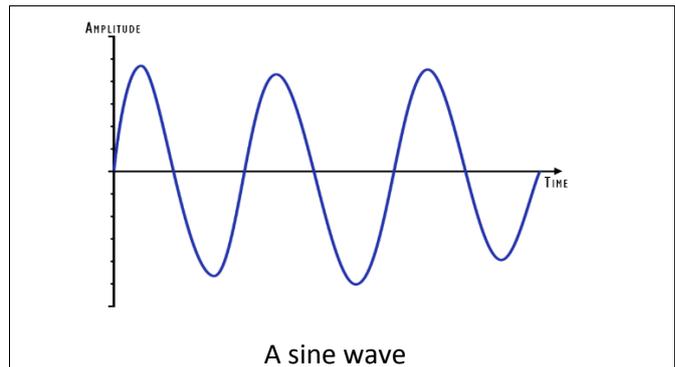




## Newsletter to parents – December 2017

It has been quite a term. The move to the new build and all the niggles that come with that process. The arrival of Ofsted and their judgement that we need to do better in one or two areas, which was absolutely in line with our own judgements. We have enjoyed trips, performances, visits, cake sales for Children in Need, a school disco, a shoe drive and much more. And in the midst of all this, we have been working with the children, helping them to learn, guiding them in their relationships and friendships, dusting them off when they fall over, laughing at their jokes, smiling at their genuine love of life and occasionally, just occasionally, tearing our hair out when things don't go to plan.

There is a rhythm to life, it is woven in to the fabric of everything. In nature we have the seasons; in our own bodies, if we stop and listen, we can notice our breath, our heartbeat. As a parent myself I have grown to understand the importance of these rhythms. I know that I can't spend all my energy on my work and caring for my own children if I don't replenish my own energy. It is the sine wave of life, I give out and then I need to take in, so that I might give out again.



Children need this too. We know that our children need to sleep well if they are going to give their all at school. It is important that they eat the right foods to maintain their energy for learning. And then they need to take in things other than their work at school. To balance out everything they do with us they need to spend quality time with you, playing, reading, watching a great movie, baking a cake or walking by the sea. Life is a sine wave, an up and a down; when you give out, you must take back in.

One of the great conundrums for school leaders is to consider how to help your staff to get their own work-life balance right. How do I make sure that they are taking in enough outside of the classroom to make sure they are ready to give out to students? If you have any suggestions I would be pleased to receive them. One of the things that I feel is important is refusing the idealism of perfection. The perfect lesson will never exist, just like the idea of a perfect marriage, it is a fallacy. Lessons can be great, marking can be fantastic, our care can be superb but it will never be perfect. I will let you into a little known secret, my staff are human! At times they get tired because they have been up all night with an ill child, sometimes they are a little grumpy because their boiler has stopped working. Once in a while teachers choose a strategy to teach a topic that doesn't work, occasionally a lesson will just fall flat on its face – it happens.

I don't think you want the teachers of Parkfield to be robots, or mindless automatons delivering lessons without consideration to the context of the class. The teachers here are wonderful, caring, considerate, hard-working, dedicated, committed and human. But they can only do this if their own personal rhythms are right. I very much hope that this Christmas, you and our staff will get good quality time with your families, times of rest and renewal, time to slow down and think, time to get the rhythms right again.

May I take this opportunity to once again thank you for your engagement and support of Parkfield School. We know that we still have work to do, but with your help I am certain that the future is bright.

### **Staffing Changes:**

At the end of the autumn term we are saying goodbye to two of our secondary colleagues. Ms Doon has been at Parkfield since 2015 as our English teacher. She has done a great job in navigating the change to the new qualifications. Ms Doon is very much looking forward to changing the pace of her life after her recent marriage. We are grateful for all she has contributed to the school and wish her well in the future. Dr Evans has also decided to leave Parkfield. Having joined the school right at the very start, we know that this will come as a considerable wrench. It is difficult running a Science department by yourself and I know that Dr Evans is very much looking forward to belonging to a larger subject team in her new school. We are very grateful for all that she has contributed to Parkfield.

We are very pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Roberts as our new HLTA for Maths. Mr. Roberts comes with a wealth of experience including running a forest school, we are very much hoping to tap into these skills over the coming years. Mr. Wilkinson has joined us as a Science teacher, his immediate appointment at the school has proved to be very successful as students have been responding very positively to the wealth of experience he brings to us. Mrs Renn has joined us following a very successful career in a Bournemouth school. She is very experienced in both literature and language and we are very much looking forward to working with her.

Mr. Salmon is joining us on a short term secondment from Oasis Academy Lord's Hill. I am very grateful to the leaders at Lord's Hill who have allowed us to borrow Mr Salmon to work directly with our Year 11 as they prepare for their exams. Mr Salmon will work very closely with Mrs Renn in supporting the Year 11. Liz Wagner has been appointed as a part time science consultant. She has a wealth of experience in a number of different school settings and is a skilful and knowledgeable science leader. She will be working very closely with Mr Wilkinson in preparing our Year 11 for their Science Exams.

