



The St Michael Steiner School

Newsletter



March 2021

The St Michael Steiner School, Park Road, Hanworth Park, London TW13 6PN

www.stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk

020 8893 1299 / info@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk

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Dominic Mugenis-Mendonca

The school is now accepting applications for fee assistance for the academic year 2021/22. Applications and all supporting paperwork need to be submitted by Monday, 26 April 2021. For further information and for an application form please contact Birgit on bursar@stmichaelsteiner.com



Photos from kindergarten and classes 5, 7 and 8. But which is which?



Online Parent and Baby Support Group

Since the beginning of the Autumn term, with Covid restrictions in place, we have been unable to facilitate a Parent and Baby Group at School and so began a new venture. Since January, we have hosted a total of fifteen sessions, with two groups merging into one over time. Every Wednesday morning over ten weeks up to ten parents have gathered together, each zooming from our own homes, the park or a quiet street.

We have shared how the week has been for us, our families and most importantly the beautiful babies in whose names we gathered. From time to time a baby and/or an older sibling popped up to check who their Mama was speaking with and added to our pleasure of being together. We have taken our starting point in short discussions/presentations, around what is happening in the little ones' lives as we meet, feeding, teething, allergies, sleep, the development of movement etc and the sorrows and joys of parents' lives.



We have dipped into the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner's understanding of the new-born and growing infant, the young child as a 'whole sense' being and more. We have explored some of Emmi Pikler's practical indications around respectful care, naturally paced motor development and free movement. We practiced together some of the hand gesture, songs/movement games of Wilma Ellersiek. Together, we supplemented our zoom meeting with our group email and a What's App group, where we continued the conversations and shared photos and articles, useful websites and titles of books with each other.



Some of the parents very much appreciated discovering a different way of being with their babies, inspired by both Steiner and Pikler pedagogies. They have found the sharing of information useful and have enjoyed meeting up with like-minded parents. They have also welcomed the opportunity of meeting via zoom in time of lockdown and being able to connect when social interactions have been very restricted.

This week, in our final session, we realised that we have definitely become an online community who enjoy meeting, sharing and supporting each other so much over this term.

*The Healthy Social Life is found
when in the mirror of each human soul
the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community
the virtue of each one is living*

‘The Motto of the Social Ethic’ - Rudolf Steiner

What Next:

We plan to continue communicating with each other via group email and What’s App.

Some parents who live near enough to our School will be joining Silvia’s Parent and Child Outdoor Groups which can start up again after Easter.

Leigha will be offering some Sessions online to include “Simplicity Parenting”.

Best of all, when restrictions are lifted, we plan to have a picnic so we can meet up with each other in ‘real life’.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this group.

Leigha Hipkin and Silvia Lauzzana



A couple of books we found ourselves often dipping into:

‘Beginning Well’ P. Dogl, E. Rischke, U. Strub. Wecan
‘A Child’s Health’ Dr M. Glockler, Dr W. Goebel. Floris Books

Akhenaten

For the last four weeks of term, **Class 10** has been studying the temples and sculptures of Ancient Egypt and the ‘Golden Age’ of Greece, tracing the changes in human consciousness that took place in the period that spans the two cultures. In Egypt, things changed very slowly, so that the sculptures of the 2500 BCE are hardly distinguishable from those of 1500 BCE. In contrast, Greek sculpture evolves rapidly, almost year by year, from the beginning of the 5th century BCE to the end. However, there is one extraordinary exception in Egypt. In the 14th century BCE, a Pharaoh came to the throne whose deeds, buildings, sculptures and relief drawings indicate that he was aware of something that would become a common experience for mankind much later, and which we mark each year in the festival of Easter. In this extract from her book *The Ascent of Man*, Eleanor Merry explains:

The imperial power of Egypt rose to great grandeur with the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, but its spirituality had by then become decadent.

