



MOUNTJOY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Making a difference today, for tomorrow

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Summer 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I can't believe I have been at Mountjoy for a year now... and what a year! Despite the restrictions, the staff here have been working tirelessly on providing a rich variety of learning experiences and helping our children and young people to develop. I will be working on our School Improvement Plan very soon, so please look out for the parent survey which will be flagged up to you or email the school office with any thoughts you've had on improving Mountjoy.

On a daily basis I am reminded of our school values:

Passion – I often see people going the extra mile. Staff absolutely care about our school family which includes all the pupils and their families and every member of the team.

Respect – there is never a moment when the children or families are talked of in a disrespectful manner and the staff interaction with other adults rubs off on the children, who learn that respect goes a long way.

Optimism – everyone in school wants our young learners to be their absolute best and we imagine their best possible future.

Understanding – we work hard at being considerate and when we are faced with a puzzle we work together to find answers.

Determination – this underpins our work, staff and families never give up on our children and young people.

Lastly, I wanted to remind you that we pride ourselves on working with parents and carers who, after all, are usually the expert when it comes to their children. If you ever have any concerns or suggestions, let your class teacher or a member of the leadership team know so we can find solutions in partnership.

Have a wonderful summer holiday, doing all the things that help make your children the well-rounded people they grow into.

Very best wishes,
Gill



Deputy & Assistant Headteacher



And so we come to the end of another school year - an unusual one again that was outside the realm of our usual experience. However, brighter times are on the horizon -we are starting to resume some of our favourite activities that we have missed so much in recent months and there are new exciting developments happening here at Mountjoy in the future.

Offsite trips and activities are beginning to open up and we have classes accessing swimming lessons at Crewkerne Aqua Centre and participating in local visits to Magdalen Farm. The sixth form pupils will be spending a day a week at Bridport Youth Centre to access a town environment and learn specific skills to further future independence as adults. It is great to see our pupils beginning to get out and about in the local area again and experiencing all the learning that takes place there! We look forward to this expanding in the Autumn term next year and working with our community partners again!

Buddies, a preschool SEN group run in liaison with the local authority, has been able to recommence once a week here at Mountjoy and it's lovely to be able to support parents with young special needs children and meet some of our future Mountjoy pupils just a little bit earlier.

Over the summer holidays we will be having dedicated forest and beach school spaces built, on part of our back field play area. These will be developed in the coming years and will provide amazing extra learning spaces for our pupils, utilising the outside area.



We have all been extremely impressed how our amazing pupils have coped and tolerated the restrictions placed on them in the last year - it has truly been a time that we will never forget, but we are really looking forward to the rest of the summer term, the hopefully good weather and all the opportunities that the summer holidays and new autumn term will present to us.

Have a wonderful summer everyone!

Tracey & Richard

FROM THE CLASSES

Acorns Class

Our topics this term have been 'Spring Into Life' and 'Transport'.

The pupils have all created some lovely art work relating to the topics which has been collated and displayed in the corridor for everyone to see. We have had lots of comments about how this display has put a smile on people's faces.



The pupils made egg box flowers, paper rainbows, shaving foam lakes with boats on, paper plate cars and sponge print trains. We have been making the most of the not so sunny weather and have embraced the rain by getting suited up in our wet weather gear and splashing around in the puddles.



We have also had use of the play equipment on the back field over the last few weeks and the pupils have loved learning how to climb to the top and slide down the big slide as well as exploring the cradle swing.

We have been working on our signing this term and pupils are now confident in signing various modes of transport. We have used the weekly Facebook videos to help us and have incorporated signing into our transport play. Acorns pupils have been following the Read Write Inc. programme this term and have all enjoyed learning the initial sounds and exploring how the sound is written. The pupils have used sand, playdough, tomato sauce and cornflour to write the sounds.

In Maths we have been singing songs to help us understand subtraction. We have also made sandcastles and had great fun splatting one at a time showing us that one had been taken away. We are really proud of how well our pupils are now doing with taking ownership of their personal care. Pupils have learnt how to clean their teeth for 2 minutes every afternoon, clean themselves after using the toilet and how to keep themselves safe.

What a busy term we have had!

We are all looking forward to the, hopefully, much sunnier next term.

Becki, Lauren and the Acorns team



Willow Class

It has been another busy term in Willow Class. In English, we have continued to follow the Read Write Inc. programme. We have been introduced to Fred the Frog, who only speaks in sounds. He has taught us how to 'Fred talk' and then blend sounds into whole words. We have enjoyed reading the new range of story books.

