



Hazelbank Road, Catford, London, SE6 1TG

Headteacher: Manda George

Telephone: 0208 697 2762

Email: admin@torridonprimary.lewisham.sch.uk

22nd March 2024

Dear parents and carers,

It was fantastic to see so many of you at our open evenings this week. I hope it was helpful to speak to your child's class teacher and to see some of the wonderful learning that has been taking place this term.

A big thank you to Amyas (Edie and Beatrice's dad) who gave up some of his time this week to come and work with our team of Eco Leaders. Together, they have built some fabulous new planters for our Torridon Allotment. They recycled the wood from delivery paletts, the space is looking great and we can't wait for our seeds and bulbs to start showing their shoots.

We are finishing off the spring term with an exciting science week next week. We have science workshops taking place on Monday and lots of investigations and experiments happening throughout the week. If you or a member of your family work in the world of science and would like to come in and speak to your child's class about your job, we would love to hear from you. Please email our science lead, Lizzie, at admin@torridonprimary.lewisham.sch.uk

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday at the Corbett Chase. Whether you are running walking or cheering people on we hope to see you there.

Please remember we finish at 2.00pm on Thursday ahead of the Bank Holiday weekend. We hope you will pop in to our bake sale at the end of the day to buy some sweet treats to celebrate the end of term.

Have a lovely weekend.

Warm wishes

Manda George

Headteacher



Corbett Chase – Sunday 24th March 2024

4th Annual Corbett Chase this SUNDAY
24th March.

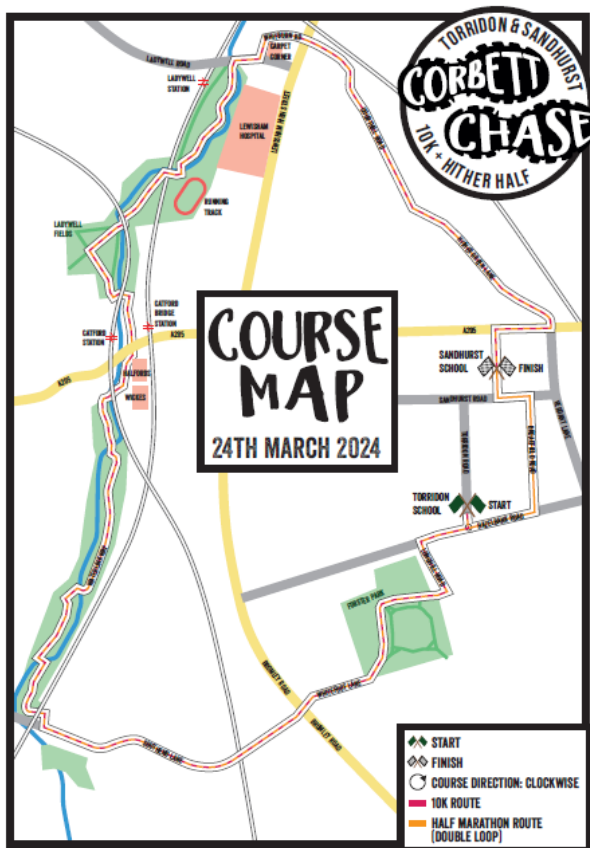
Come out to cheer on the Team Torridon - both parents and staff - enjoy the Play Street with your family and bring a sweet treat to contribute to the cake sale!

9:15am - race starts at Torridon School

10am-12noon - Play Street and cake sale on Minard Road outside Sandhurst School where the race finishes.

We're still short on help - last chance to [SIGN UP](#) and get involved! We need contributions to the cake sale, volunteers to help out on the day at the Play Street and cake sale, runners or walkers to take part in the 10k or half-marathon.

If you're donating a cake please bring it to Sandhurst School on Sunday from 9:30am. Please provide a list of ingredients - no nuts please.



We're fundraising this year to improve [digital learning at Torridon and get iPads in every classroom](#) - please support our amazing team of staff and parents.

Any questions - email friendsoftorridonpta@gmail.com. Thanks for your support!

Year 6 – Easter School Learning

The year 6 children will be taking their SATs tests in May this year. We are working hard to ensure that all children achieve the best possible outcomes in order to prepare them for secondary school and beyond. We are pleased to be able to offer additional revision sessions during the second week of the Easter holidays.

These revision sessions will run 9.00-12.30 on Monday 8th, Tuesday 9th, Wednesday 10th and Thursday 11th April. The gate will open at the usual time of 8.45 each day. We are sure that you understand the importance of this extra opportunity to assist your child with their revision to ensure they are fully prepared and can approach these tests with confidence.

We hope you will support us in encouraging your child to attend these sessions. Please note that children will not be required to wear school uniform to Easter school.

