



our voices

Senior Newsletter for Children in Care - Issue 15

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of this newsletter!

In this issue, find out about the fun days out have been had, in the summer holidays and also what our Children in Care Councils have been up to.

I hope that you have settled back at school after a great summer . I have really enjoyed meeting so many of you at our VSK Awards Ceremony in September and want to congratulate you for all your hard work at school and for all the other amazing things you do.

At VSK, we love to hear your ideas about what else you would like us to include in this newsletter, so get in touch with the VSK Participation Team.

Best Wishes

Tony Doran:

VSK Headteacher



Email the team at:

VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk

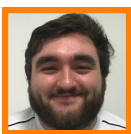
Included in this issue:

- OCYPC/ Kent Pledge
- Staff Update
- Activity Days
- Kent Cares Town
- VSK Awards Ceremony
- MOMO
- Competition

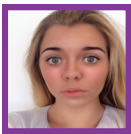
VSK PARTICIPATION TEAM



Tia



Tom



Chelsea



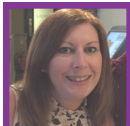
Reece



Rob



Andrea



Jo



Sophia



Sarah



OCYPC stands for 'Our Children and Young People's Council.'

Kent's Children in Care Council for young people aged 11 to 16. OCYPC have been involved in important projects. OCYPC also get the opportunity to meet with Members and Senior Officers in Kent County Council to voice their views and opinions.

All meetings are designed to be fun and relaxed and of course there is always food and drink provided! Being part of one of the Councils is extremely beneficial as it gives you a unique opportunity to have your voice heard at the highest levels. Your views and opinions help shape the service that you and other young people in care receive so that it is as good as it possibly can be.

If you are interested in joining or want more information, contact Reece or Sophia - Reece.Graves@kent.gov.uk or Sophia.Dunstan@kent.gov.uk



Have you received your copy of the Kent Pledge cards?

The Kent Pledge is 6 promises that Kent County Council make to you as a child in the care of Kent. They are:



- To give you a sense of belonging
- Make sure you have an adult who is always there for you
 - Make sure you have a good education
 - Help you make good memories for the future
 - Help you get ready for being an adult
 - To support your interests and needs



We have made the 6 promises into a set of cards that are given to you by your Social Worker. They have been designed with the help of young people in care and are clear and easy to understand. There are 2 versions, one pack for you if you are over 11 and another pack if you are under 11.

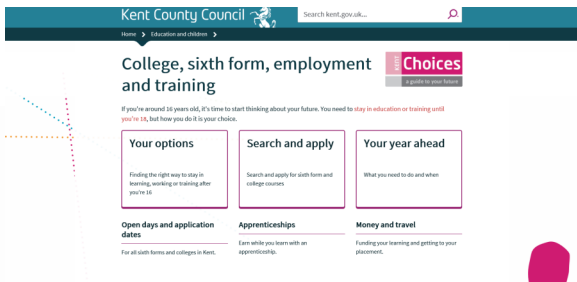
If you don't have a pack, just ask your Social Worker.



Information

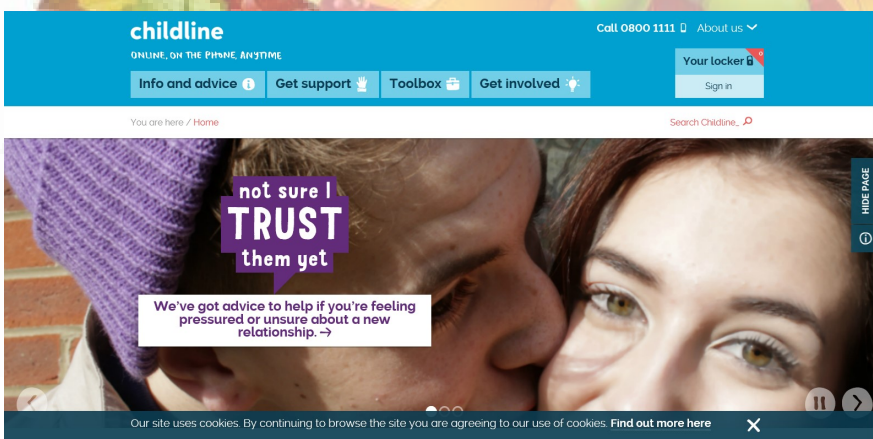
When you turn 16, there are lots of different options for you. On the kent.gov website, there are lots of options that could suit you when you move on from Secondary School. Whether this is college, employment, or sixth form, the website can help in different ways.