The worship of Amun-Ra, under the decline of old clairvoyant wisdom, became the means toward worldly power and personal ambition in the hands of the priesthood of the temples. The true progress of mankind was destined to be dependent upon the loss of seership; not because seership itself was wrong, but because Man had come to the point of feeling himself responsible for his own progress, and had not to feel that he was forever to be under the guidance of higher powers who in a certain sense took the responsibility upon themselves. The decline of clairvoyance was the beginning of the “twilight of the gods”, and the rise of earthly knowledge.

About 1500 BCE Egypt stood at the height of its temporal power and in the decadence of its religion. In 1375 BCE Amenophis IV, the young pharaoh known to us as Akhenaten, ascended the throne.

Excavations in Egypt have shed a romantic light on his brief life. The tragic aspect of his reign was that he was destined to experience more or less consciously what was really already taking place in a more hidden way in the evolution of civilised humanity—the advance toward self-conscious individuality.

The now decadent cult of Amun had become the begetter and nurturer of power — the power to create a tremendous civilisation and empire. But Akhenaten wanted to change power into love; and so incurred the deadly hatred of the priesthood of Amun. There had dawned in his heart a warmth of love for the world; it was as though he felt the approach of the spirituality of the Sun itself as divine love streaming to the earth.

He could no longer feel himself bound, like his immediate predecessors, in the thrall of a majestic ceremonial system, for the light of his own Ego had kindled his self-knowledge, and his eyes beheld mankind.

The symbol of the new Aten worship which he instituted was a solar disk from which descended many rays of light terminating in human hands, some of the holding the emblem of life, and all of them seeming to bless the worshippers with love.

It was not, as some believe, that Akhenaten had any thought of instituting a materialistic Sun-worship; but it was an attempt to point to the increasing nearness of the spiritual powers of the Sun to earthly life. [...]

The new religion was a step toward the establishment of human freedom. The old religion had been an acknowledgment of Man's dependence on the divine worlds and the inspiration bestowed by them. But the Aten—the Sun of life and love—was a foreshadowing of the beginning of individual freedom in the life of the soul: the gaining of consciousness of self in order to spend it freely in love.

But a more arduous way was first needed for mankind.

Akhenaten died very young; and the priests of the dethroned and decadent cult of Amun, and all those whom they influenced, covered his memory with curses. Most terrible must have been their words and deeds of hatred! ... How different is Akhenaten's joy in the universal beneficence of the Sun-God! [In his Hymn to the Sun; here is an extract]:

*How manifold it is, what thou hast made!
They are hidden from the face of man.
O sole god, like whom there is no other!
Thou didst create the world according to thy desire,
Whilst thou wert alone: All men, cattle, and wild beasts,
Whatever is on Earth, going upon feet,
And what is on high, flying with its wings.
The countries of Syria and Nubia, the land of Egypt,
Thou settest every man in his place,
Thou suppliest their necessities:
Everyone has his food, and his time of life is reckoned.
Their tongues are separate in speech,
And their natures as well;
Their skins are distinguished,
As thou distinguishest the foreign peoples.
Thou makest a Nile in the underworld,
Thou bringest forth as thou desirest
To maintain the people
According as thou madest them for thyself,
The lord of all of them, wearying with them,
The lord of every land, rising for them,
The Aten of the day, great of majesty*

He gives his God Aten to all countries and all peoples and all languages. Even his great temple was built open to the sky ... no wonder the priests of Amun hated him!

But, too early though it was, the first step had been taken on the path of freedom. The outer imperial splendour of Egypt, in spite of a temporary revival, was at an end.

In this extract from his book *Art and Human Consciousness*, Gottfried Richter looks at the art of Akhenaten's reign:



What speaks to us in such a gripping way when we look at them is their very humanness. The works of earlier centuries, even the stone portraits themselves, never look out at us as human beings. *[see the statue left of the Pharaoh Khefre from 2350 BCE]*

They are gods, or at the very least, beings who have no other function than to serve as unquestioning vessels for the commands of some super-human, super personal agency. They are scribes who follow this one calling with their whole being; they are pharaohs, priests or princesses — and nothing else.

