

Primary phase newsletter

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today

Friday 8th October 2021

All-through news

Dear Families

Thank you so much for the great support we are seeing daily at every stage of our childrens' learning. Firstly I must comment upon the wonderful **Harvest Event** earlier this week at All Saints Church. I was visibly "moved" when standing at the front and seeing over 350 eager faces (Years 1-6); to be back celebrating events together and also the realisation that the vision of an all through school, back in 2014, was now a reality. Thank you to parents for their generous gifts of groceries which will be gratefully received by Hertford Food Bank. The annual **Fun Run** whilst spread over the entire day was equally a joyful community event (please read more about this below). Thank you too for your support and contribution to the **equalities survey**; Mr Moss has included some of the key points from this, in this newsletter.

Like all secondary schools, we have been hosting events to support Y7 transition. We have chosen to put on a weekly "Open Event" each Wednesday after school, showcasing some of our exciting enrichment activities which Y6-8 participate in. As usual it is our own students (mostly from KS3) who have truly impressed our visitors. Taking them around the school, confidently explaining our values and ethos and generally being fantastic ambassadors for the school community, we are so proud of how they performed- all 45 of them! They spoke well of their learning, the high aspirations held by all and their enthusiasm for their school. With over 350 families visiting during these Wednesday slots, it has been a huge but rewarding set of events.

Obviously, this year we are incredibly excited by the fact that over 60 of our own Year 6 students will be joining 120 other local children. Indeed, we have held separate tours for them earlier in the month and we have a detailed transition programme in place.

Speeches will be online from October 13th.

We are now planning for our **Sixth Form Open Evening**, which we hope to run face to face, as numbers are much smaller. For those in year 11 and our neighbours or friends, the date is Wednesday 24 November. Our tours of the Larch, for the **new intake of reception children (2022)** are being planned, and will be scheduled for: Thursday 18th November, Monday 22 November and Wednesday 8 December. Please see further details on our website.

Fun Run 2021

It was amazing to see the all-through school come together for our Fun Run last Tuesday. We were so proud of the enthusiasm, determination and community spirit that all students from Reception to Year 13 demonstrated. There were so many highlights throughout the day, with some impressive hero fancy dress outfits that included NHS workers, superheroes and even a group dressed up as heroes chocolates! One of the stand out moments was watching and hearing the support that students gave each other as they started and finished, with a special mention to the Reception to Year 4 session in the morning and also to the students in Y7 and 8 that once finished, decided to hand water out to other finishers. A special thank you to the PSA for their support on the day and also providing the water for the event.

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So far we have raised an incredible £9000 and we thank you so much for your generosity and support. For a number of years now, we have been promoting wellbeing through the 10 keys to happiness and this year more so than ever, wellbeing of both students, staff and our families is of utmost importance. We are pleased to announce that with some of the monies raised, we are buying into a corporate wellbeing initiative and app, that we know will reach and support so many of you. More details about this will follow this term. Other projects across all phases of the school are also being planned and we will update you on these.

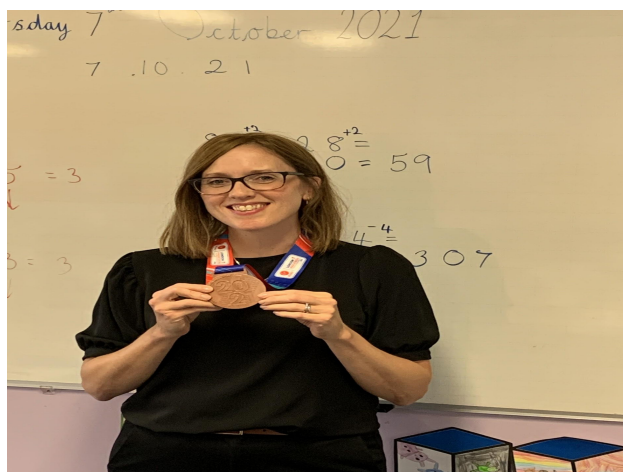
Throughout the day there were also elite races, where students could challenge themselves and run the 3K course and receive a time. Below are the winners of each year group:

Year 2 Max & Sophia	Year 3 Orsen & Marnie	Year 4 Harry & Grace
Year 5 Leo & Lola	Year 6 Jack & Sofia	Year 7 Phoenix & Katie
Year 8 Tom & Aniela	Year 9-13 Kayden	Year 9-13 Emelia
Staff Mr Welch		

Thank you again for all your support in one of our biggest school fundraisers.

Proud - Marathon Runners from the Simon Balle Community

The London marathon is such an inspiring event and we are so proud of the staff who either completed it in London or virtually last Sunday. Well done to Mrs Hawkins, Miss Ahmet and Miss Davison.



