



# Grove Road Primary School

**Growing and Achieving Together**  
*Community Respect Self-Belief Ambition*

## Newsletter 2

## October 2016

### News & Updates

It has been an eventful start to the term, with poor 2FM rendered homeless by the flood of September 16th. The children have coped brilliantly with the changes to routine. 4VH have very kindly allowed 2FM to have their classroom for the next little while and 4VH have de-camped to the Owls room.

The damage to 2FM, 2SO and 1CL has been inspected by the Loss Adjuster and claims for damage to ceilings and carpets have been approved, so we hope that repairs can begin in the next couple of weeks, so that all the children can be back in their classes after half term.

We also need to say an enormous thank you to all the parents who have offered help and support, not least the army of Dads who got the worst of the carpets stripped out for us early on Saturday 17th, so that the de-humidifiers could get the rooms dried out more quickly. It sometimes takes a minor disaster to realise what a wonderful community we belong to.

My personal thanks go to the staff who have done such a marvellous job of being so flexible and coping in some very challenging teaching conditions to ensure that learning has not been interrupted. No small thing given how much we now rely on the interactive whiteboards and carpet spaces for teaching.



### Parent Consultations

We hope that you have all managed to book your Parent Consultation appointments for the week of 10th October.

As usual for all year groups other than Nursery, consultations will be in the KS2 hall, Appointments are 10 minutes long and the teachers try their very best to run to time. Please do not be offended if a teacher suggests a further conversation by telephone, if discussion goes on beyond the allocated appointment slot. A five minute overrun may not seem like a lot, but by the 15th appointment of the evening this can accumulate to a lengthy delay.

The October consultations are an opportunity to discuss how well your children have settled into their new classes and what we want them to achieve this year. Miss Garry will be available to see parents on Tuesday 11th October if you have specific questions regarding special educational needs.



- 4/10 2FM Class Assembly
- 11/10 Harvest Festival
- 11/10 4-6:30pm Parent Consultations
- 13/10 5-7:30pm Parent Consultations
- 14/10 School Photographs
- 18/10 2SO Class Assembly
- 3/11 KS2 Family Learning
- 8/11 1CL Class Assembly
- 15/11 1TM Class Assembly
- 18/11 Children in Need Day
- 18/11 KS2 Disco
- 22/11 Y6 Workshading presentation at Tring 7-9pm
- 3/12 Christmas Fair
- 7/12 Carol Concert 6pm
- 8/12 Early Years' Nativity am
- 9/12 Early Years' Nativity pm
- 14/12 Christmas Lunch
- 19/12 Christmas party Day
- 5/1/17 Term resumes
- 12/1 KS2 Family Learning
- 15/1 Primary admissions deadline

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## Parent Survey 2016

We received 70 responses to the Parent Questionnaire at the end of the summer term. Thank you to those who took the time to respond. Your answers and comments have been reviewed by staff and governors and have helped to shape our priorities for the coming year. Staff are busy planning initiatives and events in response to some of the suggestions and requests we received on the questionnaire.

### Questions with a positive response (Agree & Strongly Agree) of over 95%:

- The school has a happy and welcoming atmosphere. (98.5%)
- I feel my child enjoys attending and being part of the school. (97.1%)
- I believe that my child feels safe at school. (97.1%)
- I would recommend the school to friends and family. (96.8%)
- The school is well led and managed (98.5%)
- My child has a good understanding of e-safety (94.9%)



### Other areas of strength (Agree & Strongly Agree) of over 90%:

- I am kept well informed about school activities and receive enough information generally about the school. (92.8%)
- I would find it easy to approach teachers at the school with questions about my child. (91.1%)
- The school gives parents a clear indication of what is taught and how (92.8%)
- I am aware of the school values and feel they benefit my child. (91.4%)
- My child is taught well (94.2%)
- I feel confident that I know how to protect my child online (94.0%)
- My child is making good progress in school. (90.0%)

### Areas where opinion was divided

#### Communication about my child's attainment and progress helps me to understand his/her next steps

- 35.7% Strongly Agree, 44.3% Agree,
- 8.6% Disagree, 5.7% Strongly Disagree,
- 5.7% Don't Know

As outlined in the Summer term Leadership Newsletter, it has been a year of considerable challenges in assessment and progress tracking as a result of major changes to national frameworks. As such, we are not surprised that parents feel communication in this area has not been as clear as it needs to be, especially when we make comparisons with approval ratings in this area over the last 3 years. Despite Curriculum Evenings and letters to explain the changes, there are clearly still some parents who still feel unclear. The change in national expectations has made it more difficult for teachers to respond definitively to questions about progress and attainment, particularly for those pupils on the cusp of age related standards. As we become more practised in evaluating attainment against the current standards, our ability to communicate these expectations to parents should improve.

