



SteinerAcademyExeter Newsletter

Issue No 71 15th Sept 2017

Dates for your Diary

For meetings outside of school hours please use the West Garth Road pedestrian gate to access the site. All parent meetings are for all class parents to meet with the teacher together.

Wed 20 th Sept 16.00	Welly and waterproof swop in the hall		Thurs 5 th Oct 17.30	Class 6 M parents' meeting
Thurs 21 st Sept 09.00	Travel plan group Thomas Hall		Thurs 5 th Oct 19.30	Class 6 W, class 1 V and class 1 M parents' meeting
Thurs 21 st Sept 19.00	Open evening for Yr 7 2018		Fri 6 th Oct	Open morning 10 - 12
Mon 25 th Sept 19.30	Kindergarten parents' evening		Thurs 12 th Oct 19.30	Class 2, 9 and 10 parents' meeting
Thurs 28 th Sept	Kindergarten Michaelmas Celebration		Thurs 19 th Oct 19.30	Class 3 parents meeting
Fri 29 th Sept	Main school Michaelmas celebration. Parents invited at 11.30		Thurs 19 th Oct 19.00	Open Evening for Yr 7 2018
Fri 29 th Sept	Kindergarten Michaelmas celebration		Mon 23 rd - Fri 3 rd Nov	Half term (note this half term is 2 weeks)
Sat 30 th Sept	Community work day 10.00 - 16.00			

Welcome!



Our new staff receiving an induction - watch out in the next newsletter and we will introduce them all!

Message from the principal

Welcome back to our fifth new school year.

Although we are sometimes at risk of feeling like an established school there is plenty to remind us that we are breaking new ground all the time. With an extra ninety children, four new classes and a dozen

more staff there is no chance of us getting complacent. There is a real sense that this school renews itself on a regular basis. On the day before term started we saw the two new class ones move up from their old kindergarten and through a ceremonial arch before being greeted by class teachers Mike and Vicky. This was the very first time that two classes were `graduating` from early years and taking their place in `big school`, but it already had the feeling of a tradition being started. By the time you read this we will also have two class sixes, our own home-grown class who have been with us from the opening of the school, being joined by our brand-new intake, the latter drawn from 18 different schools, the former well embedded in the fabric of the place. How will they relate to each other? How will they mix and mingle? How distinct will they remain in the years ahead? We have absolutely no idea, which is all part of this extraordinary journey.



The summer provided further proof that we will need to keep our pioneering spirit alive for many years to come. For the first time, and I am sure it won't be the last, we hosted our own teacher training event in the second week of August. Most of the 20 attendees were from Exeter, but there were also colleagues from the Steiner academies in Hereford, Frome and Bristol. You can read elsewhere about what we did and how it was received, but I have no doubt that it will have made a big contribution to the on-going development and training of our staff, especially the newcomers. The feedback was hugely positive and the content, like the food, hopefully provided real nourishment. I don't think any of us involved will forget those few days.



Over the summer the national media picked up on the usual themes: mental health issues arising from exam pressure, the fairness or otherwise of GCSE grades, the national shortage of teachers (14,000 unfilled posts at the last count) and of course finance, with the Archbishop of Canterbury pitching in this week. There was also national coverage of problems at a private Steiner School in Hertfordshire. We have been monitoring this closely to manage the risk to ourselves of reputational damage.

Our own finances warrant a couple of paragraphs. Last year I explained that, as a growing school, we might not feel the impact of tighter budgets quite as badly as some other schools, but that this should not blind us to the fact that things are getting very difficult for all schools. The good news is that we are on track to run a balanced budget and that, subject to the audit in December, we appear once again to have balanced the books for last year. As any accountant will tell you, however, the need to maintain a listed building and extensive grounds together with the constant need to depreciate things like ICT equipment means that we have to put money aside all the time to build for the future. It is true that the Department for Education has a small pot of money with our name on it: but this is ring-fenced for repairing the roof of Thomas Hall.

Hopefully we have balanced the budget whilst also addressing those aspects of school life that need more attention, including those highlighted in the Ofsted report. We have added additional staff at the upper end of the school, allowing two of our TA pool to focus specifically on Maths and English. A third post has been created in the lower school to co-ordinate support for those who may be coming too slowly to reading. Two of our most experienced colleagues, Jenny Wragg and Vicki Watts are supporting the leadership and management of the school alongside their class teaching. The focus for improvement will be captured in our School Improvement Plan, a summary of which will be on our web site following the first full Board of Trustees meeting of the year.

The price for managing a balanced budget is evident, however. Once again there are no pay increases for staff, not even to account for inflation. Pay remains at the levels we started with in 2013 and this will have to change if we are to attract and retain the best teachers.

