

Monday 30 June 2025

Dear Parents

I am absolutely thrilled to share some wonderful news with you all from Grange Park! We recently had a very special online introduction to a new, furry member of our Grange Park family: our new **school dog**! It was truly amazing to see the children's excited faces and hear their joyful reactions as they met her for the first time this morning. There has been such a buzz and happiness throughout the school today which was wonderful to see!

Meet Our New Friend!



[Click here](#) for a short video clip of our new school dog and some of the children's reactions!

Our new school dog is a beautiful, gentle **Cavapoo**, a crossbreed known for its friendly nature and hypoallergenic coat (a mix of Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and Poodle). She is a female, born on **12th April 2025**, making her a delightful young puppy eager to explore her new surroundings and make new friends.

Why a School Dog?

You might be wondering why we've decided to welcome a dog into our school community. At Grange Park Primary, our motto is "creating foundations for bright futures," and this extends to nurturing happy, confident individuals who build strong relationships. We believe that having a school dog can bring a wealth of positive benefits, enriching the educational experience and well-being of our pupils. Dogs are known for their calming influence and their ability to foster a positive atmosphere. Our new school dog will play a vital role in helping us uphold our values of respect, responsibility, and resilience, and truly support our children in creating their own bright futures by:

- **Enhancing Well-being:** Providing a source of comfort and companionship, which can help reduce anxiety and promote emotional well-being among pupils.

- **Fostering Responsibility and Empathy:** Teaching children about animal care, responsibility, and developing a deeper sense of empathy and respect for living creatures.
- **Supporting Social and Emotional Development:** Providing interactions that help children develop social skills, manage emotions, and build positive relationships.
- **Encouraging Learning and Reading:** Offering a non-judgmental listener, boosting confidence and engagement in reading and learning.

Many of you will already be familiar with the wonderful success of our therapy dog, Willow, who has been a fantastic listener for our children during reading sessions. It's from this positive experience that we've seen firsthand the incredible impact a dog can have in a school environment.

Our Approach to Welcoming Her

A gradual introduction process will take place. For the remainder of this term, she will be coming into school a few days each week, allowing her to gradually acclimatise to the school environment and get to know the children and staff. From September onwards, she will typically be with us almost every school day.

During the school day, the dog will primarily be based in the Wellbeing Room, which is off the Year 3 corridor. When the puppy is walking around the school site, she will always be kept on a short lead and with an adult, and children will always be able to keep a distance from the dog should they wish to do so. By introducing the dog to the school and the children at an early age, it is hoped that both the children and the dog can become familiar with, and therefore comfortable with, one another. Our aim is for her to seamlessly integrate into our school community, bringing joy and a unique educational dimension. The puppy will always be kept on a lead when walking around the school, unless she is older and has learned sufficiently to be in a controlled group activity as outlined in the risk assessment.

Important Reminder: Dogs on School Premises

We know how important dogs are to many families, and we're incredibly excited about our new school dog joining the Grange Park family. However, we must strongly reinforce our existing policy and risk assessment: other dogs are strictly not allowed on the school site, either inside the building or on the school grounds. This is typically the rule in other schools as well. This includes during events like Summer Fayres, Christmas Fayres, Sports Days, and during drop-off and pick-up times. We understand this can be disappointing, but this policy is in place for the safety and comfort of our entire school community. The only exceptions are registered service dogs or therapy dogs we are specifically working with; our new school dog is different, with a specific risk assessment and carefully controlled interactions. If you bring a dog to school during drop-off or pick-up, it must always be kept on a lead and attended to outside the school gates, and please do not tie your pet to the school gate and leave it unattended.

Children with Allergies or Fear of Dogs

We understand that some children may have **allergies** or a **fear of dogs**, and we have put comprehensive measures in place to ensure the safety and comfort of every child. For pupils with allergies, we will maintain strict hygiene routines, and specific areas of the school will remain dog-free zones. If your child has a fear of dogs, rest assured that we will never force interaction, and we will work sensitively to ensure they feel safe and comfortable in their school environment. Your child's well-being and safety are our highest priorities.

