



Together we grow, together we flourish

Letter from Mrs Huish 18.02.2022

Dear Parents,

Can you believe that we are in the final week of this half term. In some ways, this term has passed in a flash leaving Christmas feeling like a distant memory, but what a long way we have all come! My favourite place to be in a school day is in the classrooms alongside the children learning. There has been so much progress over this past term, despite the challenges, and it is wonderful to be greeted by children proudly showing me their work or telling me how they have improved on their learning. The joy on their faces is what it is all about.

The national media does not always paint a rosy picture of children's progress right now, but we have seen growth in our children at all levels. When I talk about growth, this could be easily measurable growth such as the increase in phonics assessments we have seen across our RWINC children, or the increase in SATS scores in recent Year 6 assessments, but the growth that we have seen at Dartington is so much more than this.

Our focus on relationships and nurture this year has been the foundation of the increase in resilience and confidence that we have witnessed in our children this term. The vision of our school 'together we grow, together we flourish' drives our beliefs in learning from each other blooming into the best that we can be. I have had conversations with parents who have asked 'Where has the Thrive gone?'. For us, it is not about having a 'scheme' of pastoral care that is used in sessions with select children. It is a culture of noticing, a positive approach and a continuous nurturing environment that is inclusive to all children. The way we truly believe in the whole child and offer bespoke curriculums to those who need it, the way we offer forest school to all of our children weekly as part of their curriculum offer so they can feel the calm of nature and explore the world around them, the way we take the time to talk their emotions through with each child when they need it, the way we work with you as parents, the way we greet each child every morning and afternoon to help them to feel valued and noticed and the way we discuss inclusivity and equality with them so it remains our key focus throughout the school. This is the key to our distinctive ethos at Dartington.

We could not have predicted the last two years. We don't know what will happen next, but what matters now are the relationships we have built and will continue to build between each other. I would like to wish you all a fabulous half term break. We have a non-pupil day on the 28th of February so we will see you all back in school on Tuesday the 1st of March 2022.

Warm wishes,
Mrs Huish



Successful Music Funding Award: Working with Dartington Trust



Emily from the Dartington Trust is a parent who has been working with us on a funding bid. We found out last week that we have been successfully awarded this funding to run the project with the national musician, Jason Singh. Jason, a sound artist, nature beatboxer, producer, DJ, facilitator, and performer, will be leading a project with our Year 3s. It will be an exploration of the human voice through beatboxing, Indian vocal percussion, and nature soundscapes: a three-pronged approach to music, cross cultural learning, and connections to nature. The project will form three sessions. The Year 3's will be working with two of our sister schools, All Saints Marsh and Ellacombe Academy. The first session will be at Dartington Trust; there will be a nature-walk with Jason, a performance, a demonstration of some of Jason's work, and an introduction to learning some of the skills and techniques they will be using throughout the project.

There will then be two subsequent half day workshops with each school developing skills and ideas, these will be spread out by a fortnight with time for the children to develop ideas and practice in-between. The objective of the project will be to produce a piece or set of pieces of nature inspired sound-art/music to be shared within the school and connect the schools and children involved in the project through sharing their work and experiences. We cannot wait to see this project evolve!

Community News: Did you see us on BBC Spotlight?



Do you remember our superhero day that the children designed to raise money towards the local defibrillator at Meadowbrook community centre? We worked with the Dartington Recreation Association to raise enough money for the lifesaving equipment to be installed for the community to use in the event of an emergency. We worked with the charity Jay's Aim who came in a trained all of our Year 5 and 6 children equipping them with vital lifesaving skills before Christmas. Jays Aim, whose aim is to install defibrillators in as many areas as they can, were celebrating their 100th defibrillator installation. They asked us if we would be part of an interview with BBC Spotlight which aired last Thursday. The children were incredible. They spoke so eloquently about their passion for fundraising and making a difference in the community. Harlee's response was one that had us all teary eyed. He was asked if he thought the lifesaving lessons were as important as his school lessons to which Harlee replied that he thought they were important and compared his lessons in class as ones that are important for him as a person to grow and learn, but that the lifesaving lessons were important to make a difference to someone else's life if he was ever in such a position. A huge thank you to the children who came to join the BBC crew and their parents for the last-minute permissions!

Community News: Our Silver Stories Readers

Another wonderful offer we have in our school is the opportunity to participate in the Silver Stories project. Mrs Foucher set this up in September and it is now fully up and running. We have 4 children who have weekly phone calls with elderly members of communities across the nation. Each week, they call them from school and share a book with them. It is a wonderful way to connect generations, bring a smile to the faces of others and make a difference. It was wonderful to hear from Florence and Yasmin about how much they enjoy their story time!



