



SHINFIELD ST MARY'S CE (VA) JUNIOR SCHOOL AUTUMN TERM 2018 NEWSLETTER NO.5 3rd October 2018



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Dear Parents,

Dome-ination of our World!

Such excitement has greeted the advent of the bio-dome! Over the weekend, Brad and Gary, the two young men who built it, worked their socks off to make sure it was here for Monday morning, and in fact most of it was completed by Saturday afternoon, when the Year Six children returned from Rhos-Y-Gwaliau in Wales.

It would be difficult to imagine the scope of the impact of this dome on the lives of our children, but looking into the future, it is likely that the biggest impact of all will be their sense of 'giving something back' to the community, and helping those less fortunate. On top of that there will be the science of 'The Circle of Life' (the song of which Mr Knight can be heard breaking into from time to time), with the fish providing the nutrition to the plants; the need to protect the fish from the local heron community; the sense of satisfaction at making things grow as well as the skills for life – children leaving our school will always be able to feed themselves, whatever happens after Brexit! We also hope to be able to share the produce itself with the community, selling it in order to raise funds for a homeless charity.

However, now that it is here, we need to pay for it! It came out of a grant from The Prince's Trust for half the cost of it, and the PTA has already given us £3000 towards it, with a view to raising £6500 more if they can. Family Quiz Night is this Friday, and as always looks set to be super fun – so please do come along to it.

If any of you know of any local grants we can apply for in order to support this wonderful project, please do let us know, so that we can apply as soon as we can.



Attendance for the week: 98.1%

Theme for the Week: Honesty

Rhos Y Gwaliau

The second group of children returned to us on Saturday from the Year Six residential trip to Wales. They had such a wonderful time! Several parents have written to me this week, saying that their children have learned life skills that they couldn't imagine them being taught in any other way – so this is all wonderful to hear – thank you. It's great to be told when we are doing something right. It gave me a feeling similar to that when I read the report slips at the end of last term, nearly all of which said 'We are happy with our child's report', some of which said they were happy and would like to discuss it further. In some cases parents had written fulsome praise of their child's teachers and how well they thought their child had done in their classes. Lovely! I hope you have all managed to have those conversations, which must have been joyful.



Parents Evenings

This puts me in mind of Parents Evenings, some of which we have had to change – in particular the Year Six Parents Evenings, changes to which have happened as a result of Mr Lappin's multitudinous sports commitments. These will now be on Monday and Wednesday, 15th and 17th October. They will remain the same for everyone else – on Tuesday and Thursday 16th and 18th.



CAKE SALE

Cake Sales

At Monday night's staff meeting we booked cake sales into the diary across the first half of the year. The first one will be that of Golden Eagles, on Friday October 12th. Children who are attending Film Club should let their teachers know so that they can be allowed to pop straight along to the cake sale and be on time for the start of the film. The money raised from the cakes sales will go straight into the PTA funds, and from there into the cost of our bio-dome this year!



Family Quiz Night



Yesterday was the deadline for buying tickets for the Quiz Night through the office – but of course we will welcome anyone who wishes to turn up and join a team on Friday evening. The office will be checking numbers today in order to make sure we have enough people to go ahead with the event, and if we are unable to do so, you will be informed by text – but it is most likely that we will be able to do so: it is always so much fun that I am sure people will want to come along!

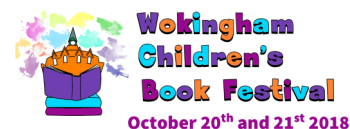
Donations of raffle prizes will be most welcome if you'd like to bring along something into school either beforehand or on the night itself.

Do come along, and try to beat the teachers (if you dare)!

Library Matters

On Friday, Elizabeth McDonald from Wokingham Library came to see us again. She congratulated the 40 or so children who had completed the Summer Reading Challenge this summer, and told us about the upcoming Book Festival at half term. The leaflets for this are attached to this newsletter, and booking the tickets is easy. I sent an email to all parents of our Pupil Premium children on Friday, to which I have had two responses. Tickets to these events are either free or £2 or £3 – please don't allow finance to be an issue for you in attending them. It is so important to instil into the children a love of reading and learning.

Please see the attached programme of events.



