



## Friends of Oswald Road School (FORS)

### October 2018 Newsletter

Hello Parents and Carers,

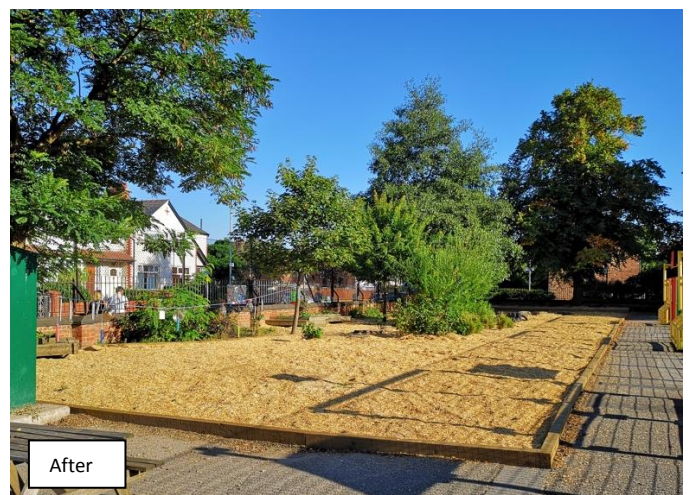
A very warm welcome back to school from all of the FORS Team! By now most of you will have been able to see the work carried out around the school grounds throughout the summer. If you haven't, here's a summary of what's happened so far and what's next....

#### Over the summer...

The patch of land in the Chill Zone was looking drab and unloved. Whilst we'd love to have used real turf, AstroTurf proved to be a much better option in terms of longevity and maintenance, as well as looking really smart. The children enjoy the tactile nature of Astro and the vibrant colour really draws the eye.



The "**Adventure Wood**" is the previously very muddy area that runs along Oswald Road. The children love this area but due to poor drainage it did get very boggy. The school and FORS wanted to keep this area as natural as possible, but felt it needed smartening up and was in desperate need of some play equipment. To get the most of the funds raised so far, parents and carers came together through the summer and installed french drains, wooden sleeper borders and filled the area with play bark.





To complete the area we will install monkey bars and an A-frame climber mid-October PLUS six new trees and lots of new shrubs, part-funded by the Woodland Trust and Tree Council grants!



Using the eye of one of our parents, we re-thought the internal **fencing** in the playground to liberate the coppice of trees to the main playground and also provide a more integrated space between Nursery, Reception, the Chill Zone and the main play area – this has made a huge difference to the flow of play during lunch times.



### Next...

The **Year 1 play area** is going to be completely redeveloped to incorporate some more AstroTurf, a hillock/tunnel and a wooden mushroom circle! We're also hoping to create a sand pit area.



We have raised enough funds to install a **running track**, which will completely encircle the existing sports pitches in the main playground – 12 laps will equal a mile for those who want to do their mile a day! Also, at the far end of the sports pitches we'll be incorporating a four lane sprint area for playground races and training for upcoming Sports Days!



## **BIG PLANS IN 2019!**

We are in discussion with an award-winning company that specializes in natural playground installations and our plan is to build a treehouse-style play area by the summer of 2019.



There is a HUGE opportunity to create something really exciting around the existing group of trees recently liberated from the fencing and to link this area together with a revitalised and fabulously greened Owl Garden around the outside wooden classroom.

The school budget simply cannot accommodate this kind of investment and parents have provided the school with priceless time, money and expertise that wouldn't exist without FORS and the valuable contributions that Owl Club make.

All of this work has left the FORS fund almost empty, so we need to continue fundraising to fund the tree house for next year and beyond! Below a list of FORS events to watch out for and support in any way you possibly can. All of the money raised will go directly to the school grounds for the foreseeable future. We really need your support to continue with the plans!

### **Next Events...**

- **Online Auction of Promises** – In the past people have offered up things to bid on, such as holiday homes/baked goods/tours, and we've held an auction. To improve accessibility this time we are doing it all ONLINE! You can place your bid contributions using a web link, so you don't have to leave the comfort of your own home! More details to follow.
- **Roller Disco - Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October** – The last Roller Disco at Stretford was a massive success both from a fundraising and fun point of view, so we'll be doing another one very soon, with a special welcome to the new Nursery children and anyone who couldn't make it last time.
- **Friends Quiz - Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November** – A really popular night, so much so that we're going to do two throughout the year! This is the first one and then there will be another one next year. Get yourself a team of around 5 people, come along and enjoy a few drinks and some comedy banter. Lovely way to get to know other parents from around the school.
- **Winter Fair - Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December** – Always a very successful event and the children really enjoy it. This year we will be running a Dragon's Den style stall, where children (Years 4 – 6) can get together in groups (of up to 4 with a supervisory adult of their choice) to plan and run a stall of their very own. The top 3 fund raising stalls will each receive a prize and certificate. We will expand our Bake Off prizes this year as we get such a lot of entrants that have clearly worked hard to produce fabulous cakes. The top three cakes in the adult category will also be auctioned off!

# WE NEED YOU!

We need volunteers to help in any capacity, and especially this year as a new FORS committee is needed. This comprises a Chair and Vice Chair (or you can work as a team with a friend and simply Co-Chair), a Treasurer and a Secretary. It really doesn't take up as much time as you might imagine, you would get the full support for a year from the existing members, and it's a fantastic way to feel part of the school community. Like many of you I work full-time, I have loved my time as Chair and it's only due to personal circumstances that I have to stand down. Please don't hesitate to drop me a line for an informal chat/coffee if you think you might be interested.

- If you are able to volunteer in any capacity, let us know on the email address below. This could be either part of the team, to help at events or simply run an event yourself as a one off!
- Are you **green fingered**? We urgently need people to assist and advise with overall planting strategy and ongoing maintenance in the playground.
- Have you got experience with **bid writing**? We are continually looking outside of our school community for sources of funds we can use, so please let us know if you can help.
- Have you got anything you could offer up for people to bid on in the **Auction of Promises**? We've had everything... holiday homes, home baked goods, homemade halal meals, a pot of Jewish chicken noodle soup, 4 hours of cleaning and a footstool making course!
- We always have a **Tombola stall** at the Winter Fair and it's always really popular with children. If you have anything at home that would make a nice prize for this stall, please hand it in to the office. Something might catch your eye whilst shopping, like an inexpensive toy, sweet treat or toiletry, for example (Quality Save is an Aladdin's cave for all things tombola!)
- The Grand Draw is one of the key fundraisers at our Winter Fair, and again if you have any prizes that would fit the bill then please let us know. We're especially looking for **organisations that may want to sponsor and/or donate prizes** etc.

We look forward to seeing you all at the events this year!

Gaynor Armstrong (FORS Chair)

Rachel Cohen-Jackson (Vice Chair)

Jayne Culverhouse (Secretary)

Lou Owens (Treasurer)

Email: oswaldPTAchair@gmail.com