

Primary phase newsletter

Friday 30th June 2023

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today



All-through news

This newsletter marks the end of June, with only 3 weeks left of this academic year. The external exam season is now over and we are extremely proud of our Y11, Y13 and Y6 and the efforts and resilience we have seen. A big thank you too to the examination team, including our educational support staff across the all-through, who have worked tirelessly in ensuring that the organisation runs smoothly. At this point we want to wish those staff who are leaving our Simon Balle Community this summer our very best wishes; happiness and good health with all future plans. Thankyou to:

Laura Cooke (Head of English- returning part time)
David Brincombe (English)
Jackie Moss (Maths)
Phil Whitby (Maths)
Dianne Mahoney (Maths)
Gareth Jones (Science)
Rebecca Gorman (Intervention)
Emily Garrett (Intervention)
Kim Wallace (Drama/English)
Fiona Johnston (Head of Art)
Rachel Soutall (Primary)
Louise Dunn (Primary)
Adam Quirke (Assistant Head)
Yvonne Clarkson (Educational Support)
George Cozzi (Larch)
Quinn Pettingell (PE Apprentice)

New staff will be introduced to students and families in a future newsletter.

We continue to look ahead into our busy schedules and welcome seeing you at so many events in the next few weeks. Personally, please take the time to seek me out at these events as I want to thank as many as possible families for their great commitment to our very special school, which for some has been over many years. I shall of course miss you all so very much.

Last night was one of contrasts- Y13 music diplomas (Wow- musicians playing at university level!), a Year 2 and 3 strings concert (plus choir) and then the Y13 prom. At each, I was so touched by the thank yous from the children and young people and their sheer enjoyment of being part of the community. Our school's values shone through.

Next week we are holding our annual "Awards" evening, by invitation only, celebrating academic success, followed swiftly by the Saffron Hall musical extravaganza. The following week we are holding a very special sports presentation evening, a great celebration for so many students.

We are welcoming new families during this coming month- sixth form induction yesterday and today; Y7 and reception.

And tomorrow is the summer fair. Do come along!

Vacancies

We continue to want to hear from you if you are interested in working in our Simon Balle All through community. Whilst we currently have a single vacancy (see our website - Headteachers' PA <https://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/community/vacancies/>) we are always looking for the right people to work here.

Music news

June has been a busy month for students. From Year 8 Minimalism, with some brilliant examples from Nitika, Heidi, Bella & Grace, to so many concerts, Piano Recitals, Singing Evenings and a Rock Gig!

Have a read here -

<https://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/musical-news-june-2023>

Dates for the Diary

WHOLE SCHOOL	
Saturday 1st July	Slice of Summer
Monday 3rd July	Inset Day
Sunday 9th July	Saffron Hall, 5pm
Monday 10th July	Stevensons 'Pop Up' Shop, 3pm to 8pm
Thursday 13th July	Year 6 into Year 7 Transition Day
Monday 4th September	This is now an INSET day
Tuesday 5th September	All Students Return to School
Monday 11th September	PSA Meeting, 7.30pm
Saturday 23rd September	Open Morning
Saturday 30th September	PSA Quiz with a Twist Night from 7pm
SECONDARY	
Monday 3rd July - Friday 7th July	Y12 Work Experience Week
Monday 10th July	Y8 Celebration Evening, 4.30pm - 5.30pm
Tuesday 11th July	Y8 Colchester Zoo Trip
Thursday 13th July - Monday 17th July	Music Tour
Monday 17th July - Thursday 20th July	Y8 French Trip
Tuesday 18th - Thursday 20th	DoFE Silver and Bronze Expeditions
PRIMARY	
Thursday 6th July	Larch Sports Day
Tuesday 11th July	Year 1 Shuttleworth Trip
Thursday 13th July	Larch Celebration of Learning Straight after school
Tuesday 18th July	Year 2 celebration assembly- 2.30pm, Larch Hall
Wednesday 19th July	Year 6 Graduation Party, 3.15-5pm (children only)
Friday 21st July	Year 6 Final Assembly, 9am (parents/carers invited). Y6 will leave from approx 11.45am

PSA news

Slice of Summer - Win a Family Weekend Pass to Standon Calling!

We look forward to seeing you at our summer fair tomorrow. With a chance to win a Family Weekend Pass to Standon Calling, a 24" Piranha Frenzy bike and a metal AirUp, there are lots of desirable prizes to be won.

