



# End of Term 5 Newsletter



Dear Families and Friends

Thank you to the many parents who replied to the parental questionnaire. It was an utterly valuable experience for us, and we will now be responding to the few areas of 'what the school could do better'. It was though most uplifting to read that 98% of parents would recommend this academy to another parent and that 96% of parents graded us overall as very good or better, with 76% grading us as excellent.

I would also like to thank all of the parents and carers who have signed up to the new Parentmail app. This will enable faster and more accurate communications to be sent. Please note that from next term, there will no longer be paper copies sent to parents unless they have specified this to the main office.

This newsletter, as always, conveys the ongoing multi-layered activities that occur for our wonderful pupils. Thank you to all of the staff who make these events possible.

I look forward to seeing you at the Parents Evening events in on 24th June and 1st July. Appointments will be made through Parentmail, which allows you to book your own time slots. We hope this will be a much easier system!

May I wish you all a restful and enjoyable break. – **Nigel Jones**

**Primary** – We are delighted to welcome some new staff to the Primary Department this term. We have been joined by Tracy East, a new teacher for our Early Years Jungle Class and some new teaching assistants as well. All our new staff are settling in very well and getting to know the children and we are delighted to have them with us.

Our concert in Key Stage two, 'the Jungle Book', was absolutely wonderful as I'm sure those of you who joined us will agree.

I had the pleasure to narrate and I couldn't be more proud seeing every single child on the stage. Many thanks for your support for this event and thank you to all the staff and children for making it happen. Have a happy holiday and best wishes. **Dee Pickerill – Vice Principal**

**Secondary** – Term 5 like Term 4 has flown by yet been full of amazing learning opportunities for our young people from the start of Key Stage 3 to the end of post 16. These include sporting challenges and events like the Panathlon, ongoing work related learning and community visits and a successful residential visit to Bognor for some of our further education students led by Janet Tidmas. A big thank you to all staff who support our young people with their learning both on and off site and for the hard work and commitment they show each day in making the learning for our pupils engaging and relevant to meet their learning needs.

Milestone Academy has been chosen by the Kent Curriculum Project to be one of five or six schools to showcase its work at the Curriculum Conference in Ashford in June. Thank you to all the parents who found time to send in their thoughts about the revised curriculum for some of our pupils. Your very creative ideas with those of students and our visionary staff are currently being woven together into the new programmes of study that will be implemented as Learning Pathway 2 in September. Noleen Donaghy, Key Stage 3 Leader, Liesl Andersson, Key Stage 4 Leader, and I will share with you the outcomes of the conference and our new pathway in more detail in Term 6.

Caity Callaghan has decided not to return to teach at Milestone Academy after her maternity leave and Millennium led by Angie Frost in Term 5 will be led by Nicola

Thatcher in term 6. Thank you Angie for leading the class this term.

On a personal note I should like to share with all pupils, parents and families my decision to retire from the post of Vice Principal for the Secondary Department from July 2015. I have been working with young people with special educational needs for over twenty two years and in teaching for a further fourteen and feel it is time to look at using my knowledge and skills in a different way as well as spend more time with my family including my adult daughter who is also disabled. It is an enormous privilege and an honour to have worked with you all and your young people since April 2006 and I look forward to our final journey together in term 6. Thank you for the support you have given me over the years. I remain fully committed to us working together to improve the learning opportunities and life experiences of our very special children.

Best Wishes for a happy half term holiday!  
**Berenice Frith – Vice Principal**

**Early Years** – With spring in the air we have taken full advantage of exploring one of our favourite books 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. Many of the children have been tasting new fruits, using these fruits to create artwork and making healthy snacks. The children have also enjoyed exploring all of the outside environments both within the school and in the local community, visiting the library, supermarket, pet shop and the park. Once again a warm thank you for attending the 'Stay and Play' sessions, we hope you are finding them interesting and supportive.  
**Claire Woolmer**

**Key Stage 1** - This Term has been a short but an exciting one in Key Stage 1.

Our topic in most of the classes has been 'Growing' and this has provided the pupils with plenty of sensory activities such as planting seeds, exploring fruit and



# End of Term 5 Newsletter



vegetables and looking at different plants and flowers.

**Lake** and **Field** classes have both been learning about the life cycle of frogs and have their own tadpoles in class. **Lake** Class are also raising butterflies from live caterpillars and the children are really excited about releasing the butterflies into the wild eventually.

Some of the pupils in **Woodland** Class have just returned from an enjoyable residential trip to Bognor Regis and I'm sure photos will soon be on the website.

We also started using a short Sensory Motor Circuit for pupils in the Key Stage at the beginning of the term, to prepare pupils to engage effectively with the busy school day ahead and allow them to more easily access learning and communication. All the teachers are reporting that this is proving to be a success.

Wishing you all a lovely holiday and I look forward to seeing you next term. **Nina Dipple (Maternity cover)**

**Key Stage 2** – This term the juniors have enjoyed learning about 'weather' and 'time'. Thankfully as the weather is gradually improving the children have been able to get out and about more.

It was lovely to see so many families attending our 'Jungle Book' concert this week. I am sure you will all agree that the children did a fantastic job! They all thoroughly enjoyed it as well.

