



School Community Newsletter July 2019

Welcome to our July newsletter including a round-up of last half term from each class, communication from our Headteacher Clare, community news and dates for your diary.

Classroom round-up



In Sunflower we have enjoyed exploring our topic 'The Sea' this half term. The children have been learning about different sea creatures, blowing bubbles, making sea animal postures in yoga, making bubble paintings and sewing small rainbow fish. We also created our own huge under the sea classroom display using collaborative creative thinking. We visited Shoreham Beach and had a wonderfully peaceful morning splashing in the waves, digging the sand and exploring the large rocks and plants. The picnic and short meditation listening to the waves and feeling the wind in our faces was beautiful. We held our end of year 'Jumping the River' puja for the fourteen children that are transitioning to 'big school'. The children enjoyed singing Dharma songs and showing their parents our Sunflower percussion band skills.

We wish those children and their families all the best for their next adventures!



In Rainbow Class we have been enjoying our topic 'Flowers, Plants and Trees'. We have been learning about the parts of a plant, what plants need to grow and how photosynthesis works! The children really enjoyed our trip to Wakehurst Place where we learnt more about plants and enjoyed a talk. The children also created some lovely Georgia O' Keeffe inspired art work after learning about her life and art work. We also learnt about the life of Van Gogh and had a go at our own 'Sunflowers' in a post impressionist style. We celebrated our last outdoor session in the wild garden with a fire and toasted marshmallows. We have been taking it in turns to be 'sun in the centre' to celebrate the qualities in all our classmates too. In PE we have been learning different jumping skills to help us to jump high and far.



Mountain class have really enjoyed exploring their topic 'Oceans and Shorelines' this term. We learnt the location and characteristics of the world's oceans, why the sea water is salty and the different layers to the ocean depths. We have done some wonderful home research on sea creatures, taken part in a beach clean, visited the rare wildflowers along Shoreham Beach's Site of Scientific Interest, and been giant fossil hunting along the ancient chalk shores of Telscombe. We have enjoyed our outdoor yoga sessions in the sun where we have collaborated on developing a Yoga story on a mythical island. We have also collaborated brilliantly with Lotus class in our Forest School sessions, making a woodland percussion band, Hape Zome leaf print bunting, clay tree spirits and campfire honey bread! In Maths we have been brushing up on times tables, and looking at units of measurement and data collection. In Science we have been learning about plant germination and pollination by growing sunflowers, as well as beans in a Hydroponic Space Garden.



Ocean class ended the year with our play - the musical **Persephone**. The class performance was a great success. The children showed resilience and determination to do their best- learning their parts, sang, danced and acted. At the same time, we turned the script into a comic strip by designing the look

of the characters and then we penciled, inked, coloured and lettered- just how it would have been done in a Marvel Comic Studio back in the day. We wish our year 4 Ocean class friends the best of luck as they leave us to enter into Lotus class.



Lotus class have been preparing for transition this term, as it is almost time for the year 6 to move on to secondary school. We had two exciting outdoor adventure days- overcoming challenges and working as a team. There was also a special transition puja outside in the Zen garden, which included an inspiring poem from Clare, special memories from the Year 6 leavers and a walking meditation through the school. In Science, we have been doing a series of investigations around science in sport, from what material makes the best sports top to how to make a really bouncy ball. The class enjoyed reading and learning about *The Wind in the Willows*, which we then performed as a musical to the school and to family and friends. Everyone worked so hard at learning their lines, making props and rehearsing. It was a great way to end the year!

Head's Up

Dear Community,

The summer holiday is well and truly upon us!

I want to thank everyone - staff, parents, carers, trustees and children - for co-creating the wonderful community we have.

We have had many highlights this year, as I mentioned in the puja. I will mention them again briefly: we were successful when the ISI came to visit towards the end of September and they gave us a very complimentary short report: <http://dharma.webdesignrct.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/The-Dharma-Primary-School-PMI-Report-2018-11-06-v5-JP-SHC.pdf>

We established a small but keen community (adults) mindfulness group, which we hope to reinstate in

the Autumn term.

