



January 2025

MAPLE RIDGE NEWS

What's going on in school and in our community?

01256 323639 www.mapleridge.hants.sch.uk

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER...

Dear Parents / Carers,

We received confirmation yesterday that, as a result of considering the need to replace or refurbish our existing modular buildings, that we are already over our planned pupil numbers and that there is still a great need within the local area for specialist school places, the local authority has agreed to provide us with an additional double modular building providing two new classrooms and a single modular building to provide us with an additional therapeutic space.

Initially these additional buildings will be used to move 3 of the 4 classes from the existing modular buildings, with the 4th class able to move into the main school building to use existing therapy space as a temporary classroom. It is anticipated that these classroom moves would be for the second half of the summer term this academic year.

We are anticipating that work will begin on site some time in March (although we don't have a specific date for this yet), and will begin with the installation of the new buildings at the rear of the school. Once these are ready for occupation, the second phase would be the removal of our existing modular buildings from June, to be replaced on site ready for our return in September 2025.

The Local Authority are also planning to remove our former swimming pool space to expand our car park using this space and the grass area next to the former pool.

We have been asked to increase our planned pupil number from 100 to 110 as a result of this planned work and, as we currently already have 104 children on roll due to the urgent need for there to be more specialist school places, we believe this small increase in pupil numbers will allow all existing and new children to benefit from the increased therapy space we would have as a result of the additional accommodation being provided, as well as reducing some of the larger class sizes back to our usual maximum of 10 children.

In order for all of the above to go ahead, there is a legal process that has to be followed which includes a public consultation in relation to these plans. The public consultation starts today, is run by the local authority and runs for 4 weeks until Friday 21st February 2025, after which I hope to be able to update you with further information.

The link to access the full details of the public consultation is as follows:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/publicnotices>

There are also posters that will be displayed in the windows near the school office and at the school gate. A copy of the poster is attached with this newsletter.

Kind regards,

Vicki

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

29 January: Chinese New Year Celebration Special Snack

29 January: Sycamore Class WOW Bus Trip

January/February 2025: Year 3 Annual Reviews

5 February: Maple Class WOW Bus Trip

13 February: Parents' Evening: Year 1, Year 2 & Team 3

13 February: Parent Information Sessions - Toileting

Half Term: 17-21 February

26-28 February: Runways Trips for Years 5 & 6

6 March: World Book Day

7 March: Parent Information Session - Introduction to autism (09:30-12:00)

14 March: Parent Information Session - Introduction to autism (09:30-12:00)

27 March: Parent Information Sessions - Behaviour (13:00-14:55)

28 March: FMR Disco

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE (DLA)

As many of you already know, your children's class teachers and our Home School Team have always been happy to support you with your DLA applications and renewals – whether it is the whole form or the statement from 'someone who knows your child'.

In order for us to be as thorough and helpful as possible, please could you give us at least 2 weeks notice of needing support/information.

If any of you are reading this and thinking 'what is DLA?', then you can find more information at www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children or contact the school office via enquiries@mapleridge.hants.sch.uk and we can make sure your questions get to the most appropriate person.

CHRISTMAS WRAPPED

We certainly had a busy festive period here at Maple Ridge. We had a range of incredible performances by the children and we know that everyone who came to watch really enjoyed themselves.



We were also spoiled with a lovely Christmas lunch and, as you can see from the above photo, many of the children took the opportunity to show off their Christmas jumpers. Throughout the month we had children doing a variety of activities - see some of the action shots below.



And rounding off the busy period was of course a visit from a very important person. That's right, Santa Clause made an appearance and all the children were given the chance to visit him in the Grotto.



Our Friends of Maple Ridge (FMR) team worked incredibly hard to set up the grotto and then put together an end-of-term Christmas Disco. It was great to see so many children and parents/carers join us on the evening. Aside from the popular tuckshop and excellent music, children also managed to get another glance at the very popular Santa Clause.



EQUALITY, DIVERSION & INCLUSION (EDI)

At Maple Ridge School we understand the importance of ensuring that all students, regardless of their gender, race, identity, or ability, have equal access to high-quality education. This is our commitment to promoting equality in education.

We create inclusive learning environments that foster the development of all students. Furthermore, it helps to prepare students to thrive in a diverse world. As part of this commitment, we will be celebrating key events throughout the year as well as ensuring our curriculum, language and resources are diverse and inclusive.

Please look out for our EDI page in the Newsletter where we will be sharing some of the ways we celebrate our wonderful diverse community at Maple Ridge.

This month we are celebrating Chinese New Year – 2025 is the year of the snake!

We will celebrate Chinese New Year on Wednesday 29th January by having activities with a Chinese theme such as a scavenger hunt, writing activities and arts and crafts. We have also planned an alternative snack time where staff and children will share a “tasting session” (please be reassured we have considered allergies and dietary requirements).

Why do we celebrate Chinese New Year?

Chinese New Year is thought to date back to the 14th century BC, when the Shang dynasty ruled. It's origins are steeped in legend. One story says that a monster named Nian attacked villagers at the start of every year. Nian was afraid of loud noises, bright lights and the colour red. People used these things to chase the beast away. Since the dragon is a Chinese symbol of power and good fortune, many areas of the country have dragon dancing, during which a long, colourful dragon puppet is paraded through the streets, as the highlight of festivities.



ALADDIN'S CAVE SPONSORSHIP

We were very lucky to receive a visit from Aladdin's Cave, a charity shop that raises money for Basingstoke and the local area. They are part of the Irene Cain Foundation and located at Burnaby Close, South Ham, Basingstoke.



Their Foundation is a local charitable organisation set up to support people struggling in the community. The shop embodies the prevention and relief of hardship in our locality by providing help to individuals in need, as well as to organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty. The name is a beacon for the promotion of social inclusion for the benefit of all, by preventing people from being excluded from society due to the economic restrictions they face.

The picture below shows a very happy Mrs Tomlin and Mr Glück accepting the cheque from one of the trustees and an ex-parent of the school. It was largely thanks to this parent and the good reputation of the school that Maple Ridge was nominated for this donation. We were astonished and very thankful that the amount on the cheque was £3,000! We will keep everyone informed on how this money will be spent.

If you get the opportunity, please visit and support Aladdin's Cave. Their phone number is 07763 523206.



They are open:

- ◆ Monday to Friday, 09:00-16:30
- ◆ Saturday, 10:00-14:00
- ◆ Closed on Sunday.

PARENT GOVERNOR VACANCY

We have a vacancy for a parent governor, from April 1st 2025, which we need to fill as soon as possible. Maple Ridge School has always aimed for a partnership with parents which undoubtedly brings great benefits to the children. One of the most significant ways you can help in promoting this aim is to volunteer to be a parent governor.

The governing body's main tasks are:

- to ensure that the school has a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- to hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- to oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Parent governors are welcomed as valued members of the team and play a vital role in ensuring the governing body is aware of the views of parents and the local community. We feel sure that there are parents prepared to take on this important role and give their time and commitment to helping us to continue to improve the school's performance.

Training and support will be available to help you develop into the role. This will include in-house mentoring and support as well as access to external governor training.

If you feel you can help in this capacity please contact the office for an application form, which will need to be completed and returned to the school office by 12.00 noon on Friday 7th February 2025.

The guidelines giving full details about how vacancies are filled can be found on the school's website. You should also look at the information for prospective governors on the [Hampshire Governor Services website](#).

Please note that for the protection of children all governor appointments are subject to an identity check.

If there are more applications than vacancies, we will hold an election and you will be sent information on how to vote.