Every day, we read our books with our partners and we help each other if we get stuck. We have been answering questions about the stories we have read and have great fun playing 'fastest finger' where we have to quickly find the answer on the page. By the end of each week, we know so much about the story topic that we complete an independent writing task. Our teacher, Kelly, has been amazed at how our writing has developed and how good we are at checking and marking our own work too!

In Maths, we have been learning to count in twos, fives and tens. To help us understand multiplication, we arranged counters into rows and columns. We call this an 'array'. We also used our knowledge of doubles to help us recall the two times table. With Julie, we learnt about capacity and how to measure liquids. We can read scales on measuring jugs and can compare the capacities of different containers.



In Science, we have looked at materials and how they are suited to their uses. We used this knowledge when we designed and made boats. We decided which materials would be suitable. We then tested our boats on water and then talked about what worked and what didn't. Some floated and did quite well but some sank and became soggy! We concluded that plastic and wood make good materials for boats, whereas paper and cardboard do not.



Our topic this half term has been 'Transport'. We have learnt about the history of a range of modes of transport, including cars, trains, aeroplanes and bicycles. We watched a video showing some people in the past trying to fly. It was funny and we laughed a lot! At the end of the topic, we wrote reports to show all that we had learnt about the topic. This is Kenzie's report:

- George Stephenson invented the Rocket train.
- The Wright brothers invented airplanes and helicopters and jets.
- Cars have changed over the years. There are now driverless and electric cars.
- The Bloodhound can go faster than the speed of sound.

We are now looking forward to Sports Day and lots of fun and games in the sun. We are hoping for good weather in our final weeks of term.

We wish you all a lovely summer holiday and look forward to seeing everyone in September.



Willow Class

Laurel Class

Laurel Class have really enjoyed this term and got through lots of exciting things. We are very proud of all the children for what they have achieved this year in Laurel. They have all made excellent progress.



We have had a wonderful year together.

Our focus topic this term has been transport. We have looked at all sorts of modes of transport and created lots of fabulous artwork, including painting many varieties of vehicles, hot air balloon papier mâché, toilet roll cars and much more.

We have been busy learning phonics using our new Read Write Inc. scheme every day. The children have adapted really well to this new scheme and we have some lovely resources that the children have enjoyed exploring.

In our daily maths sessions, we have been learning to count in twos and in tens, sort objects, adding to twenty, shapes, number bonds to ten and doubling.



One of the children's favourite activities has been cooking with a transport theme; traffic light themed biscuits, banana and strawberry cars and jelly boats.

On Friday, 21st May, we took part in World Faith Day; with our religious study focus for the day being Sikhism. We crafted some salt dough diva lamps, painted and decorated them with vibrant colours and added plenty of glitter-like we always do! We watched some Sikh dancing on the plasma and created our own dance! The children loved joining in. We have some excellent dancers in Laurel, natural performers. Those who didn't want to join in with the dancing cheered the others on and played an instrument. We all had a great day!

We have also been able to use the back field on Tuesday afternoons again this half term, which has been fantastic. We have enjoyed watching all the children grow in confidence with climbing and balancing along the play structure. At the start of term, some children were nervous about moving along independently but now speed along with caution and precision.



Thank you for all your support this year and we wish you a very happy, sunny summer.

Best wishes, Laurel Class

Hazel Class

We have had a busy time in Hazel Class and have done lots of fun activities. We have made the most of our outside space even though the weather hasn't quite been the typical April/May weather we hoped for.

In science we have been looking at magnets, floating and sinking and planting plants. We planted our own chives to create our own hair to cut and also planted some sunflower seeds which we all look forward to watching grow. We focused on the understanding that plants need light and water to grow. In floating and sinking, one activity that the pupils particularly enjoyed was 'sink my boat'. Pupils made foil boats, stated whether they floated or sank and then added coins to the boat to see how many coins sunk our boats.

All the pupils really enjoy our PE sessions and time outside. We have started each lesson with a tag rugby type game of tag, followed by throwing over arm, under arm and rolling. We have practised our rolling with games of bowls and skittles too! Pupils have enjoyed time on the climbing frame at the end of each session, where some pupils are gaining confidence in climbing and their balance.



In English, we have all started across the school adopting the Read Write Inc. programme. All pupils are beginning to understand this new way of learning and we have already started to see the benefits and progress made in their reading and writing.

