

# Primary phase newsletter

*Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today*

**Friday 5th March 2021**

## **All-through news for all families at Simon Balle All-through School**

I can not believe that the last time we saw so many of you was on December 18th. Therefore, we are delighted that from Monday, we will once again welcome everyone back face to face. Everyone has done a wonderful job over the past weeks with online learning and limited on site provision, but I think we all know that school is where our children and young people are supposed to be in order to thrive. Working alongside others, to gain knowledge and understanding, share in the delight of learning and learn to live together well. This connection is imperative for all of us, and contributes to our overall happiness and wellbeing. Unfortunately it has taken this pandemic for us to recognise this.

As part of our school improvement programme, members of our Senior Leadership Team are working with an all through school in Bedford. Their Headteacher recently featured in their local BBC news when her message of hope was cited. Ruth Wilkes and I share the same passion that education changes children's lives and the understanding that so many of our young people have been remarkable during the past 12 months. Ruth challenged the media perception of a "lost generation"; a group of young people who have been impacted negatively. Now, whilst we all know that some families and young people have been adversely affected, we also have so many examples of young people who have shown great resilience, self regulation and independence. These same young people have come to a deep understanding of the fragility of our world, and they must keep reminding us adults of this. Young people who are highly motivated to want to make a difference to their societies. Rather than the lost generation, they are the "crucial or transformational generation"- for we desperately need their energy, ideas, knowledge and skills to rebuild and recover. The pandemic has emphasised various agendas that need to be addressed, particularly climate change, inequalities and the need to celebrate the worth of every person. Indeed, as an all through school, what a great privilege to be "creating tomorrow's citizens today" and so I am so looking forward to getting everyone back where they belong and are valued, within this special community.

Once again, thank you for all of the support you have given us during this lockdown period, which has meant such a lot to our staff. Whilst we would never claim to have got everything right, it's hugely motivating and encouraging when the families we serve notice the good things and cheer us on! Thank you to each and every person who has taken the time to mention something they've appreciated.

## **Simon Balle All through Governing Body**

As the school completes its cycle of growth, we have been looking at the membership of our Governing Body. We always welcome enquiries from parents or members of the community who would like to find out more about Governance and share their knowledge and skills in ensuring that the school continues to improve and offer the best educational experiences for all children. Being a school governor is a formal and legal position, and less about helping, volunteering or being a voice from a particular interest group. Some parents enjoy being part of the "PSA" as this offers greater social opportunities and the ability to share ideas.

However, we are eager to ensure that our Governing Body reflects our inclusive community and would be particularly interested to hear from those interested who work in local business or industry, work with young people in another setting, and have themselves had a different educational or cultural background. If you wish to talk about this more, do email [head@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:head@simonballe.herts.sch.uk).

### **New Director of Finance**

We are delighted to welcome Haydn Walsh to Simon Balle All-through School. Haydn is a highly experienced Financial Director, working mainly in the London boroughs. We wish him success and happiness in our community.

### **Simon Balle All-through School Mini Farm**

Work preparing for the opening of Simon Balle All-through School Mini Farm is increasing and excitement is mounting! We now have all our animals ready to join us - two rabbits (baby girls at just nine weeks who we are currently nurturing and getting used to being stroked and cuddled!); four guinea pigs (also babies, but this time boys, bred and donated by one of our Larch families); six chickens (all being rehomed and looking forward to their palatial enclosure!) and three tortoises (boys, being kindly given by a family in our secondary phase). Please see attached a photograph of each of them with this newsletter. We now enter the naming phase! If children in the Larch completed a special research project on an animal, please could they (or you) email Miss Maycock ([maycockg@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:maycockg@simonballe.herts.sch.uk)) with suggested names for the animals they researched. Miss Maycock will collate all suggestions and then voting will take place, with every child involved. Please send name suggestions by Monday March 15th. We are also delighted that 20 Year 9 farm leaders have been appointed and I look forward to meeting them next week and talking through their responsibilities. Risk assessments are now being finalised and an email was sent to all Larch parents this week in relation to any children with allergies.

And so, the **launch date** will be **Monday 12th April!** All details to follow but what a wonderful start to the summer term. A huge thank you is owed to so many people, including: Busy Lizzies for their generous donation contributing to the farm, Mr Tweed and his team who have worked so hard on site, all families who donated to the fundraising campaign and particularly those families who are supporting us with animals or resources or expert advice and guidance - thank you all.

