



# Headteacher's Blog

FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015

## GOODBYE MRS BROWN!

Today we said a very fond farewell to Mrs Brown. Gilly is leaving us to set up her own company writing plays for primary schools. Nic Walmsley, one of our Teachers to Support Outstanding Practice, will replace Mrs Brown as Jays' class teacher on Thursdays and Fridays. We will all miss Gilly very much, but wish her every success with her exciting new venture.



## GOODBYE FOR NOW, MRS DOHERTY!



It was also Mrs Doherty's last day with us today (for now!) as she starts her maternity leave. Claire is expecting her first baby within the next few weeks and we are looking forward to hearing some lovely news very soon! Good luck, Claire!

## SCHOOL MEALS

Thank you for your responses indicating your preference of hot meal or school packed lunch. Don't forget, if you haven't already signed up, our new school meals will be available from the first day back after Easter.

Remember, if your child is in Foundation, Year 1 or Year 2, you do not have to pay for this meal under the government's scheme. For children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, meals and school packed lunches will be available at a cost of £2.20 per day. Payment is made via ParentPay and all parents need to do is simply load the money onto their child's ParentPay account – that's all there is to it!

If you haven't yet responded to indicate your preference, please don't worry because your child can just choose on the day!

All food will be prepared freshly on site by the new caterers and we are really looking forward to the new meals.

## PE LESSONS

There have been a few occasions recently where parents have asked that their child be excused from PE, mainly due to minor illnesses such as coughs or colds. I would like to remind you that PE is part of the national curriculum that we provide by law and if a child is well enough to be in school, then they are well enough to take part in PE. This also applies to children going out at playtimes, as the staff who are on duty are all outside, which means that there are no staff available to supervise children indoors. There may be exceptional circumstances, for example if the child has a broken bone, or hospital/doctor recommendation, but this must be agreed with me in advance. Thank you for your understanding.

## GOVERNORS' AWARDS

Congratulations to all the children (and adults!) who received Governors' Awards this week. The children really aspire to receive one of these special awards, and you can see by the children's faces just how much it means to them. It is always a pleasure for me to sit back and listen to the reasons why the nominees have been chosen.

## 100% ATTENDANCE

Many congratulations, too, to the **127** children throughout the school who have achieved 100% attendance for being in school, on time, every day for the entire spring term. Each child has received a sticker and a certificate in recognition of their achievement.

## HANDWRITING CHALLENGERS

Today I enjoyed a very special celebration 'Pizza Party' lunch with the winners of my Handwriting Challenge.



Teachers from each year group nominated children for the 'Most Improved Handwriting' and 'Best Day-to-Day Presentation' categories, and I received lots of wonderful entries for my 'Best Special Piece' category. It was a really hard decision to choose the winners of my 'Best Special Piece' category, but I was particularly impressed by the entries I received from both William and Naqiyah in Rabbits class, who had spent a lot of time perfecting their letter formation.

The results of my challenge for the spring term are as follows:

Year Group	Most Improved Handwriting	Best Day-to-Day Presentation
Foundation	William - Hedgehogs	Annesah - Rabbits
Year 1	James - Otters	Libby - Foxes
Year 2	Sahal - Robins	Amelia - Badgers
Year 3	Adamah - Jays	Joe - Doves
Year 4	Holly - Kingfishers	Rachel - Wrens
Year 5	Ryan - Snowy Owls	Nishita - Woodpeckers
Year 6	Harry - Golden Eagles 1	Thomas - Golden Eagles 2

### Winners of my Best Special Piece:

William - Rabbits  
Naqiyah - Rabbits

I will send out certificates after the Easter holidays to all the children who took part, to thank them for all their hard work.

## RED CHALLENGERS

Thank you, too, to the many children who have completed the RED ('Read Every Day') Challenge for this term. Those who completed the challenge for the first time this term were presented with their certificates and pencils in assembly this morning. The children who completed the RED Challenge for both the autumn term AND the spring term have also received a special 'RED Ticket' which they can exchange for an activity of their choice one afternoon in the summer term. The children will receive further information after the Easter holidays.



