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Message from Miss Talbot

Sustainable Transport

Congratulations to all those children who have joined in with our WOW challenge by walking, cycling, scootering or parking and striding to school. An average of 275 children have achieved their first two badges which is brilliant. Don't forget that the challenge resets each month and all the children have to do is use a sustainable method of travel to school at least once a week. We will shortly be checking the database so that November badges can be distributed to the children.

In order to aid our efforts to ease traffic congestion around the Godinton Park estate and surrounding road, we have been working with KCC to put a school travel plan in place. A travel plan identifies local issues relating to the school journey, sets out a strategy of agreed aims and identifies a package of measures designed to promote more sustainable travel choices for pupils, parents, staff and visitors to our school. Our school travel plan is on the school website and can be accessed by clicking on the following link: <https://godinton.kent.sch.uk/media/8165/godinton-primary-school-travel-plan-october-2024.pdf>



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Class News

Year 1 go back in time



We were very excited to be able to offer the children in Year 1 the opportunity to bring their learning to life with an interactive visit from the team at Maidstone Museum.

The children have been learning about Victorian childhoods and toys and games from the past. They were thrilled to be able to see, and play with, artefacts and replicas from the Victorian era to have a go at some popular, and tricky games that they hadn't tried before.

The children explored toys from the past such as: hoops and sticks, knuckle bones and spinning tops, and also learned about toys that were used in Victorian times and are still popular today, such as teddies, dolls and yoyos.

Finally the children enjoyed a special craft activity; a chance to make their own historical inspired peg doll just like the ones that children would have played with in the 1900s.



Year 6 Explore

Canterbury

It may not surprise you to hear that school trips require a lot of organisation – countless phone calls, itineraries to plan and reams of paperwork to fill in. So when the children in Year 6 were left in charge to organise their own visit to Canterbury earlier this month, the adults were delighted! Prior to their trip, the children worked in groups to plan their fieldwork studies in the city, looking at transport links, tourism and historical landmarks and buildings within the High Street.

Before the half term, the classes had been studying the medieval period, focusing upon Canterbury's expansion from a small medieval market town to a thriving city. The children also learnt about the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket and the pilgrimages that people would make to Canterbury, following his death. Such pilgrims inspired Geoffrey Chaucer to compose 'The Canterbury Tales'.



The day itself comprised of three parts: a guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral, a craft-based workshop and the geographical fieldwork that the children had planned the day before. The latter gave the adults and

children alike the opportunity to study interesting features of the city, which might normally be missed on a day out in Canterbury. Sadly the weather wasn't on the children's side, but this didn't stop them enjoying the day.

The children represented the school brilliantly, and received many compliments from staff at the Cathedral for their behaviour. By the end of the day, the group had recorded a count of approx. 12,000 to 13,000 steps, but were grateful that, unlike medieval pilgrims, there was a dry Ashford-bound train waiting at the station to take them home.

Our New Mini Management Team



Our new Mini Management Team have made a great start to their responsibilities and have met with Mrs Partridge to give their feedback on our newly refurbished Year 3 to 6 toilets (which have had new flooring, cubicles, sinks and toilets) and to share their views on how our new play initiatives are going. They have amazing ideas and I know they are going to be fantastic in their role. Next week, they will be meeting with some of our school Governors to tell them more about Opal Play.

Our congratulations go to:

Year 1 – Ralphie and Barney

Year 2 – Scarlet and Amelie

Year 3 – Scarlett and Macie

Year 4 – Freya and Benjamin

Year 5 – Raymond and Tommy

Year 6 – Isla and Olivia

Term dates for 2025– 2026

Our term dates for the academic year 2025–26 have now been set. These have been sent out via ParentMail but are also available on the school website:

<https://godinton.kent.sch.uk/media/8219/godinton-primary-term-dates-2025-2026.pdf>

Nurture Accreditation

We were delighted to have been awarded the National Nurturing Schools Award 2024 as a reflection of our commitment to the wellbeing and personal development of our children and the school community. We are only one of 50 schools in the south east region to achieve this award so are very proud to have achieved this. I hope that you have read the report which was sent out via ParentMail just after half term.