In terms of satisfying parental demand for detailed progress information, the school exceeds the Department for Education (DfE) requirements for reporting to parents. Please also remember that opportunities such as Busy Fingers and Building Blocks, Family Reading and Class Assemblies are all additional opportunities to spend time in school and see a broader picture of how your child is learning and progressing. KS2 staff are currently exploring ways to further involve and inform parents in the learning journey, with the prospect of some additional workshops to show parents how and what we teach as well as half termly Family Learning sessions similar to the KS1 model. In this way, we hope that it might be easier for parents to share in the range and breadth of assessment that informs planning and teaching that is not easily reported or summarised.

cont...

### **If there is a problem, my child knows who to talk to and feels listened to.**

- 34.3% Strongly Agree, 45.7% Agree,
- 10.0% Disagree, 2.8% Strongly Disagree,
- 7.1% Don't Know

This is an aspect where perceptions have improved steadily over the last 4 years. In discussions with pupils and in House Forums the children talk confidently about what to do if something is worrying or upsetting them. We continue to maintain high ratios of adults in class and at playtimes, so that the children always have an adult they can go to. The younger children build very close partnerships with their "Buddies" and Peer Mentors perform an invaluable service on the playground, helping children navigate friendship issues and teaching them new games. Assemblies and Circle Times are used regularly to give the children strategies to deal with problems and to make safe choices.

If your child tells you they don't feel listened to, please contact us so that we can resolve any issues and support them to feel more confident in communicating their needs and concerns. Whilst we will always encourage children to find strategies to resolve issues as independently as possible, we also invest a lot of time in listening and talking to children and helping them to appreciate that their actions will all have consequences, quite often on the feelings of others. It is however very important that you communicate with us if you feel your child is not being listened to. There is a very distinct difference between a child who does not agree with our response and a child who feels they have not been listened to.

### **I feel the school responds well to concerns that I raise**

- 34.3% Strongly Agree, 44.3% Agree,
- 11.4% Disagree, 1.4% Strongly Disagree,
- 8.6% Don't Know

Whilst we would really love to please all of the people, all of the time; in a large school like Grove Road there are always a range of different opinions on decisions that are made. The important thing is that parents feel they can come and talk to us if they are unhappy about something and we can hopefully explain why a decision has been made and the reasons for it. Our policy is to acknowledge all communications within 24 working hours, with a full response within the week from the most appropriate person. If you do not get a response it is really important that you let us know in case something important has gone astray; this is particularly so with email communications which can be subject to over enthusiastic spam and clutter email filters. If you find yourself in a position where you are unhappy about something, the very best course of action is to contact us or arrange to come in and see us. Social media does very little to resolve an issue, as it rarely reaches the people who can do anything about it.

### **As a parent I feel the school provides a broad range of sporting opportunities.**

- 21.4% Strongly Agree, 44.3% Agree,
- 15.7% Disagree, 7.1% Strongly Disagree,
- 11.4% Don't Know

School Sport and PE (Physical Education) is an area of the curriculum we are keen to develop and extend further. 2015/16 saw an increase in the range of additional sporting opportunities available after school hours as well as inter-school competitions. We are keen to strike a balance between competitive opportunities and an inclusive curriculum for all, with a breadth and depth to ensure we develop and extend skills and fitness levels for all our pupils regardless of their age or ability. In 2016/17 Sport and PE are a key priority for the school and we will be working towards the national afPE Quality Mark.

Katie Collins and the Curriculum Enrichment Team are planning a half termly **Enrichment Newsletter** to bring you a whole school summary of all the exciting learning opportunities that take place at Grove. It will give you a regular window into life at Grove Road. It's clear that whilst we know about the range of opportunities available across the school, we have assumed you do too. So we need to communicate and share these with you more regularly so that you can get a flavour of just how busy every week can be.

