St. Giles CE Primary School
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Senior teacher: Bethany Simpson

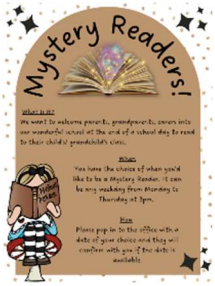
Headteacher: Ben O'Connell

Thursday 30th November 2023

November update: Circle Time, pupil and parent survey

Dear parents,

We hope that this letter finds you safe and well and braced for the start of the festive season! This term has been busy, busy, busy with much to celebrate and enjoy including:



- ★ *Welcoming our mystery readers into school!* Thank you to those who have joined us and those who have booked in. The children and staff have greatly enjoyed having you read in school.
- ★ *Forest Schools in Year 4!* The cooler weather hasn't stopped all of our children in Year 4 from enjoying weekly time in the wonderful Forest Schools areas which we have at St. Giles.
- ★ *New computing equipment!* Our school's governors met last week and approved over £4,500 of new computers for children in Years 3 and 4.
- ★ *Friendship Week!* Our children have enjoyed spending time considering and celebrating that we are all unique.

Circle Time: teaching personal, social and emotional development

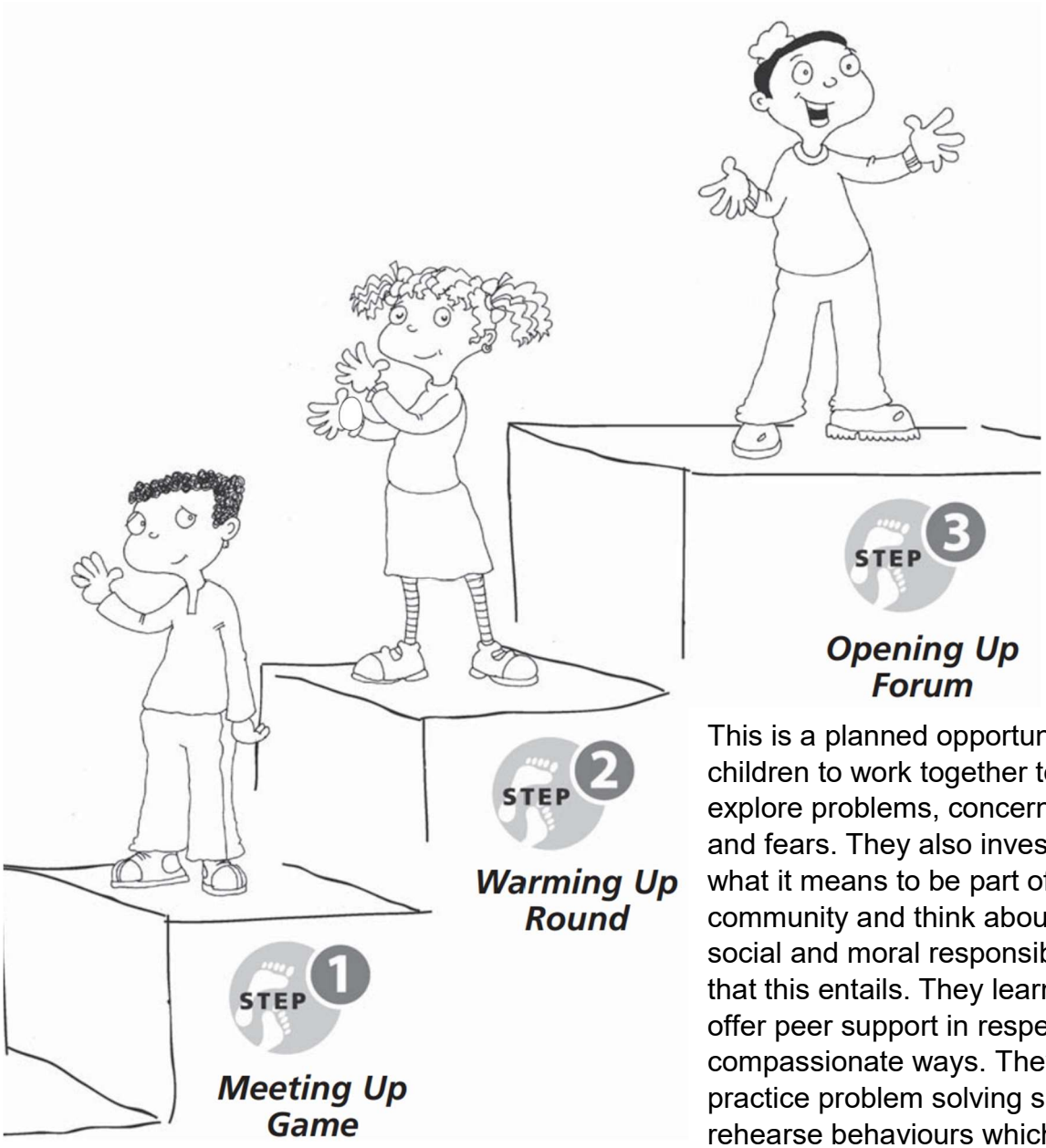
All of our children are taking part in Circle Time sessions, three times a week. We have chosen to prioritise Circle Time as we look to help further support and strengthen our children's social and emotional development.