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/college-sixth-form-employment-and-training>



At 16, you can come to YAC (The Young Adult Council). Come along and to have your say on things that affect children in care and care leavers to help make positive changes. We meet up on the 1st Thursday of each month in a different location in the county . We always have food and we will pay your travel costs to get to the meetings too.

For help or more information, contact VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk



<https://www.childline.org.uk/>



HOW MANY OWLS IN THIS NEWSLETTER?

STAFF UPDATE

Our Participation Team is growing which means we have more time and opportunities to get out and meet you, which is really the best part of our job! Our team is led by Jo. Sophia and Andrea work in East and South Kent, and Chelsea, Tom, Sarah and Reece work in North and West Kent. We are happy to welcome new staff members, Tia and Rob, and we are sad to say goodbye to Chloe who has just finished her apprenticeship with us and has moved on. Keep reading to find out a bit more as well as celebrate some of our team members achievements!



Hi my name is Tia, I'm a new addition to the VSK participation team and my role will be an apprentice participation worker. My hobbies and interests are ice skating and horse riding. I am really looking forward to engaging and helping young people.



Hi, my name is Rob. I am an Apprentice for the Virtual School Kent. Actor by heart, I love being able to express my feelings through shows and songs, so beware. I have become an apprentice for multiple reasons. The first reason would be because of the background I grew up in and my knowledge of the care system. The second reason would be the enjoyment on a young person's face when they know that things have been done for them and that rewards are coming to them as well.



We are happy to announce that Chelsea will be continuing with the Virtual School after successfully completing her level 2 Apprenticeship. She is now working towards a level 3 qualification, well done!



Contact Us:

Chelsea Goodwin - chelsea.goodwin@kent.gov.uk

Tom Byrne - thomas.byrne@kent.gov.uk

Reece Graves - reece.graves@kent.gov.uk

Tia Pires-Higgins - tia.pires-higgins@kent.gov.uk

Rob Barton - robert.barton@kent.gov.uk

Joanne Carpenter - joanne.carpenter@kent.gov.uk

Sophia Dunstan - sophia.dunstan@kent.gov.uk

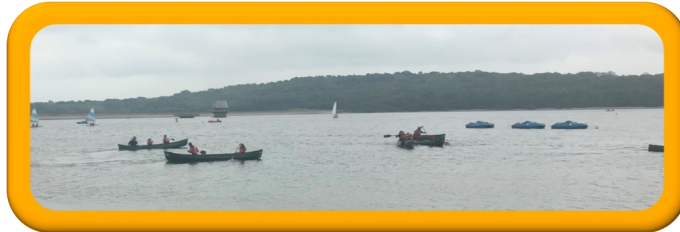
Andrea Wood - andrea.wood@kent.gov.uk

Sarah Newman - sarah.newman@kent.gov.uk

We love hearing from you!

Activity Days

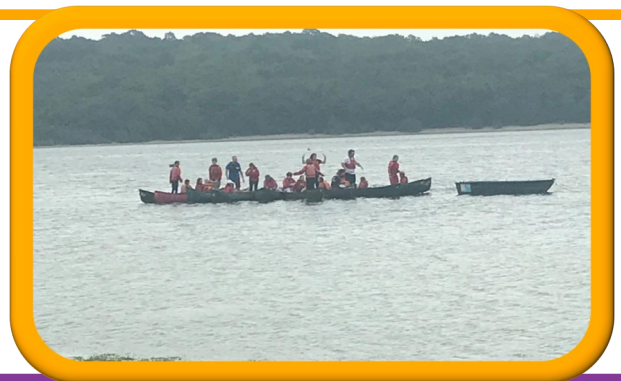
Bewl Water



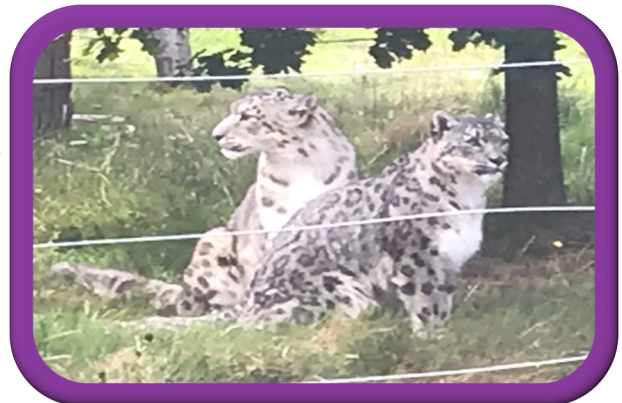
In August we took a trip to Bewl Water. and what a great day it was!

