

News On the Ninth

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National Anti Bullying Week



Throughout the year children across the entire school follow the same personal and social education themes. This month we have started work on "Getting on and falling out". As part of this, we shall be taking part in national anti bullying week which starts on 16th November.

The theme of the week targets "Cyber bullying" which we shall strongly emphasise with our junior children. This usually takes place in the community rather than at school and advice will be sent home to parents to help keep children safe.

More conventional forms of bullying take place in every community, and thankfully whilst they exist in school, they are rare. Nevertheless, these will be addressed with our younger pupils.

Where children tell staff of a problem that they can't cope with independently, staff respond promptly and most issues are resolved quite readily. Some children lack self confidence or trust in the adults around them and do not pass on concerns and it is these instances which can become very hard to resolve.

As parents we need to help our children to be self confident, independent and develop the resilience to cope with the trials and tribulations that life throws at us all. Schools can help enormously, but we put the 'icing on the cake' that parents 'bake'; without your strong input we can only scratch the surface of this troubling issue.

Please help your children to say "NO" to bullying and avoid becoming a perpetrator or a victim, and pass on any worries or concerns promptly to staff.

Blue Friday

Our anti bullying week will end with a non uniform day. Children are invited to attend wearing as much blue **non uniform** clothing, hair bands, wrist bands and so on. **Please avoid using hair dye as some can be very difficult to remove.** As with all non uniform days, we ask children to bring a donation, which on this occasion will go to our own School Council to help fund even more play equipment requested at last months meeting, and which we plan to install before Christmas.



REMINDERS

Book Club Orders

Orders should **only** be placed through the school with cash, or cheque payable to Commonswood School.

PE Kits

Please, please PLEASE bring in a full PE kit every Monday morning. Most do remember, but a few families repeatedly forget. Having to find kit for those without, at the beginning of a lesson, disrupts the whole class and reduces the length of the lesson.

Nursery Applications

The closing date for Nursery applications

Administration Vacancy Applications

The closing date for applications is today. This had been advertised, as publicised in Octobers newsletter, and we are not able to extend the closing date to accommodate late applications.

There has been a lot of interest in the position, and the selection process will be completed next week with interviews, led by bursar Jenny Anstey.

Starting Reception – January 2010

At 9am on 24th November our Foundation Stage staff, led by Nicola Stanley, will meet with parents of children due to start in the Reception class next January. This meeting is designed to explain the day to day starting arrangements and how the year group works, which is a little different from Nursery.



One of the key elements taught from the start of each Reception year is our very successful phonic programme. Some guidance will be provided, and will be followed up with a workshop in January 2010. Of course, there will be an opportunity for you to pose questions and to meet staff from other services and agencies that can help support families as children move through the education system.

Nursery will be closed on Wednesday 18th

November so that staff can undertake home visits in preparation for our next intake of children in January. Nursery provision will change quite significantly in 2010 and we plan to bring our changes in from the beginning of January. Sessions will be longer and we are currently in the throes of deciding on the start and finish times of each session. I will contact parents of nursery age children once arrangements are finalised towards the end of this month.

AM Nursery Parent Consultations

On 2nd and 3rd December, Jacky Farmer our Nursery teacher will be holding consultations with parents of children who are about to move into the reception year in January 2010. Booking forms will be displayed from 23rd November.

November Governor Of The Month - Andy Nazar

I became a Community Governor at Commonswood about a year ago. I don't have any children who attend the school but I do live locally and care about our future.

I believe that by being a Governor I contribute in a small way to ensuring that local children get the best quality schooling available.

Commonswood is a happy place, where all of the staff are fully committed to providing your child with an excellent education, in a safe and caring environment.

The Governors do their best to ensure that the school provides good quality education and together with Mr Achillini, it sets the school's aims and policies and makes decisions on how best to spend the budget.

At present we have a couple of vacancies on the Governing body: a Parent Governor and a Community Governor are being sought. Could you be one of these? You don't have to be an 'expert' – only able to get on with others and to work as part of a team. You'll also need a little spare time to go to meetings and read papers. There are plenty of free training courses available to help Governors with their responsibilities and this can be a great way to develop new skills. So if you, or someone you know, care about the children who attend Commonswood School, and can invest some time in their future, get involved - ask at reception about becoming a Governor.

Andy Nazar

Departing Governor

Alan Chesterman, our LEA Governor and one time Chair, has come to the end of his term of office. We would like to thank him for the support he has given to the school

Thank You from the RNLI Thank you for supporting our charity fundraising event last month. All of the donations made on non-uniform day have now been passed to the charity and totalled £340. We have already received a letter of gratitude from the Cromer Lifeboat Station in Norfolk.

Did you know it currently costs £339,000 per day on average to run the lifeboat service? This money is raised entirely from voluntary contributions, donations and legacies!

In 2008, the RNLI in Norfolk & Suffolk launched 172 times to rescue 147 people, next time it could be one of us!