Please sign and return the slip below by **Friday 22nd March** to confirm that you would like your child to attend these sessions. If you require another letter, please come into the main office.



Science Week Home Learning Experiment

Science Week Home Learning Experiment

Have a go at doing this activity at home and email photos of your results to be in the newsletter!

- 1) Before the activity, pour a cup of very hot water (just boiled works best so adult support is required) into the jug.
- 2) Add a cup of sugar to the mixture, a spoonful at a time and stir the mixture until all the sugar dissolves. As the water is still very hot, this step is best to do before children participate in the experiment.
- 3) Carefully pour the mixture into the clean jar.
- 4) Add a few drops of food colouring to the mixture and stir.
- 5) Dip the spoon into the warm mixture and then sprinkle some extra sugar onto the wet end of the skewer and leave it to dry.
- 6) Once the mixture in the jar has cooled, attach a clothes peg to the clean end of the skewer and balance it on the jar so that the sugary end of the skewer is in the sugary mixture.
- 7) Leave the jar in a warm place for a few days and watch as sugar crystals develop on the end of the skewer, making a sugar crystal sparkler!

You will need:

- Very hot water
- Jug
- Spoon
- Wooden skewer (blunt if possible)
- Sugar
- Food colouring
- Jar
- Clothes peg



Question Prompts:

What colours can you see?
What can you see on the stick?
Where do you think it has come from?
What do they look like?
How has it changed over the last few days?

ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

Using social media is an inevitability of modern life and comes with a great number of positives in terms of the ability to connect with others. Similarly, online gaming is another way on which young people build connections with their peers. However, there are risks when using the internet and children are particularly vulnerable because they have a limited understanding of 'netiquette'.

Recently I have had reports of children using highly offensive and obscene language, taunting and being unkind to others online and attempting to contact members of staff via social media.

It is really important that as parents and carers, you take responsibility for keeping your children safe when they are online and for monitoring their activity to make sure they are behaving appropriately.

The NSPCC has some very helpful and informative guides to show you how to set up parental controls, things to consider when children are gaming online, protecting your child from accidentally accessing inappropriate content and how to report inappropriate online activity.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>

Please let's work together to make sure we are doing everything we can to make sure our children are safe, respectful and age appropriate when they are online.

Thank you for your support

Manda

Forest School News

Red class were invited to visit Forster Park today to be part of a community effort to create a TINY FOREST in the grounds of Forster Park.

The aim is to create a new forest by planting 600 baby saplings and Red class worked extremely hard to plant 60 trees in an hour!



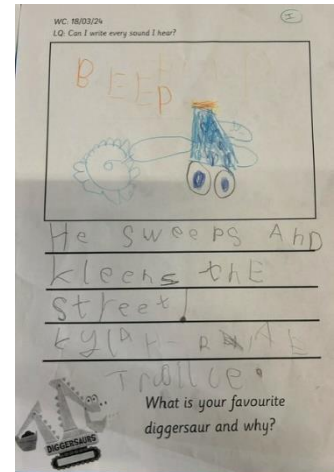
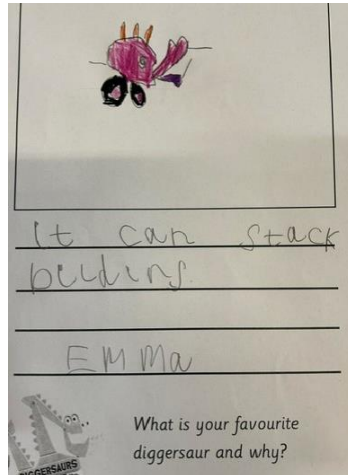
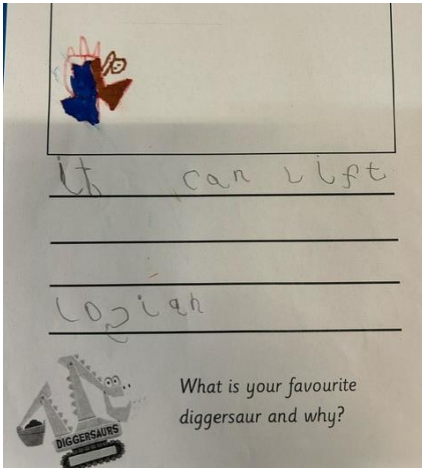
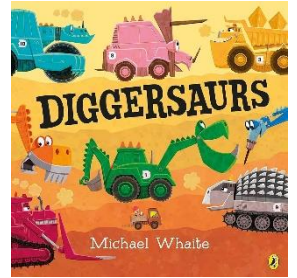
Here are the exact coordinates

[51°25'57.4"N 0°00'33.1"W](#)

so, you can visit the Tiny Forest.

