



Primary phase newsletter

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today

Friday 11th December 2020

All-through news

Dear families,

In our final newsletter of 2020, we wanted to begin by thanking you for your support for our community over recent months. In what has been such a challenging time for so many, we are incredibly grateful for the way in which parents have connected with us in school (our first virtual parents evenings and parent workshops), supported home learning (with more importance than ever) and supported our community from charity work to fundraising to all of the adaptations required at this time. There are lots of virtual events and recordings in which to engage in the next week so do look out on our social media pages and on the latest news of our website.

Simon Balle All-through School mini farm

We have been so delighted to receive such generous donations to support the launch of the mini farm at Simon Balle All-through school. At the time of writing, you have raised a wonderful £4,457.50 with only £42.50 left to raise! If you are able to contribute to help us over the final hurdle, please do click on this [link](#). We are pleased to let you know that work will commence over the Christmas holidays to prepare the area and fencing. Lots more to come between January and March with research required by the students to ensure we are truly ready to welcome animals to our community. We have had so many offers of help and expertise from across the all-through school; if your children or you are keen to get involved at this stage then please do email: kirkr@simonballe.herts.sch.uk. Thank you again!

All-through teaching and learning

We are proud that despite all that has been happening around us, our commitment to ensuring that we concentrate upon improving on and delivering the very best quality of education remains very strong. To this end, we had two external visits from 'Herts for Learning'; the school improvement company in Hertfordshire. We thought we would share with you some of the comments made by our consultants.

"The quality of education is very strong and leaders are ambitious, reflective, analytical and aspirational"

"The School's transition and induction arrangements at all stages and for both staff and students, were extremely thorough and impressive"

"The all through curriculum is truly ambitious"

And, specifically with our primary children:

"Pupil's attitudes and approaches to learning were consistently very strong. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. The attention to detail is indicative of teachers having high expectations for all children"

Developing the right curriculum for all children continues to be one of our main priorities.



Virtual carol service

Please take some time out over the Christmas break to watch our virtual Carol Service. We have tried to incorporate many of the traditional features of our church service and there is some wonderful singing, reflective readings and great seasonal music contributed by students across our all-through school.

All-through home learning survey

Mr Ian Finch (Assistant headteacher) and Mrs Rachel Kirk (Vice Principal) are undertaking an important review of home learning at Simon Balle All-through school.

Please find below a link to a google form which we would be most appreciative if you could complete for each of your children that attend Simon Balle, in any phase or key stage. As you open the form, you will see a summary of our vision. However, this will only be fulfilled with the strongest of partnerships between home and school. As we commence this all-through review, we would like to take this opportunity to seek your views. Please complete this by Monday 14th December 2020. <https://forms.gle/Au14LVtZpuspPRGGA>

Community and charity work

For the last 10 years we have traditionally held secret santa at the end of term involving up to 130 members of staff. This year we thought that in the current climate, it would be a good idea to give our energies, money, time and thoughts to a number of good causes instead. So far we have managed to raise over £1,500 which will be split between The Herts Young Homeless, Blood Cancer UK and the local charity Jedidiah which supports families in our school and many local ones in providing food parcels. We are also taking part for the first time in the national Christmas Jumper Day in aid of Save the Children. We will notify you of the total raised in due course.

This Christmas, Simon Balle All-through School Sixth Form has partnered with the Hertford & District Foodbank. They wanted to make sure that no one in our local community goes hungry this Christmas. Many of our Sixth Formers contributed and will help provide much needed food and essential items to families, children and those who are alone during these challenging times, by making sure they do not go hungry. Our footballers also gave of their time helping to deliver food parcels both locally and further afield.

Covid-19

If your child tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) at any point during the Christmas break, please notify us as soon as possible so we can complete the relevant tracking and tracing process with public health, if required, and notify any other children or staff who have been close contacts and who need to self-isolate.

During the holidays you should contact covid19@simonballe.herts.sch.uk – **this will only be monitored until Christmas Eve as after this point your child(ren) should not be a close contact of anyone at the school.** Please do not call the normal absence line as this will not be covered during the Christmas break.

Remember as soon as your child or any member of your household develops symptoms, they must start self-isolating immediately and book a test regardless of it being Christmas.

Main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal



If you are not sure whether symptoms suggest that they have COVID-19 or an everyday cough or cold, you can consult this online NHS symptom checker: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

Please do not send children back to nursery or school if any of the following:

- they have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- they, any members of your household, or any close contacts (including extended family or friends they have seen and bubbles at holiday activities and sports clubs) have tested positive for COVID-19
- they have not completed the full 14 day isolation period requested

Self-isolating is one of the most important things we can all do to help stop the spread of the virus and protect our loved ones and the vulnerable. You can read our helpful self-isolating guide at:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/selfisolatingguide

If you or your family are affected by COVID-19 and need support locally with things like shopping, getting medication or financial advice, visit: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus

Vacancies

We are currently looking to appoint a Director of Business and a Literacy Champion. You will find full details including the advert, job descriptions and person specifications on our website

<https://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/community/vacancies/>

With our very first cohort of primary children in Year 5, we will be recruiting our final cohort of staff for September 2021. Adverts for both teachers and teaching assistants will be published before February half term.

