

NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 | 2021-2022



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'To be the best we can be'

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Welcome to the Spring Term Island Learning Trust Newsletter

We are now half way through the 2021/22 academic year which seems incredible.

We have enjoyed the return to a near normal school year: no closures, bubbles, and no new Covid challenges: just ongoing isolations and absences, children and staff to juggle. I am not minimising the complexity of these challenges nor the wider impact of Covid: lost learning time, increased social isolation but we have at least remained in school. It has been a joy to visit all of our schools and see the wonderful learning opportunities on offer, the strong relationships evident and the engagement of our children in learning and school life in general. Our schools are vibrant learning communities with a strong sense of purpose and I am so proud of our children, parents and staff. As I visit each school the dual partnership role as we educate and support our young people is so evident.

As a Trust we are currently in the process of reviewing our curriculum to ensure we are indeed offering a broad and balanced curriculum. We had quite rightly narrowed the curriculum briefly to give additional time to basic skills to recover lost learning time but we have now reverted to a full curriculum offer.

The Island Learning Trust Schools **ROAR! Resilience, Optimism, Ambition, Responsibility.**

Across the past 2/3 years all of our schools have also, quite rightly, further developed their offer, in line with The Island Learning Trust ROAR Values: explicitly teaching our children about how to develop and maintain a positive sense of self, how to maintain high well-being and optimism in the face of difficulties and to ask for support if needed, building personal resilience and responsibility. The Trust has just purchased the School Breathe programme, that will be introduced in T5/6.

Many adults and children have dysfunctional breathing patterns; such as upper chest or shallow breathing, mouth breathing and breath holding. Recent studies show that a short regular breathwork practice, focusing on healthy breathing habits, is effective against stress and anxiety, along with enhancing cognitive performance, improving concentration and memory, boosting immunity, lowering blood pressure, and cultivating present moment awareness. Practising a variety of techniques can influence both physiological factors (by stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system) and psychological factors, by diverting attention from worrying thoughts and cultivating enhanced focus. All vital ingredients for a successful learning environment. This online programme encourages children to learn scientifically proven, transformative breath techniques, which allows them to correct unhealthy breathing habits, self-regulate their emotions, feel calmer, boost their immunity, cultivate focus and concentration, and so much more.... Watch out, your children will be advising you how to breathe! Our breathing coaches in each school will also offer parent sessions to share breathing for wellness, concentration and calmness.

As CEO I am immensely proud of all three of our schools, children and teams but I do need to mention the Sunny Bank team particularly. Sunny Bank Primary School joined The Island Learning Trust 2 years ago after an inadequate Ofsted rating, the school, ethos, offer is now unrecognisable. Lots of changes have been necessary: a new curriculum, vision and sense of purpose, higher expectations, new resources, staff changes, the building and grounds have changed too. Sunny Bank now has a wonderfully committed staff team (many long standing) serving the children, families and local community: and I could not be prouder of their hard work, transformation and achievement! Sunny Bank you rock!!!

Debbie Wheeler
CEO

'To be the best we can be'



Halfway Houses Primary School



Times Tables Rock Stars

This term's tournament involved an epic battle between each year group over five days! The results were so close at times. The winners were...



Hummingbird 1661

Curlew 1612

Housemartin 2792

Eagle 4714

Flamingo 1058

Passport Projects

We had some amazing learning passport projects at the end of term. Here is one of our favourite ones because it reflects the wide range of children's interests. This is Carlie from Pelican's megalodon model that she made as part of her home learning project. Well done, it is amazing!



Some Special Gifts

Mrs Spocchia's son, Matthew, is a church leader for Good News Church on Sheppey. He was contacted by Bul from 'Run to save a life' foundation as he had been sponsored for running 15 miles and wanted to donate gifts to children on the Island. Sheppey Matters allowed the use of their building for the parents and children to collect the gifts from Bul over the Christmas period and nine of our families with a total of twelve children were blessed with these gifts. We are truly grateful to Bul for all his hard work reaching out to our Island community.



