**JUNE NEWSLETTER**

June 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our June newsletter.

These newsletters are sent out on a monthly basis to keep you informed about what is happening in school. If you ever want to contribute an ‘article’ or suggest information that should be on the newsletters, I would be delighted to hear about them.

*Please note events that are underlined and in italics are new or amended since the previous newsletter.*

**Monday 26th June -** National fieldwork fortnight (Geography – Environment theme), Ladybirds ‘stay and lunch’ sessions, Swift assembly from the Greensand Trust

**Tuesday 27th June –** Ladybirds ‘stay and lunch’, Alameda dance team show to Y4

**Wednesday 28th June –** Sports Day (am only) please see details sent out below and previously in an email from the office, Alameda school tours

**Thursday 29th June –** Preschool ‘stay and lunch’ sessions, Open the Book Assembly (KS2)

***Friday 30th June*** *– Y1 Seasides in the past day, More Alameda school tours*

**Saturday 1st July –** PTASummer Fayre – more details to follow, more Alameda school tours

**Monday 3rd July –** 6:30pm Curriculum, Learning and Standards Governors’ Meeting

**Wednesday 5th July –** School Council’s ‘no technology’ morning and litter picks

**Thursday 6th July –** Letters home re new classes and teachers for September, *Y4 tennis festival*

**Friday 7th July** – Class Swap Morning at Russell and Middle School Transition day *(TBC – see item 1 below re strikes),* New Intake 2023 ‘stay and play’ sessions

**Saturday 8th July –** Ladybirds’ summer fayre

**Monday 10th July –** 6:30pm – Full Governors’ Meeting, *PTA Sunflower Competition ends, 1:20pm Drumming assembly*

**Tuesday 11th July** – 2:15pm and 6pm - Year 4 performances to parents (more details to follow)

**Wednesday 12th July –** School council litter pick

**Friday 14th July –** End of Year Reports home to parents – all year groups

**Sunday 16th July –** Ampthill Gala and parade – Russell Lower School does ‘Toy Story’ – ‘You’ve got a friend in us.’

**Monday 17th July –** 2:30pm – Open Afternoon – come in to see the children’s work and classrooms and then you are free to take the children home

**Tuesday 18th July –** 9:15 – Year 4 leavers’ Assembly to parents, *Foundation Stage to Herrings Green Farm,*  1:30 – 3:30pm – Leavers’ Party for Y4

**Wednesday 19th July –** Violin assembly to school

***Thursday 20th July –*** *choir perform at Richmond Manor (pm)*

**Friday 21st July –** Last day of school**;** Break up for the summer

**More detailed information on the above events will follow in due course**

**Strikes:**

You may have heard in the national press that the NEU plan for its members to strike on 5th and 7th July. As previously, this will not affect Russell directly: school will be open as usual on these days, but it may affect the Transition Day (planned for 7th) when Y4 go to Alameda/Woodlands for the day as these schools may be striking. At the moment, a possible alternative date being discussed for this is Thursday 6th July. As we hear more confirmed from the other schools, we will keep you updated.

**Summer heat:**

Please can we request that children have sun cream applied to them before coming to school? This should then last all day. Children can apply their own ‘top ups’ of cream during the day if necessary, but please do show the children how to do this first. The children are getting in a bit of a mess and often then rub cream in their eyes! Please always encourage them to wash their hands carefully after applying it too. Sadly, we cannot help and with 30 children in each class it is simply impossible. Thank you in advance.

Please can we remind you that any sandals worn must be appropriate and safe for school. Suitable school style sandals are those with no open toes and full ‘backs’. Please also be aware that tights or socks must be worn (either ankle or knee-length). This is for health and safety reasons. Please do ensure your child always has a water bottle with them, and a hat on sunny days. Thank you again.

**Uniform:**

Please can you ensure your child does not come to school wearing trainers for a normal school day? We do not want standards to slip in any way at all as we approach the summer holidays. Thank you.

**September staff update:**

We are currently planning our staffing for September; the details will be finalised soon. However, staffing will remain very stable going forward. We are very sad to tell you that Mrs Hale (Foundation Stage) will not be returning to school following her maternity leave, but we would like to thank her for her many wonderful years at Russell and wish her well with her growing young family and new venture. Miss Cranston who has been covering Mrs Hale’s maternity leave will now continue in Dove Class. We are extremely pleased to have been able to successfully recruit her as a permanent member of the team. She has been phenomenal. Equally, Mrs Thompson (Year 3) will be leaving us in the summer to spend more time with her young family. It will be very sad to see her leave, but we are also so pleased that Mrs Thompson will be able to spend this precious time at home. We wish Mrs Thompson and her family all the very best in the future. Mrs Hale and Mrs Thompson have made fantastic contributions to the children and families at Russell. The governors and I would like to send them our enormous thanks for all they have done here.