Reception – The Story of Diggersaurs

We have been enjoying the story of Diggersaurs! We have looked at all different types of diggers and dinosaurs! The children drew a picture and wrote about their favourite Diggersaur character.



Year 1 – Investigating Capacity and Volume (Maths)

This week, we have been working with water! We completed a number of tests and challenges over the week to investigate the capacity of different containers. We poured cups of water into different containers and counted how many cups of water each could hold. We worked together to describe the volume of water in the containers, using: full, nearly full, nearly empty and empty!



Year 2 Visit The Cutty Sark

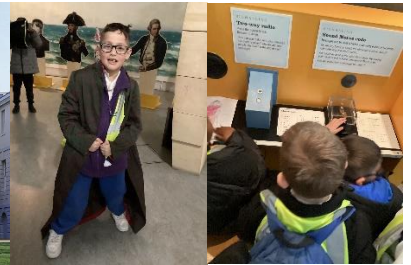
This week, Year 2 took an exciting trip to Greenwich to see the remarkable Cutty Sark, the world's fastest tea clipper of its time, and the magnificent Maritime Museum. We did some observational drawings of the figureheads at the Cutty Sark and had a hands-on experience of life on a ship at the Maritime Museum's 'All



Hands' children's gallery. We dressed up like captains and even had a go at sending messages to one another using Morse Code.



It was definitely a fun-filled day.



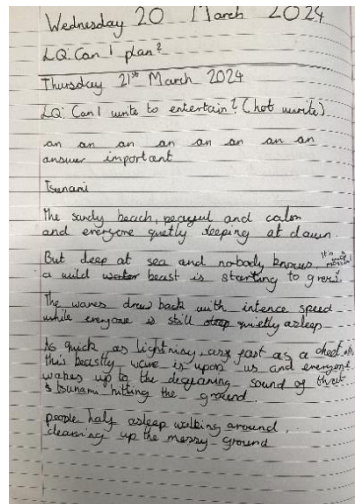
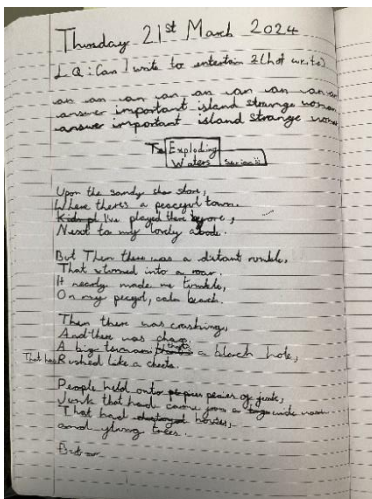
Year 3 - Buzzing Bees

Year 3 have had fun this week being buzzing bees! As we were flying around, we were attracted to the flower's strong colours and smells. As we were drinking the nectar, the pollen (glitter) rubbed off on us. We then flew to another flower, where the pollen would be transferred to another flower. This means that the flower could be fertilised and create new seeds! We now know how important bees are, and how busy they must be pollinating all day.



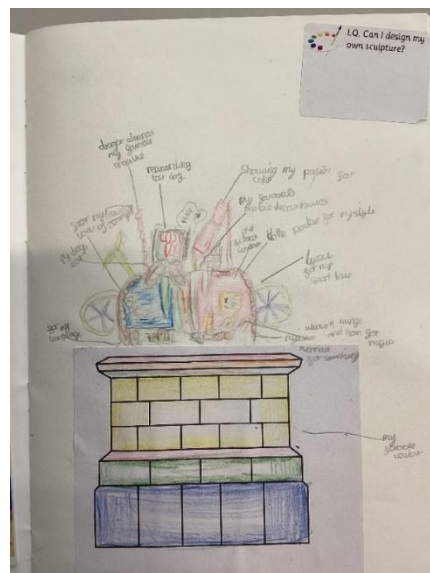
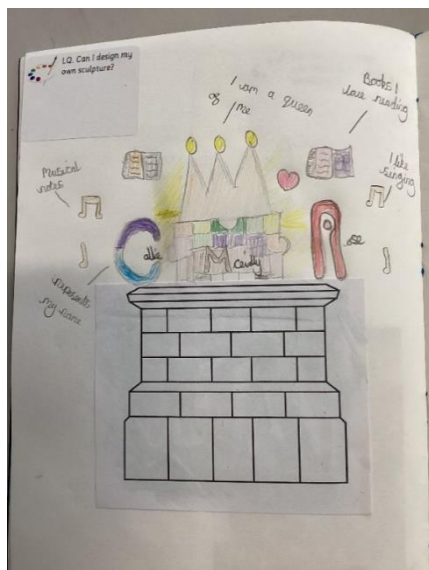
Year 4 – Writing

In year 4, the children have been writing poetry about the devastating phenomenon of a tsunami. They performed their poems to their table and to the class. We were so impressed with the ambitious language they chose, and with their experiments with rhyme and alliteration.



