



WESTERN ROAD C.P.SCHOOL
Southover High Street

Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1JB

Telephone: 01273 473013 Fax: 01273 470233

Headteacher: Matthew Montebello



<http://www.westernroad.e-sussex.sch.uk>



office@westernroad.e-sussex.sch.uk

Newsletter — Friday 11th September 2015 Issue No: 1

Dear Parents and Carers,

This has been my first full week at Western Road Primary School as the new headteacher and I'd like to start by saying thank you to everybody for making me feel so welcome. It's been a pleasure to meet the children this week (and to start learning their names!) and to meet so many of you on the gate in the morning and at the end of the day.

The teachers and teaching assistants took part in two very successful INSET days at the beginning of the term. Amongst other things, staff updated their Safeguarding and Child Protection training and Subject Leader training. I am grateful to a number of governors who were able to attend.

At the beginning of the INSET days I spent a little time exploring some of the key areas which I think will be an important part of the school's work this year. It has been suggested to me that it might be useful to share parts my presentation with parents so I have included some extracts below.

As I am sure you are aware, we have a number of new teachers and teaching assistants who have started this term. They too have commented on what a friendly welcome they have received. Our first formal parents evening will take place on Tuesday 13th October and Thursday 15th October (more information to follow). However, if you would like to speak to your child's teacher before then, please don't hesitate to contact the school to make an appointment or catch them at the end of the day if you just need a brief chat. Similarly, if you would like to speak to me about an issue, do feel free to approach me in the playground or just call the school.

Our first Celebration Assembly will take place on Friday 18th September at 2.50pm in the hall. Two children will be selected from each class to receive a certificate. They will also receive the Head teacher's cup, a trophy which they can take home and keep for a fortnight until the next Celebration Assembly. All parents are welcome to attend and parents whose children have been selected to receive the cup will be notified by text a day or so before the assembly. I would very much like to take a photograph of children receiving the awards for the newsletter - please let me know if you would prefer your child not to be photographed or appear in the newsletter.

I met with members of the Parents' Forum this week. The Parents' Forum is an excellent means of communication between the school and the parent body and I would encourage you to make contact with your year group parent representative if there is anything you wish to be raised at our termly meetings. Please see below for more information about the Parents' Forum.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you once again for such a lovely first week.

Matthew Montebello

Extracts from INSET day Presentation

“ I’d like to start by acknowledging all the staff’s hard work last year and particularly the work carried out by Martyn and his Senior Leadership Team. There can be no doubt that the school has made good progress over the last year, a fact demonstrated by the excellent end of Key Stage results – results you can all be very proud of.

But as always, there is still work to be done and our challenge this year will be to build on last year’s progress and to ensure the school continues on its journey towards becoming the outstanding school I believe it has the potential to be.

Over the next few weeks the governors and the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) will be revising the school’s development plan and I hope that you too will be able to play a role in that process. Already a number of clear priorities are beginning to emerge and what I’d like to do this morning is to talk a little about some of the key areas which I think are going to be an important part of our work this year and to share some of my initial thoughts with you.

Teaching and Learning

The first of those areas is Teaching and Learning. Schools are busy places. At any one time we are engaged in a range of activities and its right that it should be that way. However, we must never forget our core purpose which is of course teaching and learning. If we do nothing else but ensure our teaching is the best that it can possibly be - inspirational, engaging, relevant – then we will have done our jobs well and we will have served the children well. I am convinced that we achieve this by fostering a culture of continuous improvement, where all the adults in our school have high expectations of themselves and of the children, where best practice is routinely shared and where we support one another. Key to this will be the provision of high quality CPD (Continuous Professional Development) and I know that this is something the governors and the SLT are committed to, not just for teachers but for teaching assistants also, whose contribution is so vital to the school.

The Curriculum

Fundamental to effective Teaching and Learning is to have the right sort of curriculum. I’d like to invite you to take a few moments to reflect on the curriculum currently in place. Here are some questions we might like to think about:

- Are lessons and topics recycled on an annual basis or is the curriculum flexible and personalised to the learners, including our most vulnerable children?
- Is it relevant? Does it draw on the richness of our local environment?
- This school has a tradition of working in partnership with local writers and artists which is wonderful, but how creative and imaginative is the curriculum on a day to day basis? And is this creativity reflected in our class displays and in the school environment?
- Is our curriculum content driven? Or is it designed to teach the children skills, including essential life skills such as cooperation and collaboration? Is it a source of enquiry and personal development?
- And finally, is there a strategic overview which ensures real continuity and progression from one year to the next, from one developmental stage to the next.

I don’t know the answers to these questions and they are intended merely as starting points. I do know that for our children to get the right education, our curriculum has to be right. And by right, I mean engaging, inclusive, skills-based, rooted in and drawing on our local context and...fun!

I don’t mean to suggest for a moment that it isn’t these things but the curriculum is an area which requires constant revisiting. This is so in every school.

Key to this work will be the role of the Subject Leaders. Every teacher here is responsible for leading a subject and in some cases more than one subject. So important is this role to the effectiveness of the curriculum that our first Subject Leader training session will take place tomorrow.

The Learning Environment

The third area I’d like to talk about is the learning environment and by that I mean both the classrooms and all the shared areas in the school. It’s crucial that we are all clear about what the best sorts of learning environments look like, so much so that we have devoted a significant part of today’s training to this topic. And before I go any further I must say a big thank you to Zoe, who has undertaken a huge amount of research over the holidays to prepare for the workshop she’ll be leading later today. Mindful of this, I don’t want to say too much, but I do want to make a few points:

My first head teacher was a truly inspirational head and would often ask her staff ‘Does your classroom look beautiful?’ She used the word ‘beautiful’.

