



Primary News October 1st -14th 2014

Values

I would like to thank the large number of parents who took the time to email me regarding our new approach to Values. It is wonderful to know we have so much support in this area. During our first month I noticed significant improvements in the politeness of the majority of pupils. The children really listened in assembly and used all the vocabulary linked to the politeness theme. There is something very special about 80% of the pupils arriving on the keystage 2 patio in the morning and coming to greet me with "Good morning Mrs Stanford. How are you this morning?" and during break and lunch being approached with an "Excuse me" before being asked a question which always uses "please" and "thank you". I'm very proud of the way the children have risen to the challenge of being more polite.

This month we are focussed on **Respect** and in our first assemblies the children were reminded that our values are for our whole school community and not just about them. I asked them to think about several questions which I will ask for feedback on during the next assemblies:

What can I do to show respect?

How do I want adults in school to show respect?

How do I want my friends to show respect?

How do I want members of my family to show respect?



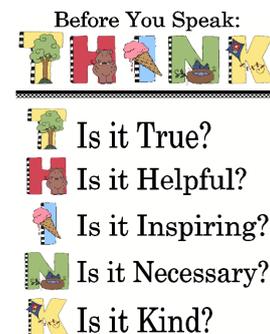
Whatsapp and Social Media



The beginning of the academic year is always a good time to reflect on our policy and practice. With last years experience alongside our emphasis on Values I would like to ask all parents to keep our first two values of **politeness and respect** in mind when engaging with social media as members of our school community.

Class Whatsapp groups are now common practice in Primary and I believe they are an extremely useful tool, especially for busy parents and those who don't get the chance to meet other parents at the school gates. The ability to liaise with other parents and ask questions about birthday parties, homework and other events is invaluable. I would however ask parents to be mindful when using

Whatsapp for other purposes. Human nature is to spend more time criticising than praising and everyone is entitled to their own opinions. However more and more we are using social media, in particular whatsapp, as an outlet for critical thoughts and opinions before we have had chance to reflect on the issue that has stirred our emotions. Last year I gave an assembly to keystage 2 children about being respectful when sharing their opinions and I believe the key message from that is very appropriate when discussing Whatsapp. We looked at this poster.



I would ask that you follow the guidelines above in order to support the Values we believe should be embedded in our whole school community.

Please remember my door is always open if you have concerns or issues and often a meeting with me or your child's class teacher will help you ascertain whether a concern is **true** and whether further comments are **necessary**.

I would also like to remind families that teachers and school staff are not permitted to friend or link with pupils through sites such as Facebook, Google plus or Twitter. This is school policy in order to protect both students and staff and is common policy in most educational establishments. I will be talking to pupils about this during assembly time but I would very much appreciate it if parents could reinforce this with children at home. Although not prohibited members of staff linking with parents through social media can also lead to complications and therefore many staff will not accept friend requests from parents. Please do not take offence at this decision it simply a case that often staff prefer not to confuse their social life and professional responsibilities.

Values continued & Star of the week

Please talk to your children about our monthly values and ask them about their assemblies and the impact they feel the values focus is having in school.

Last week I visited a successful values school in England and I had a meeting with the deputy of The International Values Education Trust and one of the key messages I took from the meeting was the importance of the role of adults in teaching Values. We are role models and if we want our children to be polite, respectful and have a social conscience we have to model this everyday.

After reflection I believe there are several things that we could focus on to model good values to our chil-

dren and make life better for the school community.

1. Parking our cars with respect for others needs both in the morning and at the end of school. For example being mindful of school staff and possibly emergency vehicles needing to enter school and never blocking the entrance. Remembering that many pupils travel on buses and that the buses need plenty of space to leave the school carpark and travel up the road.

2. Parents and staff taking the time to greet each other even when we are in a hurry and everyone wearing a smile!

3. Using only positive language when

talking to children and rather than asking them not to do something simply ask them to do the action that we want. As a parent I understand the difficulty with this request BUT when practised a real result can be seen,

Star of the week begins this week.

This year there will be two stars of the week in each class every week. Every week one of the certificates will be awarded for displaying one of our values. Please don't forget to check the display in the entrance hall board on Fridays to see who are our Stars!

European Language Day Fun!

On Friday 26th September we celebrated European Language Day and all pupils experienced a day of activities about a different country and its language. It was wonderful to see the colours of the flags of each class country brighten up the patio!

Many children also enjoyed taking part in our Language Day quiz. This kept them busy for break and

lunchtime as they worked in teams to find and then match the 10 languages hidden in the patio against the countries on their sheets. The word of the day was **thankyou** (linking nicely with our politeness theme!) It was a very tricky task to guess which word was thankyou in Swedish and Hindi! I took in all the entry sheets and marked them and alt-

though many children did very well there were two clear winning teams, the only ones who scored 10 out of 10. Well done to Pablo Torres and Gabriel from 5.2 and Laura, Eve and Sofia from 6.2. The children were presented with prizes bought from a different European country. They came all the way from England after my visit last week!!

Reading

I'm sure that many parents have noticed that we no longer have a library in the centre of the entrance area. We took the decision to move the books from the library and put them into the classrooms where they are more easily accessible to the children. Each class now has a selection of reading books, including many new ones purchased this year.

Another change to our reading is that we took the decision, after trialing it for one year, not to renew our subscription to Reading Eggs.