In PSHCE we have been understanding friendships, what makes a good friend, giving gifts, the language we use and working as a team. Linking to writing we have also created Hazel friendship books.

As part of our topic we have been learning about transport we have been acting out different transport in drama. Some of our activities have included packing a bag for a holiday and acting out being on an aeroplane.



Next half term, we are all very excited about going swimming at Crewkerne Aqua Centre and some trips to Magdalen Farm. It will be lovely to have some offsite visits.

Comments from the pupils:
I made a boat and sunk the boat.
I like playing Jenga.
I liked doing friendship bracelets in PSHCE.
I like kicking goal in PE.
I like to kick the ball at playtimes.
I did the climbing frame 3 times. I liked throwing the ball overarm in PE.
I liked the train story. I liked when the train visited the horses.
I like pushing and pulling.
I like getting my feet wet.
I have tried new foods.



Elm Class

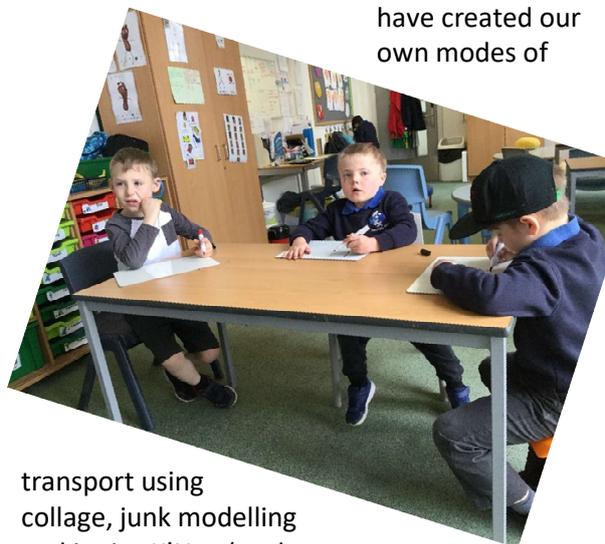
What a wet start to the Summer term! It has been wonderful to have the whole of Elm Class back together again; we have all settled back into school and learning remarkably well considering what a strange year it has been for us all. We are also lucky to welcome Colette to the Elm Team as our Teaching Assistant.



Despite the wet weather, we have taken full advantage of the outside spaces we have at school, developing our social and play skills, using equipment to self-regulate and exploring our environment. When the sun has made an appearance, we have been able to carry out science experiments to observe ice and other frozen items melting (we had toys frozen in ice that we had to rescue!).



Throughout this half term we have been thoroughly engaged with our transport topic, from making and racing cars to watching rockets take off (a bottle filled with vinegar and bicarbonate of soda at a safe distance!). We have created our own modes of



transport using collage, junk modelling and junior K'Nex (we have some budding designers and engineers!).

As a school we held a 'World Faiths Day' with each class exploring a different faith. We were very excited to find out more about Paganism, especially as they love nature as much as we do. We made a class wheel of the year, explored natural scents and used garden herbs and flowers to make potions and ointments (none were consumed or applied!). My personal favourite was watching the children try out Morris Dancing using bells and cloths to add to the merriment. We ended the day by tasting the bread we had made with local honey and jam.

As we move further into Summer we will embark on our final topic of the year – the Olympics. We will find out about some of the nations competing: where in the world they are, their flags, their food and their culture. We will be trying out lots of sports whilst remembering the importance of teamwork. We will look back on our wonderful year in Elm Class and look forward to the transition to our new classes and a sunny Summer holidays.

Stacey, Alice, Kian and Colette

Maple Class

Maple Class have been working really hard since Easter across all of their subjects. We have been working to improve our literacy skills using the Read Write Inc. programme and, as a result, our reading and sentence construction have really improved. In maths we've made great strides in telling the time and we've also been recording and interpreting data as well as some work on fractions, division and using a calculator.

Sue has worked on timbre in music and the children have enjoyed being immersed in sound baths. They have also worked on relationships in PSHCE and drama. They also planted and nurtured sunflowers that many of you will have in your gardens.

Although they'll tell you otherwise, Maple Class have loved their weekly science experiments which have included: studying the effects of bacteria on foods (not one for the faint hearted), sending mice into space and learning about water pollution and water treatment plants (ask them about sedimentation and coagulation and the effect that alum has on dirty water).