We have also just completed a round of successful interviews and we will have some very good news about new appointments in the new year.

### **Changes to behaviour strategies:**

I wrote to parents recently informing them of some changes to the way we are organising our detentions. In summary, this letter covered the following issues:

We will endeavour to complete all our detentions during the school day, however if improvements are not swift, we will set an after school detention. This will operate for 40 minutes at the end of the school day. If a student refuses to attend this detention, they will be placed into internal exclusion the next day. They will also be expected to complete the after school detention.

Teachers have been told that they need to give you reasonable notice of an after school detention, this will come in the form of a note written in the student planner. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that this note is seen by parents.

### **Responding to Ofsted**

I very much hope that you have all taken the time to read the Ofsted report that arrived during this term. As a school we are beginning to get to grips with the areas of weakness that the team identified. Some of the issues were relatively easy to resolve and have been completed quickly. However, a number of the issues will require our ongoing attention for the remainder of this academic year. I have submitted a 'Raising Attainment Plan' to governors for their approval, we are now committing ourselves to the hard yards of school improvement work. In time, I hope to publish a simplified version of this plan for your perusal.

**Social Media:**

It is clear that the use of social media by children and adults is never going away. We spend a great deal of time talking to the children about their behaviour on social media, their security settings and the age restrictions that are placed on particular sites. We would be grateful if you would regularly check what sites your children are using and perhaps more importantly what they are doing on these sites.

That brings me neatly to a minor concern. I am aware that a number of parents use social media, Facebook in particular to vent their concerns about things that happen at school. As you may be aware, a number of our staff are parents and every now and then I am presented with a print out of unhelpful messages that are posted and then receive other posts in support.

Please do not misunderstand my intention in mentioning this matter. As adults you are free to air your opinions as you see fit. For those of trying to do our best by your children, it is frustrating to see incorrect assertions, accusations that are unfounded and remarks that are sometimes incredibly personal. I recognise that this is one way of sharing your thoughts, I just can't help thinking that it is perhaps not the most productive. I would much rather you contact us directly about matters that concern you. We have no desire to sweep anything under the carpet and we will always endeavour to deal with things in a fair and open-handed manner.

**Site/building information**

I thought it might be helpful to give you an update on the further works that are planned for the site. At the completion of the initial phases of the project, Kier were given the opportunity to submit a price for the remaining external works (resurface the playground, additional fencing and new gates). Unfortunately, the price submitted did not represent 'value for money' and the Educational Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) refused to give Kier the contract.

The ESFA have re-appointed Mace as the project managers and the project leader will now start the process of procuring the external works once again. This is no-ones fault; in fact it is pleasing to hear that the ESFA are taking the spending of tax payers' money seriously. I am hopeful that we will have more news in the New Year. However, I think it is unlikely the works will be completed during this academic year.

**Reminder about disabled bays:**

It is important to remind parents that the disabled bays (particularly near reception) are for the use of parents who have a disabled parking permit or parking permit issued by the school. I know that it seems harmless to park in an empty bay once in a while. The reality is that a minor infringement of the rules quickly becomes the norm if others follow this behaviour.

**Reminder about attendance:**

Parkfield attendance so far this year is at 93.99% and the target is 96%. Progress is being made, however we still have some way to go. Please can I remind all parents that attendance matters for students to reach their potential in education. Please make every effort not to take holidays during term time, every day counts!

**My Child At School (MCAS):**

We are pleased to announce that Parkfield School now has the ability to provide you with academic information for your child/children via a new web portal called *My Child At School* (MCAS for short). By using MCAS you will be able to look at a wealth of information for your child including your child's attendance, school timetable and exam times. MCAS is linked directly to our School Management System which means that the information is continuously updated in real time and available 24 hours a day. As well as pupil attendance data, the portal also provides general information about the school. It also includes information regarding behaviour and assessments so that you will also be able to see how well your child is doing at school.

**How do I access the *My Child At School* (MCAS) system?**

Security of information is of paramount importance to us, therefore all accounts are individually password protected to ensure information is only available to the registered Parents/Carers of the child and the child's teachers at school.

**The link to the portal is: [www.mychildatschool.com](http://www.mychildatschool.com)**

To access your child's details, you will need to enter your personal password and login details. If at any time you forget your login details please click on the 'Forgotten login details' link and follow the instructions.

If you have any queries or concerns about the system, in the first instance contact the School Office via email to [MCAS@parkfield.bournemouth.sch.uk](mailto:MCAS@parkfield.bournemouth.sch.uk).

You should have received a letter with your login details. If not please email the address above and we will be able to send them to you electronically.