

Chagford C of E Primary School

Weekly Newsletter 30th April 2021



Welcome to my first newsletter as Principal at Chagford Church of England Primary School. I hope to use this space each week to give you a glimpse of what's going inside the school as well as keeping you up to date with all the news and information you need to make your relationship with the school as easy to navigate as possible.

As I'm sure you can imagine, leading a school is a very busy job and often unpredictable—every day something comes along which hadn't been expected so, while I do hope to get a newsletter to you every Friday, please don't be worried if there's a week where one doesn't drop into your inbox—it just means I've been dealing with something that needed urgent attention. If there's information you need we will get it to you!

Every morning, when I'm unlocking the school, I take a moment to drink in the beautiful view from our school fields—I am very blessed to be here in Chagford—thank you to you all for welcoming me. **Ed Finch (Principal)**



Work Party

A thousand thanks to the parents, carers and friends of the school who came in to help out last Saturday. We worked hard for two hours and got a great deal done. We took away a shed which was starting to become dangerous, trimmed back possible eye-poking twigs in the forest school area, levelled the path down to the amphitheatre so it's no longer a trip hazard, cleared a pile of gubbins from behind the big old shed, dug over the raised beds and generally made the outdoor spaces safer and more usable for the children to play and learn in. I can't thank the team enough—it was such a pleasure to work with you all and start getting to know you. And the results speak for themselves.





Gardening Group

Thanks also to the gardening committee and their helpers have made such a beautiful job of the gardens at the front of the school. The team spent hours this week tidying up and barrowing tonnes of manure to give the ground a boost. I cannot wait to see the area blooming into life as the growing season goes on—I think it might be rather spectacular. We can all help by reminding children not to tread in or on the beds but to keep to the paths—this will become clearer as we edge the beds and as the plants become more established.

Developing the Outdoor Areas

The outdoor spaces at Chagford Primary School are beautiful, lots of thought and care went in to these spaces and the attention to detail is wonderful—I love our stone circle—the children call it ‘Stonehenge’, and the Dartmoor Stone Cross at the front of the school is truly distinctive—do you know another school with a granite cross?

Over the next few months I’d like to develop the outside areas—both for the youngest children in the foundation unit and for the children in years one to six—so they are welcoming and exciting places for children to play and learn. I’d like to provide seating for the children who want to be quiet or to talk, opportunities to climb and experience the thrill of jumping, provocations for exercise, provocations for contemplation and wonder.

In the next few weeks we’ll be consulting the children and developing a really inspiring vision for what outdoor spaces could look like and how they could be used at the school. I’ll keep you in touch every step of the way and together we’ll build something which will really enrich every day and every playtime.



Chagford Champions

Is your child a 'Chagford Champion'? If they've worked hard and met a challenge we want to hear about it. It could be that they have gone up a belt in karate, passed a grade in music, conquered a big run, competed in a completion, learned a new skill or met some other big milestone.

In this world we live in it's easy for children to tie their self esteem in with what they've got—we want to build a real sense of pride in what we have done—and the work we put in to do it.

So, if your child is a 'Chagford Champion', please let us know so we can make a fuss of them. If you are happy to share you could email me a photo for inclusion in this weekly newsletter.



'Here Comes the Sun' Video

Eagle eyed parents and carers will have noticed that, for a few hours, we had a beautiful video of the children singing the Beatles 'Here Comes the Sun' video on the website. We took it down immediately when we realised we had included images of children that we didn't have video permissions for. That was our mistake and we are sincerely sorry for it. Steve—who shot and edited the video—is going to do a little reshoot and we'll have it up again for you all to enjoy as soon as we can. It's a beautiful, beautiful thing which you will all love so much. Apologies for that mistake and thanks to everyone for their understanding.

Breakfast Club

Mr Finch has been working on getting a version of Breakfast Club back up and running. We know there's a real need for this. It will be a very simple offer until the 'bubbles' protocol is discontinued—which is beyond the control of the school.

Parents will pre-book places through the same system we are using for school dinners. Children will be welcome from eight a.m. They will sit at tables in the hall and be given a cereal bar and squash. They will be able to do some simple activities and will go to class at ten to nine. We will need to charge four pounds to cover the cost of staffing—if it turns out that demand is higher than expected it may be possible to drop the price. I am hoping to have this up and running for May 10th.

Nits

We had a break from the dreaded head lice over lockdown—one of the few silver linings to an otherwise dark period—but I'm afraid they are back. Please take time to check your child's head both for the eggs and the crawling lice themselves. If you find them do, please, treat them and check again daily to ensure the treatment has worked.

Hair which is conditioned and combed through daily does seem to stay clear. Tea tree shampoo is anecdotally effective at keeping them away.

Mobile Phones

Can we remind every parent and carer that we do not allow children to bring mobile phones onto the school site. There are a number of reasons for this with safety being near the top of the list but one important reason is that we cannot take responsibility for valuable items.

Yesterday a child did bring a mobile phone to school and, unfortunately, lost it which has caused a great deal of anxiety for the family involved. Could every parent and carer talk to their children and ask if they have any information that could lead to finding this phone. They might have spotted it on the ground or know what might have happened to it.

