



SteinerAcademyExeter Newsletter

Issue No 62 10th Feb 2017

Dates for your Diary

For meetings outside of school hours please use the West Garth Road pedestrian gate to access the site. All evening meetings start at 19.30 unless indicated

11 th Feb	Ten Tors training walk		Thurs 23 rd Feb	14.30 - Class 6 parents' meeting 16.30 - Class 2 parents' meeting 19.30 - Class 3 parents' meeting
Mon 13 th - Fri 17 th Feb	Half term		Wed 1 st March 19.00	Class 7 parents' evening
Mon 20 th Feb	Class 6 rescheduled trip to Dartmoor.		Sat 4 th March	Work Day

Candlemas - Thurs 2nd Feb



Candlemas was celebrated across the school on Thurs. It marks the mid-point between the Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox, when the light begins to return, in pre-Christian times this was the festival of limbolc. Candles were traditionally blessed by the church at this time of year for use in the year ahead. The activity of candle-making, allows us to be thankful for the light that they have provided and begin to celebrate the natural light's return. The world around us slowly starts to shown signs of spring's return and we may hear our little ones herald this in their songs about snowdrops.





A traditional proverb for Candlemas;

If Candlemas Day be fair and bright

Winter will have another fight

If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain

Winter won't come again

If Candlemas Day be dry and fair

The half o the winter's to come and mair

If Candlemas Day be wet and foul

The half o the winter's gone at yule



You may remember that last Thurs was the very wet and windy day let's hope the poem is correct!



Parent and Child news

Parent and child ended their Candlemas day with a story from class 6 students! Everyone enjoyed the treat.

Parent and child groups are thriving and we have a waiting list! They are enjoying being at the heart of our school in the garden room. Parents and children get a glimpse of the 'big school'. We are pleased to announce a fifth morning after Easter. We are also working on a 'transition group' a way to help introduce our new reception children to the school. This is planned for after Easter so watch this space!

`Tries hard, must try harder` : the World of School Improvement.

Even if, at some time in the future, Ofsted ceases to exist, the National Curriculum is washed away, and GCSEs are dug out of deep layers of compressed data like fossils for us to marvel at, one thing will endure into the future from the current age of education. It is the simple concept of School Improvement, led by ideas developed in the world of business known as Change Management.

I am sure that `back in the day` schools always tried to improve, to learn from their mistakes and to address any weakness, but it was too often like the comment I remember from my school report that

appears in the title: 'tries hard, must try harder'! These days change management is big business, and school improvement is a constant requirement. Schools have to have an Improvement Plan, Improvement Partners and Improvement Priorities. Ideally the school's budget is drawn up in line with and all appointments made in response to this Improvement Plan.

Whilst much of this can appear dry and bureaucratic, especially when driven too much by data, tools of change management are invaluable when working to improve things for our children.

They are not complicated. The most effective I ever experienced was a 'name and shame' list put up every evening by the cleaners, recording which class rooms had been left tidy and which not. Others are less threatening, but they do help concentrate the mind.

Here are a few that we are currently using:

- monitoring visits from governors who come with a specific requests, for example to scrutinise students' work, or to conduct case studies;
- meetings between myself and groups of students to discuss (and record) their experiences of different subjects;
- questionnaires for the students to make these same comments but with a degree of anonymity;
- walking tours of the main school with kindergarten parents, enabling me to see things 'up here' through the eyes of those who represent our future growth;
- the constant round of lesson observations and feedback;
- input from specialist advisors.

On this last point it is good to acknowledge the individuals who have been, or will in the near future, be working as school improvement partners.



Chief amongst these has to be **Stephen Jones**. Stephen is a governor of our school (and vice-chair of the board). He is a retired head teacher of many years' experience and a passionate educationalist. The value of Stephen's visits is evident long before his arrival, by virtue of colleagues responding to his advance requests. During the visits themselves he spends time with colleagues and students, observing lessons and looking at students' work. He follows up with an extensive report to which I, as Principal, have to respond. The report is then circulated to all governors and questions arising will find their way on to the next Board of Governors agenda.



Official input comes from **Ceri Morgan**. Ceri, a former Ofsted Inspector, is employed by the Department for Education as an advisor to the four Steiner academies. On Ceri's recent visit he observed lessons, met with students, looked at books and helped me to review our 'Self Evaluation Summary' and our School Improvement Plan'. The significance of these two documents is that they are read by Ofsted inspectors immediately before any visit, sometimes quite literally on the train to their destination.



John Burnett is another addition to our school improvement team. John is an experienced teacher trainer and was course director of the Plymouth University Steiner degree course, in which role he helped develop many of our staff. John has recently been advising in Steiner school in New Zealand, Australia and China. His approach is to combine team-teaching and the modelling of specific techniques with the class teacher in order to broaden their range of skills.