Suddenly we have real people. King and queen, mother and child, officials, priests, physicians — whoever they may be, we find ourselves deeply moved by the personal destinies and

experiences that we sense in connection with what they have to do in life. Their human souls suffer and are happy, feel the melancholy of the world, tremble at the magnitude of an infinite task and are blessed by the presence of other human beings. These are real people!

It is one thing to let ourselves be carried away by this pure and infinitely tender beauty; it is quite another to see that at last man is beginning to speak for himself because, once and for all, the gods have fallen silent.

This is why relief-pictures now appear that depict with an almost touching delicacy the life of a pharaoh who dares to be a human being: “The king with his family”, “The King with his Wife”, “The King at his Palace Window”. *[Relief carving, above, from Amarna, of Akhenaten with his wife and three of their daughters]*

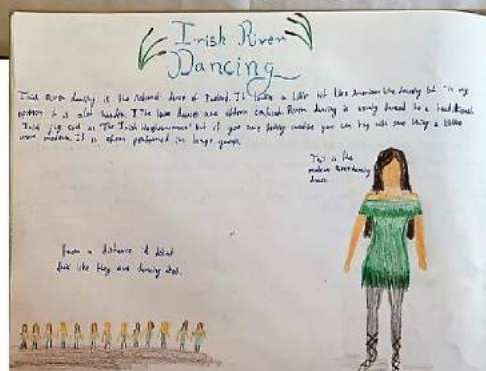
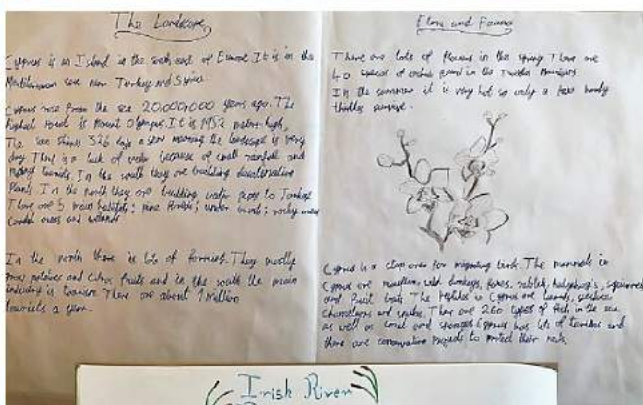
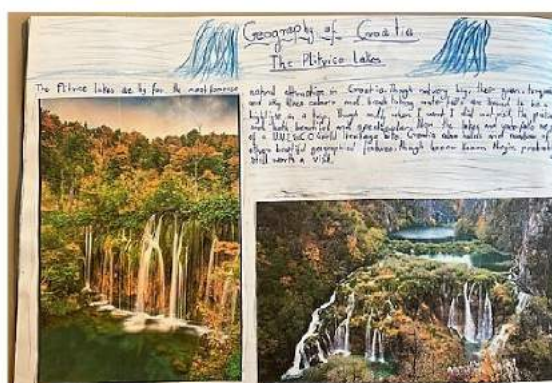
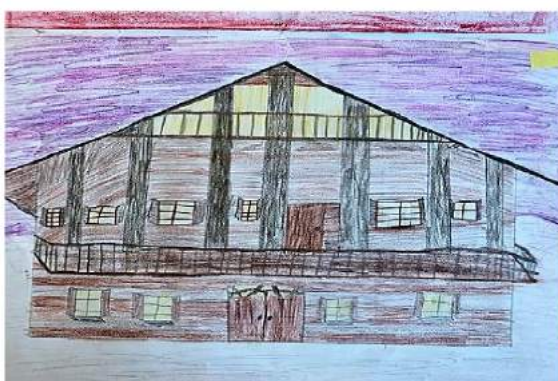


And we must also understand that the priests who were guardians of tradition, were so terror-stricken at the actions of this “heretic” that immediately after his death they chiseled his name off every stone on which it has been inscribed, as if it were something devilish, and levelled the new capital that he had built at Tel el-Amarna to the ground. A pharaoh who does not completely lose himself in service to his higher calling destroys the foundations of pharaoh-hood, the god-willed principles that support the kingdom itself ... There is tragedy in the destiny of this king, the tragedy of a man born too soon.

