



## School newsletter 6th February 2025



Dear Parents,

It has been a while since the last communication from governors, as a result of the large changes which have occurred across the school's leadership team and governing body in the last term. Now that things have begun to re-settle into a rhythm, we'd like to make some introductions, share some thanks, and provide an update on developments in the two schools.

Firstly, we're delighted to introduce ourselves as the new Co-Chairs of Governors, Xav Castelino and Dom Vicinanza. We are both hugely passionate about the two schools, especially after our experience as governors prior to this (Xav at Fen Ditton and Dom at Marleigh). It has already been so encouraging to work more closely with the leadership team of the schools. Their care and drive, to provide the best possible education for our students, is just brilliant.

Dom will be in this role for a full three-year term, while Xav will be in place for the remainder of this academic year, at which point a new Co-Chair will be elected.

We are also pleased to share that, following discussions over the last few months, the governing bodies of Fen Ditton Primary and Marleigh Primary Academy have officially merged. This new combined governing body will now oversee both schools, streamlining our decision-making and creating even more opportunities for collaboration between the schools. We're confident this will strengthen our community and help us continue to grow and improve together.

### **Some thanks**

Firstly, we feel it is important to say how grateful we all are for the time, energy and care that Stuart Wood gave in his time as Chair of Governors for the two schools. There has already been a lot for us to get our heads round as Co-Chairs of a joint governing body, so Stuart's willingness to be the sole Chair of two separate governing bodies, for such a long period of time, is just extraordinary. He has sacrificed a huge amount to support the schools. He remains the Minister at Barnwell Baptist Church, and continues to give time to the local community – if you see him out and about, please don't hesitate to share any thanks you may have, which will mean a lot to him.

And additionally, we would love to take this opportunity to thank the whole school community, for the way you have been supporting the schools! Changes like this to the leadership team and structures can be challenging, but thanks to the community spirit from children, parents and staff, much of transition has occurred seamlessly.



On the same theme, we'd like to take this opportunity to express our excitement and confidence in our new Executive Headteacher, Mrs. Thompson, who joined us in November. Mrs. Thompson has already made a very positive impact, and we're looking forward to seeing how her leadership will continue to shape and enhance the learning experience for all of our students.

### **Governor matters**

After many years of service as governors, Chris Flood (Marleigh) and Chris Lindley (Fen Ditton) have stepped back from their roles. We are hugely grateful for all of their efforts in their time as governors, and Chris Lindley is continuing to support the schools by reducing the workload on staff in policy management. We can confirm that there was no deliberate intention to remove all governors called Chris.

Additionally, we are delighted that Hannah-Beth Clark is joining the governing body, as a trust appointed governor, bringing with her a range of experience from working in schools.

After the merging of the governing bodies, the governors across the two schools are now:

Trust Appointed Governors: Xavier Castelino (Co-Chair), Domenico Vicinanza (Co-Chair), Adam Burns, James Burton, Hannah-Beth Clark, Lindsay Davies

Parent Governors (Fen Ditton): Miriam Ferrer

Parent Governors (Marleigh): Megha Kishore, Lauren Woods

Staff Governors: Emily Thompson (Executive Head), Rachel Bailham

Clerk: Stuart Hales

We are always keen to hear from parents who might be interested in joining the governing body, and in particular are in need of recruiting Fen Ditton parents, and anyone who may consider taking on the Co-Chair role from 2025-26. If you would like to learn more about the role and how you can contribute to the school community, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. We'd be happy to discuss the opportunity further and explore how you can get involved.

We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our governors for their continued dedication and support. The work of the governing body is vital to the success of our schools, and we are deeply grateful for the time and energy they invest to ensure we provide a safe and inspiring environment for our children.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support, and we wish you all a successful and happy 2025!

Warm regards, Xav & Dom

Co-Chairs of Governors

Fen Ditton Primary School and Marleigh Primary Academy

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## News from our classrooms

### Dolphins Class

This week in Dolphins class we have been looking at the story Brown Bear. The children have been busy making puppets and working together to sequence a story. This creative activity helped them develop storytelling skills while encouraging teamwork and collaboration. It was a fun way for the children to bring their characters to life and strengthen their communication skills.



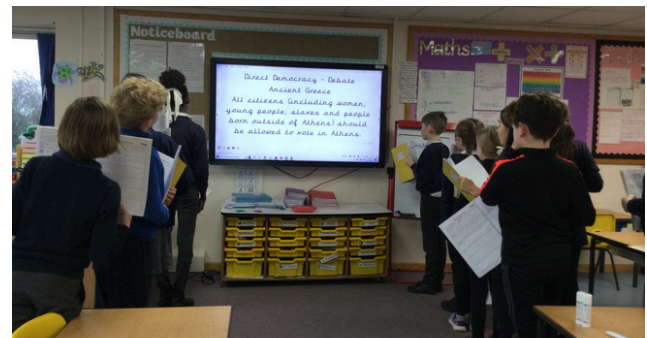
### Jellyfish Class

In PSHE, Jellyfish have been learning what asthma is. We made our own lungs using paper bags and straw. We learned how to look after someone who was having an asthma attack and how it might feel to that person.



### Turtle Class

Turtle class took part in a historical debate last week and role played democracy from the Ancient Greek times.



## Celebration Corner

### Spotted by staff:

Ida (Dolphins) for showing kindness to her friends and sharing her smile - it is infectious!

Abbie (Jellyfish) for consistently pushing herself to achieve more and more in her lessons.

Mati (Stingrays) for embracing new challenges in her learning and showing resilience.