Our barbecue (vegan and gluten free options available) and licensed bar are always a crowd pleaser. We have slush and candyfloss, an ice cream van, a variety of games, preloved primary and secondary uniform and free preloved books. You will also find three inflatables, including a slide and obstacle course, face painting, performances from the Larch Choirs, and a super selection of external stallholders selling a variety of goods. It is a jam packed afternoon, please do come and support us, **entry point next to the music block.**

Raffle tickets can still be returned or purchased at the Slice of Summer.

Simon Balle All-through School PSA	
Ensure contract details are written on EVERY ticket purchased.	Adult's Name: _____
	Class/Form: _____
	Contact Number: _____
All counterfoils, monies and unwanted tickets to be returned by 16th June 2023	

Simon Balle All-through School PSA Registered Charity Number: 107561	
Summer Raffle	
ChiBo bracelet from Chapter 79 Hertford. Cath Kidston Bluetooth radio from Albany Radio. £50 Proove Voucher. 2 x £40 Vouchers for Dinnio. Bottle of Champagne from M&S. TeamSport Karting Harlow - 1 ticket for 1/2 hour karting. £20 Voucher for Hertford Coffee Lab. Tickets for 2 people to visit Willows Farm. Cut & Blowdry at Maxin Porcaro in Hertford. 2 day family river pass from Thames River Sightseeing. 3 months free membership at Anytime Fitness. Li-ion Cordless Drill from Wickes. Gulliver's entrance for 2. PLUS MANY more!	
Draw to take place at the Slice of Summer - Saturday 1st July 2023	
Promoter: Simon Balle PSA, Mangrove Road, Hertford, SG13 8AJ. Registered under the Gambling ACT 2005 with EHDC.	
Tickets £1 each	

Quiz with a Twist - 30th September

Our fabulous Quiz Master is back with a brand new 'Quiz with a Twist!' Expect 8 rounds of brain-crunching questions, with intervals of hilarious games to get everyone out of their seats.

Tables seat teams of 8 and cost £100, which is the equivalent to £12.50 per person. The price includes a large, sharing platter of cheese and biscuits with all the trimmings, which can be washed down with drinks from our fully licensed bar.

With limited availability, you'll need to act fast to avoid missing out on this popular event. Please click [here](#) to purchase your group booking ticket.

We regret we are unable to cater for dietary requirements on this occasion. You are welcome to bring your own, nut-free platter to the event but please refrain from bringing your own alcohol onto the premises.

We look forward to seeing you there and thank you in advance for your support of the Simon Balle PSA, raising funds for Simon Balle All-through School.





Primary news

May I first take this opportunity to thank our wonderful Larch children, and our dedicated Larch staff, for all of their work in supporting children with national statutory assessments over recent weeks. From the Year 4 multiplication tables check to Year 1 phonics, from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile to KS1 SATs, we are proud of the wisdom and resilience children have shown to take everything in their stride and achieve at their best. All of this is achieved due to the climate and culture set for learning in the Larch, where all children are supported and motivated to be aspirational and to be proud of what they achieve. A huge thank you to every child and every staff member, as well as, of course, ongoing parental support too.

It is a busy time of year, where our curriculum and learning continues to be broad and ambitious. Reception have been exploring 3D shapes by describing and trying to guess the shape based on its properties. Year 1 have been learning about trains and automobiles in history lessons- a lot of discussion and exploring of how they have changed over time. What is the same and what is different? In Year 2 Maths lessons this week they have been recapping the unit of money by setting up their own shops and throughout the week have added prices together and worked out change too. Lots of fun has been had! Year 3 have been observing their seeds grow

in different types of conditions as part of their Science learning and have been discussing the many surprising results so far. Harry Potter has been the focus in Year 5 English, with fabulous vocabulary linked to the books being applied to diary entries and poetry! Year 6 are continuing to show a great work ethic, and examples of their engagement this week are shown through the high level of challenge they have been tackling in maths and the creativity and flair of vocabulary in their poetry work- inspired by Benjamin Zephaniah and The Lost Words poetry book. Please see highlights of our Year 4 geography field trip below.