Class 6 Geography projects

This month the children from Class 6 were learning about the continent of Europe and they were asked to prepare and present a project on a chosen European country. I had a chance to listen to many lovely presentations and read the beautiful project books that the children made. Below you can find the fruits of their work.

Ms Pietrzyk





Craft lessons with Ms Wallace have moved outdoors...





Class 8 have been working on three-dimensional geometry through the Platonic solids.

Even though he didn't discover them himself, Plato described the five solids as fundamental elements of the Creation and associated them with the elements of fire, air, water, earth and what is known as the fifth element, quintessence.

The students used clay, paper and sticks to create the Platonic solids and to discover the relationship between them.

Ms. Karakonstanti



Class 9 have just completed a eurythmy block where they have explored the elements of earth, air and fire.

This started with artwork which then became movement, expressing colours, textures, dynamics, forms and different tempi (e.g; earth is slow and dense, air is fast and light).

3 groups brought the elements of earth or air entwined with fire into artwork through a silent conversation using pastels.

Fire and Air

Hannah and Matthias



Earth

Daisy and Max

Earth and Fire

Aishah, Jacob and Barnaby



The common element of all their work (artwork and choreographies) was fire (inspired by their block on Heat). Then using their artwork as a source of inspiration, they brought the forms into movement and expression.

The block ended with them bringing all their separate choreographies and merging them into one group piece. We are far from finished but they have been through the process of sensing, feeling into and moving Fire, Earth and Air.