**KS2 Family Learning** sessions will also begin after half term on Thursday 3rd November and on each subsequent first Thursday of every term for the rest of the year. You are invited to pop in between 8:30 and 9:00am to spend time with your child in class, looking at their books and sharing what they have been learning. We look forward to seeing you. Future dates are as follows: Thursday 12th January, 23rd February, 27th April, 8th June.

# Grove's Got Talent!

## Cheetah Chase

The sun shone down on the African plain.  
The trees and the grass were short of fresh rain.  
Giraffes munched slowly from tall thorn bushes.  
Hippos in the pool were hid by rushes.  
The animals came to the pool to drink.  
They weren't aware of the cheetah, I think.  
The elephants were safe for they were strong.  
The impalas could graze but not for long.  
The cheetah though long grass came slinking.  
It's muscles tense and its eyes not blinking.  
It kept on crawling 'til it came quite near.  
To the wildebeest an impala deer.  
The cheetah charged it was ready to eat.  
In each second it ran eighty feet.  
The animals scattered and ran in fear.  
The victim could not escape, it was clear.  
The cheetah bit its throat and down it came.  
The impala died soon, it seemed such a shame.  
But a balance between hunter and prey.  
Keeps both healthy and is good in a way.

Written by Stella Henison



Year 4 have been using personification to bring their writing to life...

**“The trees were swaying like an elegant ballerina dancing to a calming rhythm”**

by Jayme Carew



Ellie in Year 5 plays for Raiders Girls Football Club and was recently nominated player of the match for her persistence and determination.



Under 11s Squash league champions Josh, Sean and Ethan. Ethan achieved victory in the county finals and is now U11 Hertfordshire Number 1.

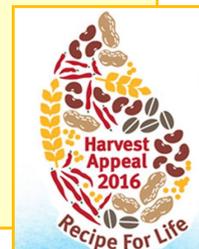


Pupils from Grove meeting their sporting heroes!

## Harvest Festival

Thank you to those parents who were able to join us for the Early Years Harvest celebrations last week. Nursery and Reception performed a lovely selection of seasonal songs and stories and collected a selection of dry goods and tinned food for the DENs charity.

On Tuesday 11th October pupils in Year 1 to Year 6 will be walking down to the church of St Peter and St Paul to enjoy a harvest celebration. This year the Bishop's appeal collection is for Water Aid. An appeal to fund clean water for families in villages around the world. The children are invited to contribute to this collection or they can bring food donations for DENs. We still need volunteers to walk with us to the church. Please inform your child's class teacher if you are able to help. There is no access to the church before 10:15am .



## Head Lice

Could we remind everyone that long hair needs to be tied back. The children all spend a lot of time together and often in close contact so hair tied back is essential to avoid unwelcome visitors.

If you find your child does have Headlice or eggs in their hair it is essential that you seek advice from your local pharmacy and treat the hair immediately. We are currently a Nit free zone so if everyone were to do a check each week with a nit comb, it's possible that we could stay clear of these troublesome house guests all year.

## Staffing

Thank you to the parents in Year 5 for their patience and understanding during Mr Comer's absence. He still hopes to be back after half term.

We hope to confirm the arrangements for Y5 before the half term break.



## Term Time & Holiday Dates for 2016/17

- Half Term Holiday - Monday 24th October - Friday 28th October
- INSET Day - Monday 31st October (school closed for staff training)
- School resumes Tuesday 1st November
- Occasional Day - Friday 25th November
- Term finishes at 1:30pm on Wednesday 21st December.
- Christmas Holiday - Thursday 22nd December to Wednesday 4th January
- Spring Term begins - Thursday 5th January
- Half Term Holiday - Monday 13th February to Friday 17th February
- Spring Term finishes at 1:30pm on Friday 31st March
- Summer Term begins Tuesday 18th April
- Bank Holiday - Monday 1st May
- INSET Day - Friday 26th May (school closed for staff training)
- Half Term Holiday - Monday 29th May to Friday 2nd June
- Summer Term finishes on Friday 21st July at 1:30pm



The school year consists of 195 days, of which, 5 are training days (INSET) when the school is closed to the children. Term dates for future years are available on the Herts Grid at:

[www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/schlifetermdates](http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/schlifetermdates)

Don't forget that a full set of dates, policies and school information are available on our website.

[www.groveroad.herts.sch.uk](http://www.groveroad.herts.sch.uk)

You can also follow us on Facebook to get regular updates and last minute information sent to you. Just click the link on our website.