Our extra-curricular offer is also blossoming now. A huge well done to 55 Years 3 - 6 athletes who represented Simon Balle on Wednesday, and demonstrated so many of our values. There were so many amazing individual performances on the day as well as our Year 3 team coming 3rd overall and our Year 5 and 6 teams both coming 2nd, all receiving medals for their achievements. We must also mention our Year 5 and 6 cricket team who represented the County on Monday and came 3rd, narrowly missing out on getting to the regional playoffs. Well done to all involved!

Many of our musicians are taking Trinity instrumental exams this week and next, with strings, wind, brass and piano all represented. We are so proud of the ongoing commitment our musicians make - all the hours of practice are now bearing fruit. We look forward to celebrating with them all soon! Of course, individual musicianship leads to great opportunities to belong to wonderful ensembles and it is a great time of year for celebratory concerts. The Year 2/3 strings, and Year 2/3 choir wowed us at their performances on Thursday - I am always struck by both the deep concentration and fantastic enjoyment so clearly shown on our young musicians' faces - well done to all! One of the musical highlights of the year - Saffron Hall - approaches on Sunday 9th July, and without giving anything away, snippets of rehearsals tell me we are all in for a very big treat! Thanks to our committed and wonderful music department at Simon Balle.

And, Explorers continues every evening. From science club (I always hear excited sounds from the classroom next to my office on a Wednesday!) to cycling, from golf to arts and crafts and much more, it has been a great term. I am pleased to let you know that our offer for next year is looking just as broad and engaging as ever - don't miss the sign up sheet coming next week, where we look forward to welcoming our new Year 3s into Explorers. Many thanks to Mrs Sansford and Mr Leonard especially who run Explorers with constant energy and creativity to ensure that every aspect of provision is

of the highest quality and greatly enjoyed by our young people. Year 5 and 6 parents- you will have already received a letter regarding Y6-8 enrichment, and we look forward to your children signing up!

Year 5 student leaders

We are incredibly proud of Year 5 for the values they have shown and the time they have committed to applying for various student leadership roles for September- over 55 applications for roles in total! 19 children applied for Larch president, and they had a second part of the process this week which included bringing in an object that meant something to them. They met with a group of Y12 school presidents, who knew nothing about them in advance other than what they had read in their application forms for the role, and explained why they chose that object. We were blown away by their courage and dedication.

We have assured the children that although not everyone will get a role, that actually they should be most proud of putting themselves forward and to use this as an experience that may help them as they apply for student leader roles in the secondary phase, and for future further education and job applications as they get older!

We look forward to announcing our Larch leaders before the end of term, and equally we thank our Year 12 leaders for running this very important application process.

Reading

As you all know, we talk with such passion about the importance of reading for all of our children. We ask you to commit to daily reading at home to support children's love of reading- and the need to practise this daily is shown by so much research, not just for reading itself, but to open up the wonderful world of learning in every subject area. We thought you may be interested to read this piece, published this week:

Children become more intelligent with 'optimal' amount of weekly reading. Cambridge study suggests academic performance, mental wellbeing and behaviour can all be improved by early literacy habits

By
Joe Pinkstone, SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT, 28
June 2023 • 7:00am

Children should read for 12 hours a week to boost their performance in school, a Cambridge study has found.

Reading for pleasure was found to increase the size of children's brains, improve cognitive ability, support good mental health and also lead to better grades.

The study of more than 10,000 children in the US found that those who started reading for fun at a young age had superior brain structure and function in their teens.

For "optimal" results, children should be reading for 12 hours every week, academics found. Any less and the brain is not being fully nurtured, but any more and the child starts to suffer a decline, likely due to being sedentary for too long.

Prof Barbara Sahakian, co-lead author of the University of Cambridge research, told The Telegraph: "This large sample of adolescents studied suggests that 12 hours per week of reading for pleasure in children would boost their academic achievement as adolescents.

"Reading for pleasure in childhood was linked to improved school academic achievement in adolescence."

Data show that children who did read for pleasure got an average of a quarter of a grade higher than those who did not.

"I think it is very important that such a relatively low-cost intervention of reading for pleasure in childhood can have such major benefits to cognition, academic performance in school and mental health in adolescents," added Prof Sahakian.

"It is also very enjoyable for parents and children to spend time reading and discussing the story and the pictures.

"It stimulates social skills, creative thinking and other forms of cognition in young children."

Their study, published in the journal Psychological Medicine, analysed data on children, all from the US, including interviews, cognitive tests, mental and behavioural assessments and brain scans.

They then compared information on children who began reading for pleasure before they turned nine against those who started later, or not at all.

