

Ongar Primary School Newsletter



In our safe and supportive school, we provide lessons full of challenge, inspiration and real life learning in order to promote independent, respectful, high achievers who step out of their comfort zone, smiling.

Monday 27th February 2017

DINNER MENU WEEK 1

ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL WEEKLY TARGET - 96%
% for w/e 24th February -95.5%

Amazing improvements in attendance last week, let's keep it up!

Class	Weekly %	Points to Date
Donaldson	97.3	3
Hargreaves	94.3	0
Morpurgo	97.1	2
Dahl	93.1	0
Rowling	96	1
Tolkien	95.5	0

CELEBRATION ASSEMBLY

The children listed below will be receiving certificates in this Friday's Celebration Assembly.

Donaldson	Morpurgo
Lily	Nathan
Kai	Stanley
Teddy	Maisie
	Samuel
	Maizie

Change to Dinner Menu

It's Shrove Tuesday so there will be a slight change to the dessert. The kitchen will now be serving pancakes with various toppings instead of chocolate sponge.



DIARY DATES

Diary dates are now available on the school website – www.ongar-pri.essex.sch.uk. Please be aware diary dates are subject to change occasionally.

Wow Day!

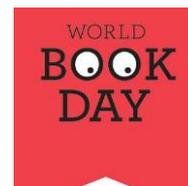
Thank you to all those parents who visited the school on Monday to see what the children had been doing on their Wow Day! As I popped into classes, I could see how engaged the pupils were with their tasks. The work that has gone into the resulting displays looks spectacular. Well done to Mr Farmer for introducing this concept; it will now take place every half term. However, we have decided to move inviting parent to view the work to the **end** of the half term rather than the beginning so that the children have even more work to show you.

Mr Bowden

Mr Bowden, Interim Head Teacher, will be visiting the school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays this term. This will give him the opportunity to meet and get to know parents and children before he takes up his position after the Easter break. I am sure that you will all make him feel very welcome.

World Book Day

World Book Day is this Thursday 2nd March and we are asking all children to come to school dressed as a book character; once again we will be starting the day, at 8:15am with our Reading Breakfast- so please join us for this; it will be lovely to see you.



Red Nose Day

The school council have decided on the events for Red Nose Day (**Friday 24th March**). Everyone is encouraged to come to school dressed as one of the 2017 Red Nose characters or alternatively children can wear non-uniform. A donation of £1 is required which will go to the Red Nose Charity. In the afternoon we will be hosting 'Ongar Primary's Got Talent'. The children had great fun last time we ran this event and have already started practising their acts. We will also be holding a Key Stage 'Red Nose Hunt' competition, with the winning house from each Key Stage receiving 100 house points.

Year 3 & 4 Indoor Athletics

On Tuesday 7th March, selected children from Year 3 & 4 will be participating in the Indoor Sports Hall Athletics event being held at the Ongar Leisure Centre. The competition starts at 1pm and we look forward to seeing as many parent supporters there as possible. If your child has been selected to participate in this event you would have been sent an email at the end of last week. Alternatively a list of participants is available from the school office.



Booster Classes

Letters have been sent out informing you if your child has been chosen to attend Booster Classes with their class teacher. These classes give children confidence with areas of the curriculum that they may find difficult and will run until the Easter holidays.

Complaints Procedure

Attached to this newsletter, I have included guidance on how to make a complaint if you have one. Social media is not the appropriate forum to do this as we cannot solve problems if we are not made aware of them directly. I am happy to report that most of you follow the correct processes, but there is a group of parents, once again, complaining over the internet and using inappropriate language. This behaviour gives the school a bad name. Parents that really care about their children will use the reporting process in the correct way. The school will be seeking legal advice as to how to proceed.

CIA Sponsored Read

If you still have any sponsor money, please could you hand it into the school office by tomorrow morning at the latest. Many thanks.



Reminders

Please remember that if your child is absent from school, it is your responsibility to contact the school on the first day of absence explaining why. On their return to school you must provide evidence, such as a letter, medical appointment card or medicine.



Complaints Policy

School vision:

In our safe and supportive school, we provide lesson full of challenge, inspiration and real life learning in order to promote independent, respectful, high achievers who step out of their comfort zone smiling.

Compliments

These are always welcome and very encouraging to teachers and staff. The school encourages feedback or opinions from pupils and parents. In practice this dialogue is continuous, sometimes directly and also indirectly, for example, through the Friends' Association. It may not always be possible to act immediately but pupils and the school always benefit so please don't hold back.

Concerns

It is natural that parents may, occasionally, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue.

The school welcomes enquiries from parents about any matter. Teachers and staff will explain the school practices, policies, and how they affect the pupils. The vast majority of concerns will be handled by the class teacher or by the subject co-ordinator if this is more helpful. If in doubt, keep asking until you are completely satisfied as all staff are eager to help.