A great many events happened around Christmas, including a successful community tea and disco. We continued to fundraise for the Chestnut Tree House (via the Reindeer Run) and for refugees via both Brighton Voices in Exile and the Hummingbird project. Both of these latter charities have built on the interests and care of parents and children.

We have had some interesting visits and talks in the puja, including Caroline Lucas and Ven. Kassapo. Thanks also to Darius for coming to speak to the children at the Monday puja about his visits to ancient Buddhist sites in Asia.

My thanks again to all the community for such a spirited summer fayre and also to those who got out their power tools and gave of their energy for the community grounds' day just before the fayre. It certainly makes a difference!

A great many staff come in during the week - sometimes for short periods of time. You may not have noticed them and so I also want to especially mention staff that are new to us this year and have really added to what we offer. This is in particular Sophia, who has really inspired so many children in violin and piano this year. She will be offering further sessions from September. Also, I am pleased that James (Cosham) will continue to offer PE to Lotus and Ocean. I really thank him, and Georgia, for an excellent sports' day.

Throughout the year, staff and children have joined us and some also have left. The staff have been mentioned elsewhere but here I say good-bye to Wilfie and Henry. I also say a fond farewell to Charlie from year 5, whose family have been associated with the school for many years! Please do feel welcome to come back and visit, leavers!

The space and extra time in the holiday are much needed and are of course in balance with the everyday business of being at school. My wish is for all beings to be happy but also accepting of things as they are (if we cannot change them). I wish that all beings are at peace, with a spacious stillness of heart that creates room for all things.

There is an African saying: "calm seas do not create skilful sailors." This saying means that difficulties we face in our lives help making us strong and able. We can learn something significant from most situations, particularly less easy ones. They help us grow. In fact, without these difficulties, these 'high winds and storms in our lives', we might not be challenged to do the growth bit. And of course, all is temporary and subject to change.

After rest, recuperation and connections with friends and family, I look forward to welcoming you back

on Tuesday 10 September (at 8.55am or earlier of course!)

Community news

It's our 25th anniversary this year and we celebrated at our Summer Fayre on Saturday 22nd June. What a wonderful day it was. We were blessed with the weather but also we are blessed by our vibrant community. Heartfelt thanks to the very many people who contributed to this event; beforehand, during and afterwards. In the build-up, many people spent a considerable time organising and helping. In particular, the 'dream team' of Annabel, Sam and Michaela aided and abetted by many others - Maxine, Vince to name just a few - worked steadily and hard. Sincere thanks to you. A big thanks to Connor and Julie (the steel band was amazing), all the people valiantly manning stalls, and the many staff helped before, during and after.

We say farewell to some members of staff who are moving on this year. Kind wishes and gratitude go to Susan McKenna, who works in the nursery; Jenny Haufek, a TA and drama teacher; Dave Richtor, SEN teaching assistant and Bursar's support; and Emily Goodwin, Lotus class teacher.

We are starting a new parent and child group called 'Ladybirds' on Friday mornings 9.30 - 12. This is open to anyone with a child or children under 5 years old. The intention is that this will provide an Early Years Sangha Group for parents who want to find ideas, support and encouragement for bringing mindfulness into their children's lives. The group will follow a similar rhythm to our nursery mornings, and will provide a good introduction for those considering a Dharma School education. The cost will be a termly subscription of £80 per family (£6 per session), or £8 per individual session. Please register & pay at the office if you would like to join us.

Brighton and Hove Schools Wellbeing Service are offering emotional and mental health sessions for parents and children in August and September. This is a chance to have an informal chat about any questions you may have in a safe, friendly environment. For dates and details click here-

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/d67f8b125e4a9e6fcd93c9d16/files/6e19e640-73b0-4ab4-af01-8f92f00952d9/Flyer_Wellbeing_amended.docx

Diary dates

29 July - 2 Aug Art Camp week 1

5-9 Aug Art Camp week 2

12-16 Aug Art Camp week 3

19-23 Aug Art Camp week 4

5.6.9 Sept Inset for staff

Tues 10 September - Term begins

More details regarding the community meetings, new class meetings and pujas will be forthcoming early in the new academic year.



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For further news and information please visit our school website

<http://www.dharmaschool.co.uk> and connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Main Photo: A sunny Summer Fayre

Parent Community Newsletter

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