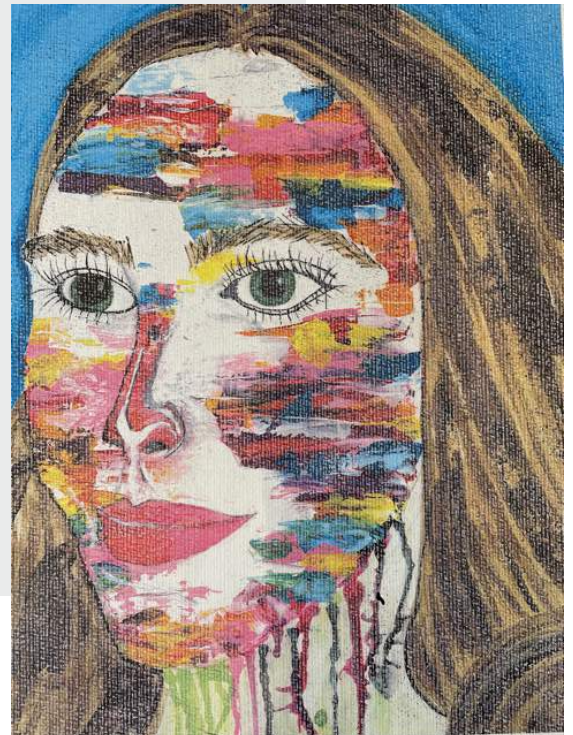
Michèle Hunter

Class II self-portraits

with Lola Gil Navarro

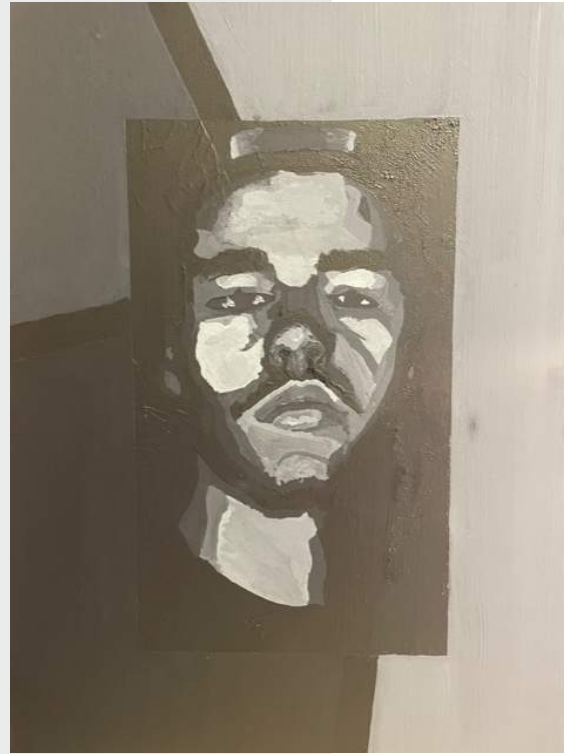


Bianca Morrison





Dan Waring



Herbie Halligan



Takumi Voss





Sophie Poll-Hulshoff

From Kindergarten...

We started the 'Big children's club' in kindergarten after the half term, every Friday morning. The group comprises the oldest children from both kindergartens, the rising 6-year-olds, also known as the rising Class 1 children. The kindergarten teachers start to work more closely with this group of children, observing their readiness for school and supporting them both as individuals and as the group that will transition to school. As the children come in, they start drawing in their books, a bit like in a main lesson. They then work on their craft projects: started by sewing their initials on a handwork bag, which they will use for their handwork in class 1 and through lower school. They have also started making their hobby horses, a symbol we use to picture the children riding off and going out into the world after their time in kindergarten.



After this time of focused work, children are keen to play before ring time and snack. At ring time we challenge the children with movement and gestures: they are more capable in controlling their bodies, and move with more form and grace.

