



West Exmoor Federation

'Rooted and Growing – Together we Love Learning'

6.3.15

Dear Parents/Carers

Hasn't it been wonderful to see the sunshine over the last couple of days? It seems to have really lifted everyone's spirits and it's been lovely to have the windows open and to hear the children playing outside. Let's hope that the beautiful weather stays with us for the weekend.

With Easter just around the corner we will be launching an Easter competition next week. Every child within the federation will be given a small, polystyrene egg to take home and decorate. Their completed eggs should be brought back into school by Wednesday 25th March (clearly named) and will be displayed in St Mary's during our Easter Service on Friday 27th March. Prizes will be presented to the most imaginative and creative egg within each class, taking into account the relevance of the egg to the Easter story.

The Governors and I have recently been considering the term dates for the 2015/16 academic year. We have made the decision (subject to final ratification on 16th April) to trial a two week half-term break in October. We have been able to do this by putting together two occasional days and three teacher training days. Schools are increasingly adopting this term pattern for a number of reasons. Firstly, the autumn term is extremely long (eight weeks, followed by seven weeks) and many of the children are exhausted prior to the half-term and Christmas break which, in turn, has a negative impact upon their learning. Secondly, this tiredness also increases the rate of illness absence amongst the children which also impacts upon their learning. Finally, the new legislation regarding term time absence for holiday has resulted in many of your requests for such absence being turned down. I am no longer able to authorise holiday absence purely because cheaper term time holidays make a holiday affordable. With this additional week of holiday outside of the normal school holiday period this may enable you, if you so wish, to benefit from a cheaper, out-of-season break. A calendar of term-dates for the 2015/16 academic year will be sent home shortly.

Finally, can I once again ask all parents/carers to be extremely considerate and careful when driving and parking around our schools. Please drive slowly, take extra care to check your mirrors and ensure that you park legally. Many thanks for your co-operation and in helping to keep all of our children safe.

With Best Wishes,

Jayne Peacock
Executive Head teacher

Within Collective Worship our thoughts and prayers are currently with members of our family who are poorly; wildlife that is illegally traded for its ivory or skin. We have also been giving thanks for our plentiful supply of water and food.

Class news – Streams

In our literacy learning we have been looking at non-fiction writing. The children have been learning how to identify and use contents pages, index and glossaries. They are very good at identifying the differences between fiction and non-fiction books. The children wrote some good ideas about our local environment and are learning to write in the third person. They will be learning about how to use captions and illustrations to add information.

This week in our maths, we have been learning about fractions – the children have been finding out about halves and quarters and thinking about how they could be linked to division problems. We are going to be learning about measurement – more particular using different units of measurement to measure length.

In our theme learning we have been finding out about journeys and how we travel from one place to another. We are now going to design and make a vehicle using a chassis, axle and wheels..

The Reception children are enjoying their learning based on Harry and his bucketful of Dinosaurs. The role

play area is Harry's house, and there are lots of activities around the room to support the children's learning, based on the theme of dinosaurs. The children particularly have enjoyed looking for dinosaurs in the jelly swamp and digging for bones!

Thank you to Mrs Berry for all her hard work with Streams whilst I am absent. I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Mrs Kirby

Class news – Rivers

In maths we are using our knowledge of measures to solve real life problems. So far this week, we have used thermometers to measure temperatures around the school to find the difference between the warmest and coldest locations. We are also working on money related problems – using known facts and inverse operations to support our calculations. In literacy we are reading the King of The Birds – a traditional story where the birds create a competition to decide which one of them should be the king. This is not only an excellent stimulus for exploring language features, especially noun phrases and comparative and superlative words, but also a great book to spark debates about fairness and citizenship. Can you identify this bird from Dani's descriptions? *Colour maker, winter-migrator, seed-eater, teasel-picker*.

