

## Galleywood Infant School

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

We wish everyone a very happy half term week, and hope that spring really is around the corner!



Just a reminder that there is no non-pupil day this time, so school opens for everyone on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February at 8:40am.

It hardly seems possible that we have reached the spring half term, the mid-point in this academic year! Last week we held parent consultations for parents with children in Foxes and Badgers classes to share the progress children have been making across all 7 areas of learning and teachers are starting to write reports for children in Year 1 and Year 2, to be sent out on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> March.

Many parents commented on the lovely sketch books we have invested in for this year, so that children build up a portfolio of art work across their 3 years at Galleywood.



This has been a very busy half term for learning, starting with a day in a Victorian house for Yr1 and Yr2, and a walk in the local area to look at different types of houses and homes for the Early Years classes. We loved welcoming so many visitors to our curriculum afternoons, entertaining you with stories, songs and the facts we have been learning about life in Victorian times.



Theo, Joshua and Evie told me that they have had lots of fun this week learning to write instructions by following, improving and writing instructions for a Victorian cook! They peeled, chopped and finally tasted roast potatoes, some plain and some sprinkled with herbs; they made jam tarts choosing between strawberry, raspberry, apricot and blackcurrant jam, and to finish the week tasted a mini Victoria sponge cake.

Children in Year 1 made porridge in the traditional way, carefully chopping and adding fresh fruit!



Children in Foxes and Badgers have also been learning about houses, working collaboratively to design and build a house for their toys:



They spent time carefully designing and then printing wallpaper, and finished the half term with a fire and hot chocolate at Wednesday Forest Fun!



Our next learning theme is about toys, looking at how toys have changed over time and investigating how some toys from the past worked. To launch the theme, we have a collection of toys from different decades for the children to explore. This time we would like each child to invite a family member to join them for a toy making workshop with a design technology focus. These will take place in the hall, for Year 2 classes on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2:15-3:15pm and for Year 1 Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2:15-3:15pm. We hope you can join us!

### **Best Wishes**

We send our thanks and very best wishes to Annabel Thomas, who is stepping down from her school admin role after 2 years. We shall miss having Annabel as a member of staff, but hope that she will remain part of the school team.

After half term we welcome Natasha Evans, who has been shadowing Annabel and will be working with Faye Dennis in the office every Monday-Wednesday. We hope that Natasha will be very happy working at Galleywood.



### **Attendance**

We continue to focus relentlessly on attendance, and we are pleased that most attendance conversations in the autumn term resulted in improved overall attendance by January 2025. The vast majority of families arrive in good time for school- thank you and well done. It is important to establish this routine so that your child understands the need and expectation that they will be on time.

However, since the start of the academic year 55 children have been late on at least one occasion, leading to 341 late marks in the autumn term. 11 children have registered after 9:15am, between them incurring 73 unauthorised absence marks, which can accumulate towards a penalty notice.

Classroom doors open at 8:40 and registers are taken at 8:45am. Phonics, handwriting or reading groups begin at 8:50, so a prompt start is essential; children arriving late not only miss their learning, but disrupt learning for others.

Together we can improve attendance and punctuality in the second half of this year!



### GIPA news

At our committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January, Sarah Ditchburn, treasurer, was pleased to announce the fundraising total for our **Christmas events was £2,539!**

This is an amazing step towards the new trim trail we are hoping to install later this year! Well done to everyone!

The **ASDA cash pot for schools**, which closed on 30<sup>th</sup> November, raised £185 for Galleywood Infant School! Amazing effort, thank you for your support!

The GIPA Committee are excited to announce a new event, Mr Frostie's Magic Show, which comes highly recommended and we hope will be lots of fun!

Availability was limited due to other diary commitments, so we have decided to offer this from 3:15-5pm on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February, the week following half term.

Tickets are available from today via Parentpay, priced at £5. Parents and carers are welcome to accompany their child, if they wish to do so, but otherwise please collect from the quiet area doors at 5pm.

Our next Cushion Club takes place on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March from 5:30-7pm- details to follow.

Faye Dennis and her husband have agreed to run another Quiz night, this year on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March from 7pm. Teams have up to 8 people, and smaller groups or 2-4 people will be able to join others to form a team- everyone welcome. We invite people to bring drinks and nibbles. Tickets will be available after half term.

All classes are still collecting small change in our coin challenge- can you find any 1p, 2p, 5p or 10p coins for your class jar? Year 2 children will collect and count these on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March



Chloe Needham, our English subject leader, is working with GIPA to organise a Readathon in March- details to follow. If you are interested in becoming involved in GIPA, Galleywood Infant Parents Association, the next meeting is on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> Feb at 7:30pm in Badow Barn. Everyone welcome!



### Names in clothing please!

We have an increasing amount of un-named active wear, as children leave hoodies and sweatshirts in the hall or playground after PE sessions. We know how expensive these items are, but of course one black or navy hoodie looks very much like another. Please remember to write or iron on names to all your child's clothing- if it is named it will find its way back to you. Thank you

### Term Dates

Please see the term dates attached to this newsletter. These include the 5 non-pupil days set by Galleywood and St Michael's in addition to the blocked holidays, which are set by Essex Local Authority.



### School Council and Pupil Forum meetings

On Thursday morning Eliza and Raya, our school ambassadors, took part in a Zoom meeting with 11 other schools in the Chelmsford area, each sharing the work going on in their school linked to the environment.

We have decided to focus on improving our school grounds as a habitat for birds, so that more birds are able to feed and nest in the trees and bushes around our school. The school council already have some exciting ideas for this and will be writing to parents as well as to other members of the local community for some support.

We would like to encourage different kinds of birds to visit our school grounds so that we can see them and learn about them.



We do some research and find out what different birds like to eat. What kind of bird feeders should we make?

What can we plant that will have seeds or berries the birds like?



We will write to the garden centre to ask for some bird seed and have a cake sale to raise money for bird feeders and seeds.

Who can help us to make some bird houses?  
How big should they be and where should we put them?  
We could ask Mr McAdam and maybe some parents.



Maybe we could make a bird hide near our Forest area so that children can watch birds without scaring them?



We would like families to join in with a Big Bird Watch at a park, the Common or in your gardens to find out which varieties of birds visit Galleywood!

If you have any expertise, ideas and suggestions linked to the School Council work, they would be delighted to have your support and interest. Together we hope to learn a lot more about the birds that live around our school, and some that may be summer visitors.