- ➢ *What is Circle Time?*

Circle time sessions provide the *teaching* of the skills all of our children need in order to manage their feelings, develop empathy, and make and keep friends. Teachers work with all of our children to help them develop social and emotional skills.

➢ *What does a Circle Time session look like and how does it work?*

Each 30-minute session includes 5 steps. The first two introductory steps (Meeting and warming up) help to relax the children and prepare them for the third step when key issues are explored. The session draws to a close with two final steps which lighten the mood and ensure an atmosphere of closure and calm.



This is a planned opportunity for children to work together to explore problems, concerns, hopes and fears. They also investigate what it means to be part of a community and think about the social and moral responsibilities that this entails. They learn how to offer peer support in respectful and compassionate ways. They practice problem solving skills and rehearse behaviours which strengthen the children's confidence and self-esteem. They learn how express opinions and join in discussions that develop their ability to reason and think logically.

- *Why are we investing time in Circle Time as a school?*

We know that social and emotional abilities, like any other skill, can only flourish if they are nurtured and practised over and over again.

We want all of our children to develop confidence and self-esteem so that they are empowered to tackle day to day challenges. We would like our children to recognise and celebrate differences and we also want all of our children to learn how to disagree agreeably.

Circle time enables teaching staff to actively explore and teach these social and emotional skills.

- *What difference is this making?*

It is lovely to see that, over time, our children are becoming more confident and aware of their own emotions and preferences as well as of others.

This means that, on a day-to-day basis, we see our children have:

- ✓ More confidence in tackling things which are perceived as difficult (this ranges from competitive sport through to planned learning or working with a new partner).
- ✓ Greater awareness of themselves and others
- ✓ Increased vocabulary to discuss emotions so that they can express themselves (and their worries, achievements and frustrations with greater clarity).
- ✓ Less falling out (and when children do disagree, they are more able to see the other child/ren's point of view).

- *What do the children and experts say?*

Last week we welcomed a visit from the Trust. They visited Circle Time sessions and spoke with the children about Circle Time. The Trust reported that our children: *all agreed that circle time has helped them get on and they can now say things that they couldn't do before*.

Summary:

- The school is calm and purposeful.
- The sample of pupils spoke very highly about the behaviour and relationships in the school
- The safeguarding, inclusion and behaviour systems have clearly been strengthen by the Partnership leadership team.

We spent time last week talking to *all of our children* about their school, focusing on friendships, safety and behaviour. All of the children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 completed the survey individually with our younger children completing in small groups. We've attached the full outcome from the survey to this letter but we wanted to share some examples of the positive feedback below.

2. I enjoy coming into school

More Details Insights

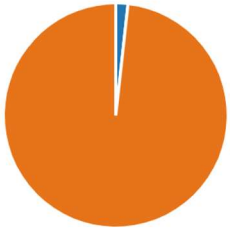
all of the time	25
most of the time	25
some of the time	7
None of the time	0



3. I feel safe in school

More Details Insights

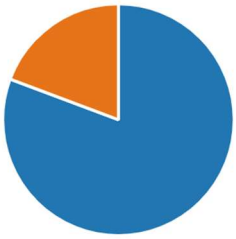
None of the time	1
All of the time	56



Teachers and adults help me keep safe on the playground **at playtime**

More Details Insights

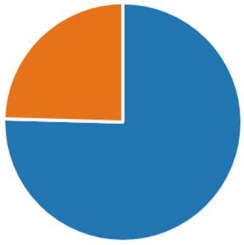
Yes (all of the time)	46
Sometimes	11
Never	0