Of the 10,243 participants studied, just under a half had little experience of reading for pleasure or did not begin doing so until later in their childhood.

The other half had between three and 10 years' reading for pleasure.

Those who started reading for pleasure at a young age were found to perform better on a variety of tests and also had better mental wellbeing, showing fewer signs of stress and depression, as well as improved attention and fewer behavioural problems such as aggression and rule-breaking. They also tended to use screens less and slept longer.

'Cornerstones for future learning'

Academics also analysed brain scans of teenagers and found that those who started reading for pleasure at a young age showed moderately larger total brain areas and volumes, and also showed differences in brain regions previously shown to relate to improved mental health, behaviour and attention.

"Reading isn't just a pleasurable experience – it's widely accepted that it inspires thinking and creativity, increases empathy and reduces stress," said Prof Sahakian.

"But on top of this, we found significant evidence that it's linked to important developmental factors in children, improving their cognition, mental health, and brain structure, which are cornerstones for future learning and wellbeing."

Professor Jianfeng Feng from Fudan University in Shanghai, China and the University of Warwick, added: "We encourage parents to do their best to awaken the joy of reading in their children at an early age.

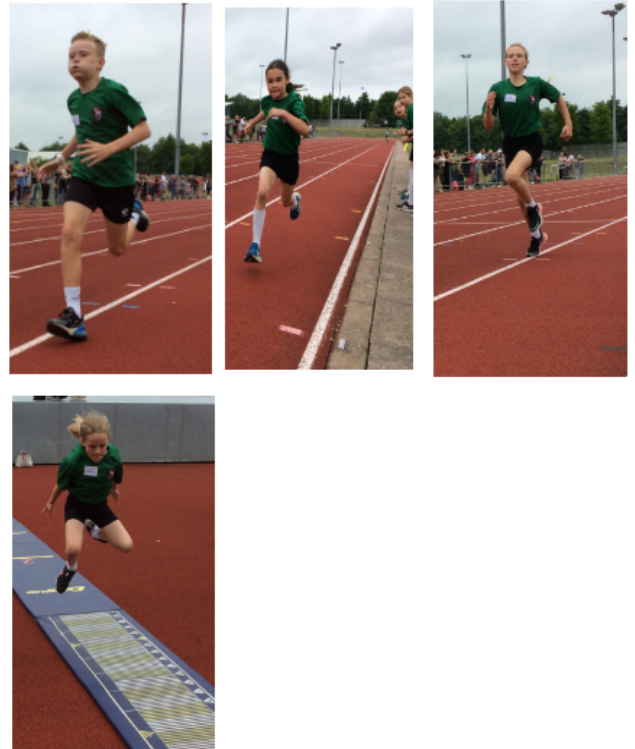
"Done right, this will not only give them pleasure and enjoyment, but will also help their development and encourage long-term reading habits, which may also prove beneficial into adult life."

PE news

District primary athletics

On Wednesday 55 children from the Larch took part in the District athletics at Wodson park against all the other large schools in Hertford and Ware. The children showed so much determination and resilience in all of their events. We were delighted

with so many individual performances on the day as well as our Year 3 team coming 3rd overall and our Year 5 and 6 teams both coming 2nd. A great achievement and well done to all that took part!



County primary Cricket

On Monday our Year 5 and 6 cricket team took part in the County cricket competition representing Hertford and Ware. They were an asset to the school and played brilliantly showing many of our school values. They came an amazing 3rd place, only missing out on the final by 4 runs. Well done to all involved!



Year 1 Badgers multi skills day

Last Friday Badgers class took part in a multi-skills festival at Sele School. They had the opportunity to take part in tennis, dodgeball and athletics throughout the afternoon and they are now very excited about doing even more of these sports now they have been inspired



Larch Sports Day

By Wednesday next week all the children will be bringing home their PE kits, could we please ask that they all come wearing their PE kit into school on Thursday 6th so they are ready to take part in the sports day. Many thanks

Year 4

On Tuesday 27th, Year 4 put on their geography fieldwork hats, following a great example recently set by our Year 6 children off on geography residential, and took to the river paths of Hertfordshire, walking from school to Ware, along the Rivers Beane and Lea. We recorded evidence and examples of some of the features of a river we had been learning about in class - meanders, tributaries, confluences and erosion. It was a great opportunity to bring learning to life outside of the classroom and of course to enjoy some fresh country air!



