

Primary phase newsletter

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today

Friday 19th March 2021

Primary news

Dear Larch Parents,

With only two weeks into the full return to school, we are delighted to be able to communicate to you that the Larch once again is such a vibrant community of friends and learners. We are just amazed by the way that your children have adapted with such ease and there are so many highlights to share with you all. 100% of families have returned to school and attendance at the end of week one in the Larch was 99.6% - thank you for your trust in us in relation to all Covid safety mitigation measures which continue to be a huge part of what we do every day.

Teaching and learning

Staff have been busy and delighted to read with each and every child in the Larch. As well as all of their normal observations and support in relation to where children are in their learning, we have focussed particularly on ensuring that each child is reading the right books for them - to support and to challenge, to focus on fiction and non-fiction, to match to their knowledge of phonics and to support them to be fluent readers, to ensure that they understand and most importantly to love their reading! Can we please remind parents of the great importance of reading with children every single day, to record this in children's reading records and to ask staff with any questions that you have. We have changed lots of reading levels in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 especially, and this next stage of children's learning relies so much on our important partnership between school and home - thank you!

As I visited lessons yesterday morning, there was so much that was exciting to share with you all! Reception children were busy practising their letter formation - the letter 'n'. Children were showing great care with their cursive writing, and staff were helping with precise support for each letter. If parents could support with practise of this we would be most grateful - each letter needs to be within the lines of children's books, and children do need to practise quite a few to be precise! Please refer to the cursive letter formation guidance sheet. As I visited Year 1 they were ready to show me their subtraction. I was pleased to see how children were using a number line to jump backwards, and they were ready too with 'Big Maths' to practise remembering subtraction calculations to 10 within the time of the music played! Lots of year groups have been enjoying their English learning this fortnight connected to a wonderful text - Farmer Duck for Year 1 (please ask how Farmer Duck is feeling and why), Rapunzel for Year 2 (please ask children how to change from the third person to the first person) and Escape from Pompeii for Year 3 (please ask how they have been describing settings with excellent vocabulary). As well as Rapunzel, I visited Year 2 in their PE learning with Mr Leonard: there was so much to see in the hall, from agility ladders to mini hurdles, to mini slaloms to races to lots of fun and fitness! I was interested to visit Year 3 when they were reading as a whole class - they had 60 seconds to read (it is so important to develop speed) and to then summarise their reading about the longest marriage of a British monarch. Year 4 were ready to persuade me as I arrived in their room - many children with opposite viewpoints! Should monkeys be used to pick tea? All linked to their text 'Cloud tea monkeys' children were able to convince me of their reasoning in both directions! I was pleased to pass the music room too, and it is so wonderful to see instrumental lessons back in person. At the time of my visit, a Year 4 child was preparing for his cello Bronze medal - what a delight to hear a duet with his teacher! We will be welcoming you back to ensembles soon Larch musicians - well done for all of your practice! And, last but not least, I was delighted to see the challenge of Year 5 mathematics when I visited - great percentage problems to make all think! A small group of our Year 5 mathematicians are also preparing for a

Simon Balle All-through school

Hertfordshire competition - good luck and well done to them! A final tip comes from Mrs Lunn with French in Year 5 - children were enjoying a web-based programme called Word Wall in which they can practise all the French vocabulary they have learned so far - please join at home on:

<https://wordwall.net/resource/10667664/les-num%C3%A9ros-1-30> (numbers 1 - 30)

<https://wordwall.net/resource/10400868/french/year-6-les-mois-de-l'ann%C3%A9e> (months of the year)

<https://wordwall.net/resource/3158616/les-jours-de-la-semaine> (days of the week)

Learning for Life- Health and Relationship Education

As part of the Department for Education (DfE) statutory changes in September 2020, it was stated that all primary schools are required to teach Health and Relationships education. At Simon Balle this comes as part of our Learning for Life curriculum. Our aim is to help the children understand the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, alongside providing the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing.