After a busy arrival, we split off into two groups, one would do canoeing first, while the other would go biking (and we would switch at lunch). During canoeing we were split into 3 people per canoe. At first there was a lot of spinning around ... and more spinning as we were trying to figure out a rhythm to our rowing. It took some of us (Chelsea and Tom!) a little bit longer to get their boats going in a straight line than the others. That wasn't the best part though, we had to group our canoes together and tie them, so we could then play a game of fruit salad! No one fell in... Although Tom almost did, and he almost took half his boat with him! Of course, there was also an opportunity to do some cannon balls, of which some people chose to do multiple times. It was awesomefun!

After lunch it was time to strap on our bike helmets, pull on our gloves and choose our bike. Firstly, some of us had a little practice as we hadn't ridden a bike in a while, while the other went off on a ride where there were dirt hills and ramps to do some jumps. While the others were off on their ride, we had some people who had never rode a bike before, and with just a little help to get started they were off and it was hard to keep up with them. So well done to you guys!



Howletts



We took a group of young people to the zoo, in fact so many of you wanted to go we had to put on 2 days for this trip! So we had 2 fun packed day seeing the animals. We slowly made our way around the park seeing all the different animals like dholes, ant eaters and the Pallas cat which we even got to see having a bite to eat!

We arrived at and stood and watched the Gorillas for ages playing in their large enclosure, we got to see a mother feeding its tiny baby, it was so cute! After that it was time for lunch and a play on the play area. After we'd had a bite to eat and time to blow off some steam it was time to see some more animals, we went and watched the elephant show, where there was a mum and a son elephant came to say hello and show off. After a little while it was time to make are way up the big hill and back to the entrance to meet their carer's and get some goody bags and go home.



Shorne Woods



We also went to Shorne Woods to do some more den building and team games.

First off it was den building and boy, did we need to build them, it was chucking it down with rain! We got soaked and covered in mud! The dens went up quick and were quickly put to use. After a nice packed lunch break it was time for some team games, we played a variety of games including floor is lava, marble runs and walking the plank.

The last one made us really muddy and more muddy we got the more we slipped off of the planks!

Once we'd done a few games of each, by popular demand it was time to go and play in the park.. Everyone had lots of fun on the swings, and climbing frames



If you have any suggestions for activity days,
please email us at
VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk

Betteshanger

Another day out was to Betteshanger Country Park, and what a great day it was! We split into three groups. One group would do den building, another would do treasure hunting and the last group would do the dreaded obstacle course.

During the treasure hunt, we were given little compasses that had coordinates set to the location that the treasure laid. We had to follow the path to get the prize. After lots and lots of running, and seeking, with help from Jo, we were able to find the item that was stuck behind a sign.

After a little snack break, we went off again, changing activity. We went to den building which was really fun to do. We were told to get different lengths of ropes and different logs and tie them in a special way to make the den have a lot of support. We then had to get the tarpaulin and place it over the den and tie it together, making the shelter complete.

After lunch, we had one more activity. This was the obstacle course. Some of you guys persuaded Robert to take part.. In and out, up and down, round and over you guys went, through tunnels and over hurdles. Faster and faster the instructor was telling to go. So, with that, we went onto the big obstacle course, in which some of you guys had really good fun on the rope swing. We had to catch you as you came across to stop you falling in. There were some close calls but luckily there was only one splash. The obstacle course was difficult so well done everyone!



KENT CARES TOWN



Kent Cares Town

Thanks for visiting Kent Cares Town. This website is for all young people who are or who have been in the care of Kent County Council. Choose the section that best suits you to find out more.

Primary

This is the section to find out everything you need to know about being in care if you are aged under 11. Click on the superheroes below!



Secondary

Aged 11 to 16? Click below to learn about being in care, how Kent County Council supports your education and health and lots more.



Moving On

Click here to find out about what happens when you turn 18. The information here will help you plan for when you leave care and start to live independently.

You will also find lots of useful information to help you once you are a care leaver.

Have your say on the 18 Plus Care Leavers Service.
Click here to access our survey.



PRIMARY

This is the place to find out everything you need to know about being in care. Below you'll see some of our special Super Council heroes. Click on them to find out more about each of the topics.