If I may, two further requests:

- Is there a family or perhaps two parents (socially distanced) who could support us with some painting? We have the paint and all resources, but the storage shed, a seating area and handwashing station all need a coat or two of paint to look the part for the launch! (And to look after the wood of course). Please email me - [kirk@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:kirk@simonballe.herts.sch.uk) - if you can help.
- If your family would like to volunteer to be on the rota for looking after the farm at weekends and holidays, please complete the google form here: <https://forms.gle/pvpV2E54Xuu6zVBx5> More details to follow about responsibilities - this is just an initial expression of interest.

### **Student news- all through celebrations!**

We are delighted to learn that one of our sixth formers, Andrew Cousins has successfully gained an Army Scholarship. This is a year long application process that involves interviews, physical preparation, medical examinations and a school reference with the possibility of being chosen to go forward to the Army Office Scholarship Selection Board. He was put forward along with 200 other candidates out of 400 who applied. Due to Covid the selection board was compressed from the usual 3 days to 28 hours (including an overnight) at which he was tested both mentally and physically.

Andrew was one of 87 candidates to be awarded last year. This award provides him with the support of the Army through university (financial and training) and an entry into the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as a potential Officer deferred for 7 years. Well done Andrew. Some families will know Andrew as he is a dedicated musician playing the tuba in Big Band, Concert Band and the "Trad Band". In fact Simon Balle supported Andrew to play, whilst he was still at Wheatcroft primary school!

### Musicians

Josh Green has been offered a place on saxophone at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Natassja Smith and Fin Smith have been offered places at the Leeds Conservatoire.

I am sure that parents appreciate just how competitive it is when applying to these arts colleges, so a big well done as this shows great determination, commitment, resilience and hardwork.

### **Primary news**

Firstly, just to reiterate Mrs Saunders' thanks to all Larch parents, from me and on behalf of all of the primary staff. We do not under-estimate in any way the challenges of this period of home learning for parents and children. We know that our primary-aged children need an adult often when they learn - to help focus, to re-explain, to motivate and more. You have been so kind in the words and emails of gratitude to staff - thank you. We too wanted to thank you for all that you have done to support your children in their learning in these unusual times.

There is lots of practical information to share this fortnight in preparation for the return to school for all on Monday. More to follow about teaching and learning in our next newsletter.

- **World book week.** The students all across the Larch have been celebrating World Book Day this week and we have been blown away by the incredible photographs of the children dressed as their favourite book characters. Some have even made drawings and written about why they like that particular book or character. We have seen characters from the Harry Potter series, a Highway Rat, a Very Hungry Caterpillar and many characters from Roald Dahl stories to name a few. The children have also had access to online workshops where they can train at a Dragon School or attend lessons at Hogwarts. The staff have even got involved with a 'Masked Reader' competition where the children have had to guess who is behind the mask and reading a story. It has been a wonderful World Book Week at home and in school!
- **Staffing.** As Miss Emery will continue to work from home, Mrs Evans will now be in Reception full time with our Hedgehogs (and the rest of the Reception team, of course). In the areas of the school where Mrs Evans was previously teaching we are delighted that all teaching will continue to be our Simon Balle staff, who the children know well. Mrs Getley will be teaching an additional day for Year 5; Mrs Prendergast will be teaching an additional day for Year 3; Mr Leonard will be teaching PE for Years 1 and 2 (Year 2 on a Thursday and Year 1 on a Tuesday). A huge thank you to all!
- **Swimming.** We are delighted to share that Larch swimming will recommence from April 13th, on Tuesdays (the beginning of the summer term). In Summer 1, Years 2 and 3 will swim, and in Summer 2, Years 1 and 2 will swim. Miss Riddle has planned sessions to compensate as well as we can for missed swimming during lockdown periods, and to ensure that all year groups (Year 1 +) have swum this academic year. All details in relation to kit are the same as that sent out in December. Your children will need swimming trunks (boys) and swimming costumes (girls) - please ensure that these are designed for swimming rather than beachwear (ie the tighter style of trunks, not shorts, and costumes, not bikinis). Please bring a swimming hat if you have long hair (including boys where applicable). Please do bring goggles if you usually use these to swim, but children may be asked to take these off for certain activities. Girls - it is advisable to wear socks rather than tights on swimming days for ease of changing! Each half term is a six week block:

Summer 1: Tuesday 13th April - Tuesday 25th May (no swim on Tuesday 4th May as this is an INSET day)

Summer 2: Tuesday 8th June - Tuesday 13th July

- **Fruit.** Fruit will be provided from Monday 8th March for children in Reception - Year 2. For those families who have had children in school, please do not send them with any additional snacks from 8th March as the school fruit is sufficient. For children in Years 3 - 5, please send children with a healthy snack as always. Year 4 - please note that for the next three weeks lunchtime will be at the later time of 1pm (this is to help with staggering lunchtimes and to keep year group bubbles separate) - therefore your child may want to bring a more substantial morning snack (for example, breadsticks as well as a piece of fruit). As always, no chocolate or crisps or drinks other than water please.
- **School lunches.** From Monday 8th March, Accent, our catering company, are launching their spring menus that were previously sent in December. We will begin with week 1, and the menus are re-attached for your convenience.