Primary news: teaching and learning

Christmas is a wonderful time of year for the primary phase! The children are so excited and we are taking every opportunity to create 'awe and wonder', to invite children to have fun and to link this to our learning too. Reception performed their Nativity play yesterday (Thursday), and it was just so professional! It is hard to summarise the children's engagement in words but from acting to learning words to singing to concentration to the knowledge of the Christmas story to just pure enjoyment, it is such an important part of our calendar. The video will be released very soon on our school website - we hope you will enjoy it just as much as we did!

We hope that parents from Reception-Year 5 will have heard that Father Christmas has written to each class in the Larch this week. Unfortunately he is having difficulty at the North Pole with his reindeers, elves and more. He has written to ask the help of the children in the Larch because he has seen on the Simon Balle website just how well our children understand values. I cannot possibly sum up in words the excitement that has been shown by classes as the letter from Father Christmas has arrived nor the various boxes that he has sent to ask for help. Children are busy engaging in all sorts of tasks - Reception need to make some more wrapping paper (the elves seem to have run out), Year 1 and 2 have already posted letters back to Santa with advice, Year 5 are getting ready to be journalists to share the reports of all that is occurring. I am confident that with the help of all Larch classes, Father Christmas will receive the advice he needs and we will be ready for our special Larch Christmas lunch on Wednesday 16th December. Please do support with home learning this weekend as I think we will need you to help too.

Over Christmas we would like to ask you to help with children's continually developing fine motor skills. All in the spirit of fun, please could you try to encourage children to engage in Christmas colouring and activities (for example, word searches); using their cutlery well at family meals; writing Christmas or thank you cards (at



whatever level is appropriate for them); building lego or any other skill that requires children to be focussed on small details. All will be both enjoyable for children and help us to prepare for January 2021! Thank you!

Other news

- This challenging time with Covid-19 restrictions has led us to creating as many **audio and video recordings** as we can - from choir to cello, the Reception nativity to Year 4 in the virtual Carol service and much more. The permissions that we hold from you for use of photographs become even more important, therefore. Where children, for reasons of safeguarding, cannot be in photos or videos on the website or social media, we respect this and commit to this, as always. However, many families have revised their permissions because they do not wish their child to be missed out of photographs or recordings. We respect parental choice, but in order to be manageable we do need to have a definite decision as to involvement in, or withdrawal from, photos and videos. We never link names to anything displayed. If your preference has changed, only for those not previously giving permission, and you wish your child to be included in such photographs and recordings, please email larch@simonballe.herts.sch.uk. We do encourage as many families as possible to provide this permission simply because it allows us to celebrate learning with you all!
- Our catering provider, **Accent catering**, are pleased to provide new four-week menus from January 2021. All allergen menus have already been circulated to those children affected but please find attached to this email the new main menu.
- The weather has certainly quickly become cold in the last week or so. For **PE**, please make sure your child has the clothes they need for outdoor PE. We encourage black jogging bottoms or leggings, a Simon Balle fleece and/or a long-sleeved T-shirt underlay under the house T shirt. We have also encouraged children to wear a coat on particularly cold days. Children should not wear tights under their PE kit and should, as always, wear only stud earrings. We continue to believe in the importance of physical health and wellbeing, hence our commitment to this within the curriculum. Please send any questions at all to your child's class teacher.
- We are so excited to see our **Explorers' provision**, for Years 3 -5 children, continue to thrive. Numbers are high for spring term activities and we continue to be committed to welcoming all! Just a reminder please that we cannot hold debt for Explorers as a school - we simply have no facility to be able to do so. Please contact finance@simonballe.herts.sch.uk with any questions or concerns.
- Well done to our Year 5 children for their depiction of '**Once in Royal David's City**' - do please visit this in the churchyard of All Saints Church.

Dates coming up

- Wednesday 16th December - Christmas lunch.
- Friday 18th December - End of term. This will be by a staggered end between 12pm and 12.30pm for the Larch (prior to lunch), as usual organised by surname.
- **Monday 4th January - INSET day. Term begins on Tuesday 5th January 2021.**

Coming soon in the spring term!

- From the start of term in the spring, we will be altering our **staggered ends to the day in the Larch**. Whilst the staggered starts to the day work really well (children engaging in next steps in marking, changing their reading books and more), and these will remain as they are at 8.30am - 9am, it is harder to make productive use of time at the end of the day, and possibly harder for parents to time their journeys. Can we please ask that pick-ups are now from 3 - 3.15pm, with surnames A - H at 3 - 3.05pm, I - P at 3.05 - 3.10pm and Q - Z at 3.10pm - 3.15pm. To ensure that this works well, please leave the school site



promptly with your child/ren and ensure that just one parent arrives to collect children. Year 5 children who will be travelling independently for the first time should arrive for school at 8.45am please and will be dismissed at 3.15pm.

- Reception children should look forward to library borrowing beginning! This will be from Monday 11th January and will be so exciting now that children know all about how our library works!