If you have any questions about what you've read or want to find out more, talk to a trusted adult like your foster carer, social worker or teacher or get in touch with the Participation Team.

The Super Council
The Super Council is for 7 to 11 year olds. It's your place to meet other children, talk about things that are important to children in care and have fun! They even helped design this website and create the superheroes!

Find out more here.

Secondary

If you are aged between 11 and 16, this is the place to find out more about what being in care means and the people and organisations who are there to support you.

If you have any questions about what you read, talk to a trusted adult, such as your foster carer, social worker or teacher, contact the Participation Team, or come along to a meeting of the Our Children and Young People's Council, People's Council.

Have YOUR say!
The Our Children and Young People's Council is your place to meet other young people like you and to discuss how it affects young people in care and have fun!

Find out more here.

Being in Care
Coming into care can be very confusing. Read about foster care, your care plan and reviews and the promises Kent County Council makes to all young people in care.

Who will Support Me?
Want to know more about the professionals who may be involved in your care? Find out about the role of a Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and Independent Visitor.

Advice and Help
If you have a problem, need help or want to make a complaint, there are lots of people and organisations out there to support you.

Education
Virtual School Kent and Designated Teachers are here to help you make progress and get the most out of your education.

Health
Your health is important to us so we employ Looked After Children Nurses to ensure you have the support you need to stay healthy.

Asylum Information
If you are in the care of Kent County Council, aged 16 and under and arrived in the UK as an unaccompanied asylum seeker, you are entitled to help and support.

Get Involved and Make a Difference
The Participation Team organise activity days for young people in care, support the Our Children and Young People's Council and have fun!

MOMO
The Mind of My Own app is an innovative way for you to share your thoughts and feelings with the professionals.

Kent Cares Town is the website just for Children in Care and Care Leavers. Find out all about what being in care means, school, health and lots more. It's also a great way to find out how you can get involved and have your say about the services you receive. Google Kent Cares Town to explore the Secondary Portal, the section just for you!



For help or more information, contact
VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk





VSK Awards Ceremony



On Sunday the 16th of September we had our Virtual School Kent Awards Ceremony. There were all sorts of stalls and games there, from a bouncy castle to fancy dress, there was even a fantastic barbeque, with burgers, sausages and chips! Of course it wasn't all funfair and food. We had lots of awards to hand out and a presentation from the Participation Team on what we've been up to over the last year!

We want to thank everyone for attending and a huge well done on all the Awards they received on the day.

Keep up the great work!



AWARDS PICTURES



Over the whole day:

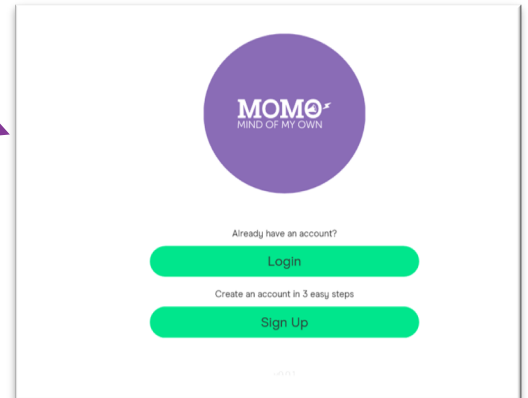
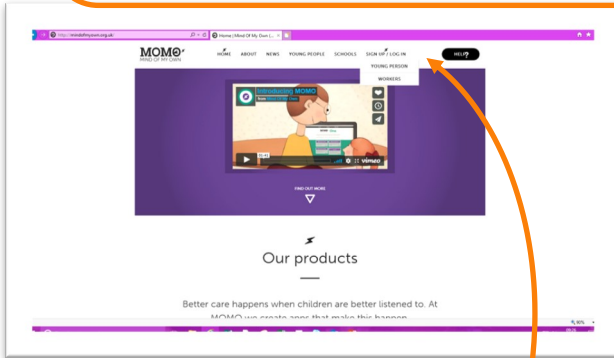
- * 247 young people received Bronze awards
- * 29 young people received Silver awards
- * 5 young people received Gold awards
- * 39 young people received 'Star of 2018' awards for their involvement with the Super Council and Our Children and



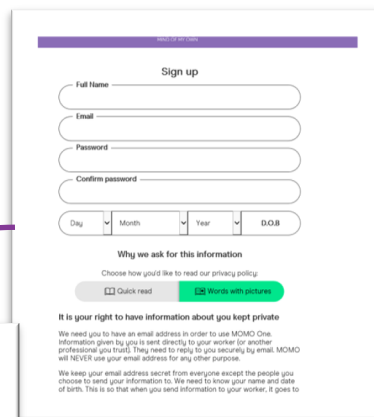
WHAT IS MOMO?

