

Primary phase newsletter

Thursday 20th July 2023

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today



All through news

Dear Families,

We are now truly at the end of term and I am sure all are looking forward to Friday when school breaks up. Holidays are a special and important time; time for interests and hobbies, to explore new places, build positive relationships, and time to ensure that both physical health and mental health are restored. This last week, Simon Balle Ambassadors have been on great journeys. Our musicians returned to the Ghent music festival after a break of several years.

<https://visit.gent.be/en/calendar/ghent-festivities>

Many Year 8 students are in France, whilst those participating on both Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award programmes are in the Chilterns navigating and enjoying the "great outdoors"!

It has been a wonderful week of celebrations- a truly uplifting one for so many of our children and young people. To receive an award recognising achievement and effort brings a great deal of happiness and self worth. Receiving thanks is fundamental to our well being and we should all remember this. Our Awards Ceremony at All Saints Church was packed out with students from Reception to Y13; academic awards, community awards and the celebration of the promotion of our school values with equally proud parents and carers.

Celebrating and acknowledging how so many of our young people play and contribute to the sporting life of the school is equally important. Our guest speaker on this occasion was an ex Simon Balle student, Flo Fyfe who now plays womens' football for Watford. Once again awards showed the ability and potential of sports men and women from KS2- KS5.

Music as so many parents keep on reminding me is central to so many of our young people's lives and many families attended our annual gala concert at Saffron Hall earlier this month. Mark Taylor and I have been on such a musical journey over the past 8 years; from conception of what an all through musical school would look like to where we currently are and beyond! The summer concert is a true show case with so many of our youngest children playing and singing. Each group (woodwind, brass, strings, guitars, choirs) all perform and then miraculously they came together to form ensembles or vast choirs, the youngest performing alongside the oldest and even the adult musicians.

It has always been my belief that concerts and sports are about childrens' achievements and not about adult's narrative. However as this was my final concert as Head (and a very proud one at that!) I was enticed to the stage and as the band played the Paul Simon song "Call me Al" (as my own Dad called me!) I could not resist joining in (see below!)

Hopefully I shall still be seen from time to time at school events, as I eagerly witness how the community continues to grow and flourish.

I would like to also record my thanks to you the parents, for all of the support and kind words that you have given to me, my amazing staff and the incredible team that I have. You may know and have had contacted with one or two but I want to thank here publicly:

Leon Brown- our safeguarding lead and Director of Care and Wellbeing. Leon joined my team in 2004/5 and has worked tirelessly with so many families and staff. His knowledge, skills and experience has been invaluable and his wisdom kept me sane at times. James Pooley came as a Head of Year and has always worked so hard in championing students welfare. James keeps us all positive and energised. Ian Finch

leads our teaching and learning strategy and ensures that our new teachers are trained well. Rob Klippel and Yvonne Adshead both retired from SLT a year or so ago. The former is well known to many as Rob has taken the lead in many areas, whilst Yvonne led on teaching and learning and mentoring. Lucy Owen trained here and is a highly valued member of the team championing and inspiring many students. David Ayes has now taken a far more logistical and operational role (needed so much in a large school) and Katie Boyce, working strategically with our youngest students. Over the past two years we are also grateful for the work of Adam Quirke who has led on inclusion (and we wish him well in his new job).

And finally to Mike Moss who arrived on the same day as me, as a history teacher; promoted to SLT almost 20 years ago and who has challenged, guided and supported me daily. And also Rachel Kirk- an experienced primary head who has embraced the all through and brought so much wisdom and knowledge to ensure that provision is at its very best for the past 4 years. Her knowledge and understanding of secondary continues to grow and she is an amazing colleague. Thank you to all!

Therefore, there is now little left to say except a deeply heartfelt thank you to the whole Simon Balle Community, past and present. Whilst over the 26 years, there have been challenges and difficulties, together I do know that we have modelled our values (of respect, kindness, hope and wisdom) and touched so many people's lives. The United Nations this week celebrated the birthday of the late great Nelson Mandela; a voice of social justice. I end with their plea to all of us:

"Everyone has the ability and the responsibility to change the world for the better!"

