

Newsletter 1 2017-2018

Dear Parents/carers,

Welcome back to a new academic year. The children have had a fantastic start to the new term and we have welcomed some lovely new reception and nursery children to our ever-growing school family. We have also welcomed new staff to our school; Miss Hez in Year 2, who will also be leading Literacy across the school, Mrs Richards our new Year 4/5 teacher and Miss Makepeace, our new apprentice in Early Years. All new staff have been made to feel very welcome by pupils and parents.

This year we are starting lots of new and exciting initiatives in school.

New Curriculum

This year we are launching a brand-new curriculum, which will broaden the children's skills, knowledge and understanding in the foundation subjects: science, history, geography, art, music, RE, design and technology and computing.

Mrs Foggin has worked tirelessly to produce a bespoke curriculum that heavily focusses on the core skills needed to be scientists, historians, artists and so on. The children's books will have a new look to them, with pre and post topic assessments and the work itself will be practical and engaging.

What is unique about our curriculum is that the subjects will be "chunked" together and taught in isolation. So, science will be taught in a two-week chunk and then history for two weeks and so on. This way, the children won't forget what they have learned the week before and the learning is continuous and seamless. What is more, the whole school will be learning the same subject at the same time. It was great to walk around the school this week and see every class learning science at the same time- we have some budding scientists in our midst!

Parents will be able to see the changes in the children's books when they come along to parent's evenings towards the end of the term.

Core Value of the month

Parents who are already logged onto Class Dojo, will have seen our post about the "The Core Value of The Month." Each month we will be promoting core values that we feel our children need to have in order to be well rounded members of society. This month we are starting with "Confidence." Children will be rewarded for demonstrating the core value of the month and at the end of each month, teacher's will choose one Core Value Champion to be given a certificate. Keep an eye on Class Dojo for monthly updates and tips on how you can promote the core values at home too!

Action Groups

By now, your child should know what Action Group they belong to. Our Action Groups start on Friday XXXX September and will meet monthly. These groups are a great opportunity for children to make a positive change to their school, local community and the world, as well as being a way for children to work with others from different year groups. I'm really looking forward to hearing about their projects; from Eco-Warriors to Junior Road Safety Officers, there's something for everyone.

Daily Skip

Following a fantastic and motivating day with Dave Gibson from Skip2BFit, we are launching the "Daily Skip." From Monday 18th September, every child will start their day with a High Intensity skip at 8.55am every day, in the school yard before registration. When the gates open at 8.45am, children may use the counting skipping ropes to free-style and play, if they wish, but when the music starts in the school yard, every child will skip for two minutes with a minute break in between. Children will monitor their fitness by recording how many skips they can do in the time given on the special counting skipping ropes and strive to beat their personal best. In time, our Sports Leaders will run this activity.

Working in partnership with parents

You will already have seen, and hopefully signed and returned, your Homework Contract. We have introduced this to empower parents in supporting their children with learning at home. Along with the new homework books, we hope that the contract raises the profile of homework and highlights how important it is in supporting children in being the best that they can be. As a school, we recognise what an important and valuable role parents play in a child's education and we look forward to seeing the benefits of home and school, working together to support our pupil's learning.

In addition to the homework contract, we are also attaching a home/school agreement to this newsletter. Our school agreement has been updated and invites parents and pupils to make a commitment to sharing, and contributing to, our school vision and ethos.

We hope that parents will use the agreement as a talking point and share with all children and adults in the family. It's a great way for families to discuss what is expected from everyone, including the school, so that we are all working on the same goals.

Please sign and return your Home/School agreement as soon as possible.

We will be letting you know about other new ways for parents to get involved with learning, in the near future.

PTA

Last year, the PTA fundraising total was the most successful ever! With the support of parents and local community, we were able to build a brand-new Trim Trail and Early Years outdoor play area. We have some money left over and hope to buy some much needed resources for our new curriculum, a bespoke outdoor mud kitchen for the Early Years area and pay for every child to visit the pantomime at Christmas for free!

This year, we want to repeat the success of last year and continue to raise funds for the school. Our focus for 2017-2018 is Technology. We want to take St. Andrew's Primary School into the 21st century, with new software and hardware for the school, to include; new ipads, programming and coding software, Osmo kits and state of the art whiteboards in the classrooms.

We hope to have your continued support with the fundraising once again!

Talk About

This year, we are beginning a new PSHCE programme called "Talk About". Led by Mrs Dickinson, the programme focusses on children's ability to be socially able. It supports children in developing their body language, tone of voice and choice of words, to become confident speakers and to understand their own and other's feelings in a variety of social situations.

Mastery in Maths

Although mathematics has always been a strength at St. Andrew's, we know that there is always room for improvement. This year we are introducing a new way of teaching and learning maths called "Maths Mastery." Many schools across the country are using this method and have had fantastic results. Mr Soppitt is leading this initiative and has high expectations about the impact it will have on our pupils mastering maths!

We hope to invite parents into school to take part in a Mastery Maths lesson very soon.

Reading

We are having a big push on reading this year. Miss Hez has some exciting ideas to promote a love of reading, throughout the year.

We ask that parents join us in promoting reading at home too and encourage you to log when their child reads on Class Dojo. Simply send a short message to the class teacher to say when and what your child has read so that they can keep a track of reading at home. Better still, send a photo of your child reading!

Class Dojo

You will have noticed that Class Dojo plays a huge part in helping us communicate between teachers and parents. If you haven't already done so, I urge parents to download the app and log on as soon as possible, so as not to miss out on important messages and news about school life.

If you have any problems logging in or need another password, please see Mr. Orwin, who will be more than happy to help!

Final requests

- The children look fantastic and feel proud in their school uniforms. I ask parents to support the school in maintaining these standards all year round. We still have a few pupils without a full PE kit and would remind parents that all children need black shorts, yellow T-shirt and black plimsoles for indoor PE and a black tracksuit jogging bottoms and black sweatshirt/hoody, for outdoor PE- all of which are available to buy in school or in supermarkets.
- We would like to extend this request to swimming kit too and ask parents if they can provide a black swimming costume or swimming shorts for swimming lessons. This will contribute to the children feeling proud of their collective appearance and being part of a team.

- For Health and Safety reasons, children are not permitted to wear jewelry in school. Children are only allowed to wear stud earrings but only if they are able to remove them themselves for any physical activity. Children MUST NOT wear hoop or dangly earrings for school – they are too dangerous and can cause serious injury if caught.
- Please can I ask parents to make payments to school, on time. We are having some issues with some parents who are not paying for lunches, after school clubs, school trips or additional nursery childcare in advance or on time. This causes a lot of extra work for our office staff, who have to chase up the payments, as well as causing issues with school finances.
- It's great to see so many pupils using the Trim Trail after school, however may I remind parents that after 3pm children are not supervised by teachers and that parents must watch their own children for health and safety reasons. Please can I ask that children from Year 1 to 6 do not play on the Early Years equipment after school. Thank you.

I thank you all for taking the time to read this newsletter; I make no apologies for the length of it – I have had so much to tell you about how our school is moving forward!

I have attached a calendar of dates for you to use at home, so that you can keep a track of everything that is going on throughout the term. More dates may be added later and we will update you as and when.

Here's to another fantastic year at St. Andrew's Primary School.

Mrs N James

Acting Headteacher.