



LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

PEGASUS NEWS

SPRING TERM

ISSUE 9

FRIDAY 10 MARCH 2017

THE HEADMASTER WRITES...



They say that ‘a week is a long time in politics’ and once again, this old adage has proven itself to be accurate in the political landscape around education. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) this week warned of GCSE and A-level subjects being cut, class sizes rising and support services falling as a result of funding cuts (despite government claims of record levels of funding). Today we have seen news that Amanda Spielman, the new Head of Ofsted, is about to launch a major investigation into whether schools are using the curriculum to give children a broad enough education.

She will use her speech to emphasise that schools are trying to ‘game’ league tables by entering pupils into easy, non-academic qualifications, with some schools even taking poor-performing pupils off roll so that low grades do not show on the tables. The new performance measures at GCSE (Attainment 8 and Progress 8) with different weighting for different subjects and rewards being given for a certain breadth of academic subjects will help to tackle some of this at GCSE level. I am pleased to say that our current GCSE subjects are already academic and include a range that would be well represented by these reforms. However, if the ASCL are to be believed, the consequence of some of the funding changes will be that schools will have to increase class sizes and reduce their curriculum offering in order to meet the challenges posed by these new measures for success.

The challenge is also very real at Key Stage 2 where the SATs league tables place pressure on schools to have a very narrow focus on the core subjects of maths and English at the expense of a wider, more balanced curriculum. Whilst a solid foundation in the core subjects is essential for future success, it is my belief that a curriculum should be fun, exciting, inspirational and broad. Without an early appreciation and grounding in subjects such as religious studies, history, geography, science, languages, ICT and the creative arts, I do not believe that we are properly setting up children for life-long learning. I appreciate that without national standardised tests to measure these areas of the curriculum, it can be very difficult for parents to compare one school against another but this is where I believe in the importance of the school visit for any parents choosing a school. The data for a school may look impressive but there may be an atmosphere that just does not feel right and where you, as a parent, knowing your child better than anyone else, will know they do not fit. The reverse may also be true and your child may thrive in a school where the published data suggests that the quality of the education may not be as strong. Following the comments last week about our absence from league tables, I have done some digging as to why we are not appearing in the various tables and it is turning out to be a rather complex picture (it is not deliberate that we are not there). But if and when we do appear, it will be vital that we continue to have the confidence to maintain a great breadth of curriculum, to celebrate a diverse range of skills and abilities, and to accept into the Long Close family any child who will thrive and enjoy their time with us here. With small cohorts of mixed ability children, our percentages will vary year on year, but at no point will we be looking to remove a child from our data because they ‘don’t fit in’ and we will never reduce our curriculum in order to raise our position in the league tables.

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AFTER SCHOOL CARE MOBILE NUMBERS

ASC team members can be contacted on the following numbers between 3.30pm and 6.00pm each day. If you are running late to collect your child from ASC, please give the staff on duty a quick call to let them know. Thank you!

Yellow, Red, Blue Room & Reception:
07783 198998
Years 1-11 (Mrs Bahri):
07986 316132

EARLY YEARS UPDATE BY MRS HARRIS

We have certainly enjoyed a lot of enrichment beyond the classroom this week in the Early Years! We have extended our learning from our educational visit to the farm to look at planting seeds, exploring where vegetables come from and exploring how we care for ourselves and animals in a similar way. Our guinea pigs have had a move out to our nature garden area at the back of the nursery so that we can let them out into their run now that the weather is appearing a little kinder and the children have excelled in taking on board the caring routine that Max and Leo need to live well!

On a personal note, I wanted to say thank you for all of your kind words about my decision to leave Long Close at the end of the summer term, once a suitable replacement has been recruited. It was certainly not an easy decision for me to make, although it is much easier to do when you are leaving a thriving department behind you who are developing character, pursuing the best for every child and continuing to strive for excellence using embedded systems and structures that make the setting safe, compliant and efficient within the school. It makes me feel very proud of our foundation stage team effort and I know that I will be leaving you in safe hands.

YELLOW ROOM



We have continued to explore different sizes this week, as some children noticed the 'big Gruffalo' toy in the Nursery and a 'small Gruffalo' toy on the shelf which the children called a baby one.

We then decided to gather up and compare all of the different sizes of the teddies in the Yellow Room. All the children selected a teddy during carpet time as I read the story "Where's My

Teddy?". Some of them decided to have a 'Teddy Bears picnic' afterwards with their chosen bears as they lined them up and placed plates of food in front of each bear. The children developed their fine motor skills when manipulating play dough as they moulded and rolled out long and short wiggly snakes and worms. The children had a go at cutting the play dough using scissors - some of the children persisted as they used spring loaded scissors to make cutting a little easier.