Sparrows' and Blackbirds' Cross Assemblies

These were not assemblies in which the children of Sparrows and Blackbirds classes appeared to be irritable and annoyed as you might expect from this sub-heading, but an assembly about the Pakistani and Japanese crosses, that were very informative. As many of you are aware, our start to the year has been 'Our World of Belief' – an immersion into the RE curriculum and its links to all the other subjects; last year we immersed ourselves in Geography in our 'Passport to the World' project, and previously we had involved ourselves in the 'Take One Picture' project, with the National Gallery. This year's 'Immersion Project' has been organised and led by Mrs Lawless, and it has been fascinating: thank you, Mrs Lawless!

As part of this, every class has been asked to study the symbol of the cross as it is represented across the world, and it has proven to be very interesting indeed. In Sparrows' assembly we learned not only that hundreds of years ago, Pakistan was a Christian country, but also that some of the poorest people in the world have managed to make beautiful crosses out of whatever they could find. A tiny cross was found that dated from the 5th century AD, and as it reminds people how old the religion is in Pakistan, it has been adopted as their cross.

Similarly, the Japanese cross has a symbol cut into the centre of it that looks like a human figure, and which represents the sacrifice made by 26 Christians who died because of their faith. I have found it very interesting to learn about the different reasons for the adoption of different crosses by different countries: almost always, there is a story that is dear to the hearts of the people. It is important that we remember that such stories exist in all faiths, and that their symbols are always heavy with meaning for them.



Please turn over

Photo-Shoot

Ten of our children were involved in a photo-shoot for the company who made our climbing frame, on Friday. Once I have received copies I will share them with the parents of the children involved. The children behaved beautifully and were praised to the skies by the photographer and her assistant.

Smoking

It has been reported to me today that one of our mothers has been seen smoking in her car, with her three children inside it, outside our school.

This is from Gov.uk:

It is illegal to smoke in a car (or other vehicle) with anyone under 18. The law changed on 1 October 2015, to protect children and young people from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Both the driver and the smoker could be fined £50. The law applies to every driver in England and Wales, including those aged 17 and those with a provisional driving licence.

Please be aware that if I become aware of anyone smoking with a child in their car, I will have a duty of care to report them immediately.

I have indeed been given the number plate of this car, but feel it is only fair to warn you that I have been made aware of it. Please desist, or I will take action.

**IT'S ILLEGAL TO SMOKE IN A
VEHICLE WITH ANYONE
UNDER 18**



Winter Coats

As the cooler weather approaches, please make sure your child has a coat to wear at play and lunchtimes. If your child does not have a coat and there are financial constraints for you, please come and see me and we will make sure together that this can happen.

A Final Reminder

Miss Minesso will be coming into school to survey the children's views on toys, colours and art according to their gender – to see if there is a link. No such studies have happened for some years, so we are interested to see what conclusions she draws, and what her findings might mean for the teaching and learning of our children. Please make sure you send in your permissions slips if you are happy for your child to be included.

Dates for the Diary

Monday 15th October – Parents' Evening 1 for Year 6 only
Tuesday 16th October – Parents' Evening 1 except for Year 6 *** NO CLUBS TODAY ***
Wednesday 17th October—Parents' Evening 2 for Year 6 only
Thursday 18th October—School photographer in school
Thursday 18th October – Parents' Evening 2 except for Year 6 *** NO CLUBS TODAY ***
Friday 19th October—End of the first half of term. School finishes at 3:30pm as usual
Monday 29th October – Back to school
Thursday 1st November – Theatre performance for Year 3
Friday 2nd November - November – Theatre performance for Year 4
Friday 16th November – Year 3 trip to Butser Ancient Farm
Tuesday 4th December – Last Street Dance session
Wednesday 5th December – Year 5 first group to Ufton Court
Thursday 6th December – Last Drama session
Thursday 6th December – Year 5 second group to Ufton Court. First group return.
Friday 7th December – Year 5 second group return from Ufton Court
Friday 7th December – Flu immunisation for Years 3, 4 and half of Year 5
Tuesday 11th December – Last Church Club, Football Club and Choir
Thursday 13th December – Flu immunisation for rest of Year 5
Thursday 13th December – Christmas Art Day
Friday 14th December – Christmas Jumper Day
Friday 14th December – Last Gymnastics Clubs and Film Club
Tuesday 18th December – NO CLUBS TODAY
Wednesday 19th December – End of term. School finishes at 1:30pm

Best wishes,
Sue Runciman