Walking bus

We were aware of the exercise and environmental benefits of the walking bus but it has been great to see the enjoyment in the children walking on the bus! Huge thanks for the leadership behind this important initiative Jo, the "drivers" Emese, Hazel, and Tracey without whose belief and involvement this would not be possible. Thanks also to the sixth formers Lucy, Willow, Yazmin, Toby, Callum and Michael...
... and the wider community who have volunteered and made a commitment to help us get off of the ground - the definition of a community effort!!

If primary parents would like to register their child/ren with the walking bus please email simonballewalkingbus@gmail.com.

We are looking for volunteers, particularly on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, so please let us know (email address above) if you can help out on these days.

One happy parent sent the following text for us to share:

Simon Balle All-through school

'A heartfelt thanks to Jo and the Larch Bus drivers and 6th form team, for setting up and leading the Walking Bus. The safety of my daughters has been at the forefront and they have enjoyed the company of you all and the other children, as well as getting daily morning exercise walking up to school. A huge thanks for supporting our family and for your care.'

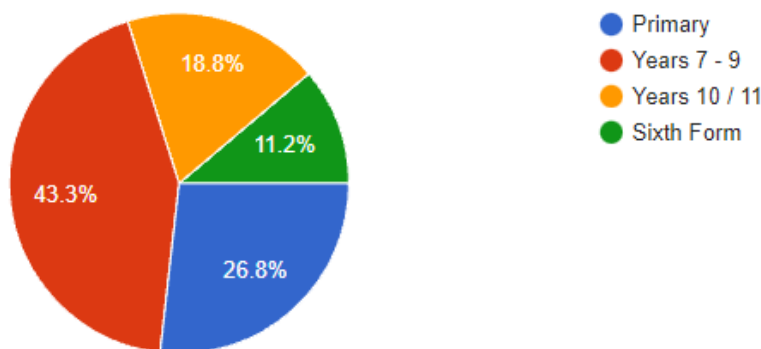
Equality

Mike Moss, Rachel Kirk and Alison Saunders are all working on reviewing our Equalities policy and plans. As part of this, a survey was sent to parents across our all-through school and we were delighted to receive 224 responses.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our request under the Equality Act for their views on key areas requiring our focus. As you can see below we had a great number of responses across all key phases of our All-through School. Parents have now identified the three key principle areas we are to focus upon and we are now analysing the free text to refine these targets. To complement this work we are also looking to achieve the Equalities and Diversity Charter Mark and the Inclusion Quality Mark. These organisations help give us structure, provide advice, resources and external scrutiny to ensure that Simon Balle All-through school is as inclusive as it can possibly be. At this point, we hope that you find the statistics below informative.

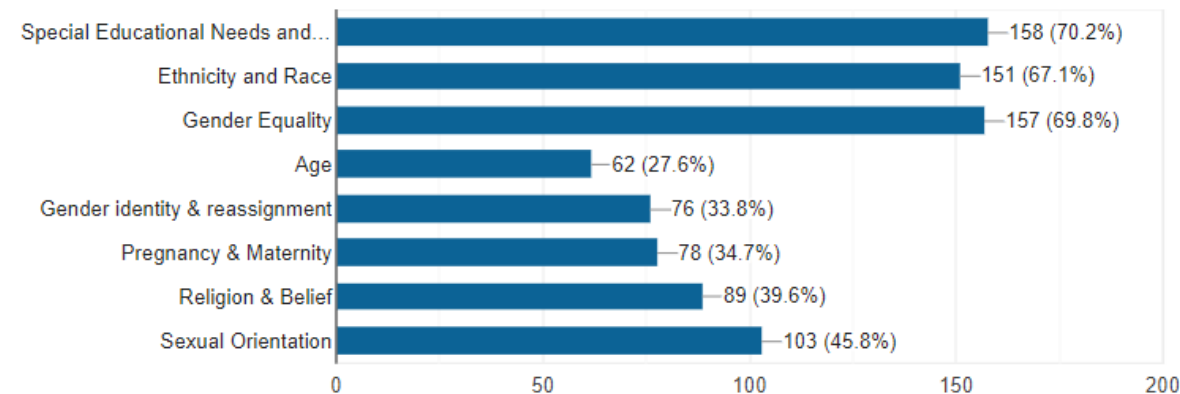
What phase is your child in?

224 responses



What are the principal area/s that you would like us to educate your son/daughter over the next academic year at an age appropriate level?

225 responses



This important information, along with the very helpful comments, will now guide and direct us in shaping our next steps at every stage. The final policy and plans will be submitted to the Governing Body in December, equally informed by our student voice.