As you will see from our staffing structure below, the new Blackbird Class teacher will be someone very well-known to us – Mrs Milligan – who will be moving to KS2 from September. As a result, there will be a few other staff tweaks, but otherwise staffing will remain very stable.

The teaching team for next academic year will be:

**Foundation Stage:**

Mrs Brown – Swan Class (FS lead)

Ms Leung – Swift Class

Mrs Lyons – Dove Class (formerly Miss Cranston, who will be getting married this summer)

**Year 1:**

Mrs Rogers – Owl Class (increasing her days and moving from Wren Class)

Mrs Cox - Puffin Class

Mrs Jochacy (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) Ms Meyern (moving from Year 2 - Thursday, Friday) – Wren Class

**Year 2:**

Mrs Coles – Penguin Class

Mrs Johnson – Greenfinch Class

Mrs Hitchings – Robin Class (KS1 Lead)

**Year 3:**

Miss Walker – Goldfinch Class

Ms Gallagher – Blackbird Class (currently Mrs Milligan, but will be Ms Gallagher from September)

Mrs Nilletti (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) and Mrs Salih (nee Miss Thompson) – Nightingale Class

**Year 4:**

Mrs Beirne – Woodpecker Class (maternity leave for Ms Lyons who leaves us in July to have her second child. Good luck Ms Lyons!)

Mrs Moffat – Starling Class

Mrs Tuck – Kingfisher Class (KS2 Lead)

We are so lucky to have such an experienced, talented and stable teaching team, especially at a time when so many other schools are really struggling to recruit.

Children will spend a morning with their new class teacher on Friday 7th July. A letter will come home on Thursday 6th July, letting you know who this will be. We deliberately only send it the day before so that any possible anxiety and worry is minimised. If your child should come home concerned, please reassure them: all the teachers at Russell are lovely and they will soon ‘settle in’ and they will definitely be with some of their friends (even if they are in Y2 who will be ‘mixed’ as usual this year). Thank you.

**VW Inspire Day:**

One Friday 9th June 2023 we were very lucky to have a VW ‘Aspire’ technology and science day at Russell Lower, supported by VW staff (and particularly, Claudine Warwick who works for VW).

Each year group attended an assembly which focussed on electric cars and sustainability. They also had a 30-minute slot at a ‘car show’ on the field where they were able to get 'up close and personal' with 6 different incredible cars – including the ID. Buzz! The children were told about the cars and able to ask questions, they were even able to get inside to try them out (obviously without the engines running!). This was then followed by an in-class activity with VW staff and the teaching staff. The whole day was a huge success and the children not only learnt lots, but had good fun in the process. A huge thank you goes to Claudine and her team for making it such a wonderful experience for the children and staff.

**Russell Lower School Values:**

Each half term, we teach the children about a different value. We then have a weekly ‘values’ assembly where we celebrate the demonstration of this value. The values this term are:

**Summer 1** : Trust

**Summer 2** : Tolerance

**Summer Reading Challenge 2023:**

The annual Summer Reading Challenge, organised by The Reading Agency and delivered by public libraries, has a sports and games theme this year: **Ready, Get Set, Read**.

Ampthill and Flitwick libraries are keen to support schools and families, in encouraging children to keep reading throughout the summer.

The Summer Reading Challenge runs Friday 21st July to Saturday 9th September 2023 and aims to keep children’s minds and bodies active over the summer break. Children are encouraged to read whatever they like for the challenge, recognising the importance of reading for pleasure in increasing empathy and improving well-being, as well as in children’s educational success.

**The Challenge:**

Children must be members of the library service

Join the library using the link in the attached flyer, or go to your local library

The challenge invites children to read any six library books or more during the summer holidays

Children can borrow books or read e-books, magazines and audiobooks available from the Virtual Library

Families can sign up for the challenge at any library, at any stage in the summer from Friday 21st July

Children are awarded a certificate and a medal for reading 6 books (they love the medal!)

Children completing the challenge (6 books) will be entered into a lucky dip at their library for the chance to win a £50 Lego voucher

See the flyer for more details and please keep reading over the summer – it will make all the difference when we return to school in September. Thank you.

**Reminder - Sports Day:**

Please see below information about our sports mornings that has already gone out in an email. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible!

