

Garstang Community Primary School



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Dear Parents and children

We seem to have had a smooth start to 2023, with an icy playground the most tricky thing to contend with so far. When I start a newsletter, I tend to look back at that month in previous years to see if there is anything I regularly mention. The last 2 January letters have been very full of COVID, so I'm pleased to have nothing to report on that front! Two years ago at this time we were busy each day on Google Meet—it seems so long ago now!

The children have returned from the Christmas holidays keen to work—I love this term as we get so much done! Mrs Newiss, myself and two Governors undertook a learning walk a few weeks ago, looking at writing throughout school. It was lovely to see the children enjoying their lessons, participating with enthusiasm! We also looked at books and spoke to children about their writing—they were very articulate and impressed our Governors with their confidence, and love of learning. The Governors had nothing but praise for what they had seen.

We've had a few staffing changes this term. Mrs Webster in Maple Class has been successful in gaining employment outside of education, and left at Christmas. She will be replaced by Mr Harrison in April. Until then, Ms Hardy, our teaching assistant apprentice, will support Maple Class in a morning. Mrs Miller has joined Rowan Class to provide further support, and Miss Parker has joined our welfare team. We welcome them all and hope they will be happy as part of our school family!

Garstang Community Academy have asked us to highlight the vacancies at their school—these can be found at: [GCA Catering Assistant](#) and [GCA Exam Invigilators](#)

Spring is on its way—the grass verges on my way to school will soon be bright with daffodils (my newly planted bulbs in November have yet to show any signs of life—I'm a little worried about them, and hope I put them in the right way up!). The mornings and evenings are getting lighter, but the weather is still a little unpredictable, so please ensure that the children are bringing their coats to school each day—we try to get out as much as we can despite the weather!

As ever, thank you for your continued support.

Steph Reeves
Headteacher



Strike Action

As we have informed you, we are not impacted by the strike action taking place on February 1st. This isn't to say that we won't be impacted on future strike days, but we will keep you informed.

The common belief is that the strike action is fundamentally about teachers' pay. However, at our school alone, we have lost 3 support staff members within the last 6 months as the cost of living crisis has meant that they have sought work elsewhere that pays better. Recruitment is then difficult; where in the past we could have up to 20 applications for a support staff role, we are currently receiving on average 4, and in some cases, zero. Support staff pay in particular is incredibly low.

If this continues then schools around the country will not have the capacity to provide the high quality staff to maintain the quality of education all children deserve. Teachers feel incredibly strongly about this. They feel that they need to stand up and be counted to voice this concern. So, whilst we remain open on Wednesday, we do support the many colleagues out there taking action.

School Activities and Achievements

The children enjoyed an assembly given by Mr Harding from Broughton Music School, who teaches guitar, piano and keyboard in school on Wednesdays.

Oak and Ash classes are undertaking the Healthy Heads programme this term, focusing on British Values. This programme helps children to understand values such as democracy and liberty to help support their growth and understanding of citizenship. This enables pupils to develop self-confidence to distinguish from right and wrong, and respect the civil and criminal law of Britain.

Maple Class are enjoying their Judo sessions - they are very fierce!



KS2 classes were visited by United Utilities to take part in a Water Workshop last week—learning all about what a valuable resource our water is, and the part they can play in ensuring that they don't waste water. They all made water promises—have they shared theirs with you?

Shaun Gash visited us with John on Friday, in order to let children experience wheelchair basketball. Shaun started the visit with a whole school assembly, where he was interviewed by Zara, our very own wheelchair and prosthetic leg user! She asked Shaun some incredibly insightful questions about his inspirations, his frustrations about disability and his amazing achievements. Shaun then turned the tables on Zara, and she was able to talk about her disability and her dreams of taking part in the Para-Olympics at some point in the future. Every child in the school was then given the opportunity to have a go in a wheelchair, playing a fast paced game of basketball. Zara was on hand all day to help the children, and she impressed them all with her speed and dexterity in her chair. I imagine she spent most of Saturday asleep!

Acorn Class have been incredibly busy this half term. They have made apple seed bird feeders in Forest



School, and also created their own Stick Man. As part of their topic, Ticket to Ride, they have been visited by 2 police officers, tried on their uniform, including being handcuffed, and had a look in the police car. They were then visited by a paramedic, and looked inside an ambulance. Such an exciting week!

You can keep up to date with all of our activities on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

Online Safety Evening

Do you ever feel that your child knows more about the online world than you do? Do you worry about how to keep your child safe online? We are holding an Online Safety Evening on Tuesday 7th February, which is Safer Internet Day. Mr Wilkinson will lead the session, and we will be joined by our IT technician, Richard. They will answer your queries and guide you in ensuring you are able to protect your children. Also, don't forget to read our monthly newsletter, dedicated to online safety.

Diary Dates

January

31st Young Voices—Manchester

February

1st Acorn Class Vision Screening
 7th Parents Briefing—Online Safety 6pm
 9th Willow Class Assembly—9:15am
 Break up for half term
 PTA Discos
 20th School re-opens
 24th Y2/6 Fire Safety talk



March

2nd World Book Day
 14th Oak Class Dental Check
 22nd Maple Trip to Cuerden Valley
 23rd Rowan Class Tea Dance—Marine Hall
 24th Rowan Class Assembly-9:15am
 PTA Easter Bingo—non-uniform
 27th-31st Enterprise Week
 28th/30th Parents' Evening 3:45—7:00 pm
 30th Ash Class Assembly—9:15am
 31st Break up for Easter

April

17th School re-opens



May

KS1 SATs take place this month

1st May Day Bank Holiday
 3rd Ash Class trip to Foot print
 8th Coronation Bank Holiday
 9th-12th KS2 SATs
 26th Sports Morning and family picnic 9:15am
 Break up for half term



June

Y4 Multiplication test take place this month

6th School re-opens
 12th Y1 Phonics tests this week
 12/13th Oak Class Bikeability
 21st PTA Fun Day after school
 23rd Willow trip to Leighton Hall
 30th Acorn Class Assembly 9:15am



July

6th/7th Oak Class trip to London
 17th/18th Oak Class Performance 6:00pm
 20th Oak Class Awards Evening 6:00pm
 21st School closes for summer