We felt it was a good program but we also recognized that it did detract from the real book experience that we feel in the primary years is still crucial. It is still possible for parents to take out individual subscriptions for reading eggs directly through the company. If you are interested in online reading we recommend Oxford Owl. This is a free website featuring many reading books at different stages. Parents are advised to create their own login as the site does not facilitate multi-

ple users on one login.

We have also started to offer reading drop in sessions to all year 4,5 and 6 children during first break each day. They can come to the old library and sit comfortably and silently on the sofa and cushions and experience a quality reading environment.

Finally please remember that the skill of reading aloud and discussing a book is just as important in year 6 as it is in year 1. Please take time at home to allow this for all children.

Parents Meetings

Our staff are available for meetings whenever you need us but we will soon be holding our formal parents meetings after school. The date for your diary is:

Term 1 parents meetings will be held week beginning :

10th November 2014

We always enjoy meeting and talking about your children but please also be assured that if we have concerns about their progress we will contact you and request a meeting. Therefore should you be unable to attend the formal parents meeting and have not received a call you can assume that your child is making the expected progress.

Should you wish to make an appointment at any time during the school year please call the school office and we will arrange a suitable time for you to meet with your child's teacher.



Clubs

Primary clubs commence this week. I hope that all parents have received the names for this term's clubs.

A reminder that Miss Mickel's creative cookery children need to bring a plastic box with a good lid to school with them on Wednesday, Please ensure the box is labeled.

A reminder of our Primary Club Timetable:

Tuesday- Programming Club

Wednesday- Photography Club and Creative cookery

Thursday— Sewing club

Friday—Rap club

Choir and chess will continue as organized in a separate letter.

New Assessment and Reporting Arrangements

You may have read in the press that there have been some changes to the Primary National Curriculum for England. These changes have been implemented to make the curriculum more rigorous and some of the previous contents have now been moved to the year below. For us these changes are exciting but do not present us with a challenge, as much of what has been changed we were already addressing in order to deliver the high quality education you would expect.

We are committed to delivering the best education possible for each student and standards were already extremely high before these changes. In fact our children, despite learning a curriculum in a second language, are at the same and often above the level expected of a native speaking English child.

We have however homed in on the recommendation for adopting a more school appropriate curriculum and in this you will see this year some more events to challenge pupils through

enjoyment. Such as a whole school maths competition / Science week / Innovation week etc.. We have also added more opportunities for creativity in our curriculum.

The biggest change that affects us and families is that we are no longer to report progress using the national curriculum leveling system. I know that many of you have spent years trying to understand this system and may be relieved to hear of the change. We welcome this change and have devised our own reporting method linked to the statutory objectives for each year group. I believe that this will be much easier to understand and more purposeful than the last system.

In brief you will now receive three reports each year. Each time you will see all the subjects taught and all the objectives that the children should have mastered by the end of the year, Each term the teachers will indicate one of 3 lev-

els to show your child's progress against each objective.

We want you to imagine that your children are travelling along a learning road and with this in mind our 3 levels will be referred to as:

Getting ready

Going Steady

Got it! Arrived!



We have also incorporated a far more personal element to the reports and emphasized the importance of life skills as well as academic achievement.. We've named these two sections Marvellous Me Skills and My Magical Moments.



The benefits of this report is that you will be able to see with ease the specific areas your child needs to develop in each subject. I will produce a more detailed information sheet to accompany the first report in December.

Assessment Explained

Every year I have many questions about our approach to assessing learning. With our new approach to reporting some aspects of assessment will be a little different but our philosophy remains the same. At this point in the year it's useful for me to outline our assessment policy in Primary.

We believe that assessment should be used as a tool to help your child make progress, grow and achieve their own potential. Assessment must be purposeful and inform future learning. It is never simply a numerical response that then has no associated action.



The theory

There are two main types of assessment, formative and summative. Both these methods have merit but the formative assessment is most crucial in primary to ensure that pupils individual needs are met. In formative assessment practice the assessment is constantly happening. The teacher is assessing your child throughout each lesson, asking questions, noting comments in their

books as they are working, noting comments in the teacher mark book and observing learning conversations between pupils to gauge understanding of concepts. Formative assessment means that a teacher can at any time change their planned teaching to address misconceptions or add an additional lesson on a subject if students have not understood. In many cases if a few children have not understood an objective the teacher will then ask the teaching assistant to reinforce the concept in the following lesson. This type of assessment ensures a flexible and personalised curriculum.

In summative assessment the assessment of learning is made after a period of time, usually at the end of a topic or theme. This assessment is useful to see what a child has remembered about a concept and many exams as children get older use this method. In primary we will be using a version of this method each half term to compliment our daily formative assessment. We have chosen 6 specific weeks during the year during which we will set the children tasks that will allow us to see whether they have understood the learning objectives covered during this half term.

Each class from year 2 to year 6 will be summatively assessed in the following areas in the following ways.

Writing—children will complete a special long writing task in a special writing book each half term. The writing book will be passed on to the next year group, year after year, and will form a record of their writing progress. Each piece of writing will be marked against the objectives the children should have learnt during the half term.

Reading— Children's reading and comprehension will be assessed through a reading comprehension test and their responses during group reading lessons. In years 2 and 3 children will be assessed for their phonic knowledge.

Maths— The teachers will either teach a review lesson incorporating the objectives from the half term and assess understanding during the tasks set in the lesson or they will give the children a short test.

Our first assessment period will take place during the week beginning

Monday 20th October

I will be asking teachers to send home a list of the objectives they will be focusing on during the assessment week. However do remember we are interested in what the children have retained naturally from their learning and not what they can practise and practise and then forget.

Photos of Language day