Simon Balle All through School
"Creating tomorrow's citizens today"

May I wish you all a good summer break and return refreshed to enjoy the wonderful opportunities and quality of learning that the Simon Balle All through school offers.

Alison Saunders



Open day

We are looking forward to holding our annual open day on Saturday 23rd September. We expect all secondary students to attend school on the morning to act as guides or helpers in departments. We also invite all Year 5 (current Y4) students to be on site. Students will either be conducting parent tours in the Larch, or helping in Larch classrooms. Some children will additionally be involved in music or sport - we will write to you separately if this is the case. We will send a Google Form in September to confirm if your child is available to support.

Full details will be sent out early in September.

LAMDA classes

A huge congratulations to Sophie (Year 9), Willow (Year 7) and Ella (Year 6), who all achieved distinctions in their LAMDA exams last term. We wish good luck to those students who have completed their exams this term. There are a small number of spaces available for 1:1 LAMDA drama lessons from September: please contact the front office for more information (admin@simonballe.herts.sch.uk).

PSA

Thank you so much to everyone - parents, children, staff, volunteers, PSA committee members and very generous local businesses - who supported this year's Slice of Summer fete. Together, we raised an impressive £7600, which will make a huge difference to our children. It was a lovely day and so wonderful to see so many people enjoying themselves. Our next fundraising event is the Quiz with a Twist, on Saturday 30th September. Please join in, enjoy the fun and help us raise more money - tickets available [here](#).

You'll also find us at the September Open Morning on 23rd September, so do come along and say hello. Refreshments and breakfast items will be available.

We're always looking for fresh ideas about how to raise much needed funds. If you have a brilliant idea or would like to help fundraise, please join us for our first meeting of the new academic year on 11th September or contact us on psa@simonballepsa.org.uk

PE news

Sports Presentation evening



On Wednesday 12th July we held our annual All through Sports Presentation Evening. The evening was fantastic with many parents and students from Year 5 up to Year 13 in attendance. The PSA provided refreshments which on a lovely sunny evening provided a lovely community atmosphere. Many thanks to the PSA for their efforts and support. We were very fortunate to have Flo Fyfe (Watford Ladies FC and ex England International), a former student at Simon Balle present our awards. Flo took part in a Question and Answer session providing an insight into her career so far, her experience of playing for England and her next steps. Many sports awards were handed out on the night and even though everyone in attendance did not receive an award, everyone invited were there due to their commitment to training and school sport representation throughout the year. The marquee awards were the last to be handed out and went to the following students ;

- Sportsman of the Year 2023 – C Giliberti,
- Sportswoman of the Year 2023 – E Keepence,
- Larch Sportsman of the Year 2023 - M Hughes,
- Larch Sportswoman of the Year 2023 - A Halliday.

Congratulations to all award winners with over 70 students receiving awards. Finally thank you to everyone who supported the event and we look forward to the 2023-24 school sports season.

Music news

As we reach the end of the year, we have celebrated all of our students in the community. From a wonderful evening of music at Saffron Hall, to a Music Tour in Ghent and our Diploma students! It has been an amazing end to a brilliant year. We are so proud of the musicians and we thank you for your support!

Have a read here:

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

Sustainable Hertfordshire - YouthCOP 2023 Event

On Thursday 6th July 2023, we took 12 students from Year 8, 9 and 10 to the North Hertfordshire College Hitchin Campus for the Sustainable Hertfordshire YouthCOP 2023 event which was run by Hertfordshire County Council. Students from 14 secondary schools in Hertfordshire attended the event with their accompanying teachers and four county councillors; Cllrs Eric Buckmaster, Terry Douris, Caroline Clapper and Marks Mills Bishop. The students took part in a facilitated climate change debate and a range of sustainability workshops. This enabled our students to learn more about climate change and the impact that both local and global changes can make. At the end of the day there was also a surprise dial in direct from the Arctic by Prof. Phil Porter, University of Hertfordshire which was an exciting end to the day.