Help Us Name Her!

The most exciting part is that our new addition to our Grange Park family needs a name! Here are some suggested names: **Olive, Hazel, Toffee, and Maple**. We want the children to vote for which name they like best, and we will announce her chosen name next week.

A Google Form will be posted in your child's Google Classroom for voting – they can only vote once. Please encourage them to [click here](#) for the form. They have until the end of the week to cast their vote!

We are incredibly excited about the positive impact our new school dog will have on our Grange Park community and look forward to this wonderful new chapter. For more information, including answers to frequently asked questions and our full risk assessment, please see below.

With my very best wishes

Tijen Hassan

Headteacher

School Dog Frequently Asked Questions

Who will look after the dog when she's not at school? Tijen Hassan, Headteacher will be responsible for taking the dog home every day and looking after it during the holidays. When Tijen is away or needs to, other trusted members from the school community will look after her.

Is the dog from a reputable breeder? Yes, the dog has been purchased from a licensed and reputable breeder. Tijen visited the puppies in their home with the mother. The puppy was specifically chosen for its temperament, ensuring it is friendly and confident. We are also pleased to share that this puppy is a half-sibling to the two highly successful school dogs at Fern House, another school within our Trust, sharing the same dad and breeder.

Why did you choose a Cavapoo breed? We believe a Cavapoo is a fantastic breed of dog for a school due to their wonderful temperament and hypoallergenic qualities. Cavapoos are typically very sweet-natured, intelligent, affectionate, and sociable. As a **hypoallergenic breed**, Cavapoos shed less hair and don't drool as much as other breeds. While no dog can be 100% non-allergenic, this makes her less likely to cause problems for allergy sufferers, as allergies are triggered by proteins in saliva and urine spread through shed hair. She will also be regularly groomed to help manage this further.

What about her training and health? She will receive training during the summer holidays and next term and then special therapy dog training when she is a bit older. She has also had two vaccinations and will receive regular worm and flea treatments to ensure she is healthy and safe for everyone.

How will the dog be toileted to ensure hygiene for all? There will be a designated area of the school grounds that is kept only for use by the dog for toileting purposes. The staff in charge of the dog will ensure this area is cleaned appropriately and regularly.

Which children will the dog work with? The dog will work with children in scheduled sessions to support reading, confidence, and emotional regulation. The dog will visit children around the school site, but will always be kept on a short lead. From time to time, there may be group sessions that will take place where the dog will be allowed off-lead in a controlled setting. Generally children will not need to approach the dog should they wish to do so. Children will not need to work with the dog, should they not wish to. As you know the school is on a very big site with plenty of space to enable this to happen.

Will the dog be a distraction? During the school day, the dog will primarily be based in the Wellbeing Room. The wellbeing team- will take care of her in school and will organise her schedule. When going to see children, the wellbeing team will always be present, and interactions will only occur if children want to participate. As the dog gets bigger, she will be gradually introduced to other parts of the school, such as classrooms and playgrounds, under strict supervision. We will be careful to ensure that time spent with the school dog is shared among the children as fairly as possible.

My child is allergic to dogs. How will you manage this? Please email the school office at office@grangeparkprimary.org to let us know if your child has an allergy to dogs as soon as possible. We will contact you and work with you to ensure that we manage this closely. As mentioned above, we have chosen the dog breed carefully to ensure that it is as suitable for allergies as possible.

My child has a fear of dogs. How will you manage this? Please email the school office at office@grangeparkprimary.org to let us know if your child has a fear of dogs. We will contact you and work with you to ensure they feel safe and comfortable. We will never force interaction, and we will work sensitively with your child. There will be a very gentle approach to introducing the dog to the children.

Has a risk assessment been made? Yes. We have carefully considered having a dog in school and sought advice from many sources, including other schools that have successfully welcomed a dog within their community. Please see the [Risk Assessment](#) for any additional queries.