Staffing news

It is the time of year where we also need to share staffing news with you all. Firstly, a huge congratulations to Miss Hesketh who is expecting a baby in the autumn term - she will be still with us throughout Autumn 1, but with exciting times to come we wanted to share this news with you all.

We do have to say a huge thank you and goodbye to some of our valued Larch staff members. Miss Dunn has been a simply wonderful Larch teacher this year - always dedicated to her Year 2 class, with great enthusiasm for every aspect of the curriculum and beyond. The final hurrah for Year 2 is much awaited by us all on Tuesday 18th July at 2.30pm (parents all invited); thank you Miss Dunn and we wish you all the best in pastures new outside of teaching.

Mr Cozzi has been such a fantastic asset to our Larch office during his gap year. Always positive, helpful, kind and involved in every aspect of the Larch from sports to trips, reading and daily life, we will miss him as he has, we are sure, the best time at University - good luck Mr Cozzi!

It is hard to put into words what Mrs Southall has given to our all-through school. Her expertise in both MFL and PRE have enriched our broad and ambitious curriculum immeasurably. Knowing, I am sure, every child in the Larch, her passionate Spanish teaching and her deep care yet high expectations of all, have been a true gift to us. We wish Mrs Southall all the very best in her caring responsibilities and we promise to think of her every time we sing, 'Feliz Navidad!'.

Finally, Mrs Major has given such service and dedication to our all-through school. Not just as a valued lunchtime midday supervisor, Mrs Major has also volunteered to support at so many events - from the PSA to Sports Day, from trips to music, and much more. We thank her for her generosity of spirit, her kindness to our children and her wonderful commitment. We wish her a very happy and fulfilling retirement.

We look forward to welcoming the following new staff:

- Miss Frank (an experienced and full time class teacher)
- Mrs Stanton

- Mrs Surge
- Mrs Marks (all as experienced and part time class teachers)
- Miss Mizon - a new primary-trained Assistant Headteacher in our all-through school who will often be Larch -based
- Miss Gomez and Miss Brewer (SEN TA support)

Looking forward to 2023-24

As well as all that is going on now, we want to support the children to look forward to the new academic year! The following is a summary of how this will look in the coming weeks:

- Next Friday, 7th July, we will write to Larch parents letting them know the staffing structure in the Larch for September 2023. This will allow all children to know and be excited about their move to the new year group!
- On 7th July parents/carers in Reception (current Hedgehogs and Squirrels) will receive an email explaining whether they will be a Rabbit or Badger in Year 1. We often re-mix our Reception classes, as we now know our children so well in terms of friendships and academic levels and more.
- On either Thursday/Friday (6th/7th) and Monday 10th (new staff), staff will introduce themselves to their new classes. We know how important a familiar face is for all!
- Between Friday 7th and transition day on 13th (with some already begun) we will make sure that any children who may need particular personalised support to make an effective transition have this support in place. We will liaise with parents individually of course.
- Transition day on Thursday 13th. All children will be in their new classes between 9am and 12pm, with our current Year 6 spending the whole day in Year 7 on the secondary site. There will be much excitement in the Larch! Teachers will write to you introducing themselves and explaining the focus for wonderful summer learning to prepare for the new curriculum.



Stay active whilst **MAKING A SPLASH** this summer with our **SWIMMING CRASH COURSES.**

Each course runs Monday through to Friday for a 30-minute lesson where your child will learn valuable pool skills and boost their water confidence in a safe environment. We will be running lessons for all swimming abilities and for children aged 2yrs upwards.



COURSE 1: 24TH - 28TH JULY

~ Lonsdale, Brittain Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 8UT 9am - 12pm (Due to pool dimensions, stage 5 is our maximum ability for this course).

COURSE 2: 24TH - 28TH JULY

~ Simon Balle, Mangrove Road, Hertford, Herts, SG13 8AJ
3pm - 6pm. Teaching all abilities up to stage 7/advanced swimmers.

COURSE 3: 21ST - 25TH AUGUST

Haileybury Haileybury College, Hertford Heath, Herts, SG13 7NU
4pm - 7pm. Teaching all abilities up to stage 7/advanced swimmers.

*Cost per child,
per course*

£45



 07805 309102
 <http://littlefishesswimclub.co.uk>
 debbie@littlefishesswimclub.co.uk