In Art we've worked on creating a Graffiti wall and, as part of our transport theme, we've been crafting and using pastels – with some amazing results.

We've also enjoyed dance, cricket, football, touch-typing and learning about the history of transport from the invention of the wheel to the first man in space.

Next half-term looks to be equally fun and demanding as we look to embrace the theme of the Olympics (whether it goes ahead or not). Look forward to (among other things) Venn diagrams, using a stopwatch, Japanese food and art activities and a special Pentathlon Challenge, where each pupil will plan to make five special individual achievements in order to get their gold medal.

As we look to finally being freed from many of the restrictions of Covid we'd like to thank Maple parents for your amazing support and good humour and we look forward to sharing your child's achievements with you through the annual reports (coming soon).



Kevin, Sue, Lesley, Donna and Nellie

Ash Class

Ash have continued to develop their independence through our Lifeskills challenges and are proud to say everyone has passed at least one of these ASDAN courses.

Maths and numeracy continue to observe themes relevant to later life, with special focus on Time, Money and number work. In readiness for our Sports Day events, we have also been learning about positional and directional language.

Literacy occurs across almost all lessons and students continue to enjoy reporting on their weekend news, practising their writing and reading in functional skills lessons. We have started an ASDAN course which we can run alongside our Read Write Inc. programme and we're happy to report the students are reading and spelling much more confidently.

We have begun to learn some words in French. We have kept this to simple greetings, numbers and expressing food preferences. As ever, our students have enjoyed tasting a plethora of different foods. Escargot and les cuisses de grenouilles are rumoured but have still not made an appearance.

Students have experimented with many different sensory mediums like paper-crafting, sculpting from clay and using marbling in Art. We worked on individual and collaborative projects as we've learned about important social / cultural events, including: St. George's Day, Ramadan, Wesak, National Vegetarian Week and Mary Anning's birthday.

We are desperately looking forward to our harvest from the raised garden beds we've planted. Using the garlic for a garlic bread whilst watching how tall our beans and peas might grow will be a job for later in the term. You may have sensed that Ash Class enjoy learning alongside food; we have taken the ASDAN course 'Cooking for Ourselves and Others' to continue with this. In accordance with Rights Respecting Schools, students were given a choice and they chose to make: sausage/veggie sausage rolls, cheese and chocolate (not together) fondue, burgers/veggie burgers with a coleslaw and shortbread biscuits.

In an effort to stay physically healthy and active, students have enjoyed some of the fine weather outside for PE. We have been practising our football skills and other ball skills when we have been able to get on the field. We have even trialled a rounders game and are beginning to think about position and speed much more effectively.



Ash have had a taste of careers by interviewing some staff about jobs, assessing ourselves for which skills and qualities we have and which jobs might suit us. We also acted as part of the Student Voice to help appoint a new teaching member of staff.

Finally, we have been re-exploring music ready for (hopefully) a Summer of festivals and live music. We can now recognise some common

notes and play together more comfortably to create some rhythms.

Oak Class

In Oak Class this term we have been enjoying some fabulously interesting delights in cooking, getting wet and messy during our sensory stories, moving to music and enjoying a bit more time outside doing some gardening. We have also been continuing with our important individual therapy programmes.



“I really enjoyed exploring a new environment.”



“Chickens were my particular favourite – I laugh when they cluck.”



“I loved looking at new things.”



Post 16 has been a little different this term as we have started to see an ease in restrictions, we have been able to start getting out and about again, with a view to venturing even further for the last part of the year as we go off exploring colleges again. The students have worked incredibly hard on their enterprise project this term, growing a range of wonderful vegetables in the poly tunnel and selling some to earn money to fund their next adventure; inclusive cycling in the New Forest!

Whilst the weather has been a little unpredictable, we have still managed to spend a lot of time outside; from pitching tents in preparation for our Duke of Edinburgh Bronze (on site) Expedition to basketball games where the students well and truly put the staff to shame with their skills!

Opportunities to be independent have started to increase this term and we have seen resilience, hard work and determination from our students as they progress on their path towards adult life.

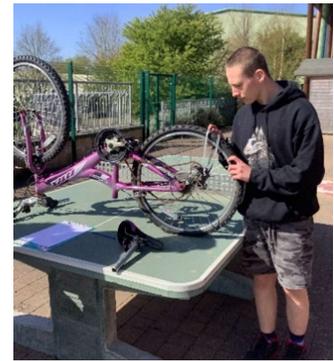
Careers education has included some great video chats with students from Weymouth and Oakwood Colleges, digital tours and exploring courses available.