The usual format is to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or to contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern with whoever you wish. At all times the staff will help to resolve a problem. If occasionally parents feel they must state their concern formally, this too is not a problem. The school has defined procedures for handling complaints so don't be embarrassed if you feel an issue warrants more attention.

Complaints

The procedure is again to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your complaint with whoever you wish.

The school's policy is to follow the Local Authority (Essex County Council) guidelines when handling concerns and complaints. Just ask if you would like advice or a copy. It would be unusual to deviate from these procedures but the school always retains discretion in these matters. In summary, the Local Authority procedure is divided into three stages:

- Stage 1 - Aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school;
- Stage 2 - Is the first formal stage where written complaints are considered by the Headteacher or a designated governor, who has responsibility for dealing with complaints;
- Stage 3 - Is the next step once Stage 2 is complete. It involves a complaints review panel of governors. Such a panel may be offered at the discretion of the Chair of Governors.

Ongar School Procedures for Dealing with Complaints

The majority of concerns of parents, carers and others are handled under the following general procedures. Please be aware that the regulations that govern these procedures stipulate that a written record will be kept of all complaints that proceed beyond the informal stage and of any action taken by the school as a result of those complaints regardless of whether they are upheld.

The procedures are divided into three stages;

- **Stage 1** - Aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school (as described previously)
- **Stage 2** - Is the first formal stage at which written complaints are considered by the Headteacher or the Designated Governor, who has special responsibility for dealing with complaints.
- **Stage 3** - Is the next stage once Stage 2 has been worked through. It involves a Complaints Review Panel of members of the Governing Body.

How each of these stages operates is explained below:

Stage 1 – Your initial contact with the school

1. Many concerns will be dealt with informally when parents make them known to the school. The first point of contact should be your child's form teacher/tutor or subject teacher.
2. We will see parents or contact parents by telephone or in writing, as soon as possible after the concern is made known to us. All members of staff know how to refer, if necessary, to the appropriate person with responsibility for particular issues raised by the parent. He or she will make a clear note of the details and will check later to make sure that the matter has been followed up.
3. We will ensure that parents are clear what action or monitoring of the situation, if any, has been agreed. We will confirm this in writing.
4. We will ensure that we speak directly to all appropriate persons who may be able to assist us with our enquiries into the parental concern.
5. We will discuss with parents (normally within ten working days) the progress of our enquiries. Parents will have the opportunity of asking for the matter to be considered further, once we have responded to the concern.
6. If parents are still dissatisfied following this informal approach, the concern will become a formal complaint and we will deal with it at the next stage.

Stage 2 – Formal consideration of a complaint

This stage in our procedures deals with written complaints. It applies where parents are not happy with the informal approach to dealing with their concern, as outlined under Stage 1 above.

1. Normally, a written complaint should be addressed to the Headteacher. If, however, a complaint concerns the Headteacher personally, it should be sent to the school marked "For the attention of the Chair of Governors" (the Designated Governor).
2. We will acknowledge the complaint in writing as soon as possible after receiving it. This will be within three working days.
3. We will enclose a copy of these procedures with the acknowledgement, unless we know that parents already have a copy.

4. Normally we would expect to respond in full within **ten working days** but if this is not possible we will write to explain the reason for the delay and let parents know when we hope to be able to provide a full response.
5. As part of our consideration of the complaint, we may invite the parents to a meeting to discuss the complaint and fill in any details required. If parents wish, they can ask someone to accompany them to help explain the reasons for their complaint.
6. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors (Designated Governor) may also be accompanied by a suitable person if they wish.
7. Following the meeting, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors (Designated Governor) will, where necessary, talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, we will talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question.
8. We will normally talk to student with a parent or carer present, unless this would delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint, or where a pupil has specifically said that he or she would prefer the parent or carer not to be involved. In such circumstances, we will ensure that another member of staff, with whom the pupil feels comfortable, is present.
9. If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the school's internal confidential procedures, as required by law.
10. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors (Designated Governor) will keep written/typed, signed and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations, and other related documentation.
11. Once we have established all the relevant facts, we will send parents a written response to their complaint. This will give a full explanation of the Headteacher's or Chair of Governors (Designated Governor's) decision and the reasons for it. If follow-up action is needed, we will indicate what we are proposing to do. We may invite parents to a meeting to discuss the outcome as part of our commitment to building and maintaining good relations with them.
12. Where the parents are not satisfied with the response to the complaint they may request to have the matter heard by a Complaints Review Panel under Stage 3 of the procedure, as described below.
13. If we do not close the complaint after Stage 2, you may wish to proceed to Stage 3, as described below.

Stage 3 - Consideration by a Complaints Review Panel

1. If a parental concern has already been through Stages 1 and 2 and the parents are not happy with the outcome, they may request the matter to be heard by a Complaints Review Panel. This is a formal process, and your ultimate recourse at school level. The Chair of Governors (Designated Governor) has discretion to agree to this form of meeting where he or she feels it would be helpful in resolving the complaint.
2. The purpose of this arrangement is to give the complainant a hearing in front of a panel of at least three members of the Governing Body who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and someone who is independent of the management and running of the school.
3. The aim of a complaints review panel is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent. We recognise, however, that it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations that will reassure parents we have taken the parental complaint seriously.