Bikeability

Over 30 of our year 6 pupils completed their Bikeability training this term. The course was split over two days into two levels. Level 1 involved developing cycle handling skills in traffic-free environments that included the core functions for safe and responsible cycling. This included: 1. Making good and frequent observations 2. Communicating intentions clearly to others 3. Choosing and maintaining the most suitable riding position 4. Understanding priorities when negotiating shared space. All our participants managed to pass level one meaning they moved onto level two where the skills they worked on were very similar but on single lane roads with simple junctions and moderate traffic; I'm pleased to say again they all passed with flying colours. All of our children who took part had smiles and a 'can do' attitude, this was noted with frequent compliments from the coaches on their behaviour. Well done all!



Book Banter

In line with the expectations of the Reading Framework, we have been challenging our pupils to talk about our favourite books in greater detail. Book Banter occurs every Friday in our reading assembly time and children submit their books using post cards in our very own post box!



Outdoor libraries

We are continuing to improve all our learning spaces...check out these outdoor libraries that will soon be found in each of our playgrounds. We cannot wait!



'To be the best we can be'

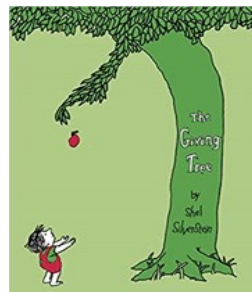
Sunny Bank Primary School



Vision and Values

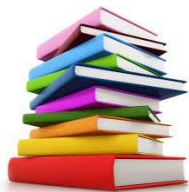
Pupils and staff revisit the school vision every week. In assemblies this term we are focussing on our H of H-E-A-R-T values and Aspiration is this term's focus.

During assemblies the pupils have been listening to poetry and a story by Shel Silverstein which tackle diversity and self-image. We have also been learning a song called 'Bump In The Road' which promotes resilience. We also encourage pupils to aim 'To be the best we can be' in any situation every day. The children have also enjoyed re-learning the TILT theme song which was written by pupils at each of the Trust schools.



Accelerated Reader

We continue to drive AR and the children are averaging approximately 1.8 million words per week which is such a great achievement. This term, those that reached their target were able to attend an afternoon cinema experience within school which included eating popcorn. At the end of each week one pupil from each class has the chance to win a token for our new book vending machine which gives them the opportunity to choose one book from a whole range of choices to take home and cherish forever. There is a real buzz around the school the day the vending machine was installed!



This term's focus was the woodlands. We focused on the natural woodland environment, the animals that live there and their habitats. The children engaged in lots of fun activities including creating fox masks, crafting nature owls, using materials collected in basecamp and creating mini homes for woodland animals. The children also enjoyed welly wandering in the mud and balancing on the logs in basecamp & being tree bark artist, creating lovely bark/texture rubbings. The children have really embraced the routines and activities on offer this term.

Forest School



Our Learning Zone

Our Learning Zone hub have been busy this term building social skills through a range of carefully planned activities and have been communicating their emotions in imaginative ways. The children have enjoyed exploring the learning opportunities in the Forest School and are making the most of their new cooking facilities. This term they have made scones, pizzas, biscuits and cakes!

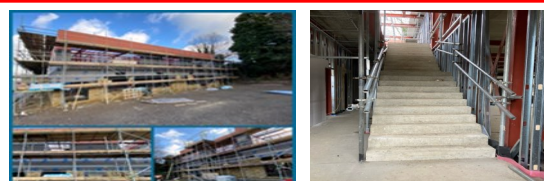
The children have been building up their fine motor skills with fun interventions and have been keen to share their creativity. They have helped the staff redesign their learning space and are making the most of their new workstations.



Author of the term – Murphy

Jill Murphy was a British author and illustrator of [children's books](#). First published in 1974 at the age of 24, she was best known for the [Worst Witch novels](#) and [Large Family](#) picture books. Her books have also been adapted for television and stage. She has been called "one of the most engaging writers and illustrators for children in the land".

Murphy class is taught by Mrs Raven.



The new building continues to develop at a fast pace. We hope that it will be finished by the Easter holidays. We are all very excited about having this new space!