The students have been busy preparing meals on Mondays, developing their basic cooking skills and learning how to make themselves a quick, healthy lunch. We have plenty more opportunities coming up for them to practise and perfect these skills as we head into Summer, so make sure they are showing off what they have learnt and cooking for you at home!

Have a fantastic, relaxed Summer!

Emma and the Oak 1 team

“On Friday morning we are rebuilding this bike because as you can see it’s broken and the tyres are falling off the bike. We are putting new things on the bike like new wheels and new brakes and a seat and maybe new coloured spray paint. We might do it red and black because it’s a great combination. It’s going to look sick when we’ve finished.”



“I have enjoyed doing Horticulture because I loved doing jobs out there like weeding and watering. I also loved planting different things like tomatoes, potatoes and cauliflower.”



“I am making an omelette and I liked making it. I like cooking on Mondays. We make our own lunch.”



“I enjoyed making pizzas. I put tomato puree on and I like grating the cheese in the cheese grater and putting the cheese on the pizza. They were very tasty.”



Cedar Class

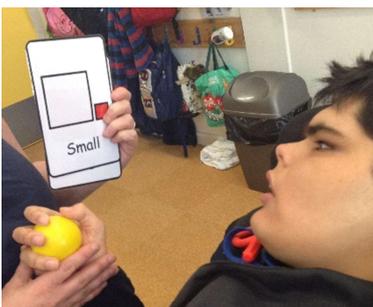
Welcome to summer! We hope it does arrive soon and we see the sunshine, although we enjoyed seeing and feeling the large hail balls that fell in May and hearing the thunder storm.

Cedar are all busy and back together after the winter lockdown. We have begun our new story for this half term, "On the bus". It comes from the Read Write Inc. books which we have developed into a sensory story for our class; it also ties in with the whole school topic this half term: Transport.

In our Sensology lessons we have listened to transport sounds and looked at forces push and pull. We hope to have a tug of war, Cedar style for Sports Day later in the term (all being well).

Monday mornings is still music with Rachel exploring the sounds of different instruments, the big bass drum has been a particular favourite of ours and may appear on Christmas lists!

Maths has been all about big and small and practising numbers.



We welcomed Liz Clark, the physio, back after her maternity leave. She commented: "The boys have all got much longer!"



Friday, 21st May was multi-faith day in school and Cedar Class explored the Hindu faith with smells, taste, costume and dance. We all enjoyed this colourful day.



In Art we have been using wheels to print tracks with different paints and tying in our push and pull within science.



We very much hope to see you all at the end of term and wish you all a lovely healthy summer.

Cedar Team

Juniper Class

Hello from Juniper Class!

This half term Juniper have been very busy with their learning and focusing on developing independence.



We have been implementing new ways of learning into everyday routine, such as Read Write Inc. into our daily morning greetings. We have also been working on promoting more independence, such as choosing own snacks, putting rubbish in the bin, and sweeping up after ourselves. In Maths we have been working on the concept of 'big' and 'small', 'fast' and 'slow'.

Highlights of the half term:

One of our pupils had been using coloured symbols but has now progressed on to using black and white symbols. This half term he has also begun the next step of using black and white symbols with larger text and smaller pictures.

Another one of our pupils, who joined us just before Christmas, is using many more words verbally and vocalising his happiness within Juniper Class.

An important and focused part of our learning in Juniper is communication. Another pupil has been communicating clearly when he needs 'time out', and uses this in an effective way. He has also been communicating clearly his needs and wants.

Our fourth pupil has become more independent with meeting his own basic needs, such as toileting and making a drink. He has made progress with Grid3 on iPad, which is his communication aid. This half term we have begun introducing new words onto the iPad.

We have had a very positive half term and look forward to this half term, where we can continue focusing on our independence and progressing with our learning. 😊



PUPIL VOICE

Pupil Voice is part of Mountjoy's commitment to maintain the Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that all children have the right to have a say and to be heard. At Mountjoy we encourage students to develop their communication in the best way they can and we listen to what they say. We hope you enjoy reading the comments from pupils in this newsletter.



Ash pupils made a list of their own questions to ask at the Pupil Voice section of a recent staff interview. Their opinions on their favourite interviewees were considered by the board.



Oak Class enjoyed a brilliant careers trip learning about working on a farm. They got stuck in to the jobs and enjoyed being outdoors in the fresh air. Here is what they thought of the day...



