

**WESTERN ROAD C.P.SCHOOL**

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**Newsletter — Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018 Issue No: 2**

Dear Parents and Carers,

***Please see below my presentation to staff on the first day of term. In this presentation I outline our main areas for development this year. I hope you find it of interest.***

Welcome back everybody. In case you haven't yet had an opportunity to meet all our new staff, I'll briefly introduce them: Hannah Blackwell comes to us from Polgate School and will be teaching Year 1, Alice Cottingham is from the Hollington Academy in Hastings and will be teaching Year 4 and Suzy Bennett has come from Hamsey School and will be job sharing in Year 5 for one day per week with Chris Linton. It's lovely to have you with us this morning as we start a new academic year together.

Before we start our training today, I'd like to spend a little while looking back over last year and reflect on our progress before looking forward and outlining some of our new priorities for the year ahead.

I'll start by looking at our children's academic performance at the end of last year by sharing the school's recently published attainment and progress data with you. As I think I have said before, this is of course only one measure of success, but an important one nonetheless.

76.7% of children in the Early Years class achieved a Good Level of Development, which was in keeping with our baseline predictions and above attainment for Early Years nationally (71.5%). It's not an easy thing to take over a class half way through the year, especially our youngest class, but together Karen, Ruth, Carla and Janine did a wonderful job ensuring the children were not adversely affected by the change of teachers in January. I'm also delighted to say that we are very nearly full in Reception this year, again a testament to the hard work of the Early Years team.

In Year 1, 86.7% of children achieved the phonics screening check which compares well with the national picture (82.5%) and once again, a testament to Laura and Kate's hard work and the effectiveness of the intervention programmes they put in place. I'd also like to congratulate Laura on passing her first year of teaching with flying colours.

In Year 2, 75.9% of children achieved the expected standard in Reading which was in line with the national figure of 75.5%; 75.9% of children achieved the expected standard in writing which was above the national figure of 69.9% and in maths, 82.8% of children achieved the expected standard, again, above the national figure of 76.1%. Overall, 75.9% of children achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined which compares favourably with the national combined figure of 65.3%.

In Year 6, 90% of children achieved the expected standard in Reading (the national figure was 75.3%); in Maths, 93% of children achieved the expected standard (the national figure was 75.6%) and here it should be noted that every child who took the maths SATs papers passed, and finally in Writing, 70% of children achieved the expected standard, which was a little below the national figure of 78%. 86.7% of children achieved the expected standard in the Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar paper compared to the national average of 77.7%.

Overall, 70% of children achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined, compared to the County average of 63% and the national average of 64% and represents an improvement of 3.3% on last year's combined figure.

Progress measures, which arguably are a better indication of success, show that the children in Year 6 last year made expected progress in writing and maths when compared to other children nationally with similar starting points, and in Reading the children's progress was significantly above the national average.

So this is a very secure data set. The only slight vulnerability is perhaps our attainment in writing this year, although it should be remembered that with our relatively small cohort, each child represents 3% and that progress in writing for this class was in line with expected progress. That said, it will be important to continue to focus on improving children's writing this year, especially across Key Stage 2, and I will discuss this in a little more detail below.

One of our main areas for development last year was to create an engaging, whole-school curriculum, developing children's key skills as they progress from year to year. Crucially this involved planning imaginative and engaging units of work, not just for English and maths, but for each subject, for each year group. The Subject Leader meetings in Term 5 last year showed that we have made very good progress towards this target, with a great many of units of work now in place. Of course there is still work to be done here and this will be an ongoing focus for the school this year.

Last year considerable work was undertaken across the school to improve children's writing, chiefly through the inclusion of "Talk for Writing" strategies in English lessons. Here the writing process is carefully structured: children learn about the features of a given genre, initially through reading, before going on to closely model their own writing on a text chosen by the teacher. Through our monitoring activities last year it was clear that where this approach had been fully adopted, the children were able to improve their writing very rapidly and produce work of a very high quality. It is important that we build on this progress and that these strategies are fully embedded in our planning and teaching of writing this year.

Last year we set ourselves the target of continuing to improve the quality of maths teaching through a number of measures, including the use of working walls in classrooms, the regular practice of reasoning skills and, crucially, the use of concrete resources in every lesson - not just for the younger children, but for all classes and all abilities. We invested significantly in "Numicon" for every classroom, planning resources and staff training to make the most of this versatile resource. It's clear, not just from our maths results this year, but from monitoring across the school, that these measures have begun to have a positive impact. More training in this area is planned and this will continue to be a teaching and learning focus for the coming year.