The accreditation involved an assessment of the provision provided at Godinton and focused on the 6 principles of nurture:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- The importance of transitions in children's lives

We are in the process of developing the school website to provide more information for parents about pastoral, nurture, wellbeing and mental health support at Godinton and will let you know as these pages go live. In the meantime, if you require any help with your child's wellbeing or mental health, please get in touch with our team.

My thanks goes to all members of our school team for the part they play in ensuring that nurture provision is placed at the core of our school.



**National Nurturing
School Award
2024**

'Godinton Primary School stands as a beacon of how a nurturing approach can shape a thriving school community, where both academic success and personal wellbeing are prioritised.'

Nurture UK report – November 2024

Year 3 Swimming

It has been a pleasure for me to accompany our Year 3 children to their swimming lessons at Ashford School over the past 8 weeks. Working in small groups, with their own instructors, the children have had an intensive course of swimming instruction by qualified swimming teachers. All the children have made great progress with their swimming skills over the course of the sessions, with our confident swimmers perfecting stroke action, speed and accuracy and our less confident children now able to use floats and noodles to support them in the water. Swimming forms a core part of our Year 3 PE curriculum. Similar sessions will run next year, when our current Year 2 children move into Year 3.

Morning Buddies

You may have noticed some of our playground buddies on the gate in the morning assisting in welcoming the children into school. Our buddies are now available to help take some of the younger children into class if they need a helping hand. You can easily identify our buddies by their hi vis tabards. They are loving their new responsibilities and are keen to help in whatever way they can.

The children will also find our Buddies out on the playground and field at break times where they will help the children to join in with games and activities. If anyone is lonely or sad at break time, the buddies will help to find things to do, look for opportunities to make them smile or help them to find an adult to sort out a problem.

Opal Update



Just opened this week, is our Dig and Discovery Zone which is proving to be our most popular area yet. With plenty of leaves to jump in and earth to dig in, the children have been making discoveries and working collaboratively to dig holes and uncover treasures buried underground.

We are very keen to open up some den building activities which we know our older children would relish. To do this we are in desperate need of sturdy milk crates or bread crates (strong enough to support the weight of a couple of children). Please also contact us if you have any more tyres, drain pipes or tarpaulines that might prove useful or any large pipes that children could crawl through.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us out with donations so far; we have been amazed by everyone's generosity. Our latest donation of tyres has come from HiQ Tyres and Autocare Ashford— thank you.

Thank you to everyone for your help in ensuring that the children have wellies in school so they are able to access the field at lunchtime. Please can I ask that you ensure that they also have a warm waterproof coat in school, every day.



It's Christmas! (well almost)

Our Godinton Christmas celebrations kicked off at the weekend with our PTFA Christmas Fayre. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this such a success—whether you helped out on the day, helped to set up beforehand, brought in donations or came along with family and friends to spend your money. Particular thanks must go to Kelly prior, Jo Gandon, Keri Hunphrey and Sam Ellis for all their efforts. The afternoon was a lovely occasion with a plentiful array of stalls. We will let you know how much money has been raised, once counting has been completed.

We have lots of other festive celebrations to look forward to over the last few weeks of term including our Christmas performance and carol service, Christmas film afternoon, Christmas parties, Christingle making, Christmas dinner and our PTFA Breakfast with Santa.

Details of all these activities have been sent out via ParentMail.

Our Christmas postboxes are out so children are able to post cards to friends if they would like to do so. Class teachers are able to give out lists of first names to help with this. It is helpful for our Christmas postmen if the envelopes show children's names and their class.

Year 6 Cake Sale

Thank you to everyone who supported our Year 6 cake sale. This raised £133 for Year 6 to spend. Our next bake sale is Year 2 on Monday 13th January and then Year 5 on Monday 10th February.

Little Wandle Reading Books

Our new phonics scheme for Years R and 1 (and some children in Year 2) has got off to a flying start and the children are engaging very well in their class phonics and reading lessons. Mrs Stein, Mrs Partridge and I have had the pleasure of teaching a Year 1 reading group since the start of the year and have seen first hand the good progress that the children are making with reading and phonics. The quality of the reading books which the children explore in their taught sessions in school and which they bring home to share with grown ups is excellent. I hope that you are enjoying sharing these books together.