"I stroked the pig at Magdalen Farm. He felt soft. I felt happy."



"I stroked a chicken. It made me feel happy."

"I planted 12 broad bean seeds. It was dirty, I washed my hands. It made me feel happy."



"I was having fun with the hosepipe at Magdalen Farm. I was gardening, watering the plants. It was fun."

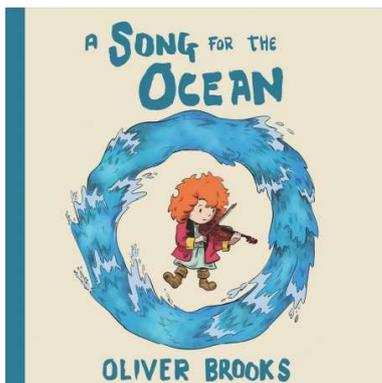
"I enjoyed the farm day. I liked collecting the chicken eggs and checking if they were small or big ones."



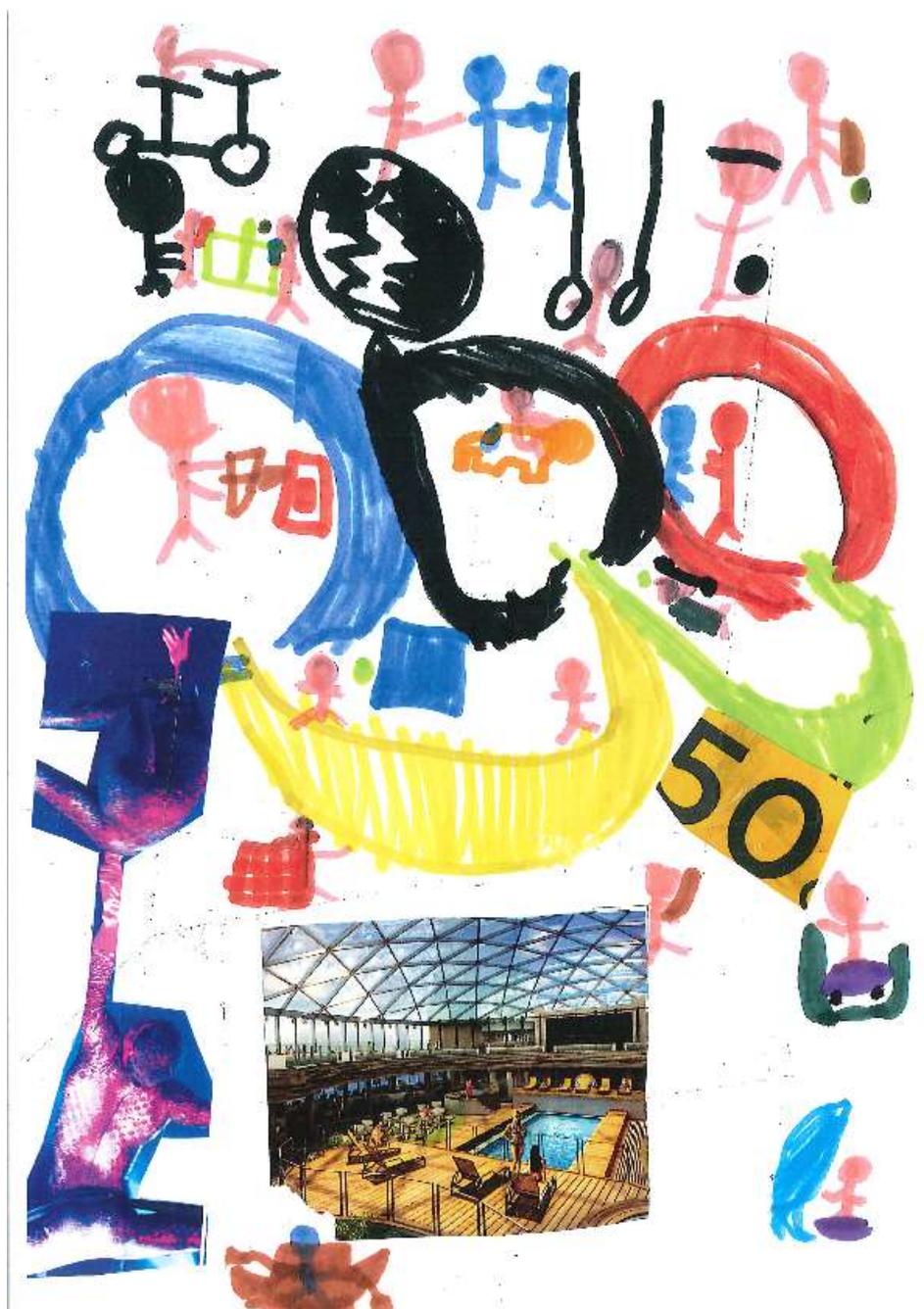
New Book

A new book has been donated to the school library. It is called "A Song for the Ocean" and it is written by Oliver Brooks. It is a magical story, beautifully illustrated by the author. Oliver Brooks is a children's book illustrator and writer living in Rye, East Sussex.

Pupils enjoy reading to others as part of their literacy and PSHCE lessons and we hope they will enjoy this book when distancing regulations allow them to visit other classes again.



Artwork



To celebrate the Olympics, Heidi created this fabulous picture at home.

ECO School

Summer seems to have crept up on us and here we are with just a short while before we break up. The school continues to embrace our Eco ethos and you may have noticed the blister 'monster' in reception that thrives on being fed used blister packets (keep 'em coming). In September we hope to have a crisp packet recycling scheme up and running and we are really looking forward to meeting as an Eco-group before the holidays to discuss what other priorities we have for next year.

Any ideas from parents would be especially welcome. Please send to:
k.broadway@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

Pastoral Support Team

We hope you enjoyed your Easter holidays and we're all looking forward to some well-needed sunshine as we now head into summer! We're really pleased, as a pastoral support team, that our Family Liaison Officers are able to make home visits again. It's so lovely to be able to see families face-to-face rather than trying to support over the phone. It was also fun to meet up for a walk and the weather stayed dry just long enough for us all to avoid getting wet! We aim to offer more walks and if any of you have a particular place you think would be good to meet up for a Mountjoy amble, please let us know. Coffee mornings are back too and we are hoping to continue to offer these termly from now on.



We have all had to update our technology skills this year with so many meetings taking place remotely and I have to thank you all for managing our Annual Reviews so well over Microsoft Teams and telephones. It hasn't been ideal, or easy sometimes, but they have all gone really well thanks to you and our wonderful admin team who have been no end of support! We've actually found that more professionals have been able to attend remotely and some families with busy schedules have preferred it, so we will keep offering a remote option for future reviews as well. All being well, we look forward to welcoming you back into school for Annual Reviews next term. It will be lovely to be able to have the pupils join us for their meetings again then too!