Next term we will be learning about 'the environment'. We hope you all enjoy your half term. **Emma Wilkinson**

**Key Stage 3** - There has been lots of exciting things happening in Key Stage 3 during Term 5.

A small group of students from **Norman** class have been taking part in an eco-engineering challenge; check the website for more details! They are in need of some cereal boxes to help them with their

project so please send your boxes into us. **Roman** class have been accessing their walkers and had a great game of football in the common room. **Saxon** class visited the Roman villa at the beginning of term and they have also made a volcano and caused it to explode using coke and mints. You can imagine the mess! **Viking** class have been working really hard in Term 5 and enjoyed making their own version of the story 'Lost and Found.' **Tudor** class enjoyed a visit to the local fire station to meet the fire men and explore the fire engine and even had a turn at operating the water hose. **Jurassic** class have been using their green fingers to develop their allotment. They have been growing sunflowers and runner beans which are beginning to sprout.

We hope all the students and families have a lovely half term! **Noleen Donaghy**

**Key Stage 4** – Despite being such a short term the KS4 department have been busy. **Sparta** class have been working hard at Bore Place getting the gardens ready for planting and both **Sparta** and **Victorian** classes have enjoyed swimming at North West Kent College. Those students from **Millennium** class who attend Land Based Studies lessons have continued to work hard in their lessons and both **Millennium** and **Sparta** have joined art for the Arts Carousel. **Liesl Andersson**

**Sixth Form** - During this term **FE1** students have been learning about how to set up and run a business, supported in this by Molly Mattingly, our partner in the 'When I Grow Up' project. The class have also been learning about managing their own money and where their money actually comes from. **FE2** have become engrossed in their current text 'War Horse' and have visited the Firepower Museum in Woolwich to bring to life their learning about the World War. They are also saving hard and looking forward to going to see the show in London next term. **FE3** have worked very hard learning how to complete daily living skills such as preparing simple meals and cleaning by accessing the kitchen, bedrooms and bathrooms at the Parent's

Consortium. **FE4** have learnt new skills whilst accessing the Cyclopark in Gravesend. They have also been learning to make a simple lunch for themselves.

Last week sixteen students enjoyed a week at Butlins in Bognor during the Sixth Form residential break. The students learning for the week focused on developing their self-help skills and increasing their independence (and maybe having a little bit of fun along the way!).

The pupils remaining at Wilmington took part in science based activities over the week and all enjoyed a trip to Eagle Heights. The pupils remaining at Milestone learnt about different countries over the week and made meals related to the different countries each day.

## Choices 14+ Event

I would like to thank those families who attended the Choices 14+ Careers Event at the end of April. We had almost thirty participants attend and I hope those of you who came found the event informative and useful. To have so many agencies, colleges and service providers available to provide support and advice all 'under one roof' is invaluable for families as I am sure you will agree. **Sixth Form - Janet Tidmas**

**Medical News** - We are currently moving all the pupil's health care plans onto a new standardised format. These will be sent to all parents and carers over the next few weeks to be amended or updated. Please make any changes and return at your earliest convenience. I will be spending the next few weeks agreeing and writing plans so Sue Nye from Prestige Nursing Agency will cover my absence. **Joyce Chick, Nurse Manager**

**Therapy News** – We are currently running the Language Acquisition and Development course. This is a five week course that teaches staff about the development of early language and communication skills. This information helps staff to better understand and support pupils' development and needs. There will also be



# End of Term 5 Newsletter



an eating, drinking and swallowing course on the inset day).

On 30th April we held a coffee morning for families. This was a chance for families to meet and chat with the slts, physios and OTs. We plan to run another coffee morning next year and hope more parents will come.

As part of our ongoing commitment to professional development, we have Speech and Language Therapy student from Canterbury Christ Church University on placement with us for seven weeks. The student is supporting some of our work with our post 16 students.

Jamie has been busy developing and commissioning Milestone's very own signing manual. This will contain all the core signs used across the day at Milestone and will be a useful resource for teaching staff. Families will be able to buy a copy from Signalong once it is available. There is currently a competition for students at Milestone to discover the front cover!

**Friends of Milestone** – The Friends of Milestone Summer Fete will be held on Saturday, 11th July 11am – 3pm. We are planning to have lots to see and do, and hope to have a very special person coming to start proceedings at 11 am (more details later). Please note the date in your diaries and wish for good weather on the day.

## **Reminder – Pupil Absence Reporting**

- Parents and carers of any child who is absent must notify the Academy before 9.30 am at the latest by telephone each day of absence.
- Once a student returns to school the absence needs to be supported by a letter accompanied by medical evidence where applicable.
- Any pre-booked medical appointments should be registered with the Academy office before the event happens. This will prevent any unnecessary phone calls or unauthorised absences.
- If you are requesting that your child be absent from school to accompany you

on holiday, this request must be made in writing to the Principal, outlining the exceptional circumstances for the absence during term time.

## **Other News - Reception**

Over the half term break we will be doing some more building works to the main reception area to increase the safety for our students. This will mean that there will be a student/parent reception desk and a separate visitor reception.

We anticipate the student/parent reception desk being completed within the week, however the visitor reception will take a little longer, therefore please bear with us whilst we carry out this work.

If you have arranged to collect your child early at the end of the day, please meet them at the canopied entrance next to the Nurse's office, as there will not be a seating area in reception.