Sarah Wilson was a class teacher at Michael Hall Steiner school in Sussex for many years. Whilst there she developed that school's in-house teacher training programme. Sarah's passion is for exploring ways in which teachers can increase the level of student engagement through methods such as collaborative working, peer marking and outcome based learning (putting this last one alongside the more traditional - for Steiner schools - activity and experience based learning.)



Parent governors **Morag Fraser** and **Jenni Shute** have focussed their monitoring visits on a small handful of students who have Special Educational Needs or are in receipt of Pupil Premium. They are developing case studies on targeted students to identify areas in which we can improve our provision for these more vulnerable groups.



Jonathan Palk was our lead Ofsted inspector back in May 2015 (was it really that long ago?!) We have employed Jonathan as a consultant on assessment. Later this year he will be visiting in order to undertake an audit of maths provision and teaching. Maths is his speciality, and during the last inspection he was able to give many valuable pointers as to how we could improve things.

Steiner Waldorf Schools **Fellowship Advisors** will hopefully complete the set, as requested by teachers or myself. Last year we brought in SWSF advisors for the benefit of our Kindergarten and class one teachers.

We are fortunate to have such an array of people and such a depth of experience to draw on. Hopefully they will contribute to a collective voice that can say `Tries hard, and should do so by working on X, Y and Z.` **Alan Swindell, Principal**

Ten Tors



The Ten Tors group braved very challenging January weather to practice their navigation skills in mist and rain. Swamps, bogs and rivers were crossed, shelter beneath tor stones was sought, spare gloves, coats and socks were required but everyone arrived back at the car park after 21km and were greeted by dry parents and hot chocolate!

As we set off tomorrow for another similar adventure (this time with sub zero conditions forecast) we require similar kit

and more. This is the first year of Steiner Academy Exeter's Ten Tors challenge and we are building our equipment so as more of our students can participate in future years. If you have unused boots, tents, stoves, rucksacks, waterproofs, sleeping mats, sleeping bags to offer we would gratefully receive them. **Frances Dathan, Expedition Club**



Governors - Steve Jones



I am delighted to be part of the governing body. My background has been in comprehensive community schools from Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire and latterly as the head teacher at Heathfield School in Taunton and more recently at King Edward VI Community College in Totnes. Whilst in Totnes I came to know the South Devon Steiner School and we accepted many of their post 16 students into our 6th form. These students were excellent advocates for Steiner education and they went onto universities across the UK including a brilliant mathematician who went on to read Maths at Cambridge.

I have three grown up children and four grandchildren who take up a good proportion of our time. My wife and I spend a lot of time travelling, sailing in the Ionian Sea and walking the moors and the coast of Devon. **Stephen Jones**, vice chair of governors

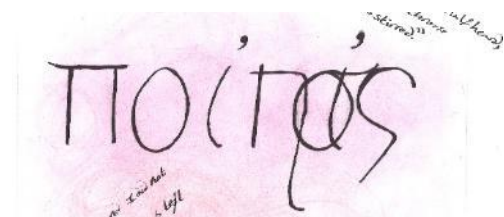
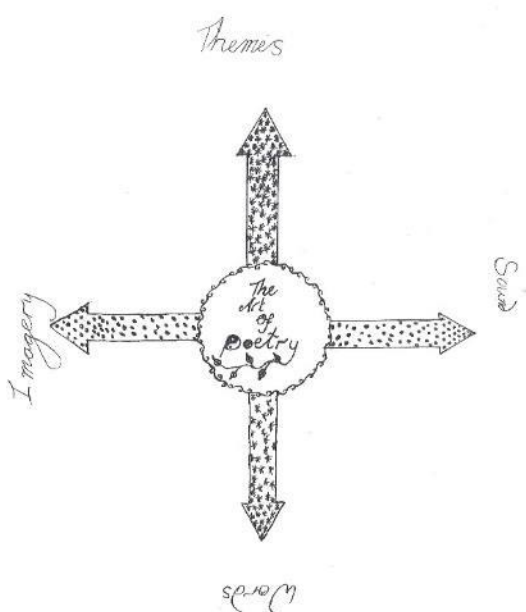
Composting in Kindergarten



Redwood children enjoyed a visit from Melisa Harvey from Devon Community Composting Network. She helped the children to set up their new composting bin.



The Art of Poetry - Class 8



The Wave (a Haiku)
 Crashing, dark, heavy, Spume
 Breaks upon the lonely shore
 No eyes see its death

Joe Lisney

A Haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry consisting of 3 lines of 5, 7, 5 syllables.

The Art of Poetry - Class 8

The Noise of Silence,

The noise of silence,
The loudest of them all,
The subtle nuances
Of a birds fitful call

The noise of silence,
How long in our keeping,
Now that the fire is out,
That the trees are weeping.

The noise of silence,
Now that we do well,
Scarce is heard,
As sound is on the swell.

The noise of silence,
Over a lake's glittering hide,
The stars of justice shine
Bright, as the moon meets her bride.

The noise of silence,
Again and again,
The wind that is howling,
The dancing of the wren.

