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Message from Miss Talbot

Dear Parents,

Thank you to everyone for all the fantastic effort that went into the costumes for World Book Day and for the participation in our Extreme Reading Challenge. I have seen lots of photos and the children look brilliant!

The purpose of our participation in events to celebrate World Book Day is to raise the importance of the written world in developing children's literacy skills. Children today are so fortunate to have a wealth of wonderful literature, often beautifully illustrated, to devour. We want our children to enjoy reading and to gain pleasure from them. Sharing books together as a family is a very worthwhile experience and whilst we appreciate that we now live busier lives than ever before, we would ask you to continue to make time for this with your children at home. Reading together every day will make a significant difference to your children's reading ability.

This year I have put a significant injection of funds into replacing and replenishing our school reading books and will aim to continue to do so on an annual basis. We are also grateful to the CoOp who have also provided us with further funds to enhance reading resources at our school. Many of our books are well past their prime and replacements have been desperately needed. We would ask that when our new books enter circulation, everyone treats them respectfully and with care in order to ensure their longevity. We hope that the children will be excited by the range of new titles available. Please remember that we expect the children to read a wide range of books across each band and to be fully confident in their comprehension of the texts before moving onto the next band. Teachers will determine when they are ready to do this - it's not a race up the ladder and thorough immersion and success within a particular band will result in greater long term reading achievement.

With the Easter holiday only a week away, I hope this will provide lots of opportunities for reading books at home, in the caravan or by the pool or perhaps visiting the local library. I hope that you all have a wonderful Easter break.

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Class News...

Explosive ends to our Learning Adventures



As our Spring Learning Adventures come to an end, each year group will be marking the finale of their unit of work with an 'explosive ending'. Year 2, had an exciting drama workshop based on the Great Fire of London taking place this week and I hope that parents enjoyed coming to watch the children's performance at the end of the afternoon. Year 5 and 6 have an astronomy show to look forward to on Wednesday this week which will explore our solar system and Year 3 are off to hunt down their crocodile at Wildwood. Year 4 indulged in an afternoon cream tea on their recent trip to Chilham as part of their village study.

We end this term with our next STAR Week, 'Making the Headlines' which will focus on current affairs and explore a further RE unit. Details of your child's next Learning Adventure will be available shortly in the curriculum section of the school website.



Year 1 Phonics Parents' Meeting

Parents of Year 1 children are reminded that we have meetings taking place next week, when information will be shared regarding the statutory Phonics Screening which takes place in June. The meetings are scheduled for 6.15 pm on Tuesday 2nd April and 9.15 am on Wednesday 3rd. Parents only need attend one session.

This is a useful opportunity for parents to find out more about how the screening works and what the Government have designed this screening to assess.

Creative Homework

Well done to everyone who took part in this term's Creative Homework on the theme of Heroes. We are always delighted by the imaginative efforts produced by the children. One child from each class was chosen to have a tea party with Mrs Stein to celebrate their particular impressive efforts. Our last Creative Homework of the year will be set just before the May half term.

Uniform Reminder

Please can I remind parents that only plain black shoes are permitted at school. Black training shoes are allowed, providing they have no coloured marks, patterns or stripes on them.

Skirts or trousers should be worn and leggings are not part of our school uniform. We have had a number of children coming to school wearing leggings and coloured trainers having told parents that these are allowed – this is not the case!

We have also had a few large coloured JoJo bows sneaking back into school. Again, these are not part of our uniform. Small bows and hairbands in the school colours are permitted.

Although it has been really lovely to see the sunshine, please remember that coats are still needed. Weather can change throughout the day!

Comic Relief



Thank you to everyone for all your support with our fundraising for Comic Relief. We are immensely grateful to everyone who took time to make cakes for our after school cake sale which raised £365 for the charity.

Language Workshops

We were delighted to welcome Japanese teacher training students from Chaucer College, in Canterbury to Godinton at the start of term. This is part of the students' orientation in understanding educational provision in UK schools. The students also led some sessions for our children which gave them a taste of Japanese art and language. This includes calligraphy writing and learning numbers in Japanese.

Our children also enjoyed some Spanish workshops led by Sarah from Lingotots. She will be setting up an after school Spanish club next term, the details of which will be on the next club timetable.