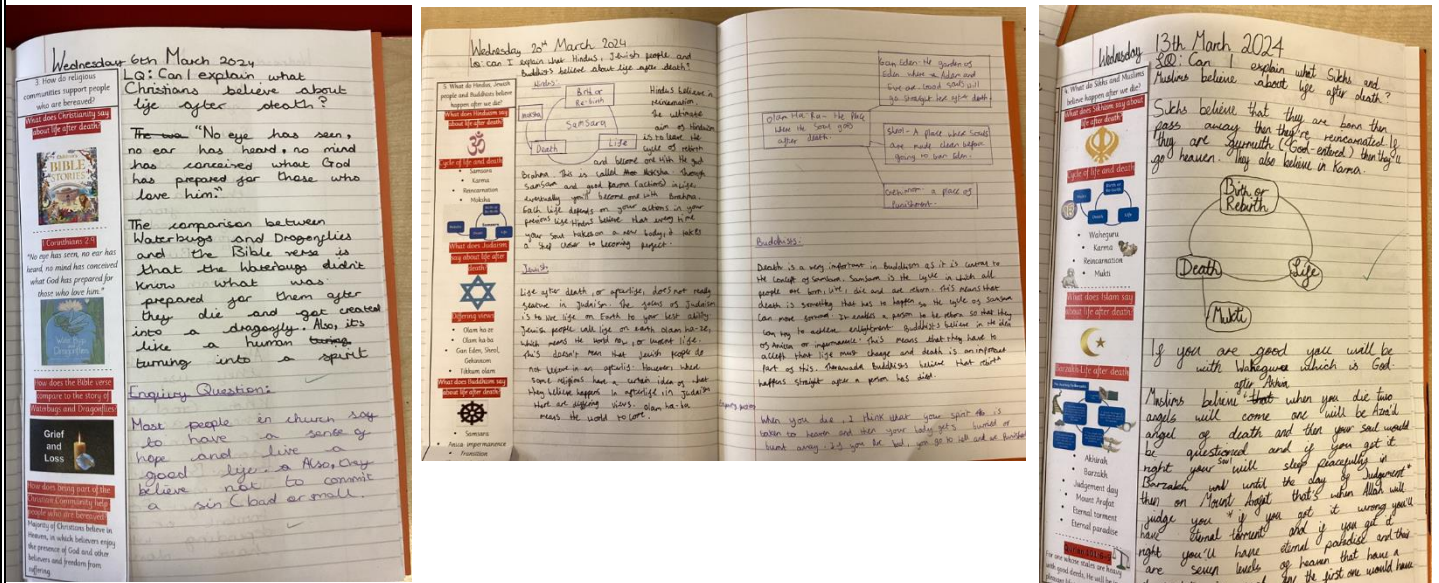
Year 5 - Art

In Year 5, we have been sketching designs for sculptures for the fourth plinth competition. We worked in groups to discuss how we could represent our identity through images, and then we used those images to create a sculpture design that was personal to us.



Year 6 - RE

In RE, Year 6 have been looking at 'The Journey of Life and Death unit.' We explored the teachings of various religious groups regarding the topic, and how different religious communities support those who are going through bereavement. We made comparisons and also shared our own beliefs and viewpoints.



Resource Base Learning



Green Pathway went on a treasure hunt around school this week! We have been reading a story called 'Snail Trail' where a snail takes a long journey. The children practised following a map to find puzzle pieces in the classroom, playground, forest school and Manda's office!



Following on from our shopping trip last week, the resource base children made some Easter treats! We all worked together to make chocolate cornflake cakes and decorated them with mini Easter eggs.



