



SteinerAcademyExeter Newsletter

Issue No 92 9th Nov 2018

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

12 th Nov - 30 th Nov	Class 10 Mocks Exams (2 weeks)		Tues 20 th Nov 18.30	Parent Forum
Mon 12 th Nov	Martinmas celebration in school time		Wed 21 st Nov	Class 9 & 10 Drama with the Police (County Lines)
Wed 14 th Nov 09.15	Friends Fayre meeting, Thomas Hall		Wed 21 st Nov 09.15	Friends Fayre meeting, Thomas Hall
Thursday 15 th Nov 19.30	Class 5 parents evening		Wed 21 st 14.30	Parent Forum
Sat 17 th Nov 10.00 - 12.00	Open morning in KG for prospective parents		Thurs 22 nd 09.30	Parent Forum
Sat 17 th Nov 10.00 - 16.00	Work day		Sat 24 th Nov	Advent Fayre
Mon 19 th Nov 09.30	Parent Forum		Thurs 29 th Nov 16.30 - 20.00	Classes 8 and 9 subject teacher parents' evening

Message from Paul

Dear Parents,

Our Ofsted report will be published next Friday, 16th November. The report identifies a number of serious issues and areas which required immediate action, it also identifies areas which require significant improvements and change. We have already acted quickly to ensure the school is a safe place for your children to learn and grow and we are putting into place wide range of actions and plans to address all the issues in the report. Katie has included above dates and times for parent forums the following week. Our response to the report will acknowledge we have previously been failing in our duty of care as a school in a number of ways; SEND provision, safeguarding, and the quality of teaching. We will also detail the changes that have been, are being, and will be made in a root and branch reorganisation of the school's provision as part of an **Action Briefing for Parents** that will be emailed to you on Thursday 15th November, as parents, together with the Ofsted report itself.

At the heart of this reorganisation is a seismic shift in the level of rigour and responsiveness of our focus on the quality of children's education and wellbeing. I am wholly committed to this school offering an excellence in Steiner Waldorf education and see no tension with that commitment and the excellence demanded by Ofsted and the Department of Education. I do, however, see a tension between the trappings of tradition ('this is what we do') that have bedevilled Steiner Waldorf Education and the inspiration of its pedagogy ('this is why we do it'). As I will more fully explain in your **Action Briefing for Parents**, both colleagues from Babcock LDP and the Ted Wragg Trust as well as Steiner Waldorf educationalists are helping us to tackle head on those myths of Steiner Waldorf practice and reputation that impede our excellence.

And to one of those myths

In 1921 Alexander Sutherland Neill founded the Summerhill School in Leiston Suffolk - a fee-paying independent boarding school. Its distinct pedagogical approach had many characteristics and controversies, including the extension of student voice and autonomy to such an extent that children were free to decide whether or not to attend lessons.

We are not that school. But a good number of fellow educationalists, journalists, and parents often confuse the 'free' approach of Summerhill with that of Steiner Waldorf education. This is not only inaccurate, but deeply damaging to our ability to fulfil the goal of a state funded Steiner Waldorf education that places children first within a curriculum that, essentially, is designed coherently and robustly to meet their holistic needs at each phase of development.

As we unfold our action plan concerns will inevitably arise as to our ethos and identity, from all sections of our community. Particular concerns were expressed by a parent this week that our current changes will mean that we become 'mainstream' and begin to have consequences for disruptive behaviour. Consequences for disruptive behaviour are already part of our behaviour policy, as they are with many Steiner schools. The dialogic nature of our pedagogy can indeed lead to more 'visible turbulence,' but this in no way is akin to the 'free school' approach of Summerhill or an excuse for poor classroom management, lack of SEND provision or insufficient engagement in learning. There is excellent practice within the school, some of which Aegir has detailed in his column below, but there is also poor practice, clearly referenced in the Ofsted report, and I need you to know that we are addressing this with urgency and rigour in an effort to ensure teaching and learning is more regularly effective and "good."

Alongside these changes is going to need to be a review of our routines and rhythms around school that supports a healthy focus on learning and wellbeing. Timings are being made more specific in a number of different areas and we are going to be updating our signage on all gates to be more specific about access to the site and crispness of our transitions, both in the school day itself as well as at drop off and pick up. We would appreciate your tolerance and understanding but these are essential changes as we go forwards.

I look forward to seeing you on my gate duties over the next week. Sincerely, **Paul Hougham, Principal.**

Message from Aegir

Dear Parents,

As Paul mentioned above I have been busy (along with Julie Skinner from the Ted Wragg trust) visiting classes to look at ways to support teachers in their task of delivering a robust and engaging educational experience for your children. Our ideal is to offer lessons that show the potency and effectiveness of the Steiner Waldorf approach. In essence, we are aiming to deliver lessons that offer a fusion of creativity and solid formative learning. If we get it right we can offer the educational landscape of this country (which is always changing) a model of excellence based on innovation and forward thinking.