We have also had much fun outside exploring in the nature area this week. We played in the very sensory mud kitchen, producing some wonderful textures and patterns in the mud using paint brushes, twigs and leaves.



GREEN ROOM

This week we have continued our health and self-care topic. The children have been learning about the importance of good hygiene. They have been exploring germs and how easily they can be spread between people and objects. The children used glitter to represent germs and then touched each other to see how they are passed from one person to another. They were then shown how to wash their hands properly ensuring they wash in between their fingers and around their nails. The children then dried their hands thoroughly to make sure they don't get sore. Everybody did a fantastic job!

The children have bathed the babies in the water tray. They looked at the importance of bathing daily to ensure we feel clean and fresh. We spoke about how to wash our bodies, not forgetting behind our ears and in between our toes! The children can demonstrate their knowledge and independence at home during their bath time routine!



THIS WEEK IN EARLY YEARS

RED AND BLUE ROOMS

We have continued exploring our health and self-care topic this week, focusing on dental hygiene. The children have learnt how to look after their own teeth by brushing the plaque off some pretend teeth and helping a 'toothless hippo' recover his missing teeth! The children were also given the opportunity to show us how they brush their own teeth in nursery, making them all nice, clean and shiny.

The children have been spending lots of time outside in our garden this week, practising putting their wellington boots on and off before entering the garden. It was lots of fun and another way to develop our self-help skills and independence. In the garden the children had fun constructing and balancing on crates, concocting 'delicious' soups in the mud kitchen and finding lots of intriguing mini beasts from a millipede to ants. They even shared with the grown ups that they had excavated a dinosaur egg!

Our baby role play area has been very popular after the visit from Shriya's mummy and baby brother on Monday. The children loved finding out lots of fascinating facts about how babies grow and develop before creating their own roleplay scenarios changing nappies, bottle feeding their babies and rocking them to sleep.



RECEPTION

Following on from the children's interest that arose as the daffodils in our garden popped up in the warm weather, the children also spotted blossom on some of the trees. We have decided to explore the topic of growing plants further to extend the children's interest. We listened to the story of Jack and the Beanstalk and the children spent time writing about the characters and talking about the moral of the story. We then had a special delivery - some 'magic beans' had been sent to Reception by Jack! We looked at the life cycle of a flower, labelling our diagram and planting some cress and flower seeds as well as the 'magic beans'. The children have been fascinated each morning as they come in to check how they have grown - some children expected to see a beanstalk the day after planting our seeds! But of course we explained that our seeds will take a little longer than those from the story! In numeracy this week, children are exploring length and height, using the language associated with comparing and measuring. We used a cut-out of the 'Giant's foot' to measure against objects that are bigger/longer/taller or smaller/shorter than the 'Giants foot'. Our week ended with looking at our cress seeds - some of them had grown long enough for us to cut, wash and eat! We buttered some bread and made cress sandwiches, which the children were proud of and they enjoyed having the opportunity to taste their home grown harvest!

PREP SCHOOL NEWS BY MS FIELD

KEY STAGE 1

Year 1

The highlight of our week was the trip to Windsor Castle on Wednesday! The changing of the guard was a spectacle as the children looked on and listened to the band. We visited St George's Chapel, where the ornate organ and colourful stained glass windows were very impressive.

The children carried their sketch books with them and were keen to draw many of the features around them as we moved through the remarkable state apartments, looking at the hand painted ceilings, enormous tapestries and beautiful chandeliers. There was real awe and wonder as the children entered the rooms with gasps and yelps heard from everyone at the beauty and extravagance. The Queen's dolls house was magnificent; the children pointed out all the details of tiny beds, cutlery and even a shrubbery in the garden area. It was an amazing day!



Year 2

Wow, what superheroes we have in Year 2! The children were absolutely amazing on stage this week performing their assembly to the rest of the Prep School and to their families. They conveyed their special message of developing a growth mindset with confidence and stage presence. Reiterating to all that we must never give up on things that may be tricky or of a challenge. In the famous words of the famous inventor Thomas Edison, 'I haven't failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.'

Year 2 continue to spread your positivity, Mrs Woodcraft and Miss Moss are so proud of you all!



