



17th November 2017

No. 4

Dear Parents/Carers

MUGA

You may well have noticed that the MUGA has been out of action this week. We seem to have a major drainage problem that I do not think will be solved very quickly. This is proving to be quite an issue with the children at playtimes as there is obviously less space available. We would like to suggest that children in KS2 be given the opportunity to play on the field. It is beginning to get quite muddy though so we would suggest that children bring in waterproof trousers so they can pull these on over school clothes. They can then either wear wellies or old trainers. This will give them more space to play football or run about. The children will not be allowed on the field in regular school clothes and any extra clothes that are brought in should be named and be in a named bag as they will inevitably get muddy! Thank you for your help with this issue. We are currently in the process of seeking advice and quotes for remedial work to allow us to bring the MUGA back into use.

Malawi

Many people have asked Mrs Ricca and I about our trip to Malawi in the October half term so although your children may by now have told you a bit about the visit I thought it would be worth sharing some of my memories of this amazing experience.

As you are aware the trip was in part facilitated by the charity Starfish Malawi who arranged the visit to our link school and made the travel possible. Going with them also meant we were with a group of teachers (mainly based in Kent) who were also visiting their own link schools. This was great as it meant that we got to hear about experiences in other schools as well as finding out about Maganga.

Being in a country as poor and as underdeveloped as Malawi was an experience in itself. The country has frequent power cuts so that most days we only had electricity for small portions of the day. Roads are well developed in the capital but outside the capital a lot of travel is along dirt tracks. Goats are everywhere and I remain amazed and thankful that we did not see any goat related accidents! Travel at night is inadvisable due to the poor condition of the roads and the goats. There was only one occasion when we had to travel in the dark and it was slightly alarming.

The first weekend of half term Mrs Ricca and I went on a short safari trip. This was an incredible experience and allowed us to see a somewhat different side to the country. We were lucky enough to see elephants, hippos, baboons and lots of wonderful bird life including many fish eagles. The country is very keen to develop its tourist industry but is sadly still struggling with poachers in the particular area we visited who come across the border from neighbouring Zambia.

After the safari we travelled to an area of Malawi called Salima which is on the shores of Lake Malawi. We were lucky enough to stay in a hotel which had electricity for at least some of the time and had modern plumbing. Each day we travelled to our school which was about a 45 minute drive over mainly dirt tracks. Of all the schools that were being visited, ours was the most rural and seemed to be the most poorly resourced. However there is an International food programme at the school which means that all the pupils arrive at school at about 7am and get breakfast.

Classrooms are brick built with corrugated roofs. Depressingly the floors are just dirt which means everything is very dusty. The walls are not painted so the classes are very dull and dark- very different to our lovely bright school.

Headteacher Debbie Gilbert
Chair of Governors Jan McKeever
East Sussex County Council



The older classes have desks and chairs which are packed in, as classes are about 100+ pupils. The younger children have no tables/chairs and so they sit on the floor; these classes have about 200 pupils in them. All classes have blackboards but there are little or no other resources.

Whilst we were there we were able to provide the school with 1900 books and pens plus books for teachers and a magnetic whiteboard and letters. We have also bought stickers for pupils as we have been told the teachers would like these. We also took the lovely banner that the children made- the children loved this.

While we were in school we observed lessons being taught. The curriculum is taught in English which is the children's second language. We also taught some lessons and used photographs of Burwash and England which the children really enjoyed looking at. All the children were given stickers if they answered in English which they were very excited about.

As well as working in the school we were also shown some traditional cooking, which is over wood fires and we got to see some of the village houses. None of the houses or the school have electricity or modern plumbing. Water is collected from a pump which is in the middle of the school grounds. Life is extremely hard, however the children and adults seem happy and were very excited by our visit and were lovely and welcoming.

The visit provided much food for thought. We will, over the next few months, be thinking about how we can best support Maganga and will continue to communicate with the school. Communication is difficult due to the lack of electricity and general infrastructure but we have created a WhatsApp group with the teachers as there is good mobile phone coverage which will allow for more speedy communication. We will also be helped by Starfish who have someone living in Salima supporting schools on a permanent basis.

Our collection at the Nativity and Carol concert will be for Starfish Malawi but any other fundraising that we may do will not be until after Christmas as we do realise this is an expensive time of year for all.



Collecting water at the water pump

Teaching

Traditional cooking

Yours sincerely

Debbie Gilbert
Headteacher

17 th November	Children in Need day- wear pJs and bring a teddy to school Mercury sharing assembly
24 th November	Pluto sharing assembly
1st December	PTFA Christmas fair 3.30pm- 5pm
8 th December	Whole school trip to Kent Life- more details to follow Christmas tree festival at the church
13 th December	Christmas jumper day for “Save the children” Christmas dinner day Carol Service in St Bartholomew’s, 6.00pm- if your child is in KS2 and is unable to attend this please let the office know asap. Thanks Last Judo day
14 th December	FS/KS1 Nativity 2:00-3:00pm
15 th December	FS/KS1 Nativity 2:00-3:00pm
19 th December	Christmas parties
20 th December	Last day of term 2
2 nd January 2018	INSET day 3
3 rd January	Term 3 starts for children

We intend to print the dates for the term with each Newsletter; please note that this chart will be updated as new events are planned with new events appearing in **BOLD** text.