



Headteacher's Newsletter - 2023/4 Summer term 2

Dear Parents and Carers,

There is a lot to fit into this final newsletter of the year, my apologies that it is rather lengthy.

Phones in school

It has been hard to escape the recent media publicity and discussion regarding the use and possible ban of smart phones in schools.

See below for one recent such article from the Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/article/2024/may/25/mps-urge-under-16s-smartphone-ban-statutory-ban-schools#:~:text=This%20might%20require%20radical%20steps.proposals%20has%20not%20been%20published>

At HCJS we have no plans to ban phones for pupils; we do not need to as our teachers collect them from pupils at the start of every day and children do not have access to them during learning time.

The debate over whether mobile phones should be banned in schools (or even to all children under 16) is multifaceted, involving educational, social, and psychological considerations. There are many arguments for and against a ban, one pro-phone argument is that they allow pupils to stay in touch with their parents, which can be crucial for safety and coordination, especially in emergencies and particularly for older children who walk home on their own. Even if I was so minded, it is not my place to tell you what to think or do on this issue but one thing I feel it may be useful to point out is that if you buy a phone for your child, it doesn't have to be a smart phone with unlimited data. I have had a number of recent conversations with HCJS parents concerned about the peer pressure that has built over recent years; it has become an assumption it seems that by the time your child enters year 6 you should buy them a phone. This doesn't have to be the case. Have a look at the following websites that have been passed on to me by one such concerned parent. A key message of both is that once a

group of parents all agree not to give their children smartphones, the peer pressure is instantly reduced.

<https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/theparentpact>

<https://delaysmartphones.org.uk/evidence/>

SATS results and OFSTED follow up.

The 9th July saw the publication of the annual SATS results (end of Key Stage 2 assessments). I'm pleased to share with you the news that in terms of the percentage of HCJS pupils reaching the 'expected standard', all our subject results represent a significant improvement on 2023 and further strengthen our trend of upward improvement since the end of the pandemic: Maths (9% more year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard) Reading (+7%) and Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling (+7%).

80 % of our pupils met the expected standard and 31% of pupils exceeded the expected standard in the Reading test. This is (pleasingly) frustrating and slightly ironic given my battle with the Ofsted inspector to convince her that our standards were rising (This shows that they really are!). Both of these figures are above the expected national average.

Whilst on the subject of Ofsted...

If (as I know many of you do), you take an interest in such things - you might like to know that we are making a significant change to the way that our curriculum is organised from the start of next school year. From September, our foundation subjects (all National Curriculum subjects other than English, Maths and Science) will be taught via 'discrete' lessons. Different subjects will be delivered at different times of the year (eg - History and Geography will have half a term on and half a term off in rotation) but all will be taught in a dedicated timetable slot. This represents quite a change for us; up until now some subject content has been mixed up across 'topic units' - Let's Rock (Yr 3) for example was a mixture of History, Geography, Art and D.T. We were not at all unhappy with the way we did things, but we feel that this change will put us in a stronger position to respond to our Ofsted feedback when they return. The Curriculum pages of our website: (<https://www.haddenhamjun.co.uk/web/curriculum/523323>) are in the process of being rewritten to reflect this new approach; please visit them after the summer holiday to learn more.

Federation with HCIS

Our (proposed) new Governing Board 'The Haddenham Community Schools' had an informal get together earlier this week to get ourselves acquainted and get organised for September. From my point of view, it's a really exciting time as the leadership of both of Haddenham's Community Schools (staff and governors) begin our new journey together. At the meeting were our two parent governors; one, Mrs Emma Wood was re-elected and has transferred over to the new governing board from the current HCJS board and another Mr Andrew Thomas is newly appointed to the role. Welcome Andrew, I look forward to working with you.

XYZ Music Academy

As XYZ were so incredibly generous with their support at our recent School Games Day, giving our support back is the very least I can do...

XYZ Music Academy is hosting a large variety of workshops over the summer holidays. They are offering Music Camps, Summer Schools, Musical Theatre Camps and much more!

To check out their offering, please click the link:

<https://xyzmusicacademy.com/product-category/workshops/>

If you are interested in learning with them, please get in touch to book your FREE no obligation taster lesson with them at their centre in Westcott Venture Park.