### Other news and dates

- **Covid 19.** Please refer to all details sent in both primary and secondary letters in relation to the return to school. [Covid19@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:Covid19@simonballe.herts.sch.uk) remains the best email address for any Covid-related concerns. We thank you in anticipation of your continued vigilance and support as we re-open fully.
- Please note that the next **PSA meeting** will be held on Tuesday 9th March. All are welcome and a link will be circulated by the chair.
- **Baking continued!** We have been delighted to receive so many wonderful photographs of baking at home. All entries have received a house point! We move on and attach biscuit and cake weeks below - please add photographs to the google folder on the shared primary drive or email Year 7 entries to [owenl@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:owenl@simonballe.herts.sch.uk). A flyer is also attached for the 7<sup>th</sup> series of **Junior Bake Off**; a Channel 4 programme that celebrates the culinary talent and ambition of the younger generation in Britain - please see all details included on the flyer.
- **Term dates:**
  - Firstly, just to confirm that Friday 26th March is the final day of the spring term. School will end at the usual time.
  - Please note that our final **INSET date** for this year is now confirmed as Tuesday 4th May 2021.
- **Vacancies.** We are currently advertising a number of educational vacancies. These include a cover supervisor, teaching assistants, teachers (Science, RE) SENCO and Assistant Headteacher Inclusion. If we can, we take a flexible approach, so do email to discuss further if you would like further information. Additionally, if you would like to work at Simon Balle and there appears no vacancy to suit at the moment, do email us with your enquiry as from time to time, vacancies appear! For many years it has been difficult to recruit in Hertford and our most successful applications usually are from parental or family members, local residents or from word of mouth. Please do check our website.

*Wishing you a wonderful weekend and looking forward so much to welcoming the all-through school back next week.*

*Best wishes,*

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



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# LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF

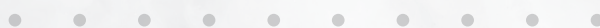
## BISCUITS

—  
LAST ENTRIES RECEIVED  
BY 5<sup>TH</sup> MAR



WEEKS COMMENCING 22<sup>ND</sup> FEB & 1<sup>ST</sup> MAR

# LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF



Welcome to the "Lockdown Bake Off 2021" Competition, why not spend some of your time improving your cooking skills and having some fun. Over the next 10 weeks, starting from 25th January 2021, Accent Catering will be providing you with recipes to try at home, including Bread, Pancakes (Pancake Day 16th February), Biscuits and Cake rounds and to top it all off there will be an opportunity to bake a Show Stopper in true "Bake Off" style.

Each round will run for two weeks giving you time to try these recipes and others you may have at home. Send in your photos of your baking to your School to be entered into the "Bake Off challenge".

Every two weeks entries will be judged by your School and Chef Manager on site and the winner of the round advertised on the School website.

At the end of the challenge we will take all of the "winners" entries and award a First and Second Prize of Bake Off Cookbooks.

## Please Remember

- Always wash your hands, before and during preparation. Make sure your equipment and area you are working in is clean
- Wear an apron if you have one
- You may be using mixers, knives and other equipment which can be dangerous so make sure you ask permission at home and are shown how to use each item
- You can make all of the recipes by hand, so don't be put off if you don't have a mixer
- Ovens will be hot so handling baking trays needs to be done with care. Ask an adult where appropriate to help, especially when removing your finished product from the oven
- ALLERGENS – as you will be using your own ingredients the allergens included in those products may change depending on where you bought them so ALWAYS check the packaging before cooking

So now you're ready to enter, gather your ingredients and let's BAKE!!



- 400g butter, unsalted
- 600g plain flour, sifted
- 200g icing sugar

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C and line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Place the room temperature unsalted butter and icing sugar in a mixing bowl with the beater, and mix for approx. 3 minutes, until smooth and pale.
3. Slowly mix in the sifted flour until the mixture becomes light and crumbly.
4. Remove the bowl from the mixer and with your hands, mix in the finely chopped stem ginger until the mixture comes together as a smooth dough.
5. Gently roll out the dough to a thickness of 10mm on a dusted work surface then using a 9cm round cutter or star cutter, cut out 10 discs or stars. You may need to re roll the trimmings of the dough to achieve this.
6. Place the discs or stars onto the lined baking sheet and cook in the oven at 150°C for approx. 20 minutes.
7. When cooked, remove from the oven and allow to cool.