The noise of silence,
The loudest of them all,
The subtle nuances,
Of a birds joyful call.

Maeve Salmon



Twelve

Securely, safely set in our ways
The sun, ever shining and melting the blue
Crumbling around us we see only the haze
A shadow, of mist, a deep velvet hue

The moon, she knew all along
Wisened eyes peep through saddened slits
Her knowledge of time has never been wrong
Ever booming, ever smashing and shaking to bits

What makes it accepted to sit by, tight?
Collapsing and closing our emotions inside
I wish the moon would shed some light
Like her oceans reflecting at the change of the tide

One day, too soon,
Her wavering tear will silently slip
Twelve solemn birds with their lonesome tune
Will ring out, loud like the crack of a whip

Zoe Ripley

Long sunny days

High in the mountains outside a Spanish town,
I learnt to swim and ride with wild nature all around,
We use to walk for hours down by the river,
That flowed slowly in summer and fast in the winter.
Gathering nuts, figs and huge lemons,
We would sit, munch and stare at flying dragons.
I wonder sometimes how happy we were,
Living the slow life, feeling much calmer,
Long sunny day's loud crickets and food tree's
I think of how much we now sniffle and sneeze
It's cold here in England but here I have friends,
I guess all things must change but don't really end.

Isla Welland

Material needed!



Class 1's hand work is flourishing and we are needing our own handwork bags. Do you have any spare pieces of material to donate? It would need to be 80cm by 60cm (3ft by 2ft) Soon we'll be looking for keen sewists! Thank you. **Frances Dathan Class 1 Teacher**

Seize the Day



Don't forget to get your tickets for Seize the Day on Sat 25th Feb door open at 5.30. £5 per adult, children free tickets available from reception or on the door. Drinks and snacks will be available. **Chloe Wilson, PTFA**

Upper School Update

As we are halfway through the school year we feel it's a good time to update you on the progress and intentions of our Upper School. We have sent out a letter to class 7, 8 and 9 parents with a full update. This letter is available on the website <http://www.steineracademyexeter.org.uk/our-curriculum/the-upper-school>

It includes;

Student testimonials from a recent interview with four Class 9 students.

The positives:

"There is a great connection between pupils and students. You can be yourself around the teachers, they're more understanding. The people here are nicer than at my last school."

"The Upper School has a family feel."

"We still get to do fun stuff like arts and crafts."

"The work is manageable and we don't feel like we're constantly under pressure."

"Having no uniform is great!"

"Teachers often nag us, but we know it's because they care."

Room for improvement:

"We don't go outside as much as we used to."

"We would like a common room."

"We would like increased involvement in the running of the school and to expand the student council to tackle more important issues. It would be great if the governors could get involved in the student council. Also if we take on more responsibility this would give the teachers more freedom to focus on their tasks."

"Communication between teachers, students and parents could be better."

"We would like more Music and English lessons."

Community News, Events and Advertising

Disclaimer: Placement of advertisements does not imply endorsement by SAE of the products or services offered.

LIFT HELP/EXCHANGE

I am looking for lifts to school for my two children each morning from Farm Hill in Exwick. They are in class 4 and KG Moonbeams. Collection can be anytime between 8am and 8.45am as they can start at breakfast club.

My eldest is able to walk my youngest every day so they can be dropped off at the school gates. She currently does this. I am also able to pay petrol costs. I would be available to collect your child(ren) from 5ish (from after school club) if that works for someone too. I am pretty flexible with regards to where you live too. Could this work for anyone? Thanks Michelle [07823 884590](tel:07823884590) Hannah and Harry's mum

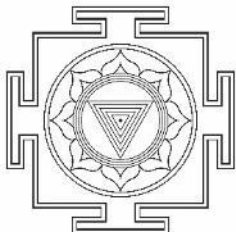
House wanted to rent from March/April

We are a family of 3 in need of a new home as we are moving down from Bristol so our son can start school at the Exeter Steiner academy in April. Ideally, we are looking in the Crediton/Silverton area. We are gentle, non-smoking

family who love the Steiner approach to life and community. If you know of anywhere please let us know. 07854 876753(Sophie) 07976517640(Matthew) soflyme@yahoo.co.uk

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lessons in City Centre home Text: 0795771665





Creative Contemplations

Is it a meditation thing that is really about crafting, or a crafting thing that is really about meditation?

Come and find out... there are many paths to wellbeing – and these are two of the best!

Evenings in Exeter and near Okehampton (suggested £3 donation)
Day retreats in Exeter (inc veggie lunch and afternoon tea), £35
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Donation to Steiner Academy, Exeter, for every day / weekend retreat booked from this advert.

Visit: www.creativecontemplations.co.uk Email: karen@creativecontemplations.co.uk Tel: 01837 849103



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Razzamataz use the school's movement rooms for their Saturday Theatre School for more info

<http://www.razzamataz.co.uk/schools/exeter>



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