Dates For Your Diary

Sunday 24 th March	Corbett Chase & street play out
Week beginning Monday 25 th March	SCIENCE WEEK
	Year 6 assessment week
Monday 25 th March	Green pathway to Forster Park
Tuesday 26 th March	Year 3 to the National Gallery
	Lego club exhibition for parents and carers
Thursday 28 th March	Last day of term – 2pm finish
	BAKE SALE
Friday 29 th March – Friday 12 th April	EASTER HOLIDAY
Monday 8 th – Thursday 11 th April	Year 6 Easter school
Monday 15 th April	First day of the summer term
Thursday 18 th April	Year 5 and 6 tag rugby tournament
Monday 22 nd April	Key stage 2 athletics tournament
Tuesday 23 rd April	Year 3 to the British Museum
Thursday 25 th April	Green pathway to Bellingham Playzone
Friday 26 th April	Year 5 and 6 Tri-Golf tournament
Wednesday 1 st May	1M to The Ragged School Museum
Friday 3 rd May	Year 5 and 6 frisbee tournament
	1W to The Ragged School Museum
Monday 6 th May	BANK HOLIDAY – SCHOOL CLOSED
Thursday 9 th May	1M to The Ragged School Museum
	Blue Pathway – Tate Modern Workshop
Friday 10 th May	Year 5 hockey tournament
Week beginning 13 th May	YEAR 6 SATS WEEK
Wednesday 15 th May	Year 4 to London Symphony Orchestra concert
Monday 20 th May	9am – Piano performance for parents and carers
Tuesday 21 st May	9am - Guitar performance for parents and carers
Wednesday 22 nd May	Year 3 and 4 tennis tournament
Monday 27 th – Friday 31 st May	HALF TERM HOLIDAY
Wednesday 5 th June	Year 5 and 6 tennis tournament
Sunday 9 th June	FAMILY FUN RUN – Forster Park



Sustainability News

On Thursday we were really fortunate to have a wonderful parent helper, Amyas, come to the school to support the Eco Leaders from years 3 and 4 build some planters for our blossoming allotment area. The planters were made from recycled wood and nails from Amyas' own house! The children enthusiastically undertook many tasks including measuring, hammering nails, sawing and lifting. They really enjoyed themselves and achieved a fantastic end result!



Work Of The Week WoW – Creative Learning

Top WoWs for week beginning Monday 18th March 2024

WoW
Work Of The Week

Reception	 Baseline brush control/ colour knowledge and attitude	 Baseline brush control/ colour knowledge and attitude	 Baseline brush control/ colour knowledge and attitude	 Baseline brush control/ colour knowledge and attitude	 Baseline brush control/ colour knowledge and attitude
Year 1	 Spring 2 Instrumental Lessons	 All Around the World	 All Around the World	 All Around the World	 All Around the World
Year 2	 Recorders B, A & G	 Pirates	 Recorders B, A & G	 Pirates	 Pirates
Year 3	 Ukulele - More Chords	 Stamp	 Stamp	 Stamp	 Stamp
Year 4	 Sculpture Spring 2 Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset	 Sport choreography	 Dimensions of Music	 Sport choreography	 Dimensions of Music
Year 5	 Reggae and Ska	 Sculpture Spring 2 Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset	 Into the Hood	 Into the Hood	 Sculpture Spring 2 Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset
Year 6	 Ghost Dances	 Ghost Dances	 Ghost Dances	 Ghost Dances	 Ghost Dances



STARS OF THE WEEK



Class	Name	Reason
Nursery FT	Aziah-King	For joining in and remembering the animals in the story. Well done, Aziah-King! 😊
Nursery AM	Kimora	For fantastic independent name writing. Well done, Kimora! 😊
Nursery PM	Aurora	For being kind to her friends. Well done, Aurora! 😊
Blue Class	Anthony	For his amazing improvement and perseverance during independent writing. Keep it up – Anthony!
Red Class	Esmee	For her new positive attitude in the morning! Esmee always tries her best and smiles all day long 😊
Yellow Class	Noah	For working hard in phonics and blending words independently. Well done!
1M	Annika	For always trying to be polite and respectful. Well done Annika! 😊
1N	Elyne	For her amazing reading, for getting her good ideas down on paper in writing and for always being kind. 😊
1W	Adem	For working extremely hard on his handwriting and presentation in school and at home! Well done Adem! 😊
2S	The whole class	For their wonderful behaviour during our school trip this week! You set a wonderful example and made us all very proud – well done 2S 😊
2SW	The whole class	For their fantastic listening and wonderful behaviour on our school trip! You made us all very proud- well done 2SW! 😊
2V	The whole class	For being fully engaged on our trip to the Cutty Sark and the Maritime Museum, for participating in all the different activity and for having an enjoyable time. Well done 2V 😊
3A	Liam	For displaying a great attitude towards your learning. Well done 😊
3G	Shanaiya	For her positive attitude towards learning, always being respectful and trying her best. Well done! 😊
3S	Jah'shawny	For always being a caring and thoughtful member of our community. Well done for always making good choices 😊
4A	Junior	Being a kind, helpful member of our community.
4L	Oli	For his fantastic behaviour for learning, developing in confidence and his excellent and terrifying Tsunami poem.
4S	Maria	For being such a hardworking and helpful member of the 4S community and for reading aloud to the class with confidence and clarity.
5C	David	For making good progress in his writing over the past few weeks especially in the letter he wrote to Judge George Mason. Well done David!
5L	Simeon	For making good progress with your maths assessments. Well done. Keep it up!
5S	Zephaniah	For his enthusiasm and dedication maths this week was truly inspiring to the entire class. His remarkable progress and unwavering determination are admirable. Keep up the excellent work, setting a fantastic example for others!
6A	Azarni	For displaying a great attitude towards his learning, especially in maths, which has enabled him to make progress. Keep it up!
6C	Adam	For excellent focus during writing lessons this week and considering the features required when writing his visitors guide. Well done!
6L	Abshikah	For her concentration and focus during reading lessons and assessment. Well done!
RB Blue	Elliot	Well done for following your timetable so well and having a more positive attitude.
RB Green	Amarachukwu	Well done for being so sensible and calm on your trip to the Cutty Sark this week.

