Painting Faerie were as popular as ever. We had Motown and Blues music from the singing duo, Catherine and Richard Samuel, who gave their valuable time freely; we would like to say a very big thank you to them.

Our grateful thanks go to all the local businesses, staff and parents who donated prizes, support and their time.

It's been a record-breaking year for us; let's see if we can beat the total next year. Our next event is Cream Teas at The Salt House, West Bay on Sunday, 20 August - please come along and support us.

Cheryl – Chair of Friends of Mountjoy School (FOMS)

Mountjoy School

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Making a difference today for tomorrow



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2017 - 18

Friday, 21 July	Last day of term
Monday, 4 September	Staff Training Day - school closed to pupils
Tuesday, 5 September	Pupils return to school
Friday, 20 October	Last day of term
Monday, 23 October - Friday, 27 October	Half term week
Monday, 30 October	Staff and pupils return to school
Friday, 15 December	Last day of term
Monday, 18 December - Friday, 30 December	Christmas holidays
Monday, 1 January 2018	Bank Holiday - school closed
Tuesday, 2 January 2018	Staff Training Day - school closed to pupils
Wednesday, 3 January 2018	Pupils return to school

Free School Meal Eligibility

If you wish to check for free school meal eligibility, please visit **Dorsetforyou.com**, to complete the electronic application form.

The online application can be found at
<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/free-school-meals>

Absence

Should your child/young person be unable to attend school for any reason, please contact the school reception as soon as possible. This will need to be repeated daily until your child returns to school.