Parent Consultations

It was good to see such a high turn out at parents evening just before the half term break. Regrettably, a small number of appointments that were booked by families were not attended. If for any reason you are unable to keep and appointment please contact the school as soon as possible to avoid inconveniencing staff and other parents.

If you were unable to attend and would still like some feedback about how your child has settled in at the start of the school year, please make an appointment to speak with your child's class teacher after school.

Junior Disco

The Friends of Commonswood have organised two fundraising Discos for the older children in school. These will be held this Friday 13th November. Years 3 & 4 will be 5.30-6.45, Years 5 & 6 will follow at 7.00-8.15. Entrance will be £3 which includes squash. Sweets and glow sticks will be available to purchase from the Tuck Shop.



Congratulations to Kathryn Armstrong who gave birth to Sophie Rose on 14th October, weighing 9lb 1oz!!

Both are getting on well, and Mrs Armstrong plans to return to work at the start of the summer term 2010.



Skern Lodge Visit October 2009

It was probably one of the most exciting, but exhausting weeks that the Year 6 children have had for a long time. With activities ranging from archery to abseiling, surfing to tunnelling and kayaking to night walks, there was something for everyone!

After a gruelling six hour coach journey, the children were finally able to start their week-long activity trip. For many it was the first time being away from home, having to undergo room inspections and being constantly active for most of the day.

All the adults agreed that it was wonderful being able to watch the children's confidence grow. There were many, including adults, who overcame fears during the week, surprising themselves by what they could do. Mr Clare, a school Governor, remembers one boy who didn't want to take part in surfing because the waves were too big and the water was cold! However, twenty minutes later, the boy was sitting on his board in the water saying "Do we really have to go?" and "I really enjoyed that!".

The evening activities were just as enjoyable, with many of the children showing off dance routines during the Thursday night disco. One of my most enjoyable evenings was during the night walk. Some children who initially started off as being afraid of the dark, ended up creating scary stories to try and scare the adults!!

Mr Clare, was told by a parent the following Monday that their child had enjoyed every minute. He believed this completely summed up his week too.

It was a very enjoyable and rewarding week for everyone involved. Many thanks to everyone who made the week a success!

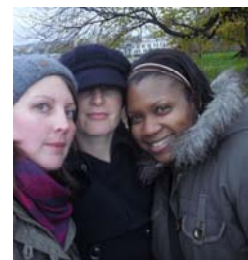
Steve Burt

Teachers International Professional Development

During half term, Claire Hill, Jemma Hall and I were given the opportunity to visit schools in Poland. We went to a variety of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in Warsaw and Krakow, which regarded themselves as being creative in their teaching and learning.

It was very interesting to be able to have an insight into another country's education system and to see different approaches to creativity. The schools there had elements of creativity that reflect in some of the ideas we have already adopted and put in place here at Commonswood. After a very busy week in Poland we could summarise - what we do at Commonswood, we do very well.

Alison Rogers



Photos In School



After news of the dreadful events which took place in a Plymouth nursery we have tightened our own protocols for taking images in school. We need to take pictures as forms of evidence for the local authority, Ofsted and parents especially for the younger children's learning journals. Staff are not permitted to retain any images on their own cameras or mobile phones. Once transferred to our secure computer server they are deleted from memory cards.

Sadly the conduct of a tiny minority impacts on all the rest of us and may I remind parents that it is not possible to take any photographs on the school site even for our usually stunning Christmas



performances. Once again we shall provide DVDs of the Christmas shows which should be regarded as mementos rather like your own pictures, as we do not have the resources to produce to professional standards.

LEA Monitoring Visit

As you will be aware we received a very favourable report from Ofsted last December. However, such inspections only come around every 3-5 years, and in the interim the local authority monitors the work of the school each term. This term they will be in to consider our assessment results in a lot of detail. Comparisons will be made between boys and girls performance; children with and without special educational needs; comparisons of children from various social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.

All of this takes a lot of preparation, as you can imagine, but at least it assures the authority, governors and hopefully, parents too, that the school still provides high quality education for your children. This major review takes place later this month with governors and members of our leadership team, but it is not published.

Christmas Bazaar 27th November 3.10-

6.30pm This year the Friends are organising a Christmas Bazaar, and they are looking for donations of nearly new books, games, toys, DVD's and items suitable as lucky dip prizes.

If you have any of these items please bring them to the school office or hand to your child's class teacher.

Parent Survey

The parent and pupil surveys that were undertaken last summer were sent home on parents evenings. Some spare copies are displayed by the entrance to the junior building, and are also available from our document display in the foyer. The key points made by parents will be used to ensure that the school continues to meet the expectations of our community.

Christmas Lunch

Thank you for booking your child's Christmas lunch which will be served on Monday 14th December.

We have to place our orders very early with our suppliers as they provided food for several hundred schools and regrettably it is now too late to book a school Christmas meal, if you have not already done so.



Year 5 Skern Lodge Meeting

The school journey to Skern Lodge in North Devon was a massive success once again last month. Many images from the week are on display in the dining hall.