Simon Balle All-through school

Music

Music Hall of Fame

In 18th place this year in our Hall of Fame is... Nimrod from the Enigma Variations; Composer: Edward Elgar

17th place in our Hall of Fame is... 'Jupiter the bringer of Jollity' from The Planets; Composer: Gustav Holst

Don't forget you can listen to the 100 Hall of Fame pieces on our Spotify playlist here:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/39aeNJ0J2bkGeVJYuF4Wrp?si=e5e04aee022240af>

School Parliament

We are so pleased to announce that our School Parliament has been re-launched after 18 months of inactivity during Covid, when different year groups could not mix and work together. We now have our form and sports captains elected and our year councils are meeting to discuss issues and ideas. In addition to these groups, we have three focus working parties and these reflect our school priorities: diversity, environmental issues and literacy. The School Parliament will be run by our Senior Student Leaders and will have representation from every year group, including the Head Boy and Girl from Year 6 and voted representatives too from Year 5. The Year 5 and 6 leaders will then in turn lead our Larch parliament for Years 2 - 6. We know that our students have so many wonderful ideas and are so eager to make a difference both in school and to the wider community. This is another example of our vision of "creating tomorrow's citizens today".

PSA (Parent Staff Association)

A reminder that the annual general meeting will take place on Thursday October 14th, in school. More details to follow.

Primary news

Teaching and learning

As primary leaders we have been delighted to see so many children for wonderful learning over the last fortnight. From newspaper articles about an invasion of frogs in Year 5 (based on the wonderful picture book 'Tuesday', one of our literary canon texts), to excellent home learning completed by Year 3 all linked to our current value 'responsibility', to some wonderful extended pieces of writing produced by Year 2. We are always pleased to celebrate with children for showing ambition in their learning.

Sports

Year 3 and 4 Development days

Following on from the letter sent out last week about sporting fixtures and events (KS2 only) we wanted to let you know that Year 4 will be taking part in their development day on Friday 12th November in the morning and Year 3 will be taking part in theirs on Monday 15th November in the afternoon. These will take place at Wodson Park and the children will have the opportunity to take part in activities focusing on agility, balance, coordination, orienteering and game skills. The children will need to make sure that they have their water bottle, coat, a snack and their full PE kit on these days. We will make sure that the children have their lunch before or after the event. We have arranged for the children to attend the events by coach so please do speak to us if you have any questions.

Sporting achievements

We are delighted to let you know that Harry Harris has been signed for Cambridge United Academy. This is an excellent achievement that has taken a great deal of sacrifice and hard work and we would like to congratulate Harry on his achievements.

Parent workshops

We have been delighted with parental attendance at the live and virtual workshops held so far this term. Thank you to you all for your engagement in your children's learning - we know that it is the partnership between home and school that is so crucial in supporting every aspect of your children's wellbeing and learning. A particular thank you to Reception parents who we have been delighted to welcome virtually and in person with our focus on phonics, reading and Tapestry.

Upcoming events are:

- Tuesday 2nd November, 6.30pm. **Year 5 parents** in relation to Summer 2022 residential trip. Please could 1 parent attend from each family in order to ensure appropriate distancing in the Larch hall. Both Wildchild staff (<https://www.wildchildadventure.com/activity-centre-hertfordshire/>) and Simon Balle staff will be presenting and responding to any questions at all raised. We know that this residential trip will be a wonderfully enriching experience for all.
- Monday 8th November, 2pm. **Parents with children in Years 3 - 6** are invited to learn more about **Google Classroom**. This is a live workshop, for which a booking sheet will be sent out next week. Content will be completely practical - for example, how to access and submit homework. Miss Ridley is leading and is happy to help with all queries! We anticipate this will be more useful for parents in Years 3 - 4 (as many Year 5 and Year 6 are already experts!).
- Tuesday 30th November, 9am. **Year 1 parents** are welcome to join us live with a workshop that will focus on phonics and reading. We will be sharing the expectations of Year 1 and focussing on lots of practical ways to make phonics and reading learning fun at home and in school.

Advance notice of the following workshops:

- Monday 10th January, 6pm. **Year 6: SATS**, logistics and expectations (this could be a blend of in person and virtual - more information to follow).
- Monday 17th January, 5pm. **Year 3 and 4 focus on mathematics** (calculation strategies, including multiplication tables) - a virtual workshop (through google meet) with lots of information and top tips to share!
- Thursday 3rd February, 9am. **Year 2 - learning across the curriculum**. Live meeting in school.

Dates

Tuesday 12th Oct	Primary influenza nasal vaccine
25th to 29th Oct	HALF TERM
11th Nov	Remembrance ceremony in school
Thursday 18th Nov	Larch open evening for Reception places 2022
Monday 22nd Nov	Larch open evening for Reception places 2022
Friday 26th Nov	Occasional day 1 - school closed
Monday 29th Nov	Occasional day 2 - school closed
Wednesday 8th Dec	Larch open evening for Reception places 2022
Wednesday 15th Dec	Larch Christmas Lunch (Reception - Year 6)
Thursday 16th Dec	Year 1 theatre trip - Under the Frozen Moon (Southern Maltings in Ware)

Simon Balle All-through school

Details of the school carol services will be sent out soon

Friday 17th Dec

End of term - early finish

Wednesday 5th Jan

Start of spring term

Wishing you all an exciting and fulfilling fortnight ahead!

Best wishes,

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