HAF Programme – SKIPZ Production



SKIPZ PRODUCTION CIC PRESENTS

EASTER

holiday and food programme

Tuesday 2nd April to Friday 5th April 2024

10am to 2 pm

Torridon Primary School,
Hazelbank Road, SE6 1TG

4 to 11 years old
FREE FOR FREE SCHOOL
MEALS CHILDREN

Lunch provided | Siblings welcome
Paying children welcome




In partnership with
Lewisham Council

For more information and to register,
please visit

<https://www.skipzproductions.org/skipzhaflewisham>



Weekly Attendance

Class	Attendance		Class	Attendance		Class	Attendance	
1M	93%		3A	95%		5C	94%	
1N	92%		3G	91%		5L	89%	
1W	95%		3S	87%		5S	95%	
2S	98%		4A	100%		6A	96%	
2SW	100%		4L	98%		6C	95%	
2V	97%		4S	92%		6L	98%	

A big well done to 2SW and 4A for achieving 100%! Keep up the good work!

Nursery Admissions

If you have a child who turns 4 years old between 1st September 2024 and 31st August 2025 and you would like to enrol them at Torridon nursery, please get an application from the office or request one by email from: admin@torridonprimary.lewisham.sch.uk.

We have limited spaces, to avoid disappointment, please request and submit an application form as soon as possible.



TORRIDON NURSERY HAS PLACES AVAILABLE FOR SEPTEMBER !

A place where staff meticulously consider and plan for individual needs, interests and stages of development for each child resulting in a nurturing, stimulating and exciting learning experience for all.



Open Morning Invitation – Christ's Hospital



CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

A SCHOOL LIKE NO OTHER

OPEN MORNING INVITATION

SATURDAY 27 APRIL

Year 7, Year 9 and Sixth Form Entry

Hansel and Gretel – Show Dates

A musical version of the classic fairy tale for all ages

Two performances each Sat & Sun* at 2pm & 3.30pm

*No performances Sat 16 March.
Shows last approx 45 mins

SHOW DATES

Sat 2 March,
Sun 3 March,
Sat 9 March,
Sun 10 March,
Sun 17 March,
Sat 23 March,
Sun 24 March
(7 show days in total)

UPSTAIRS
AT THE
SYDENHAM
CENTRE
44a Sydenham Rd
SE26 5QX



Advance booking
online recommended

Adapted from the classic fairy tale by
JONATHAN KAUFMAN and JANE WALKER

Original songs and music by
JAMES BOSTON (lyrics)
and TOM NUGENT (music)

Produced and directed by
JONATHAN KAUFMAN
Assistant director and choreographer
VALENTINA PAKOU

SPONTANEOUS
PRODUCTIONS
In association with KIRKDALE BOOKSHOP presents

Hansel & Gretel

BOOK ONLINE spontaneousproductions.co.uk/hansel

THE CAST



FRANCESCA
ANDERSON
as Wilma Wonky



JYO MIAKALI
as Gretel



PAUL-D STEPHENSON
as Hansel



MEGAN MADALEINE
as Mum

Our first family show for 2024 – and our 29th original
show for families since 2017 – is a brand new musical
version of the classic fairy tale *Hansel and Gretel*.

When Hansel and Gretel are left behind in the
woods by their forgetful parents they must learn
to fend for themselves. But when they discover a
marvellous House made of sweets and its mysterious
owner Wilma Wonky, things take a very strange
turn... With the help of Wilma's talking cat Kitty
can they escape Wilma's clutches and be reunited
with their parents? And will they be able to straighten
out Wilma Wonky once and for all?

Featuring all the usual Spontaneous magic – and
lots of surprises – we are joined by a brand new
song-writing team James Boston and Tom Nugent,
who between them have created a wonderful
psychedelic 60s & 70s style soundtrack. With fabulous
costumes as usual by Jackie Poulett, choreography
by Valentina Pakou and special video effects and
animation by Joe Kaufman of Red Kite Films,
this highly entertaining show is not to be missed!