Nor are we able to carry the kind of loss on school trips and residential that we have done in the past. It is difficult to imagine a Steiner school not sending a class 5 to the Michael Hall Olympics or a class 7 down the river Wye in canoes. We do not want to become that school, but the numbers have to add up at the end of the day and we have to be realistic about what we are asking of parents.

In the near future you will receive a letter that explains what you will be asked to pay for trips this year. Alongside this we will tell you how you can help the school's finances and your own child's sense of responsibility by enabling them to own rather than loan certain items of equipment. Once these things are made clear you will be better placed to consider supporting the school through donations of time and/or money, something that more and more schools are coming to rely on. Such a reliance is a bad thing, but creating the right environment for generosity can benefit us all.

And here is one final thought: all the children in our school were born in the 21st century. Our school has never had and never will have a 20th century child. Steiner education will celebrate its centenary in 2019, but none of our children were born in the century in which their parents and teachers grew up. They are citizens not only of a digital age but of a time in history that has increasingly fewer links to the one we inhabited. We all need to remember that as we go about the daily business of trying to understand them and attempting to give them the guidance, support, love and understanding they will need.

Best Wishes for a fruitful 2017-18 school year, **Alan Swindell, Principal**

All things new

You may have heard that over the holidays we have changed a lot of our systems - email, file storage and our MIS Scholar Pack to Arbor. Arbor is how we store and collate lots of information about our children/students. It is also how we email parents and will be how we keep in contact with you about school life - trips, parents meetings and school meals.

This process has been complex and we are just starting to find our feet with please bear with us, communication will start to improve and we apologise if there has been a lack of information. We have



high hopes about this new system, we think in the long run it will save us time and money. I am not sure if it will make the coffee though!

In the next week or so you should receive an email asking you to sign on to the parent portal this is going to be an essential tool for you as parents to use. We will also send out a text in case the email doesn't get through! There will be plenty of support if needed and we can make a computer available for parents to use at school if they can't access the internet at home. **Katie Young, Communications Lead**

News from parent and child

Parent and child groups have been running for a year now in our beautiful garden room at Thomas Hall. We now run five mornings a week for 0-3 year olds and their parents. This autumn we are introducing parent and child groups for 3-4 year olds (1.30 - 3.30) and in the spring will be introducing a birth to walking group.

If you would like to register for any of the parent and child groups please contact Tara Milford - parentandchild@steineracademyexeter.org.uk



Please remember our school is a mobile free zone. At school events you will be informed if it is appropriate to take photos. If you do please don't share them on social media.

Expedition club 2017-18

The Expedition Club is expanding this year and we will be running a number of activities, including beginning the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Ten Tors and the Exmoor Challenge. Our first expedition weekend will be on Saturday 30th September, starting at Postbridge Tourist Information Centre.

The club is open to all pupils in classes 7 - 10 and we have sent a message out today to those classes. There is also a parents' meeting at 7pm on Thursday 28th September where parents can get more information about the specific events we will be doing. We aim to combine weekend expeditions with practical training in skills such as navigation, first aid and expedition planning. We aim to combine the training for all the activities as far as possible, although some training will be directed at a particular challenge. There will be a nominal charge of £5 per day for the training events, which will be payable through ParentPay. This cost will be covered for pupils on Pupil Premium Funding.

Autumn term dates

Monday 25th Sept	Upper School/Middle School assembly with Expedition focus
Thursday 28th Sept	Expedition Club briefing in school. This will explore the commitment, the benefits of the challenges, kit requirements and provide an opportunity for parents to meet the staff team and ask questions
Saturday 30th Sept	Expedition Club meet up and training walk at Postbridge TIC
Saturday 11th Nov	Training walk
Saturday 2nd Dec	Training walk

Full details of the training walks will be provided nearer the date of each walk, including start/finish points and emergency contact details. They will mostly take place on Dartmoor and will take a full day each (set off around 9am, return around 3.30pm).

We look forward to hearing from pupils and to a year of exciting adventures! Frances, Jenny and Francis.

Craft group

Will be restarting on Wednesday 20th September after drop off in Thomas Hall. We will be starting to make crafts for the Advent Fayre. All welcome! Come and learn a new skill or teach us one! **Cath Fitch and Callie Holliday, parents.**

Volunteering at school

We are looking for people to help out throughout the school, from reading in classes, to gardening, to helping out in the office - even with this newsletter. Helen Jacoby is our Volunteer Co-ordinator. Helen works in the garden and kitchen on a Wednesday, but you can contact her any time at volunteer@steineracademyexeter.org.uk if you are interested in helping out. All our volunteers are invited to a termly induction and training session and to any staff training where we have room to spare.

Thank you to everyone who came to the induction at the end of July. The beginning of term and all the changes that entails have slowed our response a little bit, but we will be getting in touch with you shortly to get going with placements. **Jenny Salmon Resources Manager**

The Steiner Academy Exeter Introductory Course - Joy de Berker

A series of six sessions introducing the theory and practice of Steiner early years education and its important contribution to childhood today.