Christina (Year 9) attended the event and shares her thoughts here: "On the 6th of July I went to Hitchin College for the Youth COP 2023 and I had an amazing time going against other teams in the debate and painting in the biodiversity workshop in the afternoon. I've learnt that as a community we can work together to make a great impact on the environment and if we work together as a community we can build a great future. We also discussed what we could do as a school in the future for our environment and we came up with some ideas such as we could have events as a school to plant vegetation and to stop selling bottled water to stop the negative impact that plastic and microplastics have on our environment."

This was a fantastic opportunity for our students and promoted the school vision of "creating tomorrow's citizens today" as the students were asked to develop

an action plan for the sustainability of Simon Balle All-through School based on their learning.

The students proposed the following three school targets for sustainability which will be actioned in the coming months:

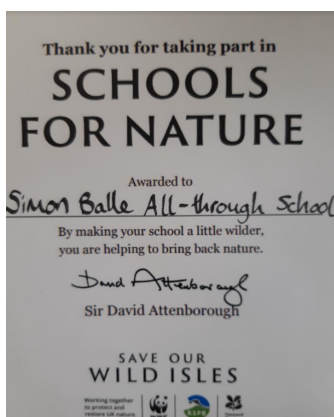
1. To reduce waste production
2. To achieve carbon neutrality
3. To increase awareness and engagement on tackling climate change

Thank you to Hertfordshire County Council and all of the staff and students involved for making this day a great success. The students represented the school brilliantly and showed passion and drive for the continued improvement of sustainability at Simon Balle All-through School.



Simon Balle All-through School's conservation efforts

Well done to everyone who has worked hard this year to make our school an environmentally friendly place: the litter pickers, wildlife recorders, energy monitors, eco team and student parliament to name a few. The school has received a certificate signed by David Attenborough as a thank you for everyone's hard work!



Dates for the Diary

WHOLE SCHOOL	
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	
Friday 21st July	School finished at 12.10
Tuesday 5th September	Start off term - school starts at 08.40
Tuesday 5th September	Individual school photos for Yr7, 9 and 11
Wednesday 8th September	Year group photos for Y7, Y11 and Y13
PRIMARY	
Friday 21st July	Year 6 Final Assembly, 9am (up to 2 parents/carers invited per child), Y6 will leave from approx 11.45am
Tuesday 5th September	Start to term - soft start 8.40-8.50, registration at 08.50
Wednesday 6th September	Parent year group information evening, Larch hall. Years 1: 4.30 - 5pm, Years 2, 3 and 4: 5 - 5.30pm, Years 5 and 6: 5.30 - 6pm
Friday 8th September	Larch individual photos
Wednesday 13th-Friday 15th September	Year 5 residential to Wildchild at Phasels Wood

Primary news

What a fantastic final fortnight of the academic year! Celebration assemblies this week are absolutely packed with achievements, and recognising these will be, as ever, a privilege and pleasure. From house point certificates (for showing our values and also aspiration) to attendance awards, from music medals and graded certificates to super star awards, values certificates and more - well done to all.

A special mention to our wonderful Year 6 cohort as they progress into the secondary phase - this is not goodbye, but time to graduate: we are so very proud of every one as an individual and all they have achieved. Thank you to all.

At so many points this academic year, we have been fortunate to celebrate together as a community - it was wonderful to see so many parents in the Larch last Thursday celebrating children's learning, sharing progress, and children and parents together reflecting on excellent outcomes. It was equally wonderful to see so many parents/carers and wider family members at our Year 2 Celebration of Learning assembly on Tuesday. The breadth and ambition of the curriculum was clear to see, as well as excellent skills in oracy, and pride and enjoyment in performance. Thank you to all parents and carers for their partnership, for we know this is how children thrive.