Telling people what you want and need can be difficult.

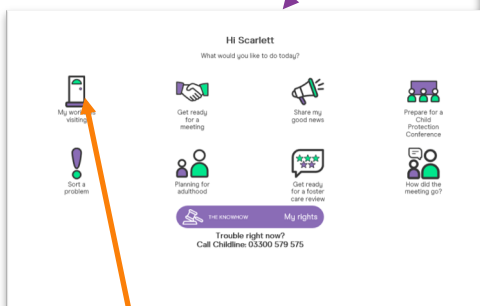
The **MOMO app** will help you say what you want, when you want to say it. It helps you organise your thoughts and makes it easier to tell your worker what you think. Your worker will get a better insight into what's going on, from your point of view.



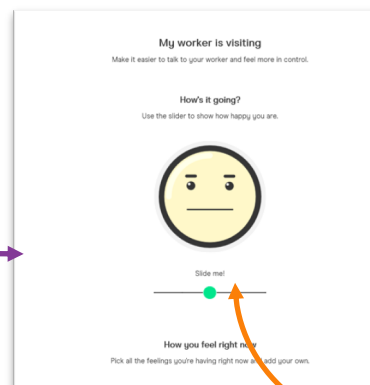
Step 1: Open the MOMO website or open the app to begin your sign up process.



Step 2: Log on. Its quick and easy, but ask for permission first from your carer.



Step 3: Once logged on, you have 8 choices to choose from.



Step 4: MOMO now has 10 different emotions to choose from by using the slider.





Step 5:

You now can choose which emotions you are feeling at this moment and you can add explanations if you wish.

Step 7:

Again, choose what if not going well for you. Add an explanation if you want to.

Step 6:

You can now say what's good in your life and add an explanation if you want as well.

Step 8:

Now write about how you feel about your foster home. Add an explanation if you want as well.

Step 10:

The last step is the most important. You need to choose who you're sending it to. This could be anyone (IRO, Social worker, Foster Carer etc...)

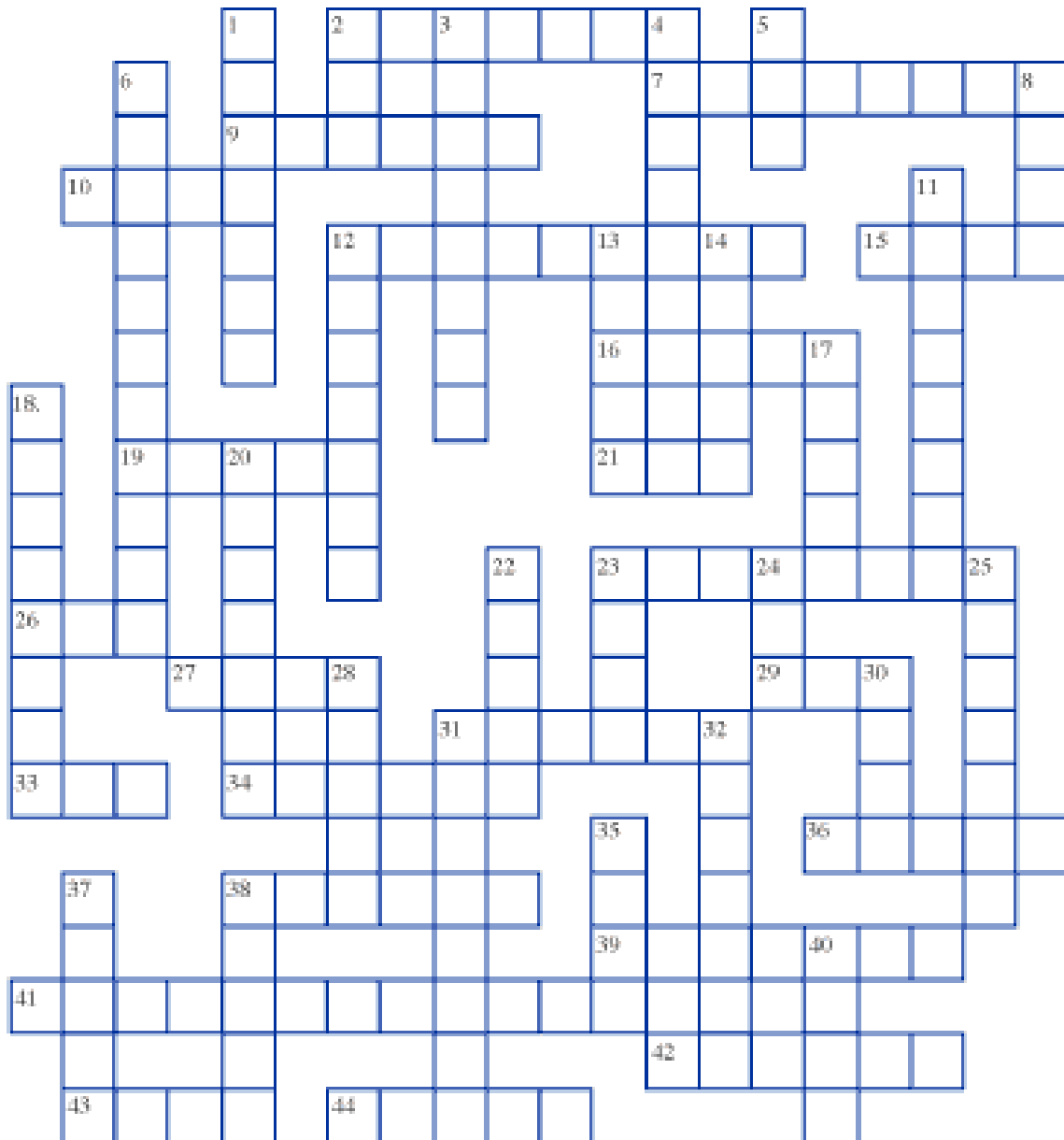
You must press SEND though because it will not go through otherwise.