I feel that I am listened to and kept safe during **lunchtimes**

More Details Insights

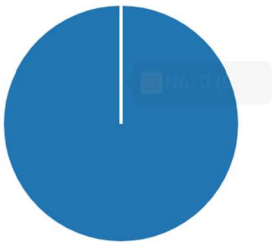
Yes (all of the time)	43
Sometimes	14
Never	0



12. I am proud to be part of St. Giles

More Details

Yes	57
No	0



As always, if you have any concerns regarding bullying (including anything untoward outside of school and/or online) then please contact school:

- enquiries@st-giles-matlock.derbyshire.sch.uk
- safeguarding@st-giles-matlock.derbyshire.sch.uk

Parents' Survey: Autumn 2023

www.stgilesceprimarymatlock.co.uk/parent-surveys/

All of the staff at St. Giles would like to ask for your views on what is going well and what we could do to further improve as we look to ensure all of our children achieve through kindness, compassion and perseverance.

We use this information to help us make decisions about our school and we will share the outcomes and next steps with you.

We used your feedback last year (Autumn 2022) to:

- ✓ successfully introduce teacher led Forest Schools at St. Giles;
- ✓ improve reporting with the introduction of termly report cards for all children;
- ✓ simplified communication and introduced weekly diary date updates (they're a life saver for staff too!);
- ✓ increased the number and variety of after school clubs (which are provided at no cost);
- ✓ increased opportunities for parents to take part in school life;
- ✓ provided half termly newsletters and 'Meet the Teacher' sessions to help share learning and school life with families.

We're still working on one of the areas noted last year (homework) and will be sharing updates about this during the next term following work with our Parents' Forum and feedback from a recent questionnaire.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey:
https://forms.office.com/e/Hs77LSSuZJ

Looking ahead: www.stgilesceprimarymatlock.co.uk/diary/

Please find below some reminders about several new opportunities which we shared just after half term. We hope that you will be able to join us in school to celebrate the children's learning and the hard work from all of the staff.

NEW! Stay and Play (EYFS and KS1)

Every half term we would like to invite you to come along to our 'Stay and Play' sessions which are aimed at Class 1 and 2 parents and carers, and our 'Come and See' sessions which are aimed at Class 3 and 4 parents and carers.

Our first Stay and Play session will take place on Wednesday 6th December from 2:45pm until 3:15pm. This is an opportunity for your child to show you around their classroom, see their wonderful work and a chance to play with your child in their learning environment. On the day, please sign in at the school office and our friendly office staff will show you to class 1 and 2.

NEW! Book Look (KS2)

Our first book look session will take place on Thursday 7th December after school from 3:15pm until 3:45pm. On the day, please collect your child as normal and then enter school through the main school entrance. During the allocated time, you will be

able to spend time in your child's classroom, where all of their work, books and displayed work will be available for you to share and celebrate with your child/ren.

We value the importance of parental involvement in school life and believe that by sharing your child's work and books and providing opportunities for you to come and play in their learning environment, it will allow you to gain a deeper understanding of their development and learning journey at our wonderful school.

Thank you for your continued support.





Ben O'Connell

Headteacher

Bethany Simpson

Senior Teacher

Autumn Dates

November

- Thursday 30th November – Swimming for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 30th November - Little Smiles at St Giles

December

- Friday 1st December – Forest School Y4
- Monday 4th December – Christmas Crafts for September 2024 Starters and parents/carers
- Thursday 7th December – Aladdin at the Winding Wheel for EYFS and Year 1
- Thursday 7th December – NO LITTLE SMILES TODDER GROUP TODAY
- Friday 8th December – Whole school Christmas craft and jumper day!
- Friday 8th December – Forest School Y4
- Wednesday 13th December – INFANT NATIVITY PLAY – Class 1 and Class 2 2.00pm and 5:30pm
- Friday 15th December – Mother Goose at Derby Arena for Years 2 – 6
- Monday 18th December – PTFA Secret Santa
- Tuesday 19th December – Whole school Christingle service14:30pm in St Giles Church. Everyone Welcome.
- Wednesday 20th December – Christmas Dinner
- Friday 22nd December – Break up for Christmas