Ten

## PLAIN SHORTBREAD



- 370ml jar strawberry jam
- For the biscuits:
  - 100g Stork
  - 175g caster sugar , plus extra for sprinkling
  - 1 large egg
  - 1tsp. vanilla paste
  - 200g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1. To make the biscuits, mix together the Stork and sugar in a bowl with a wooden spoon until well combined. Add the egg and vanilla, and continue to beat by hand until fully incorporated. You will need to scrape the edges of the bowl down for this part.
2. Tip the flour into the mixture and fold together until fully combined, then shape into a ball. Roll the dough

out onto a floured sheet of baking parchment to a depth of around 5mm. Transfer the sheet to a baking tray and put in the fridge for 10 mins to firm up.

3. Remove from the fridge and press out your biscuits using a 6cm cutter (you could use any shaped cutters to make these). You will need 16 base biscuits and 16 top biscuits with small holes of around 3cm cut out of them.
4. Recombine your dough off-cuts and reroll them on a floured surface. Try to be fairly quick doing this, as the mixture will warm up and get sticky. If it does, just pop it back in the fridge to firm up again.
5. Once the shapes are cut out, arrange on 2 baking sheets lined with baking parchment and leave to cool in the fridge for 10 mins.
6. Heat oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. Bake the biscuits for 7 mins, then take them out of the oven and sprinkle the tops with caster sugar. Return all the biscuits to the oven and cook for a further 5 mins. Take out and allow to cool fully on a wire rack. When cool, spread jam on the bottom biscuit and top with another biscuit, sandwiching them together. Will keep for 2-3 days in an airtight container.



Sixteen

## JAMMY DODGERS I



- 400g butter, unsalted
- 600g plain flour, sifted
- 200g icing sugar
- 150g cranberries, dried, chopped
- 2 oranges, zested

For the topping:

- 1 orange, juiced and zested
- 400g icing sugar, sifted
- 40g cranberries, dried, chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C and line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Place the room temperature unsalted butter and icing sugar in a mixing bowl with the beater, and mix for approx. 3 minutes until smooth and pale.
3. Slowly mix in the sifted flour until the mixture becomes light and crumbly.
4. Remove the bowl from the mixer and with your hands, mix in the diced cranberries and orange zest until the mixture comes together as a smooth dough.
5. Gently roll out the dough to a thickness of 10mm on a dusted work surface then using a 9cm round cutter or star cutter, cut out 10 discs or stars. You may need to re roll the trimmings of the dough to achieve this.
6. Place the discs or stars onto the lined baking sheet and cook in the oven at 150°C for approx. 20 minutes.
7. When cooked, remove from the oven and allow to cool.
8. In a bowl add the orange juice to the sifted icing sugar and mix with a spoon until a smooth fondant is achieved.
9. Dip each of the cooled shortbreads into the fondant, covering half the disc or star then place back onto the lined baking sheet and when all the shortbreads are dipped, sprinkle the diced cranberries and orange zest evenly over the fondant and allow to set before serving.



Ten

## CRANBERRY AND ORANGE SHORTBREAD

# LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF

BISCUITS

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# LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF

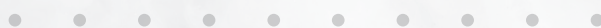
## CAKES

LAST ENTRIES RECEIVED  
BY 19<sup>TH</sup> MAR



WEEKS COMMENCING 8<sup>TH</sup> & 15<sup>TH</sup> MAR

# LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF



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- ALLERGENS – as you will be using your own ingredients the allergens included in those products may change depending on where you bought them so ALWAYS check the packaging before cooking

So now you're ready to enter, gather your ingredients and let's BAKE!!



If you want to turn your sponge into a classic Victoria Sandwich – bake two of the sponges and sandwich with jam of your choice and buttercream!

- 100g Stork
- 200g caster sugar
- 250g self raising flour
- 4 eggs
- 50ml semi-skimmed milk

1. Preheat an oven to 170t (350°F) gas mark 4. Lightly grease a 18cm (7") sponge tin.
2. Place the Stork, sugar and flour in a mixing bowl and whip until soft and fluffy. Gradually add the beaten egg and milk, a little at a time and whip to a fluffy light texture.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for 25-30 minutes or until cooked through. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool.
4. To serve cut into 16 or more portions.
5. Handy hint:  
Will keep in an airtight container for 3-4 days, or longer if refrigerated. To test if the cake is cooked insert a skewer, which should come out clean, into the centre.