Our cast is headed by two very familiar faces:
Paul-D Stephenson – in his 10th production
for Spontaneous – is Hansel and as Gretel, there's
Jyo Miakali – seen last year as Aladdin and the
Boy Who Cried Wolf – who gets to play a girl at
last! Joining our family is newcomer Francesca
Anderson as the wicked Wilma Wonky. Plus there
are special guest appearances on video by William
Hastings and Megan Madaleine as Hansel and
Gretel's Mum and Dad.

WHAT AUDIENCES SAID ABOUT PREVIOUS SHOWS



"Really good fun –
accessible for all. Loved
the singing and dancing
– inspiring for the kids,
lovely community vibe."

"Our family had a great
time! Great prices and
production. Thank you!"

"What a phenomenal
resource for our local
community. We had a
wonderful time."

"Great energy, loved the
audience interaction."

PHOTOS OF PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS BY MARK DRINKWATER

BOOK YOUR TICKETS

Advance booking online recommended
spontaneousproductions.co.uk/hansel

Please note tickets can no longer be purchased
at Kirkdale Bookshop.

We recommend advance booking online or pay on the door,
subject to availability, from 30 mins before show time.

Standard price £10 adults, £5 children aged 3+
Pay a little more £12 adults, £6 children aged 3+
Pay a little less £8 adults, £4 children aged 3+
(Under 3s FREE as usual)

Our scaled ticket price enables maximum accessibility to
those on a budget, so please pay what you can best afford.
The ticket price does not reflect the quality of your seat!

Main sponsor



Sponsors



Supporters



Adapted by Jonathan Kaufman and Jane Walker Produced and directed by Jonathan Kaufman
Original songs and music by James Boston and Tom Nugent Choreographer and Assistant director Valentina Pakou
Costume designer and Associate producer Jackie Poulett Scenic designer and props made by Annika Francis
Graphic designer Jan Warren Photographer Mark Drinkwater

Fun Activities

Kent County Cricket Ground, Warsley Bridge Road, Beckenham BR3 1DR

2-12 APRIL 2024

EASTER HOLIDAY TENNIS & MULTI-SPORT CAMPS

2024

INC NEW EARLY RISER &/OR LATE LEAVER OPTIONS 4-15 YEARS OLD

PRICING

Mon - Thurs 9am to 3pm = £30.00 pp per day
Or Mon - Fri 9am to 12.30pm = £25.00 pp per day (Tennis and Tennis Games only)
Early Risers Mon - Fri 8.00am to 9.00am = £5.50 pp per day
Late Leavers Mon - Thurs 3.00pm to 3.30pm = £3.00 pp per day
Only in conjunction with your day/half day booking

ACTIVITIES:

*Tennis *Football *Basketball *Golf *Baseball *Hockey *Volleyball
*Cricket *Table Tennis *Badminton *Tug of War and much more

Equipment provided

Grouped in age & ability

Bring £1 for the tuck shop!

wet weather program

LTA

Martin on 07528 319723
or martin@bluetennis.co.uk

Book & pay
www.clubspark.lta.org.uk/bluetennis

SOUNDSTEPS
Music School

Free Children's Piano/Keyboard Taster Sessions Available Now

- Weekly 1 hour Lessons available Monday to Sunday for Children aged 5-13.
- Children Learn to Read, Write and Play Music in every lesson. We also provide the Keyboard at every lesson!
- Termly Exams and Certificates along with opportunities to sit internationally Recognised Exams and Perform at live events!

Contact us Now by Email, Phone, Whats App or via our Website/QR code to Book your FREE TASTER SESSION.

QR Code

in f @ x

e: office@soundstepsmusic.co.uk t: 07926 371583
www.soundstepsmusic.co.uk

KVS
KIDS VOGUE STARS

KVS Easter Playscheme

Join us for fun filled activities including Arts and Crafts, Drama, Sports Activities, Dancing and lots of free play!
Including a delicious and nutritious lunch!

Our Venues are:

9am - 1pm	10am - 2pm
2 nd - 5 th April	2 nd - 5 th April
The Ringway Centre	New Woodlands School
268 Baring Road	Shrofford Road
E12 0DS	BR1 5PD

Your children will have the opportunity to explore new things and develop their confidence in a nurturing and safe environment.

Book now for free using the HAF code
info@kidsvoguestars.co.uk

IS THIS COACHING PROGRAMME FOR YOU?

This course is appropriate for any child in school years 3 to 6.

Children will experience cricket in a fun, safe and progressive environment, building on their development at an appropriate rate.

Both beginners and children who have experienced cricket before are welcome.