Educational Visits and Visitors

Educational visits and visitors to school to enhance curriculum areas, often offer some of the most memorable opportunities for our children. However, rising costs, particularly from transport companies, have meant that we have had to already cut back on the enhancement opportunities we are able to offer. We always aim to arrange experiences which offer excellent value for money whilst giving the children a high quality, valuable experience. The school can only ask for voluntary contributions to cover the cost of curriculum related visits and visitors which are already subsidised by the school. Any further shortfall is met by the school and is not covered by contributions from those who have already paid. We outline potential costs of school trips in the Year Group Welcome letters sent out at the start of the year, to try and give parents plenty of time to budget for any forthcoming events and the vast majority of parents are immensely supportive. Our school budget is buoyant despite Government cutbacks but we continually have to review where finances can be most usefully directed for the benefit of the children whilst prudently planning ahead for further anticipated cutbacks. If parents are unable to meet the full cost of any visit, part payments provide crucial support for the viability of the opportunity planned. We have had a number of occasions when parents have said that they are not intending to pay for a visit because they don't have to rather than because they can't afford it. I would ask that parents do whatever is within their means to support these opportunities for the children so that we do not have to make cancellations much to the disappointment of the children. Thank you.

Easter Assembly

We were delighted to welcome Nathan Wilson, from St Mary's Church, Great Chart, into school yesterday to lead our Easter Assembly.

Staff News

Headteacher Update

I would like to thank all my team here at Godinton, and in particular our two Assistant Heads, Mrs Stein and Miss Collins, for all their hard work in managing the school in my absence. I am happy to report that my operation was successful and that I have made good progress with my recovery. I am very much looking forward to coming back to school, I have missed everyone very much, and intend to pop in over the next few weeks before making a formal return to school after Easter.

Wedding Bells

I am sure you will all join me in congratulating Miss Collins who is getting married during the Easter holiday. Miss Collins will return to school after Easter as Mrs Partridge. On behalf of the school, we wish Mr and Mrs Partridge a very happy future together.

Hellos and Goodbyes

Last week we said our goodbyes to Mrs Diane Smith, who after ten years at Godinton is leaving us to take up a full time administration position with a local business. Mrs Smith has been a midday supervisor, has assisted at Breakfast Club and has been a keen supporter of our PTFA over the years. We are extremely grateful to everything that Mrs Smith has done for our children and wish her all the best in her new job.

Miss Johns, who teaches Foxes class is also leaving us at the end of term as she is relocating out of the county. Unfortunately, due to illness Miss Johns will not be back in school for the rest of this term. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Miss Johns for her hard work in Year 1 and wish her the very best for the future. After Easter, Foxes class will be taught by Miss King and Miss Marsh, who makes a welcome return to Godinton.

I would also like to wish Miss Brooker well as she starts her maternity leave after Easter. Nightingales class will be taught by Mrs Norman for the remainder of this academic year.

Other News and Reminders...

Breakfast Club

We are very pleased to be able to offer parents excellent Breakfast Club provision which I know provides a valuable childcare facility for working parents. In order to ensure that our Club runs efficiently, it is imperative that parents are prompt with their payments and do not go into arrears. Each month we have an average of £200 owed in outstanding payments from parents and a considerable amount of administration time goes into chasing up payments owed. With so many children attending over the course of a week, even one missed payment from an individual family contributes to the large cumulative loss for the club. If anyone is experiencing difficulty with payments please contact our Finance Manager, Mrs Williams, who will be very happy to discuss the matter with you.

Brexit

With the National arrangements for Brexit still very much in the air, there is still great uncertainty about the impact that leaving the EU will have on practical day to day activity within the county. Talks of strikes, protests, port delays and traffic control measures may indeed have an impact on Kent in the coming months and in response to this, KCC have issued guidance to schools and businesses of practical considerations in response to Brexit. For us, with our close proximity to the M20, the key concern is of course traffic delays. Our staff travel to school from across the county and have been advised to ensure that they respond to any delays by leaving sufficient time to make their journeys to work. I would ask parents to do the same and be mindful of traffic congestion in the Ashford area and do all they can to ensure that the children arrive at school on time.

Site Safety

Our school site starts to look really lovely at this time of year, once the daffodils and blossom starts to emerge. Please can I remind parents to ensure that their children help to keep the site looking welcoming and that they stay safe by not climbing on the trees by the cycle racks. Thank you.

PTFA News

We have two of our favourite PTFA events taking place this week. We are grateful to everyone who made a donation to our Mother's Day shop and who sent in their £1 in order for their child to join in. Easter Bingo is taking place on Saturday 30th March. I hope that many of you will join in with this egg-cellent event!