It's also great to have Swifts Clinics back in school. If you would like to make an appointment, please contact our reception so that they can book you in for a slot. It's lovely to feel that I'm getting to know you all now. Please do get in touch with either myself or one of our Family Liaison Officers, Sandra Hutchings or Emily Richmond if you need any support.



Stay safe and have a wonderful summer!

Kate, Sandra and Emily

SENDCo: k.millican@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

FLOs: sandra.hutchings@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

e.richmond@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

News from the office

Firstly, a big thank you to parents and carers for returning consent forms, medical forms and making payment via ParentPay for all of the trips and visits that have taken place this term. Keeping children safe and parents informed about off site visits is very important to us and your co-operation and support this term has been really appreciated.

Please continue to order meals on ParentPay; this enables us to cook to order and reduces wastage. If you think you are eligible for free school meals and would like some help applying, please have a chat with one of our Family Liaison Officers. As school life is getting busier, we are now sending reminders by text message. Please let us know if you would like help to sign up to ParentPay.

A reminder that it is very important to report pupil absence. We are obliged to follow up on all absences and reception staff will telephone home for a reason for absence if we have not been informed. You can report pupil absence by emailing the office: office@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk or by telephoning 01308 861155.

Finally, I hope you all have a lovely summer break and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in September and meeting our new families and staff members.

Best wishes from the office team.



**Covid Information – Please remember to call or text our Covid line if you have a positive test following symptoms within 48 hours of being in school:
07775 317017**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Parent/Carers Coffee morning	Tuesday, 22 June
Staff training day (school closed to pupils)	Monday, 28 June
Family Picnic Day and last day of Summer Term	Friday, 23 July
Staff training days (school closed to pupils)	Thursday, 2 & Friday, 3 September
First day of Autumn Term	Monday, 6 September
Autumn half Term	Monday, 25 to Friday, 29 October
Last day of Autumn Term	Friday, 17 December

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