Finally, I would like to wish everybody a wonderful summer. Please keep up daily reading at home, because it will support children in preparation for the

next year group, but mostly because our Larch learners love to read! Do enjoy your creative summer home learning - we look forward to seeing all that children get up to. And also, do remember, please, our uniform expectations for September, including black school shoes (trainers only for PE and lunchtimes), and book bags for Reception - Year 2, with school rucksacks only for Year 3+.

Information evenings Wednesday 5th September

We would like to invite you to an information evening on Wednesday 5th September to hear more about what your child will be learning over the new academic year and to hear other key important information.

This will be held in the Larch hall and led by your child's class teacher and phase leader:

Y1 4.30-5pm

Year 2, 3 and 4 5-5.30pm

Year 5 and 6 5.30-6pm

We look forward to seeing you and answering any questions you have.

Study club Year 6

On Wednesdays, 3.15-4.15pm there is a free study club for Year 6 students to attend on the secondary site alongside Y7 and 8 peers to complete home learning. Children will be dismissed by the secondary front office, and if you need childcare following this (until 4.45pm to match primary childcare provision) your child can wait in the secondary main library continuing their home learning or reading.

This will begin on **Wednesday 13th September**.

There is no need to sign up as your child can join on an ad-hoc basis; however please let your class teacher know if they don't have permission to walk home alone and you intend for them to join study club some weeks.

Statutory national Assessments

Throughout the summer term, children across the Larch have completed a variety of statutory assessments (with most of our younger children being unaware or completing 'special booklets' to remove any form of pressure or worry). We have high aspirations for every single child in the Larch, and in partnership with parents and carers, strive for every child to make excellent progress.

We are very proud of the achievements of our children in the Larch! The below information allows you to compare the children's performance at the end of key stage 1 and 2 with the attainment of other year 2 and 6 pupils across England in 2022-23.

Key stage 1 comparative report (Year 2)

Subject	Percentage of pupils achieving at least the Expected Standard: school (2023)	Percentage of pupils achieving at least the Expected Standard: nationally (2022) ¹
English reading	88.5%	67%
English writing	80.3%	58%
Mathematics	86.8%	68%
Science	98.4%	77%

Subject	Percentage of pupils achieving Greater Depth: school (2023)	Percentage of pupils achieving Greater Depth: nationally (2022) ¹
English reading	39.3%	18%
English writing	29.5%	8%
Mathematics	35%	15%
Science	N/A	N/A

Key stage 2 comparative report (Year 6)

Subject	Percentage of pupils achieving at least the Expected Standard: school (2023)	Percentage of pupils achieving at least the Expected Standard: nationally (2023) ¹	Percentage of pupils achieving greater depth (2023) National data tbc	Average scaled score: school (2023) ²	Average scaled score: nationally (2023) ¹
English reading	88.3%	73%	50%	108	105
English grammar, punctuation and spelling	91.7%	72%	36.7%	108	105
Mathematics	90%	73%	43.3%	108	104
English writing (teacher assessment)	91.7%	71%	45%	N/A	N/A
Science (teacher assessment)	96.7%	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Reception early learning goals

69% GLD (good level of development, local authority 2023 66.7%)

Year 1 phonics check

95% met the expectations of the national phonics screening check (national 2022 75%, local authority 2023 79.8%)

Year 4 multiplication check

National 'mean' score 2022: 19.8/25

Simon Balle 'mean' score 2023: 24/25

94% of children scored 20+ and 59% scored full marks!

These results don't necessarily also take into account a child's strengths in the wider curriculum, the enrichment they take part in, and the values your children show, and we will continue to ensure that these too are celebrated for every individual in school.

Student leaders 2023/24

Since half term, over 60 Year 5 applications were received for various student leadership positions. We were really blown away by the applications the children wrote outlining how they show our values and would be suited to the role they were applying

for.

We are delighted to share the names of the Year 5 children who will be taking on student leadership roles in September.