The Ofsted report will clearly show that there are deficiencies in our provision and that we are long way from excellence.

However in the recent learning walks we are finding gems that highlight this potential clearly. For example, in a younger class this week we saw this fusion in action where the students were learning literacy skills in way that showed a seamless blend between rich imaginative immersion and the development of a deep understanding of the shapes and the sounds of the letters. This was carried out through many mediums - poetry, story, phonics and manual dexterity that showed the potential of a Steiner education at its innovative best.

So.....we have a mountain to climb, but there are torches lighting our way! Have a lovely weekend everyone. **Aegir Morgan, Vice Principal.**

Welcome Tamsin Interim Kindergarten Lead and SENDCo!



Tamsin Robertson has been working as an Early Years Consultant for Babcock LDP for nine years. From now until Christmas Tamsin will be our Interim Kindergarten Lead and SENDCo. Tamsin is a qualified teacher has taught in the mainstream sector for fifteen years in schools in Devon and Bromley, and in her current role she supports settings and schools all over Devon with their practice and provision, as well as being Area SENDCo to over ninety settings. Tamsin brings a wealth of Early Years' experience as well as a sound understanding of inclusive practice. As Tamsin will be in school every day please come and introduce yourself.

Communications

To aide communication we have 2 new emails address for you to use.

principal@steineracademyexeter.org.uk - for emails to our principal.

wellbeing@steineracademyexeter.org.uk - for emails about; SENDCo, behaviour and wellbeing.

We are aware that responses to emails from parents hasn't been as good as it could be this week. These email addresses will help us respond as swiftly as we can. Please be aware that the Executive Committee (EC) (Paul, Aegir, Adrian and Sara S) will be working hard over the next few weeks with the organisational review, the response to Ofsted and running the school. They will be aware of messages/emails from parents but any responses will be coming from their team members.

Next term to aide communication with the EC we will be restarting the Coffee and Questions. We will be offering 2 Friday morning dates a half term. Paul will be attending all the meetings along with other EC members.

Please remember the best way to communicate with your child's teacher is to book an appointment. We recommend you meet with your child's teacher twice a year. All teachers will have appointments available for you to book on Arbor within the next week. **Katie Young Communications Lead.**

School Community Work Day - Sat 17th Nov 10am - 4pm

Help us to improve our school for all the pupils and staff, whilst getting to know other parents and sharing (literally) community building experiences together.

After the recent changes at the school we have identified various projects that we would like to complete on Work Day to improve the whole school experience. These projects include :

- Creating a play log area in the Class 1 & 2 play area
- Creating a drop zone around the climbing trees
- Safety improvements to the metal climbing frames (they need burying further in to the ground)
- Painting the Atrium stairs and Art Corridor white
- Constructing furniture for the Upper Breakout Zone
- Building some fences around the wildlife corner and elsewhere

Please bring some food to share for lunch, a vegetable or two for the soup and appropriate clothing for the jobs/weather. Please do not bring dogs on site and remember that your children remain your responsibility throughout the day.

We look forward to welcoming you on the day, and we don't mind if you can only commit to an hour or two. **The Facilities Team**

Drop Off and Pick Up (the Parking Rules) Phil and Alice's Parking Tips!

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in developing the new parking rules on West Garth Road, and thank you for the positive responses we have received so far on the changes. Below are some tips

that we hope will help improve the drop off and pick up experience for everyone and most importantly keep the children safe.

- Park in the direction of travel (i.e. don't drive across to the other side of the road to park)
- Where ever possible let children out of a vehicle on the pavement side of the vehicle
- Turn around at the triangle - do not do a 3 (or more) point turn in the road
- Encourage your children to cross where the staff members are present at the school entrance
- If not, remind your child to find a safe place to cross away from parked cars, to look and listen before they cross and to continue to look and listen as they cross. Do not run.

Please :

- Do not drop off in the Child Safety Zone (the area immediately outside school)
- Do not park and leave your vehicle in the Drop Off Only Zone
- Do not park on pavements, on grass, around corners, or overhanging driveway
- Do not embarrass your older children by dropping right outside school, agree a point further away to drop them and pick them up, which will develop their sense of independence and free up spaces closer to school for younger children's parents - suggested locations are The Farm Shop at Wrefords Lane, Lower Argyll Road, the layby (not by school) on Cowley Bridge Road, St David's Station....

Can we remind parents that incidents of dangerous or reckless driving will be reported to the police, and that we expect parents to treat members of staff carrying out their duties to be treated with the utmost respect. If you witness any inconsiderate/ inappropriate behaviour please report it to

Sara.Stone@steineracademyexeter.org.uk or Adrian.hilliard@steineracademyexeter.org.uk . Thank you.