The Complaints Review Panel operates according to the following formal procedures

1. The Clerk to the Governing Body will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within **20 working** days.
2. The Clerk will ask parents whether they wish to provide any **further written documentation** in support of their complaint. They can include witness statements, or ask witnesses to give evidence in person, if they wish.
3. The Headteacher will be asked to prepare a **written report** for the panel. Other members of staff directly involved in matters raised in the complaint will also be asked to prepare reports or statements.
4. The Clerk will inform the parents, the Headteacher, any relevant witnesses and members of the panel by letter, at least **five working days** in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. We hope that parents will feel comfortable with the meeting taking place in the school; but we will do what we can to make alternative arrangements if parents prefer.
5. With the letter, the clerk will send parents relevant correspondence, reports and documentation about the complaint and ask whether they wish to submit **further written evidence** to the panel.
6. The letter will explain what will happen at the panel meeting and the clerk will also inform parents that **they are entitled to be accompanied** to the meeting. The choice of person to accompany them is their own, but it is usually best to involve someone in whom they have confidence but who is not directly connected with the school. They are there to give parents support but also to witness the proceedings and to speak on their behalf if they wish.
7. With the agreement of the Chair of the Panel, the Headteacher may invite **members of staff** directly involved in matters raised by parents to attend the meeting.
8. The Chair of the Panel will bear in mind that the formal nature of the meeting can be intimidating for parents and will do his or her best to **put you at their ease**.
9. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses **previously undisclosed** should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.
10. The Chair of the Panel will ensure that the meeting is properly **minuted**. Any decision to share the minutes with the parents, the complainant, is a matter for the panel's discretion and they do not have an automatic right to see or receive a copy. Since such minutes usually name individuals, they are understandably of a sensitive and, therefore, confidential nature.
11. Normally, the written outcome of the panel meeting, which will be sent to parents, should give them all the information they require. If, however, they feel that they would like to have a **copy of the minutes** it would be helpful if they could indicate this in advance. If the panel is happy for the minutes to be copied to them, the clerk can then be asked to maintain confidentiality in the minutes.
12. During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:
 - You to explain their complaint;
 - you to hear the school's response from the Headteacher;
 - you to question the Headteacher about the complaint;
 - you to be questioned by the Headteacher about the complaint;
 - the panel members to be able to question them and the Headteacher;
 - any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the Chair's approval) and all parties to have the right to question all witnesses;
 - you and the Headteacher to make a final statement.

13. In closing the meeting, the chair will explain that the panel will now consider its decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to the Headteacher and parents **within two weeks**. All participants other than the panel and the Clerk will then leave.
14. The panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented in order to:
 - Reach a unanimous, or at least a majority, decision on the complaint;
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
 - recommend, where appropriate, to the Governing Body changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not happen again.
15. The Clerk will send parents and the Headteacher a written statement outlining the decision of the panel **within two weeks**. The letter will explain what further recourse, beyond the Governing Body, is available to you.
16. We will keep a copy of all correspondence and notes on file in the school's records but separate from students' personal records.

If parents wish to pursue their complaint beyond the Review Panel, they can write to the Secretary of State at the address shown below.

Secretary of State
Department for Children, Schools & Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Parents should enclose with correspondence to the Department of Education a copy of the letter giving the outcome of the Stage 3 Review. This will save time in that the Department for Education will not subsequently need to ask for the Governing Body's view of what has happened.

Closure of Complaints

- Very occasionally, a school will feel that it needs, regretfully, to close a complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied;
- we will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint against the school but sometime it is simply not possible to meet all of the complainant's wishes. Sometimes it is simply a case of "ageing to disagree";
- if a complainant persist in making representations to the school – to the Headteacher, Designated Governor, Chair of Governors or anyone else – this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from our responsibility to look after the interests of **all** the children in our care;
- for this reason, we are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on a complaint where we feel that we have taken all reasonable action to resolve a complaint;
- In exceptional circumstances, closure may occur before a complaint had reached Stage 3 of the procedures described in this document. This is because a complaints panel takes considerable time and effort to set up and we must be confident that it is likely to assist the process of investigating the complaint;
- The Chair of the Governing Body may decide, therefore, that every reasonable action has been undertaken to resolve the complain and that a Complaints Review Panel would not help to move things forward.

Other sources of information and advice

If your concern is about an aspect of **Special Needs provision**, which might include information about relevant voluntary organisations and support groups in Essex, you might like to talk to our **Parent Partnership** team on their helpline: 012455 436036

This policy was last updated and approved by the Governing Body 1st June 2015

This policy will be reviewed in June 2018