LEAD: JAHID AHMED

Jahid Ahmed is a former Essex seam bowler who has worked extensively in youth cricket. He is one of an exclusive group of Level 2 coaches. He has led the development of junior cricket in Kent London and he is a fast bowling and high performance coach with Kent CCC.

OTHER COACHES INCLUDE:

Matt Gidding (current Minor County Cricketer; Level 2 Coach), Jonathan Rodda (Club Youth Lead; Level 2 Coach), Matt Stoddard (London Schools U14 Lead; Level 2 Coach), Nikhil Nomula (Middlesex Youth; Level 3 Coach).

DETAILS

- COST:** These courses are Free of Charge
- PLACES:** Allocated to the first 30 respondents on a first come-first serve basis
- AGES:** 7-11 Years Old
- LUNCHES & REFRESHMENT:** Parents should provide participating children with a packed lunch and adequate refreshment
- CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT:** Regular sports kit & trainers (non-marking soles); Personal protective equipment preferred, although we can supply if a child does not have their own

ROYAL LONDON OF GREENWICH
Lewisham

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE OR TO DISCUSS ANY ASPECT OF THE COURSE PLEASE CONTACT:

JONATHAN RODDA
MOB: 07946 229 849
EMAIL: Jonathan.rodde@platform-LDN.org

Online Safety

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators ENCOURAGING OPEN CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

With tricky topics and occasional clashes of opinion, it can be challenging to maintain an environment where children feel able to talk candidly and honestly. However, encouraging such conversations helps to develop trust – making it easier to unpack even sensitive subjects as children get older. Here are our top tips for promoting open conversations at home.

1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Criticism, blaming or shaming can all prevent children from feeling emotionally safe – while showing affection, positive attention and an interest in what a child has to say builds their sense of security. These formative years are when children's opinions and values begin to take shape, so it's important to provide a non-judgmental environment in which to discuss them – especially if their opinions differ from your own.

2 CONSIDER OTHER OUTLETS

Some children may find it easier to talk while they're participating in another activity such as drawing, writing, walking or sport. If it's possible, taking part in these activities together presents you with an opportunity to communicate while doing something side by side. A child may feel less pressure that way and can be more inclined to open up of their own accord.

3 NORMALISE CHATS ABOUT FEELINGS

Incorporate mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday conversations, using age-appropriate language and examples to help children understand their emotions. Ask questions like "How are you feeling today?", "What was the best and worst part of your day?", "If you could start today again, what would you do differently?" and "Is there anything you want to talk about?"

4 LISTEN ACTIVELY

When children express themselves, make it obvious that you're listening closely and giving them your full attention. Maintain eye contact and validate their feelings without immediately trying to solve the problem. It's not helpful to dismiss their issues as childish or "teenage angst" – or to assume that they'll simply "get over" whatever they're feeling. Children don't have your life experience; their resilience is still developing as they learn to push through difficulties and handle problems.

5 ASK OPEN QUESTIONS

Encourage children to share their thoughts by asking open questions about their feelings and experiences. Closed questions (such as "Did you enjoy school today?") are more likely to elicit a simple "yes" or "no" response. Instead, you could ask things like "Who did you spend time with at break?" or "Who did you sit with at lunchtime?"

6 RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES

If a child isn't ready to talk to about something yet, respect their boundaries: this reinforces that their feelings are important and worthy of consideration. Ideally, you're aiming to let them know you care without smothering them, so just make it clear that you're there for them whenever they're ready to chat. Gentle, regular check-ins can sometimes be the best form of progress.

7 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Model open, honest and healthy communication in front of children and young people. Try to demonstrate kindness when talking about others and yourself, because if children hear adults being overly harsh, critical or judgmental, or see them having unrealistic expectations of themselves, it makes them more likely to adopt and repeat this behaviour themselves as they grow.

8 HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS

Check in with children periodically to discuss how they're feeling and what's going on in their lives. This could be a weekly or monthly conversation, where the child has an opportunity to share whatever's on their mind. For parents and carers, getting away from the house and other distractions might be productive here; you could consider regular trips to a coffee shop or a café, or just a weekly walk.

9 PROVIDE RESOURCES

It's often beneficial to let children know about other support that's available to them if they're struggling to talk to you specifically. Encourage them to talk to school counsellors, trusted adults or even a therapist, if necessary – while normalising this route and dispelling the harmful stigma around asking for help. Older children could engage with resources such as Kaath or YoungMinds.

10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

It's beneficial to praise children for expressing their feelings honestly – emphasising how important it is to talk about their emotions and how proud you are of them for doing so. This can be especially pivotal for boys, who often experience more of a stigma around talking frankly about their feelings and their mental health – a barrier that can be overcome, with enough love and support.

Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



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