Contact them here: <https://xyzmusicacademy.com/free-taster-lesson/>

Sporting Success

Once again, we have had a half term full of sporting triumph, with success for HCJS in...Cricket (**District Champions** and runner up in the subsequent Buckinghamshire Finals), Girl's football (**County finalists** for both year 3&4 and Year 6 teams) and Athletics (**3rd place** at the district competition).

Away from inter school competitive sports, we have also hosted a very successful wheelchair basketball day and participated in the Yr 6 transition games event at Waddesdon. Mr Battersby (ably supported by Miss Newitt) has organised and in many cases supervised all these events. I want to say a big thank you publicly here, your passion and dedication for not just school sport, but also for participation and inclusion is so very much appreciated - and the single most important reason that we have once again been awarded a '**Gold**' School games award.

Don't forget to check the WEDUC news feed regularly for photographs and brief descriptions of all the wonderful things our children get up to, both inside and outside of school.

Thank You and Good luck to the staff moving on from HCJS.

Mr Paul Booth

Many of you will not know Paul as he only arrives for work after parents and children have left the site for the day. Paul has worked here for 16 years and in his role as cleaner and sometimes handyman/decorator/gardener he's played an important role in keeping HCJS shipshape. School's simply don't work without people like Paul and the unseen colleagues who take care of the site and facilities when staff and children aren't here. Thankyou for your many years of service to our school Paul - I know Mr Bradshaw in particular feels that it won't be quite the same without you.

Mrs Emma Borchart

After starting her teaching career at HCJS 3 years ago, Miss Borchart is moving on to pastures new. Thank you Emma and good luck at your new school.

Mrs Lucy Peel

One of the nicest and most positive people I've ever worked with, Mrs Peel has enjoyed her role working at HCJS so much she's leaving us to train as a teacher! I know she will take her warm and enthusiastic approach into her secondary school language lessons in the months and years ahead. Good luck Lucy, all at HCJS wish you well for your new adventure!

And last but definitely not least...

Mrs Caroline Armstead is moving on from HCJS after 7 years and boy will we miss her! What started as a casual conversation over a glass of prosecco (a long story!) led to an initially small role working with groups of pupils on pastoral and emotional support, which a few years later resulted in Caroline taking up our SENDCO post eventually heading up what became a whole new department within the school as 'Head of Inclusion'. It is impossible to sum up Caroline's achievements and successes in one short paragraph but suffice to say she has been instrumental in overhauling and modernising our approach to all aspects of inclusion. In my opinion, HCJS and its pupils & parents owe her a great debt of gratitude. Caroline leaves with my best wishes and

thanks for all that she has done for us and I wish her the very best for her new and exciting role in Didcot.

And finally...

This year has been one of growth, learning, and achievement for our children. We have seen them embrace challenges, develop new skills, and form lasting friendships. Their resilience and enthusiasm have been truly inspiring, in addition to all the success on the sports field, court and hall HCJS pupils have...

Sung with the opera and performed at the Royal Albert Hall, staged a musical (High School musical), they've listened to a talk by world famous author (Dame Jaqueline Wilson), baked cakes and biscuits, made viking shields, danced in both Bollywood style and like an Egyptian, stayed in a castle and a Manor House where they climbed, swam, canoed and shot arrows. It's been another very busy year, and I would like to end this newsletter by thanking all our fabulous staff that make it all happen. Thank you, you are what makes our brilliant school what it is!

...And as our staff look forward to a summer break, it's over to you for a bit!

I hope you and your child(ren) can enjoy some quality time together. Whether it's exploring new interests, reading a book, or simply spending time outdoors, these moments are precious and so important for well-being; treasure them whilst you can.

For those families who are moving on from our school, we bid you a fond farewell and wish you all the best in your future endeavours. To those returning next year, we look forward to welcoming you back with renewed energy and excitement for the new school year.

Have a wonderful summer!

Mr Leach

Summer 2- 3rd June- 23rd July 2024	
Tuesday 16th July	Reports out
Wednesday 17th July (9.15am)	Leavers' assembly
Tuesday 23rd July - 1.30pm	School closes for the summer