**SPORTS DAY MORNING  -  WEDNESDAY 28th JUNE**

We would like to invite you along to our Sports Day on Wednesday 28th June (weather permitting)

This year the format will be as follows:

 Foundation and KS1 (Years R, 1 & 2)

Sports Events **9.30 am – 10.30 am**

KS2 (Years 3 & 4)

Sports Events **10.45 am – 11.45 am**

Refreshments will be available throughout the morning in the main hall

(Kindly provided by PTA)

 Once the scores are in, we will award the Sports Day Trophy to the house with the most points in an assembly

**Your child should come to school in their PE kit on the day please.**

Your child may either wear their purple PE top or a T Shirt in their house colour could be worn instead:

(Beech – Blue,  Oak – Red,  Sycamore – Green,  Willow – Yellow) We also have coloured bibs in school

As your child will be outside much of the morning,  please also provide a water bottle, sun hat and apply sun cream before school.

May we remind you that any photographs/videos taken must be for your own personal use only and NOT shared on any social media sites.  Thank you.

Parents: as you arrive, please go straight to the school field at the correct time.  A sign on the back of a chair will show you which ‘station’ the children will be starting at.  Please wait at your child’s class start point (around the long edges of the marked grid). The children will come out with their class teachers and rotate around all the stations (clockwise as you look at the field with your back to the school building), spending a few minutes at each.

Please **arrive via** the **main entrance** and **leave via the KS2 gate entrance**(A&F Motors end) promptly after the event.  Prolonged farewells only unsettle the children for the rest of the day.  Thank you.

We look forward to seeing you!  Fingers crossed for at least dry weather…

**PE and festivals news:**

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded the School Games Platinum Mark Award for the 2022/23 academic year again following on from last year’s successful application.

The School Games Mark is a Government-led award scheme launched in 2012, facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community, and we are delighted to have been recognised for our success.

Some of our sporting achievements this year include:

* Wheelchair basketball workshops for all classes
* KS2 swimming for both year 3 and 4 children
* A huge range of cultural capital/enrichment opportunities for all such as Bhangra Dance, World Cup Dance and Irish Dance workshops
* The training of 10 year 3 and 10 year 4 sports leaders
* Scoot sessions for years 2 and 3 and Bikeability sessions for year 4

As well as a huge range of local inter-school competitions attended this year.

We are extremely proud of our pupils for their dedication to all aspects of school sport. As part of our application, we were asked to fulfil criteria in the areas of participation, competition, workforce and clubs, and we are pleased that the hard work of everyone at our school has been rewarded this year. We look forward to applying once again in 2024!

**Community Events:**

A message from the Ampthill Festival team:

Get ready to rock out with us Friday, July 14th at AmpRocks! We're bringing you an incredible line-up featuring Grammy award-winning Clean Bandit, along with Black Honey, Kula Shaker, and Jacob & Amelie.

It doesn't stop there as Saturday, July 15th we’re bringing you AmpProms, where the amazing Ampthill Concert Orchestra, Redborne Jazz Band, and Ampthill Town Band will be performing alongside some incredible special guests. Get ready for an unforgettable experience filled with timeless melodies and breath-taking fireworks.

Don't wait too long to grab your spot to avoid disappointment. Tickets are available at [www.ampthillfestival.com/tickets](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ampthillfestival.com%2Ftickets%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR27mGRLT-YELJX5e62RDQOKR8d5HW5Kwv92m_xJkHYwd-Emd2QwWWrjhoY&h=AT1QEJzvx4PObvw9oMGLDuBJUNBhBwx7Gufc_Y6EZJDSNNoZcJomszPmj2YLaCd37OWvyFPSZxuCYXeg2jYT_pqlZRGwPRNi7ChFXVeTbV_2B4FMxrhd3EsyNerEkHOq9Hby78hjm59bKcpVAiel6uHi8Q&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT3EFBvQc-0Lx71r8SqUUotGhhsA2l1Rcdp60_Tq93jB3v_yfpd5c_PkEqsFkY8DUaphd8rluN3KUjI-rI6Q39X3Zty6PNduQ_nqcXMdnbTToK1iDu1lZhfqVfy3CYeDQw3A6eZYJ0NejkzYMwyamdFGp92djUAMKLFZiOL-m0MDbCp8RAwtR0foueqnzCR7ftwOg_m1JAvs). (See poster below)

Please see the rest of the newsletter for community events/posters etc.

**And finally:**

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and for all your on-going support.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher

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