I am very grateful to our new committee for the excellent start they have made to fundraising for the school. I know that the committee are currently rallying support for the summer fair and so if you are able to help, at this event or any others, please see Linda Tunbridge, Jo Gandon, Nicola Smith or Tammy Carroll. The next PTFA meeting is on Wednesday 24th April at 6.30p.m in the school. All are welcome to attend. This is a great opportunity to get involved in the life of the school and we are most grateful for help received.

Please note that there are two changes of date for PTFA events from those originally published. The Summer Fair will now take place on Saturday 22nd June and the end of year children's disco on Friday 12th July.

Governor News

Message from the Chair of Governors: Steve King

One of the more enjoyable roles as a Governor is



to visit the classroom, which we do to monitor progress against The School Improvement Plan (SIP) and to give us the opportunity to enhance our knowledge of the school through interaction with both staff and pupils. The school produces a School Improvement Plan annually to identify areas requiring improvement and identify the actions needed in order to improve. Governors are then allocated sections of the SIP to monitor progress against the identified actions.

For me, the best classroom visit is to the children and staff in Early Years. Recently, I took the opportunity to spend a day with the Reception classes to follow up on an Early Years course I had attended a few weeks before the visit. My objective for the visit was to consider whether

some of the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' that we had discussed on the course were visible, in particular, whether the children were interested and saw purpose in the activity being undertaken.

I had a great day although I was exhausted by the end of it and left wondering how the staff manage the same routines every day of the week. The children were lovely, they were well behaved and gave me a warm welcome upon arrival. They were keen to show me round the classroom and to explain what they were doing. They encouraged me to get involved in their different activities which included an informative phonics lesson and various games outside using a football. In the phonics lesson I saw clear evidence that all the children **were** interested in the activity and, when questioned, they demonstrated they understood the activity and why they were doing it. Throughout the day, I was able to see the children embracing the characteristics of learning and being provided with opportunities for doing so. It was a pleasure to undertake this part of my duties and has left me looking forward to my next visit to the classroom.



Getting to know our Governors

Governor Profiles

Charlotte Wright (Parent Governor)

Charlotte became a Parent Governor in 2017 and is currently Chair of the Strategy Group. She is lead Governor for Safeguarding, a member of the Equality Working Group and responsible for monitoring the Early Years section of the SIP. Charlotte has provided the following detail about herself :

I have two children already at Godinton and one (hopefully) starting in September place permitting! I wanted to become a Parent Governor as a way to contribute to a school that I feel is doing a lovely job in educating them. I also wanted the opportunity to use my communication and organisational skills, sadly underused since I stopped work after having the girls. I used to work in the TV and film industry making trailers and more recently have started working part-time as a consultant. As a Parent Governor, I don't influence policy or make decisions around the children, but I ask lots of questions and act as a 'critical friend'. When I am not sorting out the girls my spare time is spent running and although I'm very slow you will often see me trudging round Godinton Park in my trainers!

Other News and reminders...

- With water maintenance work taking place in and around the estate, please can I remind parents to ensure that they leave a little extra time for their journeys once temporary traffic lights and road work is in place. Please be mindful of the notifications sent out via ParentMail regarding the road crossing patrol in Loudon Way during this time.
- Headlice can be immensely frustrating especially with recurring cases happening in some classes. Please can everyone ensure that they check their child's hair regularly and when lice or eggs are detected they are treated swiftly. Children who are infected should not return to school until they have been treated.
- Term 5 begins on Tuesday 23rd April, the day after the Easter bank holiday weekend.

Caught on camera this month...



Sports Report

High Five

On Friday 15th March, the Ashford Netball Youth League Primary Schools' League Tournament began. So far our team 'The Godinton Jets' have played two matches, winning both. What a great start to the season!

Football

Last Saturday, 8 of our Year 5 and 6 boys took part in the annual Ashford school's football tournament at Lady Joanna Thornhill Primary School in Wye. Our team were in a pool with five other teams and played five, ten-minute matches. Our team played magnificently and although they didn't make it through to the semi finals, each of the boys gave 100% effort to every match and kept the pressure on, even when things weren't going our way. All the supporting adults were immensely proud of the excellent resilience and sportsmanship that our team demonstrated. Thank you as well to Mr Wood for all his tremendous efforts in training our team.

National Cross Country

Whilst our football team was busy on Saturday, Lily-Rose from Year 5 was racing her heart out in Loughborough, having been selected to represent Kent in the National Cross Country competition. 337 girls ran in Lily-Rose's age group and we are immensely proud to say that out of an outstanding pool of runners from across the country, she came 33rd, helping Kent with their third place victory. Very well done Lily-Rose.