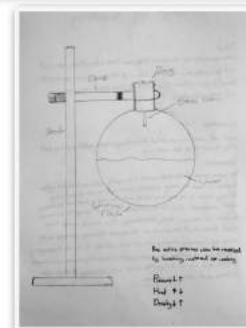
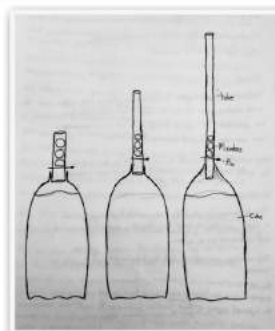
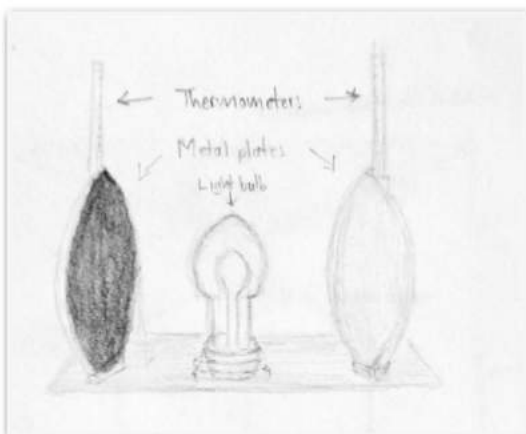
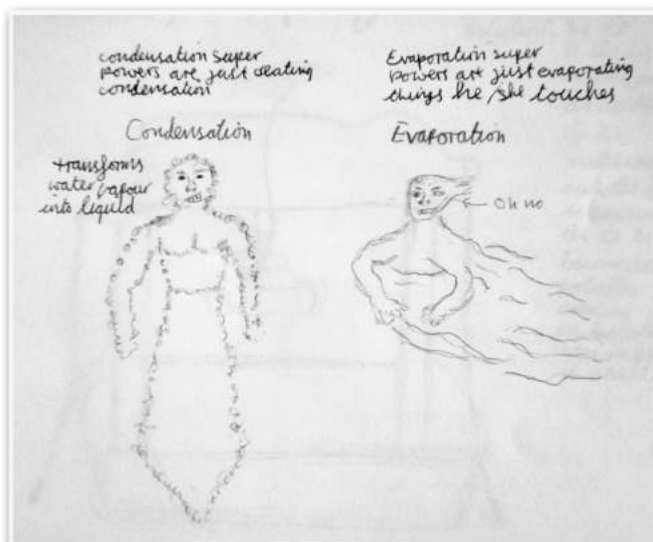
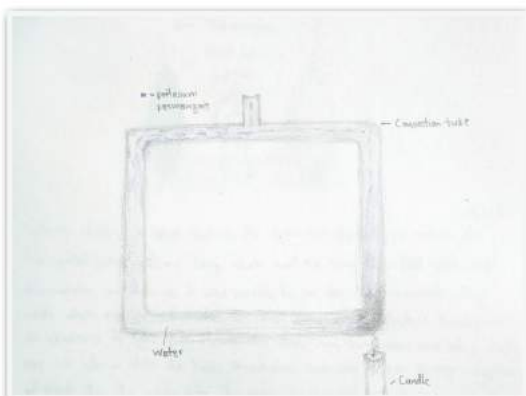
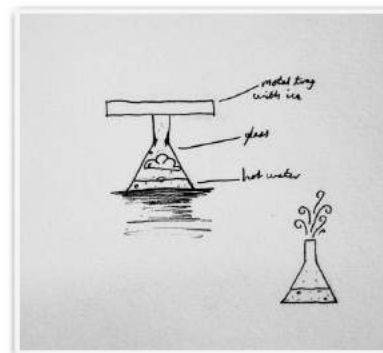
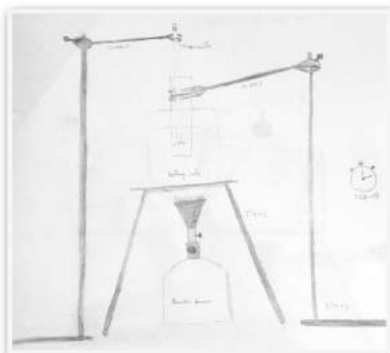
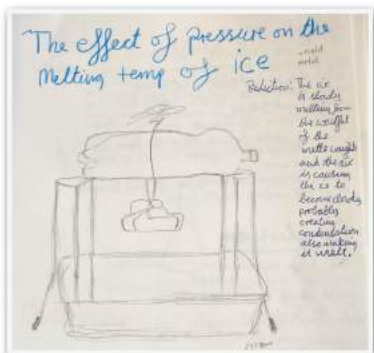


After snack, we usually head to the garden for play, where they meet their younger friends. Last Friday the day was so beautiful, that we decided to go for a long walk in Hanworth Park and to have our picnic there. The children are big enough to carry their rucksacks with their picnics to the park, and there we ate and then they played. There were many opportunities on our walk to observe nature, pick flowers and climb trees. At one point, the children wanted to bring back to kindergarten a long and heavy log that they found during the walk. They thought, talked, negotiated and problem solved how they could do that together, considering the added physical challenge of carrying their own sacks! They carried the log together for a long time and eventually they decided to leave it in the park...

Next term we will continue with this group, gently and gradually helping them to prepare for the transition to class 1.

“Now the child is able to bring forth independent imaginations from his or her inner life as impetus for play and social interaction. He can work through the internal process [of transforming] the wonderful fantasies of his earlier kindergarten years into a conscious imagination.”
(Klaar, p.72-73)



