



Primary phase newsletter

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today

Friday 9th October 2020

All-through news

New website and “Virtual Open Morning”

We hope by now that you have enjoyed seeing and using our new website. Many of you will appreciate what a job this has been over the summer, spearheaded by David Ayres (Assistant Head) and Rachel Kirk (Vice Principal). We commissioned a review led by Hertfordshire (Herts for learning) to see whether our existing website described the character of our school and what we did. Following receipt of a detailed report, we reimagined our school website and how we wanted it not only to inform but celebrate the life of our school. Whilst not finished, and still much to do, we are confident that it begins to tell both our vision and our story. This year because of Covid restrictions, all secondary schools are promoting Y7 admissions in the form of a virtual open morning. We invite all parents to look at this set of videos, particularly those in Y5, as this is your school, your home community. We are intending to update the website regularly so do “bookmark” it as a favourite!

We are pleased to be able to let you know that our primary virtual open day, for admissions to Reception in September 2021, will go live on Monday 30th November.

Black History Month

This month we are celebrating Black History Month throughout the whole school. This is part of our ongoing commitment to create a truly inclusive curriculum that reflects our ethos and values. In the Larch, we have led year group assemblies across this week and we have much more to discuss as the weeks continue. I have been so impressed with the children’s knowledge of history (for example, we talked about Rosa Parks and how her bravery made such a difference) and their ability to reflect on values and what we believe in for our Simon Balle community. If you were able to discuss more at home, that would be fantastic - these clips have inspired lots of discussion: <https://youtu.be/slSgk-K1Qe8> (for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fnt_0A5ROrs&t=8s (Years 3, 4 and 5). We have been reflecting on inspirational black people in history and now in fields as diverse as athletics, football, nursing, formula one racing, mathematics, computing and acting. Much more to come, and we will also be running a house competition in the last week of the half term encouraging students to find out more about the significant achievements of the Black Community in Britain and the Wider World.

Simon Balle All-through Library

This week saw the anniversary of the “recreation” of our school library. Ten years ago we spent considerable time planning and reimagining our school library, and then fundraising to implement our vision. We invited a member of staff from the British Library to perform the opening ceremony along with invited guests. Many people contributed to that project and in particular the vision of Janet Syme, our librarian, and Rachel Southall, then a Governor. This vision has grown from strength to strength and children and young people are inspired to be part of the library. This week saw the launch of the Y5 librarians who will in time work with our older student librarians to continue the inspirational work that comes from this place.



Primary news

Teaching and learning

When I visited lessons this week, I was delighted to see Reception children showing their developing independence. As well as changing for PE, they are now also using child-initiated books where they can find their own book and use this to record ideas of their own - with drawings and colouring, and the beginnings of labelling and writing. It is great to see their imaginative ideas! Please do continue to support independence at home (getting dressed and undressed, using cutlery to cut and eat food and more!). Thank you too to Reception parents for engaging so well with Tapestry - as well as using this for home learning, please read staff observations carefully and see if there is something you can follow up and then share learning at home. When I visited Year 1, the Badgers were busy with their maths. It is so important at this time of year that they truly understand what numbers mean - so, for example, they can show the number 5 or the number 10 in lots of different ways - using a tens frame (ask your children - they can show you!) and finding all the different ways of making 5 (or 10 or 20!). The Rabbits were busy too discussing how you know if a book is fiction or non-fiction: what clues can you find? Year 2 were being detectives when I visited their classes! There was a mystery to be solved related to the book they are studying in English - Galimoto (a text in our Literary canon). Children were using their skills of prediction to wonder why a box had been left in their class with all sorts of objects contained inside. They were so excited to read the next part of the book to find out why! Year 3 were learning science with Miss Evans at the time of my visit and were demonstrating all of the vocabulary they have learned so far in their unit on the human body - from phalanges to fibula to tibia and more, they were also discussing the function of our bones in protecting vital organs. Year 4 were using number clues in order to work systematically in maths - for example, if I know $38 + 6 = 44$, then what is $4238 + 6$? And what is $238 + 56$? Or, $238 + 156$? Or, $1238 + 156$? Impressive work! In Year 5, the Swans were reading when I visited. They were busy with a newspaper article 'The boy who harnessed the wind.' Not only were they so engaged in their reading, they were also discussing linked environmental issues and thinking about what skills they would need to write their own newspaper articles. The Mallards, meanwhile, were making boats! Using what they knew about water resistance, and carefully applying their knowledge that only one variable could be changed at a time, they were keen to tell me which boat they thought would be best and why. Well done to all!