## House Point Totals

- Hawking - 1st 187 points
- Blackburn - 2nd 129 points
- Franklin - 3rd 120 points
- Darwin - 4th 119 points



## Upcoming events and reminders

### Key upcoming dates:

### February

- 7th - Jellyfish Class Assembly at 9.15am
- 10th - Narwhal Trip to Netherhall School
- 11th - Starfish Trip to Kettles Yard
- 14th - Last Day of term
- 24th - Back to School
- 26th - Author Writing Workshops

### March

- 4-5th - Parents Evenings
- 6th - World Book Day
- 13th - Turtle Class Trip to The Light Cinema
- 14th - Red Nose Day
- 21st - Starfish Class Assembly
- 21st - Easter Egg raffle donations welcomed
- 24th - Easter Raffle Tickets on Sale
- 24th - Stingrays & Turtles Class Chemistry Trip

### Reminders

#### RSE

Have you read the curriculum guide that was sent home? If you would like to please either search your inbox or find it on our website in the PSHE curriculum section. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### Maths

For parents of children in Year 1 to Year 6 please do remember the importance of your child engaging with Times Table Rock Stars to help their times table skills and knowledge. Practice at home is vital for this. Each child has a log in and we monitor and celebrate attainment and progress in school. As a reminder please see the guides below for how to use the programme.

### Parent Guide



We recommend a "little and often" approach; 3 minutes practice a day, 4 or 5 times a week is a good target.

What are the different Game Modes?	
<b>Single Player</b>	
<b>Jamming</b> 4 or 8 coins/correct answer	The only game mode without a timer, players chose the table and operation (x or + or both) they want to practise. Answer 10, 20 or 30 questions.
<b>Gig</b> 10 coins per correct answer	Gig games last 5 minutes and contain up to 100 questions, which come in 'waves', starting with the 10s, then the 2s, 5s, 3s, 4s, 8s, 6s, 7s, 9s, 11s and 12s. Novices are not expected to get past the 5s. Gigs provide the child (and their teacher) with a simple measure of their current skills, which is why learners should concentrate fully for the whole Gig as they won't get another try until next month.
<b>Garage</b> 10 coins per correct answer	Players are given a personalised set of 6 multiplication questions (and their matching division questions) in each round. The questions they get keep adjusting to provide the best fit for every learner's needs. This is probably the best game made for improving their recall while they're still learning.
<b>Studio</b> 1 coin per correct answer	Here your child earns their Rock Status, which is based on their Studio Speed. The faster they are the better their status. Studio Speed is the average of their most recent 10 Studio games. Suitable for confident players.
<b>Soundcheck</b> 5 coins per correct answer	Soundcheck games ask 25 multiplication questions (up to 12x12), allowing 6 seconds for each question. Suitable for confident players.
<b>Multi Player</b>	
<b>Festival</b> 1 coin per correct answer	Children compete against others from around the world, with their identities protected behind their rock names. Suitable for confident players.
<b>Arena</b> 1 coin per correct answer	Children race against other members of their class who are logged in and choose the same arena name at the same time. Arena games use the same smart question algorithm as Garage games.
<b>Rock Slam</b> 1 coin per correct answer	Players challenge their classmates or teachers to answer as many questions as they can in 60 seconds, setting a score for the challengee to beat. Pupils don't need to be online at the same time.
<b>Tournaments</b>	<b>Battle of the Bands</b> – groups of children within the same school (usually classes, year groups or teams) compete to have the highest average score per player. <b>Top of the Rocks</b> – like a Battle of the Bands between schools. The winning class or school is the one with the most correct answers per person. <b>Important:</b> Each correct answer (in any game mode) earns 1 point towards the team's total in addition to the coins earned. For example, in Garage games each correct answer is worth 1 point for the team and 10 coins for the player.

### Parent Guide



Learners with different needs	
<b>How can I hide the timer?</b>	Start a game and press  > Hide Practice Clock. You could also play a game in Jamming.
<b>How can I increase the length of Garage games?</b>	Single player > Garage > press the little arrow below "play solo" > choose 1, 2 or 3 minutes.
<b>The tables are too hard</b>	Make sure your child is playing in Garage or Arena game modes. If this does not resolve the issue, please speak to your child's teacher. Remember that Jamming mode allows the child to choose the tables themselves.
<b>My child gets anxious</b>	Try the three above plus: setting mini goals (e.g. complete 2 minutes today, get 1 more point in the next game, pass 1 level); having a break from online play (come back in a couple of days); and reminding them of Baz's words: "A good rock star stays chillaxed by accepting they make mistakes."
<b>My child has visual impairments; what settings are available?</b>	Head to the Profile page where you can: change the colour scheme; reduce the visual stimuli with Declutter mode; increase the font size or switch to a dyslexia-friendly font called Lexie. play.trockstars.com is also screen reader compatible.
<b>Can I turn off division?</b>	Yes in Jamming mode but not in the other games. The reason for that is that practising multiplication and division at the same time supports the recall of both and is the most successful approach. If your child is finding division confusing, please speak to their teacher about starting with the 10s only and for advice on how to help at home.
Troubleshooting	
<b>My child's coins and/or Studio speed have suddenly dropped</b>	Another child may have logged in as your child. Please reassure your child that this can be rectified. Contact their teacher who can set a new password, refund any coins, delete Studio games and talk to the class about online safety.
<b>My child plays too much</b>	Set firm TTRS time limits; reward healthy choices; take away devices before bed.
<b>My child's name is showing on a school leader board.</b>	Please ask your child's teacher to change the settings at their end so that rock names show on the leaderboards instead of real names.
<b>What does the  mean?</b>	If this symbol appears over a game tile (e.g. over Garage) it means the teacher has set your child a certain number of minutes to practise in that game mode for homework. Once they complete those minutes the other games unlock.

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