We have invested heavily in improving the quality of our reading materials in our younger year groups and I'm grateful for the care being taken to look after the books at home and to ensure that they are returned promptly to school. As yet, no books have been lost which ensures that books are always available for the next group to use. Thank you for your ongoing support with this. More information about phonics at Godinton, can be found on the school website:

<https://godinton.kent.sch.uk/curriculum/our-phonics-adventure-the-phonics-curriculum-at-godinton/>

Roof Update

We are still awaiting a start date for work to commence on the replacement of the hall roof, in order to remove all remaining RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) from the school. This has been immensely frustrating as it has meant all forthcoming plans (such as Christmas performances) have had to be scaled back in order to avoid disappointment. It is unlikely that any work will now begin until after Christmas. I have a meeting with the DfE next week to discuss this further.

Year Group Parent Email Responses

Don't forget that you can contact your child's year group via the year group email accounts:

YearXparent@godinton.kent.sch.uk (where X stands for your child's year group e.g. YearR, Year1 etc). Please note that you may receive the following response after sending an email through to the year group account, notifying you as to when this account is accessed:

Thank you for your email. Please be aware that the year group emails accounts are not monitored during the school day when teachers are in class. They will usually be checked before or after school and teachers will aim to respond to emails from parents within 2 working days. Responses will not usually be sent, outside of working hours. Any urgent emails should therefore be sent to the school office for attention.

October Kindness Challenge

Over 100 children took part in our October Kindness Challenge, set by Mrs McGibney and Miss King, which asked the children to complete kind acts related to our 5 Ts of kindness. Thank you to all the children who took part. They have all received certificates and special kindness keyrings.

Our Kindness Ambassadors have been busy promoting World Kindness Day this month and encouraging their classmates to join in with their sunbeam kindness challenge.



Kindness from the Grown Ups too

To ensure that all adults coming onto our school site demonstrate the same respect which we expect the children to show to others, you will notice posters up in the school foyer reminding all adults (visitors, parents and our school team) of our expectations. By all showing mutual respect, we model good behaviours to our children at all times.

Dear Visitors,

At Godinton Primary we expect everyone to uphold our school values, including any grown ups who visit our school. Please be a good role model to us children and show respect:

- By being kind and respectful in the way you behave to others*
- By not shouting or being argumentative*
- By not being intimidating or threatening*
- By only using acceptable language—no swearing or inappropriate comments that might offend*
- By not showing physical aggression*
- By respecting personal space*

If you visit our school, please set an example.

Thank you

The children of Godinton Primary School

Policy Update

Please note that the following policies have been updated and can be found on the policy page on the school website.

- Health and safety
- Inclusion
- Play
- Reading and Phonics
- Relationship and Sex Education
- Uniform and Possessions
- Admissions

Other News and Reminders...

- If you are looking for a school place for a Reception child in September 2025, applications need to be made by Wednesday 15th January. Further information about the admissions process can be found on the school website.
- Thank you to parent, Jamie Foss for designing a new digital school prospectus. This can be found on the prospectus page on the school website.
- Thank you to Year 5 and 6 parents for supporting us in trying to reduce the number of smartphones coming into school. Since my last communication, the number has reduced.
- Thank you to everyone who helped us to raise almost £400 for Children in Need.
- The last day of term is Friday 20th December.

Caught on camera this month...



Sports Report– Year 3 and 4 Multi-Skills Tournament

Time flies when you're having fun and this was certainly the case for children in Years 3 and 4 who attended a Multiskills festival at the Stour Centre last week. Arriving at the venue, full of energy and raring to go, the children took part in a range of activities, such as speed bounce, obstacle courses and target throwing, designed to test their speed, agility and stamina. At each station, the children were given five minutes to complete the event, during which time their scores were recorded. Then after five minutes, they rotated onto the next activity. The festival, which was well attended by a number of schools in the local area, whizzed by, and the whole team agreed that they had had a brilliant time. Not only did they demonstrate excellent teamwork and sportsmanship, but they were fantastic ambassadors for the school. Well done Team Godinton!

