

## Thomas Johnson Lower School

Newsletter 21  
10<sup>th</sup> February 2023



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### Headteacher's Introduction

Unbelievably, we have reached the halfway point of the school year! I am very proud of what we have achieved so far as a school - but I am also highly ambitious in ensuring we work as a community to make the school even better. With this in mind, I wanted to share with you 3 of the main initiatives we will be working on over the coming months.

### 2023: The Year of Inspiration

So far in 2023, we have welcomed Commonwealth Games Bronze Medalist and para-athlete **Craig Bowler**, The Right Honourable **Nadine Dorries** MP, and just yesterday - **Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service**. The intention behind this initiative is to invite people into school to speak to the children about their lives, journeys and achievements in the hope that it will inspire them for the future. We also have Gymnastic Tumbling World Champion, **Megan Kealy**, lined up for our sponsored event on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March. There are many more visitors lined up who will be revealed as the year goes on.

### Curriculum 2.0 - The Thomas Johnson Way

In light of our excellent Ofsted report (*that's right, I'm still going on about it!*), it was highlighted that to make the school even better we need to ensure all of our foundation subjects are properly sequenced. We started this work early in September - [and you can read on the website what we have done so far](#). All the staff are currently working hard to regenerate and rejuvenate the curriculum offer so it will be fully sequenced for September 2023. In the meantime, we will gradually roll out these curriculum changes this academic year to ensure our curriculum offer continues to go from strength to strength.

### Enrichment

This is comprised of 3 aspects.

1. **Eco-Schools Green Flag Accreditation**. We are hoping to achieve Eco-Schools status this year. Upon achieving this, I want to then look at how the school can commit to operating in a carbon-neutral manner.
2. **School Clubs**. We are currently looking at how we can launch our extra-curricular clubs offer - and hope to have this ready to roll out in the not too distant future.
3. **The TJLS Play Project**. See the next page for details of this exciting project...

**Simon Bolger**  
Headteacher



### Change to the start of day procedure

From Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February, we will be changing our start of day procedure. On the rainy days where we have opened the school doors for children to come straight into the building, we have found the start of the day to be much smoother. With this in mind, we have decided to make this a permanent change.

We will now use the following process at the start of the day:

- **8.40am** - gates will open to families
- **8.50am** - the door by the ramp will open, the bell will be rung by a member of staff - and children in Year 1-4 can enter the school
- **9am** - gates and doors will be closed
- Any child arriving after 9am will need to be signed in at the front office as **late** by their parents/carers. They will need to sign the late book and provide a reason for the lateness.
- Our registers close at 9.10am. Any child arriving after this time will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded. Ongoing and persistent lateness and/or unauthorised absence may be subject to legal action.
- If you have any messages to pass to teachers, then please use ClassDojo to do this.

*Dream - Discover - Flourish*

*The aim of our curriculum is to open doors of opportunity for our children*

## The TJLS Play Project



The intention of this project is to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, co-operation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play at breaktime and lunchtime.

Children spend 20% of their time in school playing at playtime (*that's equivalent to 1.4 years of their primary school attendance*). To ensure that this time and our fantastic school grounds are used to their full potential, we will be turning our attention to developing play opportunities for our children.

We intend for this project to help our children in many ways, including:

- To be more active; improving fitness, physical development, and co-ordination.
- Increase happiness
- Improve confidence, self-esteem, and self-awareness
- Increase productivity and concentration
- Improve communication skills; negotiation, problem solving and teamwork
- Improve independence, imagination, and creativity.

Our plan is to develop different areas around the playground with a variety of invitations to play. Some of these areas will hopefully include a dressing up area, construction area, small world area, quiet area, mud kitchen, den building, musical area and sandpit. We will also listen to and use the children's ideas so they have a say in the development of their playtime. This project will take some time to fully develop - but I am sure you will agree that it will be worth it.

In short, I want to create:

- More space to play
- More stuff to play with
- A risk-benefit approach so children are safe to take the risks they need
- Training for the staff that looks after children's play

### How can you help us?

Our first step is to collect the resources - and our second step is to teach the children how they can be used for play. To get our journey started we need your help.