We are keen within our newsletters this term to introduce each of our new primary leaders to you: **here is Miss Boyce leading phase 3!**

The children in phase 3 have had a brilliant start to the term! We have so far learnt about Leonardo Da Vinci, investigated water and air resistance, investigated prime numbers, used relative clauses and much more! Phase 3 is the final part of the children's journey in the Larch before their move to Year 7. As we are a growing school, our Year 5 Mallards and Swans make up phase 3, with their move to being our first Year 6 classes happening in September 2021- something we are incredibly excited about!

The school values support our high expectations of our pupils academically and socially, and the children have really impressed us in response to this. In phase 3, the children are role models to the younger pupils so they must ensure they are applying our values every day-in lessons, corridors, on the playground and outside of school. Our priority is the children feeling safe, with values such as respect and wisdom guiding Year 5 assemblies and discussions about the positive and negative impact of choices, and how we treat others and ourselves. Year 5 have shown real maturity during these conversations and we look forward to seeing the children continue to apply these values during their time in phase 3.

Transition is very important to us. As staff we actively engage with our secondary colleagues, including the head of Year 7 and the Year 7 students themselves, to see what we can do to support our children with a gradual and smooth journey into KS3- with many plans already being made and to come! The children have already been



using the secondary music rooms for lessons, had a Google Classroom lesson led by secondary computer science teacher Mr Maloney and more of the secondary site will be used throughout phase 3. We have been really pleased with the children's engagement with their homework, spellings and filling in their new reading records. It is important that the children complete all of these tasks on a weekly basis, to support their learning and build their responsibility, and try to do as much as possible independently (with support given when needed).

Please email me (boycek@simonballe.herts.sch.uk) if you have any questions about phase 3. Well done again to Year 5 for a fabulous start to the term and we look forward to a fantastic year ahead!

Spotlight on Sport: Miss Riddle

This year should have been our first year where the children could represent the school in both Netball and Football. We are really hoping that we will be able to play some matches against other schools this year but in the meantime we wanted to have a spotlight on a range of different sports that the children are taking part in, in the Larch centre. We are so excited to be able to offer many different sporting opportunities and wanted to celebrate the children's success and their thoughts on learning some new sports. Our hope is that our spotlights on different sports will then become match reports where the children will be able to write up themselves the results and excitement of a match or sporting activity.

This fortnight's spotlight: **Netball, written by Chloe Plum (Year 5)**

This year at Simon Balle we have started a school netball team. It is for Year 4 and 5 and it is great fun! So far we have learnt which passes to use, how to pivot and how to move into spaces to receive the ball. Miss Newman and Miss Riddle, who are our teachers, always challenge us to do our best and give us tips on how to get there. I can't wait for matches to begin!

Other news

- Thank you to all parents for our Year 2 - 5 **parents' virtual meetings**. We valued speaking with you so much - thank you for your flexibility where technology did not always work perfectly for us! Please note that parents' week for Reception and Year 1 will be the week beginning 9th November 2020.
- **PSA**- keep the date! **12 October at 8pm**, for parents interested to meet online for the PSA annual general meeting.
- **Thinking about a career in teaching? Then train to teach with the Alban Federation!** Our schools are fantastic places to train, work and learn. They provide a unique school-based learning opportunity in partnership with the Alban Federation. Our partnership's vision is simple but powerful; to ensure the delivery of high quality initial teacher training that meets the needs of the local area. All partnership schools endeavour to create an environment in which staff, pupils and trainee teachers alike feel valued and supported. We have all worked with trainee teachers for many years and we fully recognise how much vibrancy, enthusiasm and drive they can offer our respective school communities. Importantly, the partnership sees its staff as its most valuable resource and its schools have a proven track record in training and professional development. Our teachers are excellent practitioners and are eager to share their skills, knowledge and practice with the next generation of teachers. For more information please visit <https://albanfederation.com/> or email afgtpenquiries@sandringham.herts.sch.uk to request a call back. If you are interested in training to teach and would like to discuss the possibility of training to teach at Simon



Balle All-through School, via the Alban Federation, please contact Yvonne Adshead adsheady@simonballe.herts.sch.uk. Applications, via UCAS, open on the 13th October 2020 for a September 2021 start.