Another area in which we saw considerable progress last year was in the use of Blooms Taxonomy, especially in Key Stage 2, to support planning and the quality of questioning in lessons. Blooms provides a framework which allows us to identify different types of skills, from simple recall skills, to higher order thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation. In many classes last year teachers used this framework effectively to challenge and extend children's thinking. We have identified staff meeting times so that best practice here can be shared and embedded across the school this year.

Last year we undertook a review of our school's behaviour policy, which had been in place for a little while. As a part of this process we consulted widely with all stakeholders and towards the end of the year governors approved the new policy. At the heart of this policy is the firm conviction that quality of teaching and behaviour are linked, that the need to build positive, affirming relationships with the children is intrinsic to our role as educators and that every encounter we have with the children matters. High expectations for behaviour in class and around the school are clearly set out, supported by a system of rewards and consequences.

Good behaviour is underpinned by the schools PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) programme which Kerry (as PSHE lead) continued to develop last year. She resourced Units of Work and supported staff with planning. She worked closely with governors to rewrite the school's Anti- Bullying policy and, with the help of the School Council, has produced an excellent child-friendly version of this policy for us to share with the children.

Last term all staff took part in a full day's training exploring ways to raise children's self-esteem through circle time and other PSHE activities and tomorrow we will take part in further training helping us to understand attachment issues, delivered by Janet, our school's psychotherapeutic counsellor. PSHE and circle time activities must be timetabled and a regular part of our classroom practice because they support children's well-being by strengthening relationships in the class.

Kerry and Irena also worked closely with the buddies last year, training them to support some of our youngest children at break time and lunch time. This has been wonderful to see and this year Kerry plans introduce a buddy bench and a simple buddy uniform to further raise the profile of this important role.

Last year we invested in Mindfulness training for all staff and teachers have experimented with some of these practices into their classrooms. Although it's difficult to assess the impact of a measure like this, feedback suggests that, on the whole, the children enjoyed taking part in the exercises and found them to be a positive experience. It is our intention this year to introduce some of these short and simple exercises into the classroom on a more regular basis.

So this is an outline of the progress we made last year towards some of our main areas for development. There were of course many other successes too, such as our participation in Voice in a Million – a truly spectacular achievement for the school, and the Parent Art Project, which got underway at the end of the year and resulted in these fabulous portraits, something we very much wish to continue with this year.

So, much of our work this year will be to continue to build on last year's progress in the areas I've described. But there are some new priorities governors and school leaders have identified too. One of these is an exciting national project called the Peer Review Project. The purpose of this project is for groups of schools to offer one another support by working together to identify potential areas for

improvement, followed by staff training and sharing of best practice. We will be participating with our partner schools and later this term Tony Smith from Priory School and Lisa Walker from Southover School will be spending a day with us to look at our data, look at children's books and talk to children and staff in an effort to uncover further opportunities for improving the teaching and learning. Each school has appointed an Improvement Champion to facilitate follow-up workshops and I'm pleased that Chris has agreed to be our school's Improvement Champion. We welcome the opportunity to work in this collaborative way with our partner schools.

Another area for development to which we will turn our attention this year is that of school attendance. The need to improve school attendance was highlighted in our last Ofsted inspection in July 2016. Since then it has remained largely unchanged. Whilst our school attendance is broadly in line with the County average, it is below the national average for both overall attendance and for persistent absence (a pupil is considered to be persistently absent when their attendance falls to 90% or below). Following a consultation with parents and governors, this year we have decided to celebrate good attendance by issuing certificates once a term for high attendance and for most improved attendance. Children with 100% attendance will be entered into a prize draw each term and have the opportunity of winning prizes such as book tokens. We will publish our attendance data each term in the school newsletter. Our intention is to adopt a supportive approach, working with families, so that together we can make an improvement in this area.

And finally, in the context of sharing our priorities for the year ahead, I feel it only appropriate to mention an important development which governors will be discussing later this term. Some preliminary work has been carried out into the potential benefits of forming a local, Lewes based Multi-Academy Trust. Our governors must consider this matter carefully and decide whether Western Road Community Primary School should be part of this new M.A.T. If the decision to proceed to consultation is taken, all stakeholders will be given the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues for consideration. I want to stress that, at this point, no decisions have been made and that staff and parents will be kept fully informed.

So to sum up, last year we made excellent progress towards whole school objectives and this year we will continue to build on this work. Our key priorities for this year will be:

- 1) Writing progress in Key Stage 2, especially for those children whose writing was not secure at the end of Year 2
- 2) Implementing numicon in maths lessons to support children understanding of mathematical concepts
- 3) Continuing to develop Units of Work for all subjects for all year groups
- 4) Continue to develop the PSHE programme, including Circle Time and Mindfulness in the classroom
- 5) Continue to develop the buddy programme
- 6) Working with our partner schools to deliver the Peer Review Programme
- 7) Improve attendance
- 8) Governors to explore the benefits of joining a local MAT with our partner schools

I hope this overview has been helpful and I will of course share our more detailed School Development Plan with you once it has been discussed with Governors. I look forward to working closely with all of you this year.