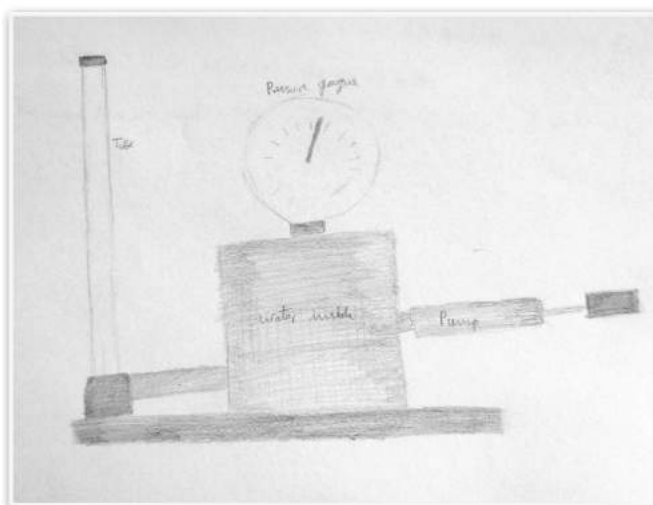


Class IX have been exploring the properties of solids, liquids and gasses and how they are affected by heat and pressure.

This has been through a process of observation. We have asked "What do we know just from what we have seen?" and "How does that fit with what we have already found out?"

From what temperature is to what temperature can do, we have completed and created experiments to build on our knowledge and create a picture of interaction.

Alex Harrison



School fundraising through Amazon Smile

The St Michael Steiner School is registered as a charity with Amazon Smile and Amazon will make a 0.5% donation on all purchases made through this scheme.

If you want Amazon to donate to The St Michael Steiner School Ltd, you need to start each shopping session at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> and select 'The St Michael Steiner School' in the drop-down menu for your preferred charity.

0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) of your eligible purchases will then be donated to the school at no extra cost to you.

Thank you!



If you have something you would like to contribute to the newsletter or something you'd like to advertise to the community, please send it to peterbrewin@stmichaelsteiner.com
The deadline for the next newsletter is Monday 26th April.

Community, notices and adverts

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SCHOOL DOES NOT ENDORSE OR RECOMMEND, EITHER IN GENERAL OR IN PARTICULAR, ANYTHING OFFERED IN THE COMMUNITY PAGES AND PARENTS ARE ADVISED TO CHECK THE QUALIFICATIONS OF PRACTITIONERS OR PEOPLE OFFERING SERVICES HERE.

For advice and support during the pandemic

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families: **www.annafreud.org**
offering seminars, courses and support to families on mental health.

Hand-in-Hand Parenting: **www.handinhandparenting.org**
resources for parents to read, listen, watch and courses on Aggression, Sleep, Setting Limits, Parents' Stress, Siblings, and Separation

Beginning Well: **www.beginningwell.com**
holistic support for parents of young children

Looking for a baby-sitter?



My name is Rose. I'm a 17 year old student currently attending The St Michael Steiner School and I have been in Steiner education since kindergarden. I love children, and I am dependable and responsible when it comes to work. I am currently looking for babysitting jobs for Friday evenings and the weekend. Rates are negotiable, I am happy to look after children of any age, and can travel within reach of the Richmond area.

Contacts - you can text me at
+44 07432 582 320
or send me an email at
rose.dowse@outlook.com

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London Borough
of Hounslow

Hanworth Park Engagement Survey

Closes 28 Mar 2021

Overview

We are fortunate to have wonderful parks and open spaces in Hounslow and during the pandemic, more than ever, it became evident just how much you value them. We know that investment in our parks and open spaces is one of our key priorities as these spaces are a vital way of supporting the health and wellbeing of the community.

Hanworth Park is an important asset for local residents who use the park for lots of different recreational activities. It is also a valuable green space to help tackle the current nature and climate change emergency.

Why we are consulting

This engagement survey aims to find out what you value about Hanworth Park and what you would like to see improved. This will help us look for future funding opportunities to deliver park improvements based on the community needs and to develop this green space as a great community hub.

We have already identified a number of infrastructure improvements for Hanworth Park, which we now have limited funding for. The improvements are directed at designing out the anti-social behaviour in the park and improving the offer for all those that use this important green space. We would like to gain your views on our upcoming improvements.

Contact

Lee Williams
(Parks Project Manager)
Environment, Culture and Customer Services
0208 583 6236
Lee.Williams@hounslow.gov.uk

