

# HEADTEACHER'S BULLETIN

## March (to date) 2024 Edition

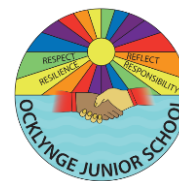
### Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to the summer term! It still feels decidedly spring like, but the promise of the sun is just around the corner (*so I'm told!*).

At the end of last term, we said goodbye to two members of teaching staff - Miss Lansley, one of our Year 4 teachers, who had taught at Ocklynge for 14 years and has moved to another school closer to home. Miss Emmett had served as Associate Headteacher for the last year and a half and has now moved to explore other opportunities. I would like to express my huge thanks to both and wish them every success in the future. Many of you will have been very used to seeing Miss Emmett on the MUGA gate every morning. I will now pick up her Monday morning duty and will then see children first thing at two different gates each week.

OPAL play has now moved into Phase 2 at school, I'm sure you've seen updates and photos across our school news platforms, and we will continue to keep you updated this way; it's lovely to see the children enjoying themselves. Rope and tyre swings have been installed and a huge sand pit has been constructed over the Easter break. Fences have been moved to give the children more space and more opportunities to explore the grounds and areas of the field. We have a dig pit and a small play area for Lego, games, and small play equipment. In addition to these, there are willow tunnels and recently added 'hills' to allow a more interesting landscape to play in. We have added a track to race scooters and burn plenty of energy. We are noticing improvements in lunchtime behaviour and engagement with the new arrangements, and children report a much better experience during their free time. The physical donations and GoFundMe page donations have made a massive difference to the experience of our children, and for that I say a huge 'Thank You' to you all.

Class open events continue to be very well attended. They are a chance and opportunity for children to share their learning and current school experience with their families. These have included story and book sharing, art exhibitions, dances, computing experiences and even maths skills sessions. We hope you have all enjoyed these events and continue to come into school and celebrate the children's work and achievements. These class open events will continue to run termly in the final week of each term and will be shared with you following the curriculum letter. We try hard to vary the timings of these to allow as much flexibility for parents to be able to attend. In Term 5 these will give parents the opportunity to see and experience Opal play first hand. Details to follow under separate communication via Edulink.



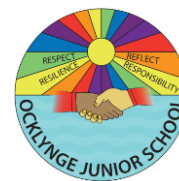
Before Easter, Miss Seal (Year 3 Teacher and Religious Education coordinator), together with our learner Faith Ambassadors, held a cake sale to raise funds to support one of our community champion charities - The Sanctuary Café in Eastbourne. The charity raises funds for refugee families who are now living locally, providing much-needed support to the families and children. Our learners managed to raise an amazing £366 from the sale! The thank you card we have received tells us that the money will go towards bedding and pots and pans for families who are having to start with nothing in a new country. The Sanctuary Team are so grateful for our donation, a big well done to Miss Seal and our Faith Ambassadors for their hard work and fundraising efforts.

In a recent parent survey here at school, there were very positive results. Of 122 responses, 85% said their child(ren) were happy at school, 92% said they felt safe and 90% knew who to go to if worried. However, 20% of parents didn't know if school taught their child to stay safe online. I can assure you we do! There are regular half termly 'How To Stay Safe Online' lessons and lessons about legality and social media. We talk and teach about online security and how not to trust people we can't see online. For more information on this, I would encourage you to speak to your child's teacher who will happily provide you further information or detail. When questioned in class, the children tell us they understand and know how to stay safe online and we will continue to engage the children and encourage vigilance in this area.

In the same survey, 27% of respondents didn't know if their child understood fire drills. They do! A recent incident involving a brioche roll and a microwave (no, really!) had the fire alarm sounding. The whole school was evacuated incredibly quickly and sensibly following the alarm. The children gathered on the field in classes, were registered and awaited further instructions patiently. This was a genuine unplanned event, but we do practice regularly - at least termly - and we also practice in the event of an emergency 'lockdown.'

At the end of last month, we were incredibly lucky that our Ocklynge Parliament members attended the Palace of Westminster. The children visited the House of Commons, the House of Lords and visited the Great Hall, exploring its history and wondering at the relics within. The children were impeccably behaved and both groups were able to chat with our local MP, Caroline Ansell, both in person and via video link, which was a wonderful opportunity for our learners and one they enjoyed greatly. Overall, a fantastic experience and parents involved were incredibly grateful. Thank you to everyone who assisted on the day, your support is greatly appreciated.

Finally, our amazing PTA have been fundraising for music stereo boxes at breaktimes, a smokeless firepit for Forest School and are arranging our Discos on Friday – don't forget to book your tickets if you haven't already (links available through our Facebook page, or by contacting the office).



As ever, the Friends of Ocklynge PTA team are integral to further strengthening opportunities across our school and their continued support is much appreciated. With this in mind, we are in dire need of more volunteers (especially with #TeamYear6 ending their journey with us at the end of July). Please notify the office if you can support our PTA team, you'd be very welcome to come along and meet the team for a no-obligation sit-in at their next meeting. Again, I would like to express our sincere thanks for their tireless support and hard work for our children.

We have a busy and exciting penultimate term ahead of us, one that we hope to enjoy and share with you all, including our new families who will be joining us in September. More on transition at the end of April... watch this space! In the meantime, wishing you all a happy and healthy start to Term 5.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Reilly', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Paul Reilly**  
**Headteacher**