Making a Difference: A letter from The Brooke Charity

Skyla and Harriet had some wonderful news last week when they received a letter from The Brooke charity thanking them for their fundraising efforts. They brought the letter in to share with the whole school and we really enjoyed reading about how the money has helped families in Africa to care for their working horses, donkeys and mules. The children were all thrilled about the difference they had made and enjoyed looking at the pictures and information that they sent in about the families. The culture we have here at Dartington about being courageous advocates and taking action to make that difference when we see something that we are passionate about, makes our school so very special!

Our Safeguarding Curriculum: Safer Internet Day



The children have been busy working on their understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet. With the rapid rise in technology available to children, it is important that they are aware of the benefits but also the challenges that come with being online. There have been lots of discussions on what information they should share online, how they should behave, what to do if they feel unsafe online and how to assess the levels of fact with posts

online as they may not always present as they seem. Throughout the school, the children have created posters and had deep discussions about the safety of themselves and others. Woodpeckers created posters to display across the school too!

School Trips and Visits: Let's start planning!

Trips and visits for our children are so important. They link to the curriculum and give the children the opportunity to experience different places and deepen their learning in different subject areas. These have been postponed through the pandemic, but we are really excited to start planning them again for our children in the Summer term.

- Year 6 have an exciting residential booked and a letter has gone out about this. This will be two exciting nights away in North Devon at a facility that is packed with fun activities.
- Year 4 have signed up to go to The Mix music festival run by Torbay and Devon Music Hub. This is based this year at Killerton House the National Trust property just outside Exeter. A letter will be going out shortly about the cost and itinerary for this trip and will be a day filled with musical workshops and live music events.
- Year 5 and 6 will be going to watch the production of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream at KEVICCs
- EYFS have booked their day out at Stover to learn more about habitats and the world around them.
- Year 3 will be taking part in the Devon Music Education funded trip with Dartington Trust to work with a national musician.



We are so excited about starting to go on trips again!

School Trips and Visits: Dan Magness Visit!



As part of the English Schools Football Association Schools Week 7th – 13th February we had a special VIP visitor coming to school! Dan Magness, World Record Holder Football Freestyler and Entertainer visited us on Tuesday 8th February. He held workshops for each class, showing off his football freestyle skills whilst engaging the children in fun and energetic physical activity. The children were really inspired by his footballing skills and we have seen so many trialling them since. Even Mrs Wallis tried them out!

Health and Safety: Appropriate school items

One of the things that makes Dartington distinctive is the non-uniform policy. Although there is no uniformity to what the children wear, it is important that we have guidelines for health and safety reasons. This information can be found in the Parent Handbook that you would have received when your child started the school, but also can be found on the website. Recently, we have had a few incidents caused by things like jewellery and inappropriate footwear being worn in school. I know teachers will have had these conversations, but we would like to ask for your support in keeping special jewellery and toys at home to be treasured so they don't get lost, broken or cause harm. If you have any specific worries, please speak with your child's class teacher who will happily talk through some supportive strategies with you.

After School Clubs: Clubs for the Spring Term 2022

MONDAY - FRIDAY After school wrap around care: This will run every evening until 6pm. This is open to all children from EYFS to Year 6. Please book on and pay as usual through the School Gateway App.

TUESDAY Premiere Sports: This is a **Dodgeball** sports club for EYFS/KS1. Book on the Premiere Education website.

Frazoo: This is a **science club** that will be starting with Mrs Hulbert for years 5 & 6. Bookings are made directly to Frazoo - frazie@frazoo.co.uk.

FRIDAY Premiere Sports: This term, it is **Basketball** for Years 4,5 and 6. Book on the Premiere Education website

All clubs run from **3:15 - 4:15** (except the wrap around care).

Dates for your Diary: Don't miss out!

PTFA Coffee Morning: Please join us on Wednesday 02.03.22@ 09:00!

Sadly, our PTFA had to cease last year because we did not have enough members. The PTFA are a huge part of the school and work to raise money throughout the school year adding additional exciting experiences like school discos and bake offs for the children. I have been approached by some parents who would like to help to form another PTFA group. We are going to hold a meeting on Wednesday 2nd March at 09:00 for anyone who would like to join us. Come along and have a cup of tea and find out more about what it involves!

Reading Fun: World Book Day 03.03.22!

Mrs Foucher and the pupil focus group have planned some exciting activities for World Book Day! On World Book Day, we would like the children to bring their favourite book in to share with their class. If they do not have a copy of this at home, they are welcome to borrow one from our school or class libraries. The children can also choose to do one of the following:

- a) Dress up as a character/person/animal from their favourite book
- b) Bring in a teddy dressed up as a character/person/animal from their favourite book
- c) Decorate or paint a potato to look like a character/person/animal from their favourite book

If they would like to do all three then that is fine too! Everyone who takes part will be entered into a raffle to win a World Book Day prize.

Shrove Tuesday: Pancake day 02.03.22!

Celebrating the start of lent, on Tuesday 1st March we will be having Pancake Day for school lunches. Don't miss out, sign up for a school Lunch!

Together we grow, Together we flourish

TOGETHER WE EMPOWER EXCELLENCE

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