Governors and Senior Leaders would like to wish you a wonderful Christmas break (when it arrives!). We learned just recently that the word 'community' is from the Latin - 'com' - together and 'munus' - a gift. It seems apt to share this with you now - our very special Simon Balle community. Together we are stronger and we should appreciate this togetherness as a gift.

Please do stay safe, enjoy family time and we look forward to welcoming students back on Tuesday 5th January 2021.

Best wishes,

Mrs Alison Saunders (Headteacher) and Mrs Rachel Kirk (Vice Principal)

Menu Week 1	Monday Meat Free Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
The Main Event	Mild chick pea and cauliflower curry	Italian Lasagne	Roast chicken with sage and onion stuffing and pan gravy	Minced beef pie with shortcrust pastry	Cod fish fingers Tartare sauce and lemon wedges
Edgy Veg	Homemade pea & potato Samosa steamed Basmati rice, curry sauce	Vegan Beetroot and red onion Tart	Cream cheese, red onion and spinach pasta bake	Veggie lentil bolognese, penne pasta and parmesan	Vegan Chick pea and corn burger with a mango and lime salsa served with
Vegetables	Bombay vegetables Steamed broccoli	Sweetcorn Courgettes	Roasted carrots Cabbage	Cauliflower Green beans	Garden peas Baked beans
Carbs	Steamed basmati rice	Focaccia fingers	Roast potatoes	Creamy mashed potato	Baked oven chips
Something Sweet	Orchard crumble with custard	Eccles cake tray bake with cream	Butterscotch bread pudding with custard	Lemon & lime drizzle cake	Jam Roly Poly with custard

Menu Week 2	Monday Meat Free Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
The Main Event	Vegetable tacos, sour cream, grated cheese guacamole & salad	Spanish style chicken, chorizo and potato tray bake	Savoury minced beef and lemon and herb dumplings	Pork butchers sausages with gravy	Batter crisp Pollock fillet Tartare sauce and lemon wedges
Edgy Veg	Penne Pasta, courgette and mushroom Frittata	Vegan Puy lentil shepherd's pie with sweet potato	Tomato and mozzarella stonebaked pizza	Indian spiced vegetable filo strudel with mango chutney	Oven baked gnocchi with tomato, mozzarella & pesto served with garlic bread
Vegetables	Rainbow slaw Sweetcorn	Steamed broccoli Roasted carrots	roasted kale cauliflower	Courgettes Roasted tomatoes	Garden peas Baked beans
Carbs	Mexican tomato rice		New potatoes	Creamy mashed potato	Baked oven chips
Something Sweet	Apple and cinnamon pie with shortcrust pastry and custard	Banana cake with cream cheese frosting	Sticky toffee pudding with toffee sauce	Steamed chocolate chip pudding with chocolate sauce	Baked Banoffee cheesecake

Menu Week 3	Monday Meat Free Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
The Main Event	Bolognaise soy mince pasta bake with creamy cheddar topping	Slow cooked Jamaican jerk pork with sweet potato	Roast Norfolk turkey with apricot stuffing Cranberry sauce & gravy	Classic beef burger served in a sesame seed bun	Cod fish fingers Tartare sauce and lemon wedges jumbo fish finger bap
Edgy Veg	Vegan Tandoori cauliflower with taka dhal	Layered roasted vegetable, tomato Enchilada pie	Cherry tomato pesto & mozzarella puff pastry tart	Spanish omelette with potatoes, cheddar and peas	Chinese vegetable spring rolls with sweet chilli & coriander sauce
Vegetables	Broccoli Chefs mixed salad	Sweetcorn Courgettes	Curly kale Diced swede	Sweetcorn Green Beans	Garden peas Baked beans
Carbs	Garlic bread	coconut rice and peas	Thyme roast potatoes	Parmentier potatoes	Baked oven chips
Something Sweet	Nutless Bakewell tart with custard	Steamed strawberry jam sponge pudding	Italian tiramisu	Banana and chocolate crumble with custard	Lemon meringue pie

Menu Week 4	Monday Meat Free Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
The Main Event	Vegetarian mince chilli con carne, crushed nachos, sour cream	Roast potato, turkey, sausage & stuffing pie	Peri Peri marinated chicken thigh with lemon mayonnaise	Savoury sausage meat puff pastry Platt	Batter crisp Pollock fillet Tartare sauce and lemon wedges
Edgy Veg	Tomato , Basil and Cheddar Risotto with chef's salad	Macaroni, creamy cheese and leek crumble	Sweet potato Feta & spinach puff pastry pie	Vegan Moroccan vegetable and chick pea stew	Keema vegetable Pattie
Vegetables	Sweetcorn Courgettes	Roasted cauliflower Curly kale	Sticky honey carrots Broccoli	Coriander roasted tomatoes Green beans	Garden peas Baked beans
Carbs	Steamed rice	Creamy mashed potato	Cajun roasted new potatoes	Crushed potatoes	Oven baked chips
Something Sweet	Roasted pineapple and ginger cake	Blueberry mess	Lemon and poppy seed pudding	Cornflake tart and custard	Apple upside down cake with custard