Larch Presidents

Summer and Stanley

Larch vice-presidents

Kira and Harrison

Larch librarians

Rosey, Jennie, Megan, Isaak, Cara and Henry

Farm leaders

Layla, Darcey, Freya, Eva and Millie

Music ambassadors

Pearl and Annie

Eco leaders

Grace and Isaac

Eco Committee champions: Rachel, Isla, Jacob and Sam

Sports leaders

Hattie and Harry

Sports assistant leaders: Ethan and Bea

Thank you, also, to our current Year 6 children for their commitment to their roles during the last academic year. We wish them continued success as they enter the secondary phase.

Y5 residential 2024 (current Y3)

For our current Y3 parents, we'd like to invite you to join a virtual information evening on Wednesday 27th September at 6pm to give you some information about the Year 5 residential to Wildchild at Phasels Wood in September 2024. More information to come in early September!



Welcome!

Summer 2023

To our Summer edition of the Schools Stay Safe Newsletter.
Read on for advice on ways to stay safe for you and your family.

Cooking Safely with **disposable BBQ's**

Last year during the very hot weather we saw an increase in fires caused by portable BBQ's. By following a few simple guidelines, you can minimise the risks!

Before your BBQ:

- Never use your BBQ near fences, sheds, trees and shrubs or garden waste, or on a balcony.
- Never use in enclosed spaces as they produce deadly carbon monoxide!
- Check your surrounding environment is not likely to catch fire.
- Place on a flat fireproof surface, and not straight onto grass. It wouldn't hurt to keep a bucket of water nearby.
- Never add additional lighting agents, e.g., petrol, white spirit.

After your BBQ:

- Please extinguish it FULLY. You can use water or sand to do this.
- Do not attempt to move the BBQ immediately after use, even if you have extinguished it fully, as they get incredibly hot.
- Ensure that it has completely cooled down before attempting to dispose of it.
- Never just walk away and leave it there still alight.

ALWAYS keep children and pets well back from a lit BBQ.





Are you aware of the risks of **wildfires**?

Most wildfires in the UK originate from human activity. These will either be leisure activities or deliberate acts, often carried out by people unaware of the risks associated with fire, especially wildfires.

- Dispose of litter safely and correctly. Items such as glass bottles can start fires!
- Never light a fire in the countryside. Small fires can get quickly out of control!
- Always extinguish and dispose of cigarettes properly. Don't throw them on the ground or out of a car window.
- Many wildfires can be prevented. Ensure you enjoy the countryside safely.
- If you see a fire in the open, no matter how small, call 999 and get yourself to safety.





Water Safety for Children

Learning to be safe near water is an important part of a child's education. By teaching them some simple rules you can help keep them safe.

- Always walk when you are near water.
- Wear a lifejacket if you are going into open water.
- Make sure an adult is always watching and there are lifeguards present.
- Don't swim alone.
- Get out of the water if you are becoming tired.
- Stay in designated areas.
- Don't get in if there is a strong current.
- Its colder than it looks!!
- Don't jump in, it could be shallow!

In the QR code below are some interactive activities for children for you to use.





Are you aware of Staywise?

Staywise is an interactive website packed full of fun activities from the UK's leading emergency services and safety-focused organisations, making it easy for you to find trusted activities that provide learning opportunities to help keep you safe.

There's lots to do on there for children and they are learning as they play!



Have you tested your smoke detector lately?

Do you have a night-time routine?

Would you know how to escape in the unlikely event of a fire?

We encourage you to book yourself a free Home Fire Safety Visit today. The local station numbers are to the right of this newsletter.

Don't forget, the visit is **FREE!**



If you need any further information or advice on any of these topics, please feel free to call our friendly staff at your local station:

- **Hertford Fire Station**
01992 507611
Hertford.fire@hertfordshire.gov.uk
- **Cheshunt Fire Station**
01992 901900
Cheshunt.fire@hertfordshire.gov.uk
- **Bishops Stortford Fire Station**
01279 696800
BishopsStortford.fire@hertfordshire.gov.uk



Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service



Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue
Community Safety



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/fire

Parental feedback report

July 2023

Thank you for your recent responses to the parental survey, in which 425 of you completed.



Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today

You Asked

We Will

94% of parents and carers say their child is happy at school

Parents evening appointments -
You asked for a return to face to face evenings.

We will strategically plan in person meetings for certain year groups next year for that chance to connect.

96% of parents and carers say their child feels safe at school

Club and enrichment awareness -
You asked for more clarity and better communication around enrichment for all year groups.

We will ensure the communication around enrichment and information about clubs readily available on our website and shared by Heads of Year regularly.

93% of parents and carers say the school has high expectationd for thier child

Food on the curriculum -
You asked for some provision to be put in place after recruitment issues led to food being taken out of the curriculum at KS4.

We will continue our ongoing efforts to recruit a teacher of food. We will continue to offer food tech as part of the rotation in KS3 and we are also working on an enrichment plan for food in the interim.

96.3% of parents and carers agree that their child takes part in clubs and activities

Cost of living crisis -
You asked for us to review our offer and the costs associated with uniform, music and enrichment.

We will review our current provider of uniform and have already begun the process of doing so with our PE kit. We have reviewed our enrichment provision so as much as possible is free and are also strategically plotting trips across the all-through in order to ensure the provision is correct and costs are taken into account.

95% of parents and careres would recommend this school to other parents

More homework
You asked for more consistent and regular home learning.

We will review our current practice around home learning to ensure appropriate and equitable amounts of work are set.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." H. Keller.

"We are really proud to be members of the Simon Balle community. Both children are happy and engaged in different ways with the curriculum and other enrichment that is embedded in everyday life. Very happy.

This school has been a wonderful learning and growth environment for all three of our children. We are now at the end of our Simon Balle journey and we could not have wished for a more supportive school for our children to have spent their secondary education.

Both of my children have been very happy at Simon Balle. The teaching staff did an amazing job throughout Covid and continue to create a safe, inspiring and supportive space in which students are encouraged to grow academically and socially. Thank you!

A welcoming and friendly school. Dedicated staff and well led. We are kept well informed of how they are progressing in the school and staff are always available to support and provide guidance when requested

Couldn't be happier that my 2 children are in Simon Balle. The learning, the culture, the environment has meant that they have both flourished. In addition they have flourished in different ways showing that the school treats the children as individuals.



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Tea & Tour

WITH THE MAYOR OF HERTFORD,
CLLR VICKY SMITH



Sunday 20th August

12-4pm

Hertford Castle

ADULT - £7
CHILD - £3

UNDER 3S
FREE

Ticket Includes:

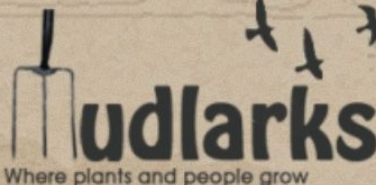
- Guided tour of the Castle
- Drink
- Cake (Alternatives available)

Purchase Tickets & book your slot
www.hertford.gov.uk

Proceeds to the Mayor's Charities



**Herts &
Middlesex**
Wildlife Trust



Charity No. - 290172





YOUNG PERSONS MAYOR'S ART EXHIBITION 2023

THEME:
THE BEAUTY OF NATURE
CATEGORIES TO WIN A PRIZE IN:

BEST LANDSCAPE. BEST WILDLIFE. BEST HERTFORD SCAPE. MAYOR'S FAVOURITE

Exhibition Date: 20th August 2023

Hertford Castle, 12pm

All Mediums, Styles and Art Forms Welcome!



FREE
ENTRY

- Participants 5-10 years old & 11- 17 years old
- Any shape no larger than 40x40cm
- Limited spaces

Submit a photo and a description to mayoral@hertford.gov.uk by
Monday 7th August 2023