PEGASUS CERTIFICATES

Congratulations to the most recent Pegasus certificate winners:

- 1H Shubhay Karka
- 1S Nihal Dhatt
- 2M Fayha Mujib
- 2W Simrin Sur
- 3I Ayan Haq
- 3R Aaron Patel
- 4M Laksh Bajaj
- 4R Armaan Wason
- 5B Zain Bilal
- 5C Aryan Sharma
- 6F Mehul Chourasia
- 6O Kirandeep Jhamatt



PREP SCHOOL NEWS BY MS FIELD

KEY STAGE 2

Year 3

This week Year 3 have thoroughly enjoyed being code-breakers as we have been continuing with our communication topic in geography. The children were excited to learn morse code and some of the basic gestures for sign language for the deaf. This work has linked with their studies on email in ICT and the children have begun to be able to email each other and their teachers with some interesting and hilarious messages! In science, the children loved carrying out an investigation to find out which objects are magnetic and which are not. Most were able to deduce that to be magnetic, a material must have an amount of iron or steel within them. Some also reasoned that most silver coins and copper coins must also contain steel, as they too were attracted to a magnet, which was unexpected. You may have noticed the children practising their time-telling skills this week and we have been encouraging the wearing of analogue watches. Please support them with this essential life-skill by discussing the time and looking at clocks whenever convenient! The children are especially excited about their musical production and are working hard towards a brilliant performance. Not long now everyone!!

Year 4

Year 4 pupils have been very busy this week in their creative writing lessons. They have been reviewing what figurative language is and how they can include it in their writing. Both classes have been writing about dramatic scenes and this has got their creativity flowing! The arrival of the new books, bought with the charity money last term, have been a welcome addition to the classroom and the children are enjoying reading them. Maths lessons have involved different types of measuring. It has been good to review both the 12 and 24 hour clock and it would be so useful if you could practice reading both the 12 and 24 hour clock with your child at home. Our science lessons have consisted of the children learning different methods to separate a variety of items. We asked the children whether they would consider drinking the water that was left, but nobody was rightly keen! Although the water appeared clear, it could be full of bacteria. We are still short parent helpers for our Castles Day on Monday 27th March. If you are free it would be wonderful if you could help. Please let Miss Malocca or Mrs Rees know if you are able to make it.

Year 5

This week Year 5 have been studying the process of condensation and revising evaporation. In geography, the children have learnt about hurricanes and the effect they have on the people of St Lucia. In English, they have continued to develop their skills in persuasive writing and they have started planning their speeches for the debating competition, which will take place next Friday. The motion of 'Junk food should be banned' was introduced to the classes and then they were grouped into house teams. For homework, the children prepared one argument either 'for' or 'against' the motion and we will continue to put their work together in the coming days and then select the teams going forward to the competition. In DT, the children have constructed the base for their moving toy using hacksaws, which has helped them learn how to use tools safely.

Year 6

Auditions for 'Oliver' have been the focus this week for Year 6 - there were some great Bill Sykes auditions from this year group! All the candidates have put a lot of effort into their pieces and are looking forward to starting the production. In addition to this, each house has been practising their debating piece in preparation for the competition next week - there are some very confident speakers in this year group! In English and maths, the focus has been on SATs work, including how to approach questions, spotting patterns and deciding upon methods and strategies. All in all it has been a very busy week!

SENIOR SCHOOL NEWS BY MR MCCARTHY

STUDY SKILLS FOR YEARS 10&11

On Monday, Years 10 and 11 had the second of their sessions with Elevate Education. Our previous session focused on revision techniques while this week the focus was on passing exams. The students all came away from the session with a clearer view on how to be successful in examinations, how to prepare fully before the examinations and making sure they are doing the right things in the lead up to the examination season. The session was very useful for all the students - hopefully they all can put some of the advice into action.

WORK EXPERIENCE FOR YEAR 10

Year 10 are also gearing up for their work placements which get under way next week. Our students have been allocated some very interesting placements in range of different industries in the local area. We have some budding solicitors, mechanics, teachers and doctors. The students will gain a great deal of invaluable experiences in their week away from school - most importantly, building up transferable skills that they can take to any future career path. It is always a very nerve racking experience for our students, who will be going out into an unknown environment with unfamiliar people. Hopefully, our students will put a great deal into their week away in order to get the very best out of the opportunity. Good luck to all our Year 10 students - make sure you enjoy the week!

SENIOR SCHOOL WORK SHOWCASE

A poem to my teacher

I'm happy that you're my teacher
I enjoy each lesson you teach;
As my role model you inspire me
To dream, to work and to reach.

With your kindness you get my attention
Everyday you are planting a seed
Of curiosity and motivation
To know, to grow and to succeed

You help me fulfil my potential
I'm thankful for all that you've done
I admire you each day; and I simply want to
say
You are my number one.

By Humza Hayat, Year 10

FURTHER EDUCATION ADVICE



We owe a big thank you to two people for coming in to share their experience with our Senior School pupils this week.

Firstly, a former pupil, Jamal Chughtai, came in on Wednesday to discuss his life at Langley Grammar School.

Jamal offered to come in to speak to our senior students because he felt he would have benefited from hearing about other people's experiences about life after Long Close.

