



Overstone Combined School

Newsletter Monday 24th February 2020

We are now half way through the academic year and it has been brilliant to see all the progress the children have made in so many aspects. I am sure you will agree that the children have come a long way already this year and we are all looking forward to how they continue to develop.

In the last weeks of the last half term the children were excited to take part in a number of events which we are pleased to share with you later in the newsletter. We are also looking forward to many more enrichment activities coming up including World Book Day and the chance to hear some of our pupils from year 2 and 3 on mix 96!

Mrs Mercer

Interim Headteacher

Safeguarding

Thank you all for your co-operation and support regarding our changes about pick up from school. This has enabled us to ensure the children's safety at these times. If you have not yet returned these forms please do so urgently.

Our School Vision

As we move towards World Book Day we would like to focus on a specific part of our vision "we ignite their joy of learning". All of our staff are passionate about children finding their joy for learning "through a rich variety of stimulating learning experiences". The children are lucky to experience a wide variety of learning opportunities within our curriculum including forest school, sporting opportunities and a variety of interesting opportunities which are continually reviewed to ensure they are engaging and relevant. This week we will be aiming to continue to develop this love for reading through activities across the whole school.

Key Dates for your diary:

Wed 26th Feb, 2.30pm – Phonics meeting for parents introducing Read Write Inc

Wed 26th Feb, 3.30pm – Information session for Year 5/6 residential trip

Thurs 5th March – World Book day including reading breakfast

Tuesday 17th March – Year 3/4 trip to Chiltern Open Air Museum

Weds 25th March – Spring disco (times tbc)

Mon 30th March – Year 5/6 residential trip begins

Fri 3rd April – Last day of Spring Term

Fri 22nd May – INSET day (school closed to children)



Reading

You will have already or will be seen noticing lots of changes in reading across the school. Children who are ready have begun using the accelerated reading system where they have received carefully matched books and have had the opportunities to take quizzes on each book they read. In Key Stage One we will also be changing the books which children receive home with the start of Read Write Inc. A parent meeting is being held on this on Wednesday and the information will be on the website after this.

Reading Recognition

To continue to develop children's love for reading as well as increase their reading frequency we will be beginning a system of recognising children for the number of times they read each week. We have thought about this carefully including research at other schools who reward for other successes including number of words or books read but in order to ensure equity for all children we have chosen to recognise effort over quantity.

In order to support us in this we ask that when you hear your child read, or know that your child has read **you add a comment or your initials** within your child's reading diary. **It is also essential that these diaries as well as your child's reading book are in school every day.** All classes have the opportunity to read while at school and this also enables this to happen effectively.

Library

You will also notice that your children have begun to bring home library books as the library is now fully operational thanks to a huge commitment from Mr Bradman and many other members of staff. Children will visit the library with their class and there will also be the opportunity to visit during lunch times with support from the new library monitors.

Reading Opportunities

To continue to develop reading opportunities and encourage all to read we have also looked into other reading options and Miss Rawlings has been trialling the use of the get epic app for reading. This provides access to 35000 books (including some audio books and magazines). Many of these are levelled according to accelerated reader levels and children will therefore be able to take quizzes on them. As a school we get access to this but if you are interested in using this at home a trial month can be used followed by a low monthly cost. There are some limitations (such as the American accent on the audio books) but the opportunities it provides will support many children.

If you have young children in nursery or who are just starting their journey to read the app "Teach your monster to read" is free for this week only. It is a great resource for those children making their first steps in recognising sounds.



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Dodgeball

Mr Winyard organised an exciting dodgeball tournament at the end of the last half term. The children who were able to take part all thoroughly enjoyed this and their competitive and team spirit was clear.



Paralympian Visit

Mr Winyard also arranged for children to meet with Paralympic gold medallist Sean Rose. The children were lucky enough to see (and some got to hold) a gold medal! This was an inspirational opportunity and the children were very enthusiastic and eager to talk about it.





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Don't forget to find our page on facebook, "like" it and look out for updates on things which have been happening across the school as well as upcoming dates.



DON'T FORGET Times Tables App for free!

Times tables fluency is key for children's understanding in maths particularly through Key Stage 2 and repeated practice can make a big difference to this. Children in Year 4 will also now need to take a times tables test and repetition will make this easier.

We are launching a new times tables app which children can use from home to practice their times tables in a fun way. Teacher's will be able to see children's results and the areas which they need to focus on, as well as how much they are using it! You will receive login details during this week for your child.

This is a great resource which is free to parents so we strongly encourage you to download it for use at home. Some teachers may also choose in the future to use this for homework so please lookout for this.

Teacher Appreciation

I am sure you will agree that all of our staff work exceptionally hard to support your children and promote their learning. In school we value not only the wellbeing of our children but also our staff and it is important to us that our staff feel valued. A DfE supported initiative has begun which is aimed to help contribute to this and other local schools have found their parents have appreciated the opportunity.

www.thankateacher.co.uk provides the opportunity to send a thank you to any members of staff within a school who have made a difference to your child. This can come from parents or children and is a great way of showing your appreciation.