In RE we are exploring symbolism in Christian and Hindu religions. The children have created their own symbols and now we are looking at Hindu Mandalas. The children are creating some beautiful, symmetrical patterns which say something about their place in the world. In PE we have been continuing to develop our understanding of invasion games by getting to grips with tag-rugby. All of the children have impressed me with their eagerness to learn and improve their skills and teamwork in PE.

Jim Doherty

Class news – Oceans

We continue to receive letters of appreciation for our thank you letters sent out in January. So far we have received letters of thanks from our community, our families, David Attenborough and now Ronald Koeman (Southampton's successful football manager). They have brought a smile to all our faces and we very much enjoy sharing them in class. Our Autobiographies are now completed so this week we are starting to look at Bethlehem by Carole Anne Duffy. This is a wonderfully illustrated, poetic story, by which we will be exploring the use of semi-colons and descriptive phrases. By the end of the sequence we will create our own poetic versions of well known events and stories which will be displayed in school.

Fractions are the key focus of this half-term in our maths sessions. Initially we have been reading, writing and drawing them. This week we are moving onto comparing and ordering a variety of fractions and next week we will be using them with all four functions. To apply our skills to real-life contexts, we will explore fractions when cooking, gardening and measuring.

How you can help at home:

Literacy – continue to ask children for extra description of events or items by using what we call "Writer questions", e.g. who, when, where, what, how, why. These open questions allow us to practice and extend our descriptive language.

Reading – When reading with children, ask them their opinions or what they think the character's opinions of an event are. Challenge them to explain or give proof to back-up their opinions through the text.

Proving inferred meaning is a key skill that is tested.

Maths – When opportunities arise for example distances involved when travelling or amounts when cooking, ask children to work out fractions of amounts ($\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, $\frac{2}{10}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{8}$, $\frac{1}{6}$, $\frac{1}{9}$). It is also useful for them to estimate fractional amounts so that they practice and develop their ability to visualise amounts.

Sincerely,

Ms. Adams

Class news – Young Buds

"First of all we were all very excited and delighted to hear that Mr. Fletcher and his wife Anna welcomed a healthy baby boy last week. As you can imagine we are very eager to meet the newest 'Young Bud' and can't wait for Mr. Fletcher's return to hear all about him. In the meantime I am lucky enough to be spending the next two weeks with Young Buds and we have lots of lovely things planned! In our literacy learning we will be carrying on with our writing based on 'The Boy Who Cried Ninja' by Alex Latimer, a very funny tale about a boy whom everyone believes is a liar (even though he isn't!). We will be focusing on doing some extended writing which includes the use of speech punctuation...if you get a minute ask your child to show you some of their 'kung fu' punctuation moves, I think you'll be impressed! In maths we will be looking at addition, with Reception children focusing on number bonds to 20 and Year 1/2's adding up to 3 digit numbers. We will then be applying this knowledge in lots of 'shop' role play activities to make sure we know how to use what we have learnt in everyday life. We will be doing some floating and sinking experiments in Science and Theme learning and writing these up, basketball is our focus in PE and we will also be planning our very own wedding for our RE learning! So as you can see a busy and varied couple of weeks are coming up. Finally can I take the opportunity to thank all of you for the continued support you give your children with reading at home, it is making such a difference to those that read regularly and I have been staggered by the progress lots of children have made over the course of this term. Keep it up! Mrs. Smith"

Class news – Oaks

Children have made an outstanding effort with their core task home learning this term and their efforts have been recognised and praised! Well done!

On Tuesday we went on a nature walk around Parracombe, exploring the local area and gathering ideas for our literacy unit. Children very much enjoyed this learning experience; we took photographs and collected a large amount of descriptive language to use back in the classroom.

In maths, year 3 and 4 are coming to the end of the unit on fractions. Children have been learning in a real life context, investigating amounts for baking and how much it would cost to bake a cake. We will finish the unit this week by finding fractions of a jar of sweets!