Matthew Montebello

September 2018

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### **Welcome Meetings**

It has been lovely to see so many of you at our Class Welcome Meetings this week. If you were not able to come but have any queries about homework, PE days, topics or any other class-related matter, please do not hesitate to speak to your child's class teacher at the end of the day or call the school.

### **New Reception Class**

All our new Reception children are now in school and have settled in wonderfully. Thank you to our Year Six buddies who have done an amazing job at helping them in the lunch hall and in the playground.

### **SENCO**

Mrs Bradshaw, our school SENCO, is currently on leave until the first week of December. During this time Mrs Bedford, one of our Year Six teachers, will be carrying out this role in the school. Mrs Bedford has had a full handover from Mrs Bradshaw. She will be working as SENCO on Tuesdays from next week onwards. Please make an appointment to see her if you have any SEN concerns regarding your child.

### **Football Club**

Please note, there are some Thursdays when the after-school football club will not take place. Please see these dates below (also on the Premier Sports website).

### **Harvest Festival**

Our Harvest Festival assembly will be on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> October at 10am to which you are warmly invited. During the Harvest Assembly there will be a short presentation from Debbie Twitchen, who volunteers at Lewes Foodbank, to talk with the children about how a foodbank works and why donations are so valued.

If you would like to make a donation to Lewes Foodbank (canned or dried goods please), please bring them into school from next week until Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> October. Please send any donations in to either the School Office or with your child to the classroom. These donations really do make a difference to lots of local people.

Thank you in advance for your kind support.

### **Flu Vaccinations**

Flu vaccinations will take place on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November for children in Reception to Year Five. The vaccination is in the form of a nasal spray. Please ensure you return the consent form, if you have not already done so.

### **Christmas Celebrations**

Christmas Jumper Day will be on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> December where the children are invited to wear a seasonal jumper and bring in a gift for the Christmas Fair tombola (or £1 which will be used to buy gifts for the tombola). A letter with more information will follow shortly.

Christmas lunch will be on Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> December (they are very welcome to wear their jumper on this day too). The last day for ordering a school Christmas lunch is Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December so please ensure you have returned the order slip and money by then at the latest.

### **News from Friends of Western Road**

We are having a second-hand uniform sale on **Thursday, 27th September** at pick up. **Please have a clear out of uniform and donate to the school.** Only items in good, clean condition please. Donations can be dropped at the school office any time between now and the 25<sup>th</sup> September.

Our Halloween Disco will be on **Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> December** after school, more information to follow.

The wonderful Artists and Makers fair will be at the town hall on **Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> December.**

The school Christmas Fair will be on **Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> December** in the School Hall.

Finally, we have a date for our summer fair 2019 – **Saturday, 15th June**, please put this and the other dates in your diaries.

Thank you.

### **Reminder**

If your child uses any form of medication, for example inhalers, please speak with Mrs Winter in the School Office (01273 473013 or [office@westernroad.e-sussex.sch.uk](mailto:office@westernroad.e-sussex.sch.uk)) as a form needs to be completed, even for self-medication of inhalers.

## Important Dates

Friday, 28 <sup>th</sup> September, 9.15am	Celebration Assembly
Tuesday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> October, 3.40pm – 6.30pm	Parents' Evening
Thursday, 4 <sup>th</sup> October, 4.30pm – 7.30pm	Parents' Evening
Friday, 12 <sup>th</sup> October, 9.15am	Celebration Assembly
Friday, 19 <sup>th</sup> October, 9.15am	Harvest Festival
Week beginning 22 <sup>nd</sup> October	Half-Term
Week beginning 29 <sup>th</sup> October	Start of Term 2 Art Week
Friday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2.30pm	Art Week exhibition in Hall (no Celebration Assembly)
Tuesday, 6 <sup>th</sup> November	INSET Day
Friday, 9 <sup>th</sup> November, 9.15am	Celebration Assembly
Friday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> November, 9.15am	Celebration Assembly
Week beginning 26 <sup>th</sup> November	Welcome meetings for prospective parents
Wednesday, 12 <sup>th</sup> December, 2pm	EYFS/KS1 Christmas Nativity
Thursday, 13 <sup>th</sup> December, 3.30pm – 5pm	FOWR Christmas Fair
Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> December, 10am	Carols Around the Christmas Tree
Wednesday, 19 <sup>th</sup> December	End of Term 2

## Remaining INSET Days 2018 – 2019

Tuesday, 6 <sup>th</sup> November
Thursday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> January
Friday, 4 <sup>th</sup> January
Monday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> June