Plans are in hand to repeat this fabulous adventure for children currently in Year 5. The journey will take place next October and payments will need to be made to a schedule which will be outlined at the briefing meeting taking place on Thursday 26th November at 6pm in the Junior Hall.

Basketball Tournament

On Wednesday 4th November, 12 junior children had the opportunity to represent Commonswood at Sir Frederic Osborn Partnership Basketball Tournament. All the children played incredibly well and were a credit to the school.



The girls team tried extremely hard during their matches, but unfortunately did not manage to beat their opponents.

The boys team played fantastically! Their teamwork and determination enabled them to win their first 2 matches. However, the third match was very close and although they tried hard they couldn't manage a hat trick of wins.

Overall, the boys came in second place which they should be incredibly proud of!

Well done all of you!!

Leena Chawda

Christmas

We always avoid moving into Christmas mode until December is upon us but staff will then be working very hectically with your children to plan prepare rehearse and cajole the best possible performances out of the children.

There may well be words to learn and for some children quite a lot.

There may also be props and clothing to be brought from home for use as costumes. Staff will be in contact early in December to advise of anything that it would be helpful to provide. Please do what you can to support the eight productions listed overleaf in the Diary Dates.

As ever seats will be at a premium and a maximum of two per family for can be provided. Please book early, once forms are sent home, to avoid disappointment.



Football

got off to an exciting start this term with a 3-1 win against Oaklands! The team worked really well together and there was some impressive passing from all the boys. Unfortunately, although the boys played really well, they couldn't hold on to the winning streak and lost 4-1 to Welwyn St Mary's.



The boys are clearly enjoying playing together and have shown excellent teamwork and sportsmanship. Well done boys, you are a credit to the school. Our thanks also go to Ben and Charlie for continuing to give up their time to coach the team and take them to matches.

Claire Hill

Netball

has seen some changes this year with the number of players changing from 7 to 5. The team have coped well with these changes and have already begun to work closely as a team.

They played well in their first match together against Welwyn St Mary's but couldn't beat them this time. We look forward to playing them at home when we're sure our training and hard work will lead us to victory!

Well done to all the girls for regularly attending training and showing great teamwork and support towards each other.

Claire Hill

French Monitoring

Each half term we monitor an aspect of the curriculum and last month Claire Hill and Teresa Frost took a close look at the quality of French teaching throughout the juniors. This was our first full review since we began teaching Foreign Languages 2 years ago, and the summary report paints a very promising picture, with speaking and listening skills developing well and the subject taught regularly.

For some teachers this subject is a challenge, having not learned this particular language at school themselves, and so more training will be phased in later in the school year. Feedback from secondary schools has been extremely complimentary, and an emerging issue is how well our secondary school colleagues can take children on from the levels reached in the primary sector, when they transfer to Year 7.



Community News



Welwyn Hatfield CVS Community Car Scheme



Do you enjoy driving?

Do you have some free time?

The Welwyn Hatfield Community Car Scheme is looking for volunteer drivers to assist elderly and disabled people who are unable to use public transport.

You will be paid for each mile you do.

So if you have your own car and some spare time contact:

The Welwyn Hatfield Community & Voluntary Service on

01707 273875

info@whcvs.org.uk

<http://www.whcvs.org.uk/cars.html>

Family Samba Music Course

A FREE 4 week course for families with children aged 6+

You will be introduced to the instruments and then it's off into the groove!!

**Tuesday 10th November - 1st
December 2009
3.30pm - 5.00pm**

Harwood Hill Primary School
Welwyn Garden city
AL8 7AG

**Please book your place by contacting
Julie Cunningham on**

01707 880382

admin.wgc@hertsextendedschools.org.uk

www.hertsextendedschools.org.uk/wgc

Please bring any remaining vouchers into school this week.

We need to count them and send them off before the deadline!!



Diary Dates

November

- 12** Prospective Nursery Viewing 9.30am re 2010/11 intake
Netball & Football at Home v St Marys Welwyn
Governors Education Committee Meeting 6.20pm
- 13** Willow Class Assembly
Disco for Years 3 & 4 5.30-6.45pm
Disco for Years 5 & 6 7.15-8.30pm
- 17** Sian Mills-Integrated Support Worker in School 2pm
- 18** Nursery Closed for Home Visits
- 19** Prospective Reception Viewing 9.30am re 2010/11 Intake
Netball & Football Away at Springmead

Governors Operations Meeting 6.30pm

- 20** Chestnut Class Assembly
BLUE FRIDAY-Non Uniform, Wear Blue
 - 24** New Reception Parents Meeting at 9am Infant Hall
 - 26** Netball & Football Away at Watchlytes
Year 5 Skern Lodge 2010 Meeting 6pm Junior Hall
Full Governors Meeting 6.30pm
 - 27** CHRISTMAS FAIR 3.10-6.30pm
- ### **December**
- 1** Sian Mills-Integrated Support Worker in School 2pm
 - 2** AM Nursery Parent Consultations 3.30-5.30pm
AM Nursery Parent Consultations 3.30-7.30pm