Suitable for all adults who wish to work with children aged 0 -7 years in a creative and imaginative way.

Course Main Topics

1. Child development - What is it to be a child and how can our approach be one of enlightened understanding
2. Rhythm, Repetition and Reverence - Why are these qualities of primary importance for the young child.
- 3 Play - What do today's children really need for their imaginations to grow healthily and why does digitalisation pose such a threat.
4. Discipline - A compassionate approach to meeting and setting boundaries for a harmonious family life.
5. Mealtimes - Growing, preparing, cooking and & making meals with a young family.



6. Festivals and Celebrations - How can the cycle of the year and birthdays become enlivened and bring a deeper significance to family life.

Dates are as follows:

- Session 1 - Tuesday 24 October 2017
- Session 2 - Wednesday 25 October 2017
- Session 3 - Tuesday 13 February 2018
- Session 4 - Wednesday 14 February 2018
- Session 5 - Tuesday 29 May 2018
- Session 6 - Wednesday 30 May 2018

Price of the course -£150 for all 6 sessions. Including refreshments. Cost can be paid in instalments. We are able to offer financial support if you receive (or would receive) free school meals for your child.

Contact reception - admin@steineracademyexeter.org.uk for further details.

Summer School for teachers!

At the beginning of the summer holidays I must admit I questioned my sanity. What was I thinking signing up for summer school and homework! The day came and I dutifully went back to school, armed with my homework I was not alone, 18 of us had signed up to go back to school. I should not have worried. What came next was several days of amazing knowledge sharing from experienced colleagues and collaboration between us all. Not only did I learn a huge amount but I made new friends from the other academies. The food was fantastic and kept us energised, giving us the boost to go on and learn more. The course was well thought out and gave me the opportunity to learn so much about Steiner education in a caring and supportive environment. I found myself stepping out of my comfort zone repeatedly without feeling pressured. The experience truly moved and inspired me and I can't wait for the next one! Karen Grattan, Teaching Assistant.

I had so much fun on the summer school and am amazed at how much we managed to fit into our days! I came away with theory and practical skills that I have brought straight into the classroom. It was a brilliant introduction to Steiner education and a fantastic stepping stone to becoming a teacher. It made me feel connected to a wider network through meeting colleagues from our Steiner academies in Frome, Bristol and Hereford. I would highly recommend it to all staff. You will eat well and leave feeling nourished! Zoe Collins, Teaching Assistant

Travel group report

Parking on Site

This year there will only be parking on site for Blue Disabled Badge Holders and Cars with SEN Permits approved by our SENDCo. The gates will be shut to all other vehicles between 8.45am and 9.30am, with the possible exception of Parent & Child Parents, who have applied for permits, being allowed in from 9.20am. If you have been successful in your application for an SEN space then you will be contacted and asked to pick up your permit from Reception from Monday.

Everyone who applied to go into the Parking Lottery and paid their £5's will have their money refunded, please collect this from Reception from Monday.

On Road Parking

There is limited on road parking around SAE. The layby on Cowley Bridge Road should be used by the parents of children in Kindergartens only. Class children should be dropped off and picked up using the West Garth Road entrance, there is limited on road parking, which is unrestricted up until 10am.

Alternative ways to travel to SAE

- Bus - There are bus stops close to the school on both Cowley Bridge Road and in West Garth Road, up to date bus timetables are available online
- Cycle - there are a group of parents and children who cycle to school from St Thomas - cycling in a group improves safety of individual s cycling please join the SAE Travel Group on Facebook to find out more (please allow a little time for your identity to be verified)
- Walk - Many children and parents walk to school, it takes 15 minutes from St David's Station. If there are enough likeminded parents we can help you to set up a walking bus
- Car Share - are there families you could car share with? Again join the SAE Travel Group on Facebook to find someone to share with

Travel Plan Group

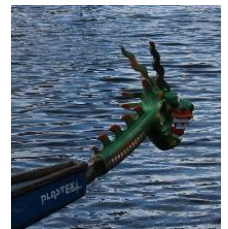
There is a Travel Plan Group which meets once a term and promotes sustainable travel options and pushes for improvements. We will be holding our first Travel Plan Group Meeting on Thursday 21st September 9 -10.30am - everyone is welcome to attend, and we are always looking for keen people to join the group.

Wellie and waterproof swop

Wed 20th September at 16.00 in the main hall. Come and swop last year's wellies and waterproofs for the next size up. All welcome! **PTFA**

Dragon boat race

Please join us again on the Quay in Exeter on Sunday 24th Sept from 10.00. A team of staff and students will be dragon boat racing to raise money for Devon Air Ambulance. It is a great day out for all the family. You can also sponsor us at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sae2017>



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Please make this page alive! **Katie Young, Editor**