'To be the best we can be'

Minster in Sheppey Primary School



Our Club Offer



This year, Minster has made a commitment to extending its extra-curricular club offer, recognising the importance role such activities make to pupils' social, emotional, cultural and academic development. It is also an essential element of our COVID catch-up approach. A range of clubs including: Science, Choir, Art, IT, Makaton, Mindfulness, Dodgeball, Dance, Multi-skills and Times Table Rock Stars have taken place so far this year and been well received by pupils and parents.



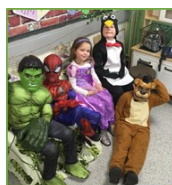
Bikeability

Pupils in Years 5 and 6, have had an opportunity to participate in a Bikeability course arranged by our Sports Coach, Nicole Ward. Bikeability is a cycle training course teaching practical cycling skills whilst also developing pupils understanding of how to cycle safely on the roads, an important skill for our older pupils. Bikeability also promotes the importance of staying fit and healthy and sustainable modes of travel. The course initially started with pupils undertaking specific manoeuvres on the playground before undertaking training on the roads around minster. 21 pupils undertook the course and all gained their level 2 accreditation.



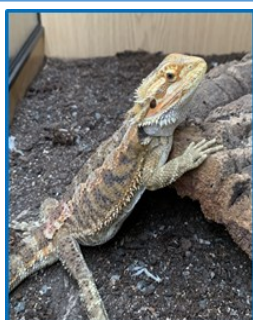
Children's Mental Health Week

In February the school marked Children's Mental Health Week. The week long event started with the school community sharing an assembly created and presented by the school's Ambassadors from Year 6. Their assembly launched this year's theme of 'Growing Together', whereby the Ambassadors shared the importance of emotional growth and development. Across the week pupils undertook a number of activities supporting the theme and the week culminated with a 'Dress To Express Day'. The whole community wore outfits, which reflected aspects of their personalities.



Challenge 20 Event

Our Challenge 20 event was held in January. This sponsored event aimed to promote wellbeing strategies linked to the Wheel of Wellbeing as well as providing an opportunity to raise money for our community. Across the day, pupils completed 20 wellbeing challenges such as: 20 seconds of mindful breathing, giving someone a smile and run a lap of the playground. The event was a huge success and thanks to our parents and other community members the school raised £1261.40.



Our New Arrival

Our nurture room has a new arrival: **Cedric** the bearded dragon. Cedric has quickly made himself at home and is a real hit with the children who visit the Den. He is very sociable and loves being handled and stroked. He particularly enjoys his chin being gently rubbed.

Music Mark



The School has become a Music Mark member. Our submission focused upon the development and enhancement of our musical offer. With support from Kent Music School, pupils in Years 4 and 5 are all receiving Ukulele lessons and pupils can now undertake individual, guitar, bass, flute or saxophone lessons. We have also employed a Music teacher, who is running a weekly choir.

A warm welcome to Sunny Bank's new Head of School



*We are pleased to announce that The Island Learning Trust have appointed a new Head of School for Sunny Bank Primary School. We would like to give a warm welcome to **Mr Jack Allen** who will be joining our team in Term 5.*

Mr Allen introduces himself below...

"It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself as the new Head of School at Sunny Bank Primary School. I feel privileged to have been appointed by the governors and the TILT team.

It is my belief, that all children should have equal access to exciting and engaging learning experiences. Through this they develop their love of learning and grow **'to be the best that they can be.'**

As an experienced leader of school improvement and the newly appointed Head of School at Sunny Bank, this continues to be my passion.



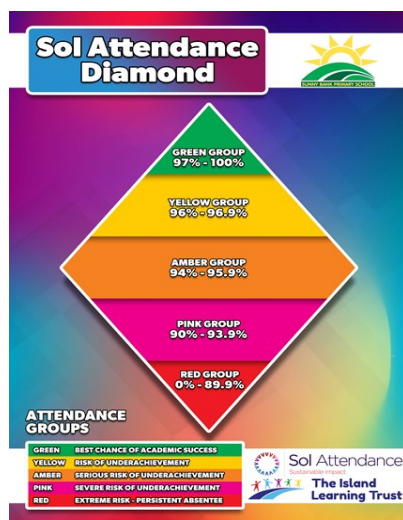
Primary schools are places of continuous renewal and development and I look forward to being part of the exciting journey ahead of Sunny Bank and working in partnership with the staff, parents and carers, governors and trust team after Easter."



