

Great Gaddesden CE (VA) Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr Matt Beach

Weekly update

Dear Parents/Carers,

We had some very frosty mornings this week at Great Gaddesden! Despite the cold, Early Years wrapped up warm and enjoyed their forest school session with Mrs Ansell. They definitely enjoyed their hot chocolate and making advent decorations.



On Thursday, it was lovely to hear about lots of outside achievements in celebration assembly. If your child achieves something such as a swimming badge, an award or completes a project at home that they would like to celebrate, they are welcome to bring this in on a Thursday.

In other news, it has definitely started to feel festive at Great Gaddesden. The children are busy practising for the nativities and the carol service. KS2 are challenging themselves with some new carols to compliment the more traditional ones this year. They are also looking forward to the service being by candlelight this year.

This afternoon our Christmas tree arrived! Thank you to our kind neighbours at the Garden Centre for donating this and to FOGGs for organising this. On Monday, we will decorate the tree as a school. Every child will have a decoration with their photo on to put on the Great Gaddesden Christmas tree. This Sunday marks the beginning of Advent and we start to count down the days until Christmas! The Great Gaddesden Christmas post box will also reopen for another year on Monday and your child is welcome to bring in cards for their friends. Our Year 5&6 children will be responsible for distributing cards around the school. As you will see further down in the newsletter, the boxes for the shoe box appeal have arrived and are ready to be collected.

All of these events help us to be reflective and return back to our foundation as a Church school. It is important we ensure that along with all of the fun and joy, the meaning of Christmas is carefully understood and as a school community we support everyone to feel thought about; especially those who may be less fortunate or lonely this Christmas.

Have a lovely weekend.

Kind regards,
Mr Matt Beach
Headteacher

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Rotary shoe box appeal update



Following on from last weeks newsletter, this Christmas, the Change Team have decided that as a school we would like to support the Rotary Shoe Box Appeal.

Boxes have arrived and are ready to collect from the school office. We appreciate that filling a box can be expensive. Therefore, we warmly welcome individual donations that our change team will put together into a box. Individual donations can be made via the office. Thank you



Forest School



It was a frosty and festive Forest School for EYFS this week. The children learned about fire safety and enjoyed dunking biscuits in their hot chocolate cooked on the campfire. They also enjoyed making a hanging Christmas decoration, using evergreen tree foliage from the churchyard.



Spotlight on collective worship



This week, our focus is on Collective Worship. Our varied weekly programme offers pupils the opportunity to engage in daily acts of reflection and worship. As a church school, this practice holds significant importance in our daily routine, providing children with the space to reflect on their values, explore their spirituality, and deepen their understanding of moral and ethical issues.

Monday

At the start of the week, the children participate in values-based collective worship, during which they engage with the monthly value and reflect on its relevance and application to their own lives. They also are introduced to 'the big question' of the week.

This week, Mrs. Ansell talked about Corrie Ten Boom, highlighting her remarkable courage in sheltering Jewish individuals within a concealed hiding place in her home, during the Second World War. It was noted that even during her imprisonment, she remained steadfast in her faith, conducting Bible studies and leading prayer sessions within her living quarters.

Tuesday

On Tuesdays, the teachers present an interactive Open The Book assembly, designed to support children in exploring the chronology and themes of the Bible. This week, the children learned about the story of Samuel and Eli, emphasizing how God can work through individuals of all ages to serve as His 'hands and feet.'



Wednesday

On Wednesdays, pupils participate in child-led worship, a form of collective worship conducted within classes and facilitated by their peers. Younger children in EYFS and Years 1 and 2 are supported by older pupils during the session. The worship follows a structured four-part framework: gathering, Bible reading, response, and mission, with children selecting activities for each segment. This experience is a highlight of the week for many, and the pupils always show great respect both in leading and participating.



Thursday

Our Celebration Assembly on Wednesday provides an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate achievements both within and beyond the school community. During this assembly, Value Ambassadors and Star Learners are also formally recognized and presented with their awards.



Friday

The final act of worship for the week is our visit to the church on Friday morning. Led by Mrs. Tisbury and Reverend Russell, this service links to the liturgical year and the monthly values. It serves as a reflective conclusion to the week and provides an opportunity to explore and share responses to 'the big question.'



Reflection ambassadors



Our Year 6 reflection ambassadors have a very important job in collective worship.

They support the children who light and put out the candle as well as supporting the children to answer response questions to help us monitor the impact of worship in regards to spiritual development.

They gather responses to the weekly 'Big Question' ready for Church on Friday.

At the end of this week they had a special job to change the cloth on the focal point table and our reflection area as we move to the Advent season.

Before Advent we have had green cloth as this is known as 'ordinary time'.



Learners of the week



This week, the following learners below were chosen by their class teacher for demonstrating **excellent learning behaviours**:

Early years	Roman
Year 1/2	William
Year 3/4	Grace
Year 5/6	Amorie

This week, the following learners below were nominated for demonstrating '**courage**' (our value of the month):

Early years	Emma
Year 1/2	Athena
Year 3/4	Otto
Year 5/6	Dottie



Attendance

OUR OVERALL ATTENDANCE THIS WEEK IS: 90%

OUR OVERALL ATTENDANCE SO FAR THIS YEAR IS: 93%

Attendance Ladder



We have recently had a number of term time holiday requests. Please note in almost all cases unless for very exceptional circumstances, all holiday requests would be unauthorised.

Information from Hertfordshire County Council:

<https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/10-day-absence>

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:

10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

If not paid within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 per parent, per child, payable between the 22nd and 28th day.

Community information

Please scan the QR code to find out lots of information about support available locally for families



Are you worried about your child's internet safety?

Do you have any burning questions?

Join our Daytime and Evening face-to-face sessions as we cover the basics of internet, digital communication, and social media safety, in collaboration with Herts Police.

Daytime E-Safety session:

Wednesday 11th December 2024 – 1:30 - 3:00pm

Evening E-Safety session:

Wednesday 11th December 2024 – 6:00 - 7:00pm

For Parents

Location: Greenhills Day Service, Tenzing Road,
Hemel Hempstead, HP2 4HS.



If you have any questions before our session, don't hesitate to contact us at: Kingsley.Davis@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Key dates

New or amended dates added in **red**
Things in bold are coming up next week

December	<p>3rd World Disability Day</p> <p>6th FOGGs Disco 3:30-4:45pm (payments via Arbor)</p> <p>13th FOGGs Christmas film afternoon (children to bring in pyjamas to change into)</p> <p>17th Whole school Panto trip- Beauty and the Beast (Dunstable)</p> <p>18th Christmas Dinner & Jumper day (optional £1 donation for Save the Children)</p> <p>19th (parents welcome to join all of these events)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early Years 'Nursery Rhyme Nativity' - 9:30am in the school hall• KS1 (Years 1&2) Nativity - 2pm at the Church• KS2 (Years 3-6) Carols by Candlelight - 4:30 at the Church <p>20th Christingle at 1:00pm at St John's Church (in school event)</p> <p>End of Term 20th December @1:30pm</p>
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