Step 9:

Write what you would like to be different. Use the hashtags as help.

For help or more information, contact
VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk

Squigly's Halloween Crossword



Across

2. Disguise
 7. Nights
 9. Female parent
 10. Halting motion when walking
 12. October 31
 15. Face covering
 16. Trick or _____
 19. Opposite of day
 21. Worn on head
 23. Large orange fruits
 26. Hair piece
 27. Worn on finger
 29. Short for 7 A

31. Grins
 33. Enjoyable
 34. Eerie
 36. Halloween colour
 38. Spin the _____
 39. Halloween month
 41. Carved pumpkin
 42. Halloween colour
 43. Stalk of a plant
 44. Halloween treat

Down

1. Blood sucker?
 2. Witches pet
 3. "_____ the witches are out"
 4. Spooky

5. An even number
 6. Very terrifying
 8. Not well
 11. Witches pot
 12. _____ house
 13. Travels on broom?
 14. Occasion
 17. _____ or treat
 18. Hairy monster
 20. Evil dwarfs
 22. Opposite of friend
 23. Remove skin from
 24. Pumpkin _____
 25. Shriek cry
 28. Invisible spirit
 30. Wicked

31. Framework of bones
 32. Beginner
 35. King of the jungle
 37. _____ & stripes
 38. Witches vehicle?
 40. Dog treat

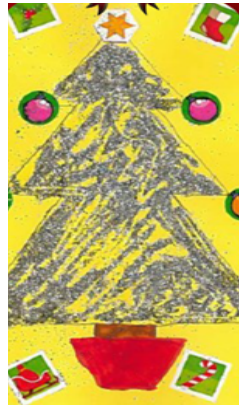


Spot The Differences

Can you find all 10 Differences?



COMPETITION TIME



Each year we hold a Christmas card competition and this year is no different! You have until the deadline of **11th December 2018** to get your designs into us. Every year we receive mind blowing designs and have always struggled to choose a winner. So get your glitter at the ready, step up the game and grab that mistletoe as inspiration because we can't wait to see the results this year! Watch out for our Christmas Newsletter, where the winners will be announced and your design might even be featured inside!

Please make sure you have given us your details, otherwise we might not be able to contact you if your design is chosen. Get designing guys!

NAME:

AGE:

ADDRESS:

TEL:

Please **POST** your completed entries to Robert Barton at Virtual School Kent, Worrall House, 30 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, ME19 4AE

or **SCAN** to Robert.Barton@kent.gov.uk

WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE!!!