During the summer term, Key Stage 2 will be focusing on Health Education. As part of this, both Year 4 and Year 5 will be partaking in lessons surrounding puberty and the consequent changes that take place in our bodies. Year 5 will be focusing on this after Easter, and Year 4, in the final half term. Teachers will ensure that information and materials used are age appropriate and suitable for the purpose of the learning. While the children will be in single sex groups for the lessons, a decision taken to make them feel greater comfort and ease to ask potentially more sensitive questions, we think it important that they still learn about the changes that occur in the opposite sex's body. As a further tool to ensure that children are able to ask any questions they may have, a box will be placed in each year group to enable pupils to write down any questions they perhaps do not want to ask in class, anonymously. If you have any questions regarding our Health Education, or any other aspects of our Learning for Life curriculum, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me at pearces@simonballe.herts.sch.uk.

Sophie Pearce, Learning for Life primary subject champion

News from Miss Boyce, as Phase 3 leader and part of our all-through staff Eco-team

Year 6 Chromebooks:

After Easter we will be sharing a letter to Year 5 parents with information about our All-through Chromebook Scheme. The online portal will open so that Chromebooks can be purchased. The letter will inform the upfront cost, finance options and detailed relevant information about the Chromebook, including how it will be used in lessons and to support home learning. We have sourced a Lenovo Chromebook that is more cost effective than the current Year 7 Chromebook and will include license, warranty and insurance. The new Chromebook device will be used by *all* Year 6 and 7 students from September, and has been offered to Year 9 students to support with their GCSEs.

Year 6 Student Leaders:

Over the last few weeks we have had many fantastic applications from our Year 5 students applying for Sports Ambassadors, Music Ambassadors and Eco Committee Leaders. After Easter we will release Digital Leader and Larch Librarian applications. We will announce too the names of who has been successful in these roles before May half term.

The application process for Larch Head Boy and Girl, and their deputies, will start after May half term and the Year 13 Head Boy and Girl will be involved in the process - more information to follow nearer the time!

As we have had so many applications for each role we cannot choose everyone, so some children may feel disappointed if they don't 'achieve' a named role. However, there will be 'leadership for all' opportunities to follow. For example, on Wednesday 30th June, every student in Year 5 will be trained as sports leaders to give them vital life skills to support them in different areas of their lives, and give them the opportunity to support and run activities for their younger peers during active play and lunchtimes.

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Eco-Schools Bronze Award:

Thanks to the brilliant efforts of our secondary Eco Club and Lucia, Rebecca and Josie in Year 13, Simon Balle All-through School has recently been able to regain the Eco-Schools Bronze Award status! We hope to achieve Silver very soon. If you have any suggestions of more we can do for the environment at school, please email Miss Boyce: boycek@simonballe.herts.sch.uk



Katie Boyce, Phase 3 leader

Simon Balle All-through School Mini Farm

There is so much happening in preparation that I cannot possibly summarise all here! We have received so many emails or messages of support - thank you! One wonderful family are hoping for a dry weekend this weekend for painting (as am I)! Mr Tweed and his team continue to be busy for which we are so grateful. Mr Pooley and I will meet with Year 9 farm leaders again next week. Also next week, we are taking a small group of Year 4 children out shopping- time to plan for the hay, straw, food, toys and more! But, perhaps the news you have most been waiting for - the animal names! Please see attached a picture of the animals and their names, all nominated and voted for by children in the Larch this week. We will keep you posted in relation to the grand launch on Monday 12th April 2021!

School lunches

Thank you to all children (and families) for your patience, as it has been tricky for us to adjust to year group bubbles with our Covid restrictions in place (yet, these restrictions have been, of course, very important for the safety of all). Year 5 have been especially patient with timings. That said, the quality of food has been really excellent and we are so pleased that children have been enjoying and trying such a wide range of foods. The salad bar has been so popular with all, and the items on the salad bar (all allergen-free) have changed every day, from cucumber and carrot sticks, to a range of leaves and seeds, to beetroot and home-made coleslaw, to pineapple and more. Our youngest children have really impressed us with their healthy choices, and this week in particular children really enjoyed meat-free Monday: vegetarian tacos, rainbow slaw and more! Popular food has continued to include roast meats, pizza, sausages (with a much improved quality of meat), lasagne; and also lots of vegetarian options, including lentil shepherds pie, vegetarian pasta bake, and a good range of vegetables each day to suit all tastes. We know that we always need to seek the feedback of all - surveys to follow for children and parents in the summer term.