At this morning's assembly, Mr Dhalla gave a presentation to Years 9-11 about his career in Information Systems. As well as talking through the skills required for the IS industry, Mr Dhalla gave some excellent advice about the importance of having a positive, can do attitude in the workplace.

Thank you both for sparing your time to support the school.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT NEWS BY MRS BINGHAM

It's a busy time in the music department at the moment and we are looking forward to this afternoon's Senior Instrumental Afternoon in the school hall. Two other musical events to look forward to this term are:

Thursday 16 March—Prep Instrumental Afternoon—4.15pm School Hall

This is for all members of Junior Choir and Orchestra, and all those who learn an instrument in Years 2 - 6. It promises to be a lovely afternoon, showcasing the talent in the Junior part of the school. Parents are warmly invited to attend. Refreshments will be served and it should finish at around 5.15pm.

Friday 24 March—Years 3 & 4 production of 'Go for Gold' - 4:15pm School Hall

Our Year 3 and 4 pupils are rehearsing very hard for the production of 'Go for Gold' in just two weeks' time. It promises to be a fantastic afternoon's entertainment so we hope you will be able to come and watch! The performance will be taking place at 4.15pm on Friday 24 March in the School Hall. All members of Year 3 and 4 are taking part, and it should finish at around 5pm.

UPDATE FROM OUR CATERING TEAM

There have been many exciting changes to the lunch offer at Long Close School in the past few weeks. Our fabulous on site team, led by Tracy, have been working closely with our Thomas Franks Development Team to rework our menus.

Tracy has hosted two Pupil Council meetings and a fish finger tasting session in order to ask the children exactly what they wanted from their school meals.

Taking all their feedback on board, a brand-new menu cycle was rolled out after the February half term holiday. The feedback so far has been amazing with the new pupil's choice dishes and we will know more when we have the next Pupil Council meetings.

To add to that, Tracy and the team have held food theme days to make lunches more exciting. These included Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day and World Book Day (Alice in Wonderland), with many more planned for the rest of the year.

The salad bar has been relaunched with a modern new look and some more healthy additions including an edible garden, protein rich quinoa and wild rice salads.

Homemade artisan bread is made fresh for the children each morning including flavoured bread with herbs or olives and fresh fruit salad and fruit yoghurts are available as an alternative to the yummy homemade cakes and crumbles.

In addition to this, a new after school cookery club will be starting soon, to give the children a chance to learn how to prepare a few of their favourite dishes!





SCHOOL NOTICES AND SPORTS FIXTURES

SUMMER TERM AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

Hopefully you will have received information about next term's clubs via School Comms this week. There are some new and exciting ones to choose from and we hope to have sufficient interest to run them all!

Please note that the online booking system will open this evening - Friday 10 March at 20:00 and it will close on Friday 17 March at 20:00.

SCHOOL EVENTS FOR W/C 13 MARCH 2017

Monday 13 March —Year 10 Work Experience Week

Wednesday 15 March— Assessment Afternoon for External Candidates

Thursday 16 March—Prep School Instrumental Afternoon (16:15)

Friday 17 March—House Debating Competition for pupils in Years 5-8 (11:30am)

Thank you very much to those parents who were able to make it to yesterday's PEG meeting. We thought it was a very productive and positive meeting, which will help to inform our development plans for the future. We will be sending a summary of the main points raised in the meeting to all parents in due course.

We are planning to hold another PEG meeting next term so we hope that more of you will be able to join us then.

Mrs Watts

SPORTS FIXTURES FOR W/C 13 MARCH 2017

Tuesday 14 March—U9 Netball v Brigidine (A)

Wednesday 15 March—U14 Football v Claires Court (A)

Wednesday 15 March—U11AB Football v Claires Court(H)

Friday 17 March—U13 Football v Shiplake (A)

PTA NEWS

This week we have more news on the upcoming Mother's day present room.....

**PTA MOTHER'S DAY PRESENT ROOM
TUESDAY, 21ST MARCH, 2017**

Presents and cards available for children to
select and purchase for their Mothers

Presents for £3 or £5
Cards for 50p

Present room will be in the school office
during the following times:
8:10am - 8:30am
breaktimes and lunchtime
3:15pm - 4:30pm

EYFS to be taken by their teachers in the morning
or can come to the office



Long Close Summer Fair 2017

Thank you to those of you who have been in touch already about the Summer Fair. Don't forget we would love to hear from anyone who would like to showcase their business, or have family/friends who would be interested. Examples of some of the external stalls from previous fairs are -

1. Mendhi designs
2. Jewellery
3. Children's books
4. Clothes or accessories
5. Mini beauty treatments

We are open to other ideas! Please email us on longcloseschoolpta@gmail.com

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