## EASTER ASSEMBLIES

We were lucky enough to welcome the Revd Mike Morris into school this week for our Easter assemblies. Grateful thanks to Mike, as always, for coming in.



## FOOPA SPRING MASKED BALL – MONDAY 23RD MARCH

Wow, what a night! The children's masks were decorated amazingly! The time and effort they put in was incredible. With Mrs Latham arriving as Belle of the Ball in her amazing gown, the children had a fantastic night and danced right through to the end. Thank you to all the teachers and parents for your support.



Our lovely FOOPA ladies were back in school again today, kindly handing out Easter gifts to all the children to bring home. This is always a very exciting end of term treat which the children thoroughly enjoy!

## YEAR 5 TRIP TO PIZZA HUT

Year 5 enjoyed a trip to Pizza Hut, Westcroft, this week as part of their 'No Way Back' topic. This topic allows children to explore reversible and irreversible changes, and how healthy options are needed when choosing a diet. We looked at the salad bar options in the restaurant and discussed which ones were healthy, giving reasons for our ideas. The topic explores pizzerias and where the ingredients used originate from. During our trip, children were taken on a tour of the kitchens to find out about food sourcing and storage. They got to go in the big fridge...which was a little bit chilly...and find out about food being stored at different temperatures. We were really lucky to also have the opportunity to make our own pizzas in the kitchen before going through to the main restaurant to taste our finished products...I think we have some star chefs in the making!!!



## TELLING THE TIME

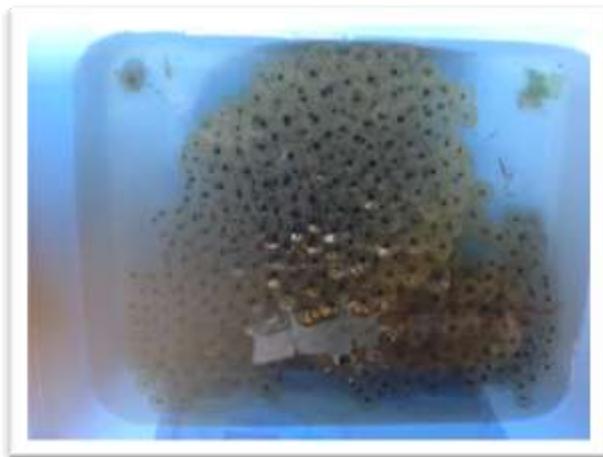
I am so proud of the children's motivation with my Times Tables, handwriting and RED challenges. It demonstrates the great partnership between home and school, which is reaping rewards so ..... food for thought (or rather, NOT food). Why not encourage family to treat your child to a watch for Easter instead of a chocolate egg? It's the Easter treat you can wear to school and help your learning too!! Watches can be bought for less than the price of an Easter Egg! We recommend analogue (with big hand and little hand) and numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, not I, II, III, IV).

## YOUR CHILD'S CHANCE TO DESIGN THE COVER OF OUR HOME/SCHOOL LINK PLANNER!

We would like to invite children to design the front cover of our Home/School Link Planners for 2015/2016. There will be two designs – one for Key Stage 1 (Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2), and one for Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4 & 5). Entries should be completed on a sheet of A4 and should be as bright and colourful as possible. We would also like to see our school name featured within the design. Please return all entries to me by 9am on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April. The two winning designs will be printed on the front covers of our planners next year. Good luck!

## FROGSPAWN!

The children in Foundation were lucky enough to have some frogspawn in their class this week. They were fascinated by the transformation from frogspawn into tadpoles within the last few days. The picture below in the blue bucket was taken on Sunday, and the picture at the bottom in the clear tank was taken just yesterday (Thursday).



## E.ON POWERING POETRY COMPETITION

Energy company E.ON is encouraging young people to put pen to paper and take part in a fantastic poetry competition themed around the subject of energy.

The Powering Poetry competition is open to all Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils and can be based on any aspect of energy and written in a poetry style of their choosing with illustrations welcomed too. Powering Poetry has been launched as part of E.ON's broader educational programme, The Energy Experience, designed to educate children about where energy comes from and how it impacts on our everyday lives.