Never was a piece of work simply stuck on the wall. It was always mounted, sometimes double or triple mounted. The children knew their work mattered. It was valued and so they tried their best with every piece.

The resource cupboards were beautifully labelled – that word again - not just for the sake of it but because it meant the children knew where things; they grew in independence as they made choices about the resources they needed for the task in hand. In addition they saw cursive handwriting being modelled.

There’s so much that can be said about the learning environment but I’m going to restrain myself because I don’t want to step on Zoe’s toes, but my vision is of a school where the environment is truly inspirational, attractive, eye catching and I’m going to use that word, beautiful.

Literacy across the Curriculum

Closely linked to the learning environment is the importance of Literacy, and particularly Literacy across the curriculum. We all know the importance of a literacy rich environment and by that I mean more than just key words stuck on the wall, important though that undoubtedly is.

Learning is perhaps at its most powerful when it is contextualised in narrative. That’s why it’s so important to have a class novel - it can provide those hooks on which to hang so much of the learning. I envisage a school where literacy is valued and has a visibly high profile. That means teachers planning opportunities for a whole range of different forms of oral literacy which we know is essential if children are to process their learning. A school where beautiful cursive handwriting is modelled by teachers and TAs and children’s writing is celebrated and displayed. A school with book corners, and yes, dare I say it, a school with a library. That’s why I’ve asked Zoe, as Literacy Lead, to develop a costed action plan as a matter of urgency to get the school’s library up and running again.

Behaviour

Another area I believe we need to be mindful of is behaviour. It’s very clear that the school has an effective behaviour code. Certainly on the couple of occasions I visited the school last term, I was impressed by the calm and purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms and the courtesy and good manners of the children. And that doesn’t happen by accident. But I would like to suggest that we need to start to think about moving beyond a simple system of extrinsic rewards and sanctions and to start to consider behaviour in a much broader context. Children behave well when they are engaged in an exciting, meaningful curriculum with the right level of challenge and particularly when that curriculum is underpinned by SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning). Children behave well when the teaching is inspirational and when the learning is fun. Children behave well when teachers have the skills to deploy a range of often quite subtle behaviour management strategies. And finally, children behave well in a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect – when they like their teacher and when they feel they have a genuine voice in the school through Pupil Voice and the School Council.

So these will be some of the areas of our work over the next few months. Of course the School Development Plan will cover a range of issues and we have only just begun the process of revising and rewriting this document. My intention this morning has been just to outline some of the key aspects of school improvement which I consider to be important and to share my thinking with you.

This is indeed an exciting time for our school. We begin this term with a significant number of new staff who bring with them a range of skills and experiences from which I am certain we will all benefit. The governing body will shortly begin a process of restructuring so as to be able to support and govern the school even more effectively. I am thrilled at the prospect of working with you this year. And I want to make it clear that I am not here just to hold the baby until a new head teacher can be appointed. We have to keep up the momentum and keep moving forwards. That means listening to and valuing the input of all our stakeholders. It means working closely with our partners in the Trust and our Area Alliance schools. It means becoming a truly outward-facing school, serving our community and providing every child with the best education possible; inspirational and fully-rounded. Our goal is very simple and it is this - for every lesson to be good or better and for every child to enjoy school life and make good academic progress.”

MM September 2015

Message from the SENCo:

My name is Ms. Masters and I am the school's Special Educational Needs & Inclusion Co-ordinator. I work on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. I am also the Designated Safeguarding Lead, alongside Mr Montebello, Headteacher.

I will be greeting at the school gates on the mornings that I work so that I can liaise with any parents as necessary. I can also be contacted via e-mail: hilarym@westernroad.e-sussex.sch.uk I will be working closely with the school's Teaching Assistants to deliver programmes of support as necessary.

I would ask that ALL pupils are given a water bottle, which they will keep on their tables so that they can stay hydrated throughout the school day, to support their over-all wellbeing.

Parents' Forum

The Parents' Forum meets once a term. It is made up of parent representatives – one or two from each class – and the Headteacher. The Parent Representatives bring issues raised by other parents to the meetings and pass on information from the meetings back to parents. Our next meeting is 30th September. Please speak to your representative if there are any issues that you would like them to consider taking to the meeting.

This year's class reps are:

Reception: James (Raff) jamesherbert@gmail.com and Jenny (Wilf, and George Year 2, Stanley Year 4) jennywestaway@gmail.com

Year 1: Natasha (Georgie and Hattie Year 3) natasha@auricula.co.uk and Sarah (Orsen) sarahhamblin@outlook.com

Year 2: Jacindy (Elijah) missuscartland@yahoo.com

Year 3: Natasha (Hattie) natasha@auricula.co.uk and Steph (Dillon) stephwilson13@hotmail.com

Year 4: Leonora (Finlay, and Joseph Reception) leonoramanning@gmail.com and Claire (Tom, and Mia Year 2) claire@imcghie.net

Year 5: Gerry (Lucas) warner.gerry@gmail.com and Beth (Saul) beth@conyboro.demon.co.uk

Year 6: Nina (Freya Year 5) nina27577@gmail.com

Safe-Guarding Children at Western Road Community Primary School:

At Western Road Community Primary, all staff take safeguarding children very seriously. All staff have been trained in Safeguarding and Child Protection. If you have any concerns about a child's well-being, please contact the Designated Teachers for Child Protection: **Mr Montebello** and **Ms Masters**.