Family Support Newsletter



Face-to-face education is important in helping children to fulfil their potential. Children should be in class with their teachers and peers and enjoying all the benefits that brings. School attendance has obviously been affected by the pandemic, it is for this reason that it is extremely important that children attend school everyday to catch up on lost learning and develop peer friendships and social skills.



How can you help us to ensure good attendance:

1. Try to make medical appointments outside of the school day, if this is not possible and it is within the school day try to bring your child in before and after the appointment.
2. Do not book holidays during term time, we send out notification of school holiday dates early to allow you time to plan family holidays.
3. Arrive on time, arriving late to school is unsettling for children and means they miss key information and important input at the beginning of lessons. If they arrive after the register closes this is recorded as an unauthorised late.

Please contact us if you have any concerns or questions.

Free Parental Courses:

We have recently been approached by a company offering free Adult Education Courses to anyone over the age of 19, who has been resident in the U.K for at least 3 years.

The qualifications on offer include, Childcare & Education, Healthcare, Business, IT and Team Learning. All courses are online, with flexible times. If you are interested but don't have internet access we may be able to help with this. Please contact your school Family Liaison Officer.

Midas Parent Workshops:

Screen Saviours—Taking Control of Tech

Monday 14th March 2022 9:45 to 12:45

This workshop will offer advice and strategies to support parents, carers and families understand the importance of maintaining children's digital health and how to encourage a safe, happy, enjoyable and manageable relationship with technology. This workshop will also consider the educational, communitive and leisure role of technology during the pandemic and how we might support our children moving forward.

Attachment

Monday 25th April 2022 9:45 to 12:45

This half-day workshop will: explain some of the factors that can prevent a secure attachment from forming between a child and their primary care giver, outline some of the challenges that these children experience on a daily basis and the impact that this has on their ability to form meaningful relationships with both adults and their peers, consider some of the behaviours that these children exhibit and how they can be supported to overcome negative childhood experiences and discuss practical advice and ideas that can be implemented.

Workshops are free to attend and refreshments are provided. **For bookings please contact:**

midas@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk or telephone MIDAS Centre on 01795 477788, option 6.

Sheppey Support Bus

The Sheppey Support Bus is here for the community if you are struggling or need help in whatever capacity, please come along and have a chat to see how we can support you.

EVERY TUESDAY

Warden Bay Pub Carpark: 8:30am—9:30am

Old Police Station: 9:45am—11:30am

Minster (Plover Road): 12:00pm—13:00pm

Sheerness (Medway Road): 13:30pm—14:15pm

**WE ARE A
COMMUNITY**

Lights, camera...action!

TILT takes an innovative approach to showcase our schools...



With the ever-present pandemic continuing to force school closures, we needed to find a way to enable parents and prospective pupils to take a look inside our schools and see what The Island Learning Trust has to offer. The idea of creating professional films arose and extensive preparations were made to get filming underway.

However, just as filming was about to start in November 2020, schools were forced to close once again as Covid-19 continued to sweep through. Eventually schools re-opened and the filming



schedules resumed, albeit a year later. Copper Tree Media were asked to create the films and the results were just as we expected. Sarah Stanier, TILT Marketing Manager oversaw the project. ***"The whole process from start to finish was quite a journey. Locations were selected, timetables drawn up, scripts written and lighting set.***

Dan Orrell from Copper Tree Media was incredibly professional, understood the brief, shot some great footage internally, and used a drone for the external aerial shots. We are really pleased with the final edits, which can be viewed on the schools' websites under the 'About Us' navigation tab, so please take a look!"

A big thanks to Dan, his team and all the staff and pupils who appeared in the films, which for some was quite a nerve-wracking experience!