Sixteen

## VICTORIA SPONGE



- 360g self raising flour
- 220g caster sugar
- 125g Stork
- 2 eggs
- 400ml semi-skimmed milk

1. Preheat an oven to 160°C. Melt the Stork and put to one side.
2. Sift the flour and sugar together into a large bowl.

3. Mix the melted Stork with milk. Whisk the eggs and add them to the Stork and milk mixture. Pour this into the dry mix and fold together to make a soft batter.
4. Pour the batter into 20 large muffin cases and bake for 20-25 minutes or until cooked.
5. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on a rack before serving.



Twenty



## PLAIN MUFFIN MIX



- 200g Stork
  - 350g caster sugar
  - 10ml vanilla essence
  - 4 eggs
  - 200g self raising flour
  - 200g cocoa powder
  - 50ml semi-skimmed milk
1. Pre-heat an oven to 160°C. Melt the Stork and set aside.
  2. In a bowl, mix together the melted Stork, sugar and vanilla essence. Beat in eggs and milk.
  3. Combine flour and cocoa powder and gradually stir into the egg mixture until well blended.
  4. Spread the batter evenly into the prepared pan.
  5. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the brownie begins to pull away from the edges of pan. Let it cool on a wire rack before cutting into squares to serve.



Twenty

## CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

# LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF

CAKES



# JUNIOR BAKE OFF

...IS LOOKING FOR THE UK'S  
BEST YOUNG BAKERS  
AGED 9 - 15

[WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK](http://WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK)

APPLICATIONS CLOSE  
SUNDAY 28TH MARCH 2021

Enquiries:  
[applyforjuniorbakeoff@loveproductions.co.uk](mailto:applyforjuniorbakeoff@loveproductions.co.uk)



## Arriva bus services and information

Route numbers that begin with an "S" are reserved for school, sixth form and college pupils only. Pupils from any year group and from any school or college located on the route can travel on these buses. If you need to travel on the same bus as pupils from another school, please sit with others from your own school, ideally from your own year group. Where possible we are asking you to maintain social distancing, although capacity on these buses will be increased allowing students to sit next to each other and standing if necessary. The seats behind the driver and any facing each other will be taped off and should not be used.

If your journey is a new additional bus, reduced capacity rules will apply, which are clearly marked out onboard, we have ensured there is plenty of capacity on these services.

Face coverings must be worn at all times by anyone over the age of 11, exemptions apply.

Route	School journey
<b>308</b> Thorley Park to Parsonage Estate via Bishop's Stortford	The following buses will run as <b>S308</b> :  0753 Thorley Park to Birchwood School 1515 Birchwood School to Thorley Park
<b>310</b> Hertford to Waltham Cross via Ware, Great Amwell, St Margarets, Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Wormley, Turnford and Cheshunt	The following uses will be renumbered <b>S310</b> :  0730 Waltham Cross to Hertford 0800 Waltham Cross to Hertford 0800 Hertford to Waltham Cross 0900 Waltham Cross to Turnford 1430 Hertford to Waltham Cross 1445 Waltham Cross to Hertford 1500 Hertford to Waltham Cross 1530 Hertford to Waltham Cross 1530 Waltham Cross to Hertford 1545 Hertford to Waltham Cross
<b>320</b> Hemel Hempstead to Rickmansworth and Berry Lane Estate via Garston, Watford, Croxley Green and Rickmansworth	The following buses will run as <b>S320</b> :  0730 Garston Parade to JFK School 1531 Rickmansworth Station to Watford Town Centre 1545 JFK School to Garston Parade
<b>321</b> Watford to Luton	The following additional buses will run reserved for school, sixth form and college pupils only:  0705 Luton Interchange to St. Albans St. Peter's Street 0731 Luton Interchange to St. Albans St. Peter's Street 1450 Watford Market Street to Luton Interchange 1524 St. Albans St. Peter's Street to Luton Interchange

**331** Hertford to Buntingford via  
Ware, Wadesmill, Standon and Puckeridge

The following buses will run as **S331**:

0735 Hertford to Buntingford Schools  
0724 Buntingford to Hertford  
1514 Buntingford Schools to Hertford  
1555 Hertford to Buntingford

The following additional buses will run open  
to anyone:

0724 Buntingford to Hertford  
1155 Hertford to Buntingford  
1250 Buntingford to Hertford  
1520 Buntingford to Hertford