Other news and dates

- **Covid 19.** A reminder to all of the letter from Director of Public Health in Hertfordshire, Jim McManus, which was emailed to all Larch parents last week (on 12th March). This letter contains much important information, but, in particular, it contains details of how parents can pick up home testing kits. Lateral flow tests can be completed at home for parents, twice weekly, which will be an important part of us all working together to keep our whole community safe. 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 all know that this combined social responsibility is crucial for continuing to keep all families and staff safe.
- **The PSA Quiz.** Easter Eggheads Quiz Night - Thursday 25 March 2021. The PSA invites you to an egg-citing FUNdraising event for all the family! Your quizmasters Mr Finch and Mr Pooley - Simon Balle's

Simon Balle All-through school

very own Ant and Dec! – have a cracking evening lined up for you. All you need to do is choose your team name and get your £10 family ticket via ParentPay from Monday 15 March. Then grab your snacks and refreshments and settle in for a most egg-cellent evening! 6.30 pm start. Look out for joining instructions and the picture round beforehand – remember to include an email address and your team name when you purchase your ticket. Thanks to all who are contributing to our community in every way!

- **Road safety.** We are aware that some of our parents are still insisting on driving children to school despite our emphasis on the importance of walking. Some of these same parents, I am afraid, whilst obviously wanting an “outstanding school” for their children frankly do not support or model our school’s values of respect, kindness and social responsibility. We have heard reports of cars not stopping when a younger child is waiting to cross the road. We want to encourage our Year 5 to walk to school independently and this is part of our planned transition to secondary school. Therefore we need members of the community to be considerate and kind, supporting this. As you will know, we have taken the decision to now close the White Lodge car park, and we have been overwhelmed by your verbal messages and emails to support this decision - thank you. Our vision is one in which all in our community are connected by a desire to ensure that all are safe, and indeed in which children’s physical wellbeing is supported by a walk each day (whether this be part of the way or all the way from home). Please do speak to Mrs Harding if you need a parking permit for the car park by the fire station. All of this will mean that disabled badge holders and those families who really do need a space to park can access this on site too. Thank you.
- **Baking continued.** We have been delighted to see so many photographs of wonderful baking at home. Attached are the last two challenges from Accent - a cake week, and an invitation to focus on the showstopper week in the Easter holidays! Please send photographs our way!
- **Term dates - a reminder:**
 - 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.
- **Dates for the summer term.** There are lots more dates to follow, but we are now excited to plan the enrichment of our curriculum into the summer. Here are a few highlights:
 - Friday 16th April - Reception places announced. Miss Emery will be ‘meeting’ parents 1:1 in the weeks beginning 3rd and 10th May.
 - Art / design technology week - week beginning 5th July (across the Larch)
 - Sports’ week - week beginning 12th July
 - Parents’ week - week beginning 5th July.

Wishing you a wonderful weekend, an excellent week at school next week and we hope that you are all looking forward to an Easter break and then an exciting summer term beyond!

Best wishes,

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

Simon Balle All-through School Mini Farm Animals



Cookie



Oreo



Dobby



Shadow



Chewy



Chirpa



Flash



Turbo



Zippy



<i>Honey (brown one)</i>	<i>Shelly (white one)</i>	<i>Edna (black one)</i>	<i>Yolki (picture to follow)</i>	<i>Popcorn (picture to follow)</i>
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LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF

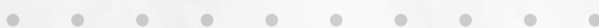
CAKES

LAST ENTRIES RECEIVED
BY 19TH MAR



WEEKS COMMENCING 8TH & 15TH 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!!



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

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LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF

SHOW STOPPER

WHAT'S YOUR BEST RECIPE? GET CREATIVE!
LAST ENTRIES RECEIVED BY 2ND APR



WEEKS COMMENCING 22ND & 29TH MAR

LOCKDOWN BAKE OFF

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