All entries will be judged and up to 20 winners selected to have their poems printed in E.ON's Powering Poetry book. Winners will also receive a £20 book token. What's more, each winning pupil will receive a selection of excellent fiction and non-fiction energy-themed books for their school library.

If your child would like to take part, please be sure to return all entries to school, marked for my attention, **by 9am on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015**, so that we can submit all entries before the final deadline. **E.ON have specifically requested that each entry must include your child's name, age, their teacher's name, and our school's full address, so please ensure this is completed on all entries.** Thank you, and good luck!!

## HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

I came across the following two resources recently, which give parents guidance on how they can help their children with reading and spelling, which I thought I would share with you:

# Ways a Parent Can Help with **READING**

1

**Let your child see you reading!**

Have magazines and books in your home.

2

Help your child find appropriate word & reading games on the computer.

Keep a dictionary on hand. Help your child look up new words they read or hear.

3

**Read mysteries with your child and try to figure out the clues together.**

4

**Movie version coming out?**

Read the book together first, then talk about which you each liked better.

5

**Set aside a time and place for your child to read -**

like a comfy chair and a reading light in a quiet place

6

**Visit your public library regularly.**

Look for and read together the books that were your favorites when you were a kid.

7

**Encourage your child to write -**

letters, thank you notes, emails, journals, lists, stories about their own trips, events, and daily life

8

**Ask your child questions about what he or she is reading, such as:**

- What is the story about?
- Who are the important characters in the story?
- Where does the story take place?
- Why do you think the character made that choice?
- Why did that happen?
- How did you know about...?
- Would you recommend this book to your friends?

9

**Ask your child to draw a comic strip about what happens in the story.**

Provide word searches, crossword and other word games and puzzles, or help your child make his/her own



# Ways a Parent Can Help with **SPELLING**

## 1 Have your child write spelling words:

- On paper with pencils, pens, markers or paint
- With chalk on a sidewalk or patio
- With dry erase markers on a mirror
- Type on the computer
- With his/her fingers in a plate of pudding
- With fingers in shaving cream on a counter

## 2

Have your child spell the words out loud while you are in the car or in line at a store

## 3

Spell words using blocks, Scrabble tiles, or flash cards

(Make your own with index cards - one card for each letter. Consider using different colored cards for vowels)

## 4

If the list of words to learn is long, have your child choose 4-5 to focus on at a time

## 5

Have your child write the words in alphabetical order or in order from shortest to longest

## 6

Play "Hangman" with your child using the spelling words

Make crossword puzzles and word searches with the spelling words for your child to solve

## 7

Combine spelling with physical activity

Have your child do jumping jacks, saying one letter per jump, or while walking up and down stairs, saying one letter per step

## 8

Keep a dictionary in your home and help your child look up unfamiliar words



Encourage your child to read!

## EASTER ACTIVITIES

If you're looking for some inspiration on how to keep the children busy over the Easter holidays, you may find the list below useful:

# Spring Break bucket list

The title 'Spring Break bucket list' is written in a playful, rounded font. 'Spring Break' is in teal and 'bucket list' is in orange. To the left of the text are several orange butterflies of various sizes, some with black spots, flying upwards.

make a volcano with baking soda and vinegar - *play go fish* - go for a hike - *read a book about bugs* - make a paper airplane - *climb a tree* - visit a local museum - *have a dance party in the kitchen* - read a comic book - *draw a self portrait* - make a tower with every block in your house - *read a magazine* - play tag - *paint rocks* - go to the beach - *have a backyard picnic* - ride your bike - *make a paper bag puppet of yourself* - pick some flowers - *make a fort* - splash in a puddle - *make a mud pie* - help make lunch or make it all by yourself - *talk like a pirate* - make a bird feeder - *flip over rocks and look for bugs* - find shapes in the clouds - *plant some seeds* - go for ice cream - *go swimming* - read an alphabet book - *do a word search* - write a story - *go to the library* - RUN outside.

[notimeforflashcards.com](http://notimeforflashcards.com)

## CELEBRATIONS

We have lots and lots of wonderful celebrations to share with you this week:

- ★ Daniel in Year 6 brought his quartz crystals into school last Friday and shared them with Years 4, 5 and 6. The children loved learning all about them, and really enjoyed looking at the crystals under a microscope.