If you are having a clear out and are in a position to donate, then we would gratefully accept the following items:

- Old suitcases, handbags or toolboxes of any type
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, worktables, wooden spoons, chopping boards
- Plastic bowls and plates
- Fabric (*large sheets, brightly coloured material*) or tarpaulins
- Bamboo poles
- Sweeping brushes
- Watering cans of different sizes
- Plastic sieve
- Plastic tubes, pipes or guttering
- Large storage tubs
- Wooden or plastic pallets, boxes, trays or crates
- Baby dolls and play-buggies
- Pegs (for holding things together)
- Any children's dressing up clothes
- Tyres from cars, scooters, motorbikes and bicycles
- Child sized wheelbarrows
- Small world toys and cars etc. (*e.g. dinosaurs, animals, figures, McDonald's toys etc.*)

From Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February, the wooden shelter on the playground will be repurposed as a storage area - **so this means it will be out of bounds before, during and after school.**

Any donations that you have can be kindly left in this area. We will then sort through and risk assess all items before introducing them to children for use at playtime.

If you work in a trade and/or have access to any of the larger items we are looking for - then we would be very grateful if you could contact the school office.

Thank you for your support.

### Weekly Awards

This week, the awards go to...

|           | Star of the Week | Reader of the Week | Sportsperson of the Week |
|-----------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Reception | Violet           | Artie              | Orla                     |
| Year 1    | Amberley         | Callum             | Callum                   |
| Year 2    | Ruben            | Jack               | Dexter                   |
| Year 3    | Mila             | Keira              | Beth                     |
| Year 4    | Summer           | Ethan              | Matthew                  |

This week's Golden Brush winner is Hedgehogs - EYFS. They have had the tidiest classroom and cloakroom this week.

### Bronze Awards

Well done to **Dexter**, **Jack** and **Ruben** (all in Y2).

### Silver Awards

Well done to **Noah** and **Flora** (both in Y3).

### House Points

This week's winning house is **Woburn**.  
Well done everyone!



### Attendance - Every Minute Counts

Whole school attendance  
for this week - **95%**  
(National attendance is **96.4%**)  
*Can we do better next week?*

Duggee The Every Day Dog  
Awarded to the class with the best attendance all week.  
**Badgers - Year 2**  
with an attendance of 99%

### Online Safety - Online Games

Is your child playing or watching others play games online? Your child could be using Twitch, Steam, Roblox, YouTube etc to access games or watch others play. We need to make sure that what they are viewing is appropriate for them.

It is important to talk to your child to see what they are interested in so you can have a look first to see if they are appropriate. For example, there are games that may appear to be appropriate but are actually horror/ survival games and characters can turn more sinister as the game progresses.

It is important to remember that children may be playing the game, watching videos of it on sites such as YouTube or playing replicated versions on Roblox for example.

More information: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-games/>

### Dates for your diary - new dates added will be written in green and highlighted in yellow

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 20 <sup>th</sup> February                 | School REOPENS for Spring 2   |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> February                 | Year 2 SATs information session - 2pm                               |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> March                     | School closed for industrial strike action                          |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> March                     | World Book Day. Dress up as a children's book character.            |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> March                     | Progress Consultations for Parents and Carers                       |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> March                     | Progress Consultations for Parents and Carers                       |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> March                     | International Women's Day   |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup> March | Science Week  |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> & 16 <sup>th</sup> March | School closed for industrial strike action                          |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> March                    | Coffee Morning - 9.15-10am  |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> March                    | Sports For Champions sponsorship forms and money returned to school |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> March                    | Megan Kealy - Sports For Champions event                            |
| 31 <sup>st</sup> March                    | Easter Bonnet Parade  |
| 31 <sup>st</sup> March                    | Last day of term  |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> April                    | INSET Day - School CLOSED to children                               |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> April                    | School REOPENS for Summer 1   |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> April                    | National offer day for children starting in Reception               |

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|  |   |
|--|---|
| 19 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> April | Scholastic Book Fair  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> May                      | Bank Holiday - school CLOSED  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> May   | KS1 SATs period   |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> May                      | School referendum   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> May                      | Bank Holiday for the Coronation of King Charles III                               |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> May   | Art Week  |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> May                     | SPLAT session - 9-9.30am. Your child will give you a tour of their classroom.     |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> May                     | Last day of half term   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> June                     | School reopens for Summer 2   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> June  | Year 4 Multiplication Screening Period  |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> - 16 <sup>th</sup> June | Year 1 Phonics Screening Period   |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> June                    | Coffee Morning - 9.15-10am  |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> June                    | New Reception starter information session - 1.30pm                                |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> June                    | Sports Day - 9.30am   |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> July                     | Sports Day Backup should there be poor weather                                    |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> July                    | Transition morning - meet your new teacher  |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> July                    | School Picnic   |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> July                    | End of year reports sent out to parents and carers                                |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> July                    | SPLAT - your child can share their learning from this year with you - 3.20-3.50pm |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> July                    | Transition morning - meet your new teacher  |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> July                    | Year 4 Leavers Assembly - 9.30am  |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> July                    | School closes for summer holidays   |

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