In PE, children are enjoying learning about the sport 'Tag Rugby', children are applying the skills of catching, running, decision making and working as a team. The children have identified agility and speed as important factors in the sport. Some children have been selected to take part in a Tag Rugby festival at Ilfracombe Academy next week, good luck!

Miss Hill

Little Berries News

Our Little Berries have had a super busy few weeks! We have spent the last week looking at Chinese New year where the children have enjoyed looking at the colours Red & Gold and their significance; they have loved our rice tray play and showed great fine motor skills when cutting up and preparing their own fresh vegetables for our Stir fry snack.

We enjoyed a visit from Sure Start on our first week back who have introduced the children to the Rhyme Challenge that we will be taking part in over the next few weeks; the children will focus on one rhyme per week both during their Little Berries sessions and we will send a copy home too...feel free to practice at home and look out for more information on how we will celebrate them completing the challenge at the end of the half term.

We have an action packed few weeks lined up too, including a child led focus next week on statues and landmarks, we will be going on a trip to Exmoor Zoo on Monday 16th March and we will be celebrating Mothers Day with lots of lovely Mothers day crafts and activities, including the children completing their first ever poem for their mummies which we will also be entering in to a national competition!

For more information on Little Berries, please feel free to contact us at Kentisbury School or organise a visit to see us!

Nicola Pierce & Jillian Kelly

Admin

Parents of children in year 2 & 3 should have received a letter about the Coastal Explorer residential in September, if you would like your child to participate, a deposit of £30.00 will be required by 6th March to secure a place. Please contact the school office if you need to discuss this further.

Can we ask all parents and carers that when a letter home is received that requires a permission, that the slip is always returned to the school to enable your child to participate. The slip is also required if you do not want your child to participate, we are unable to assume one way or the other. Many thanks.

Reminder

If your child is absent from school it is very important to notify the School before registration takes place, if no reason is given for your child's absence we are required to mark this as an unauthorised absence, many thanks for your support in this matter

Federation Staff Vacancies

Catering Assistant for Parracombe School for 6.25 hours per week. For further details of this post please contact Stephan at Devon Norse (Catering Company) on 07789 032965.

A job share for this post would be possible. (So if you are only able to manage some days and not the 5 days we would still be very interested in hearing from you)

Easter Clubs

We are pleased to inform you that we will be running two Easter Cubs during the holiday this year. An Easter egg trail at Dunster Castle on the 2nd April and a Forest School day at Kentisbury School on the 9th April. Further details are to follow.

Dates for your diary

10.3.15 First Aid day (with St John's) @ Lynton School for KS2

12.3.15 First Aid day (with St John's) @ Parracombe School for KS2

13.3.15 Whole federation trip to the Bristol Science Museum, leaving Lynton & Blackmore Gate @ 8.00am prompt. (Please return permission slips).

16.3.15 Little Berries trip to Exmoor Zoo

27.3.15 Easter Service @ St Mary's Lynton, 10.30am – please do come along and join us

Wendy, Bett, Jacqui and Mel

Community News & Information

Mothering Sunday - 15th March

Our Mothering Sunday Service of Holy Communion at Christ Church, Parracombe starts at 9.45 am. During the service we will distribute small posies of flowers to express our love and appreciation for our mothers.

All are welcome

Kentisbury & Parracombe PTFA

After a quiet start to the term, we have lots of plans in the pipeline to boost our somewhat depleted funds. Following the purchase of the play equipment at Kentisbury last year. We have also contributed money towards the children's exciting trip to @Bristol next week. We will be organising some Easter activities including an Easter bonnet competition and egg hunt, more information to follow.

The PTFA will be meeting again after school on 23rd April to talk about Summer term fundraising, and would love to see some new parents join in and support the school. Please come along, or speak to Mel, Christel or Sarah Bolton to find out more.

***Nurturing Curiosity, Achievement, Respect, Inspiration and Support
(CARIS)***