- ★ Taylor in Year 6 came to see me this week with an award which he received for coming 1<sup>st</sup> in his Sea Cadet piping. Well done, Taylor!



- ★ Daniel in Year 6 recently took part in his first ever Archery competition and came 2<sup>nd</sup>!



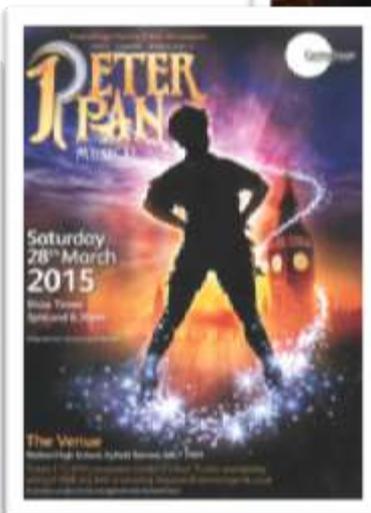
- ★ Bethany in Year 6 recently passed her Freestyle dance exam with honours – congratulations, Bethany!



- ★ Keira in Year 4 came to see me this week to show me her wonderful homework.



- ★ Brooklyn & Zaharah from Year 5 are both starring as Lost Boys in the Peter Pan musical tomorrow, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March, at Walton High School. Hollie and Charlie from Year 3 will also be appearing in the production. We wish them all lots of luck!





★ Fern in Year 5 recently passed her Freestyle dance exam and brought her certificate in to show me. Kai in Year 4 was presented with a book this week by Mrs Newsholme for his positive attitude. Faith in Year 1 has learned how to spell all her 100 Hot Words and came to collect her certificate from me this week (she also brought along an Easter basket that she had made for me!). Sanvika in Year 1 can now swim 10m, and Harry in Year 1 has passed Stage 3 in swimming – they both brought their certificates in to show me.



★ The latest pupils who have learned all their Times Tables are Masha & Momomdou from Year 4 and Reni & Adnan in Year 5. They passed their final 'quick fire' test from me with ease!



★ Nia in Year 2 has now passed Stage 2 in swimming. Ella-Mae in Year 2 has made the most beautiful glass owl with help from her very clever mummy. They have very kindly given the owl to me, and he is now sitting very proudly on my windowsill so that all the children can see him! Thank you so much, Ella-Mae (and mummy!). Isabelle and Lewis from Year 2 have now completed their 8<sup>th</sup> Grade in Karate and have earned their orange belts – a fantastic achievement!

★ Miss Hills sent Joe in Year 5 along to see me today, as he has achieved full marks in his spelling test EVERY week since school started back in SEPTEMBER. An amazing achievement – and on his birthday too! Happy birthday, Joe!



★ Oscar and Ewan from Year 1 brought their 1<sup>st</sup> Grade red karate belts in to show me today, and Lacey in Year 1 has passed her Stage 1 swimming.



**MANY CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU!**

## A REMINDER OF MY CHARITY SKYDIVE!



Thank you all for the generous donations made so far for my charity skydive on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June, in aid of Emily's Star. Just a reminder that I have set up a Virgin Money fundraising account – if you would like to sponsor me to raise money for this fantastic local charity, please log on to [www.virginmoneygiving.com/Cathy\\_Higgins](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/Cathy_Higgins) (that's Cathy\_Higgins - the underscore doesn't show in the link). More information on Emily's Star and their work can be found on their website at <http://www.emilysstar.co.uk/>.

## COMING UP

Date		
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April	INSET DAY	
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> April	School re-opens	

And so another term draws to a close – I can't believe how quickly the time has gone!

I would like to wish you and your families a wonderful Easter break, and I will see you all when school reopens for the summer term at 8:30am on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April.

With my very best wishes to you and your families

**Cathy**

*PS: If you have a few minutes to spare, take a look at 'Oakwood Funk' on YouTube. This is a school for children with special needs, the Headteacher of which is related to one of our staff members. They have made their own version of the Bruno Mars' hit 'Uptown Funk' and would like to get as many hits on YouTube as possible. It's well worth a look! We might even do an 'Oxley Park Funk'.....*