- **The car park at Simon Balle.** We do know that we have written this several times before, and we apologise for being repetitive but it is important that we remind you that it is not possible to drive to Simon Balle. The car park at the Old London Road, and the system of us providing permits, is working very well. There is no need to drive to the school, with the exception of blue badge holders. Our car park is full with staff, and there have been occasions this fortnight where either families with disabled badges or staff arriving for work, simply cannot park. We ask you again, please, to walk to school and to avoid both the White Lodge and the main school car parks. Unfortunately, we have received a number of complaints from local residents about parking, especially at the cricket club in Mangrove Road. This is NOT a car park or dropping off area. It is so important that our community work together to support one another and to keep our school safe.
- **Covid-19 reminders.** Thank you to parents for your support during this very difficult time. We continue to insist on all students practising good hygiene and keeping to the safety procedures. However, please can you also as a family continuously exercise social distancing, ensure that you and older children wear masks when required, do not organise children's parties or large family gatherings or meet in large groups with friends. We await nationally more rules and restrictions but if you are intending to travel at half term please abide by the rules. In the primary phase, please ensure that distancing is also in place when collecting from Explorers and please do not enter the Sycamore room. We thank you for your support.
- **Parent voice.** Your feedback is so important to us and it is, of course, particularly tricky at the moment to speak to you and to invite you in person into Simon Balle. We wanted just to let you know that we are in the process of writing some google surveys to learn more about your feedback - these are planned both for our new catering company (this will take place after week 8, when two rotations of the new menu have been completed) and for home learning, where we are keen to seek your views. Coming soon!
- **Packed lunches.** A reminder please that if your child does have a packed lunch in Years 3 - 5 it is very important that this is healthy and nutritious, in line with all that is being achieved with our new lunch menus and caterers. We plan to publish some helpful and detailed guidance with our next newsletter, but please ensure that children are not provided with crisps or chocolate bars, and only water to drink please. We are excited about working in partnership between home and school with our lunch offer - it is already so much more of a community dining experience in our Larch hall.
- **Second-hand uniform.** There have been requests from parents to relaunch sales of second hand uniform. We are happy to do so! A big thank you to the PSA volunteers for organising this. Second hand uniform will be available to purchase, for Reception - Year 2 initially, in the Larch playground on Friday 16th October, from 3 - 3.45pm, across children's staggered collection points. Please remember the importance of social distancing when waiting to view and/or purchase stock. We are happy to run a second date for Years 3 - 5 - date to be confirmed soon!
- **Please see the letter below from Thames Water regarding roadworks on Mangrove Road.**

Simon Balle All-through school



Wishing you all the very best for the fortnight ahead.

*Best wishes,
Rachel Kirk (Vice Principal)*



Mangrove Road
Hertfordshire
SG13 8AJ

 Our ref:
0081 08PFLZ

 [thameswater.co.uk](https://www.thameswater.co.uk)

08003 169800

29 September 2020

Our works nearby.

We are carrying out some essential works in the Carriageway on Mangrove Road.

These are essential improvements to help repair a broken asset of ours and we will have to excavate the site.

What this means for you

So that we can complete these works safely, there will be a road closure and diversion route in place until the works have been completed. There will be parking restrictions in place and we ask that you do not park in the coned-off area for the full duration of works.

We have an agreement in place with the council to carry out these works

Our Works are due to commence 24/10/2020. We expect the duration to be 9 days

How long will this take?

Our works, including the reinstatement of the excavation will be complete by **1st November 2020**.

If for any reason the duration is prolonged, we will notify you via letter.

Find out more

If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with us on the details above.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works and thank you for your patience.

Yours sincerely

Chanel Jenkins

Works Planner