



Vernham Dean Gillum's
Church of England Primary
School

Newsletter for:
Academic Year 2017 - 2018

Dear Parents & Families

As the term comes to a close, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you curriculum news for the forthcoming academic year. This newsletter, I hope, explains some of the enhancements we have introduced, or are introducing to our curriculum.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the PTA Friends for all their hard work and support. Over the last year they have worked tirelessly with their fund raising and have made a huge impact on resources for the children of Vernham Dean Primary.

Friends' Achievements

- Christmas book for each child
- Several school discos
- Murder mystery curry night
- Christmas hamper raffle
- Curry sales
- Beech Class Vernham Dean Bake Off
- Two Bags2school
- Quiz night
- Giving machine via Internet purchases
- Beverages on Sports Day

Purchases for the school

- Bean bags and rugs for the library
- Visiting pantomime
- Christmas books
- Christmas lunch cooked by Governors
- Cooker and halogen hobs
- Baking equipment
- Disco lights
- Subsidy towards Young Voices
- Enhancements such as Chinese New Year, Baking and Pancake day
- Supporting Year 6 leavers' treat

The team here at the school is a dedicated one who places your child(ren) at the centre of all that we do. We would like to reiterate that we have an open door policy for you to be able to talk to us about your queries and concerns, and this will continue to be the case next academic year.

Katy Thompson
Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers.

As the school year draws to a close, I wanted, on behalf of the Governing body, to reflect on a successful year at Vernham Dean Primary School.

The Governors would like to thank all our children for their positive attitudes and excellent behaviour this year. They are a real credit to the school, parents and to the teachers.

The school's Year R GLD, KS1 and KS2 SATs results are excellent; Governors are extremely proud of the efforts each child made to do their very best. They have done themselves and the school proud. They should be very pleased with their achievements. These positive results reflect the quality of teaching within our school.

We would also like to thank the Friends of the School for all their hard work and support over the last year. The smooth running of the many events through the year is testament to the Friends' hard work, the support of parents behind the scenes and on the day. It goes without saying your willingness to give generously your time and money is one of the strengths underpinning our school community.

As a Governing body we are more than aware that we could not achieve the good grades that we have come to expect, if it wasn't for the hard work and commitment of all staff members. So I'm sure that you will join me in thanking them for all they do for our children.

Finally, I would like to close by wishing all those leaving Vernham Dean a fantastic onward journey whether you are moving up to secondary school or relocating.

We wish the Year 6 children of Beech Class much success and happiness in their new secondary schools and we know their time at Vernham Dean has been an enjoyable and rewarding one.

Kind regards
Paul Nicoll
Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Carers

Having arrived as your parish priest half way through the academic year I have been learning how the school works and how it is run. It has been lovely getting to know both the children and the staff at the school and I have been impressed with the work ethic and friendliness of the school.

Its Christian ethos shines through in all that it does and its three values of Love, Hope and Courage are known by both staff and pupils alike that I have talked to.

It has been a pleasure coming into the school to take Collective Worship, to go into the classrooms and hearing some of the children read.

As Year 6 move on to senior school they have been given an excellent start in their lives and I wish them all the best in their secondary education and beyond. We will keep them in our prayers as they start their new school in September.

I look forward to the next academic year at the school where we can all work together to give our children the best academic, social, moral, spiritual and cultural start to their lives.

God bless you all and have a lovely summer.

Trevor Lewis
Associate Priest & Foundation Governor

Curriculum News

Over the last year, we have made many changes to our curriculum. Through our carefully planned topics we offer a broad and balanced curriculum. As with this year, you can find out what your child will be doing through the curriculum overviews which you will find on your child's class web page. Simply log onto our website, <http://vernhamdeanschool.co.uk/> then find your child's class under the Classes drop down box. This is also a good place to see examples of what is happening in class.

Maths

The school introduced a new structure to the Maths lessons this term and this will now be the permanent structure for the new academic year. The lesson consists of:

KS1

5 minutes for: times tables, counting on and back, and place value work

5 minutes for: Mini Maths (lots of little things) – this could be maths puzzles, questions linked to previous learning, or concept specific questions. Tasks can go over a few days which we call 'simmering tasks'

5 minutes for: responding to marking and any additional questions to answer set by the teacher in order to consolidate or address misconceptions

45 minutes: this is the main lesson which may have a whole class teaching focus followed by activities, or the teacher working with small groups whilst other children work independently

Example of mini maths – this would cover a week

KS2

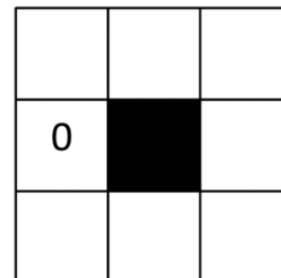
This has the same layout as KS1 but the first two 5 minute tasks maybe combined together to answer a larger puzzle/questions. These may also go over a few day and have many variables.

Example of mini maths

1) Write the numbers -4, -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, and 3 in the correct place so that each side of the square adds up to 0.

-4 -3 -2 -1 1 2 3

Total must be 0



Year R

Year R have maths opportunities across the day. As a school we ensure there are maths problem solving opportunities each day both indoors and outdoors

Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract (CPA)

Over the last two terms, the school has been using CPA in Maths and recently you will have had a copy of our new Calculation Policy sent home which uses this (if you have not had a copy, please let the office know). I thought that this newsletter would be a good opportunity to explain a little more about what it means.

The CPA approach to maths helps children learn new ideas and build on their existing knowledge by introducing abstract concepts in a more familiar and tangible way.

Concrete

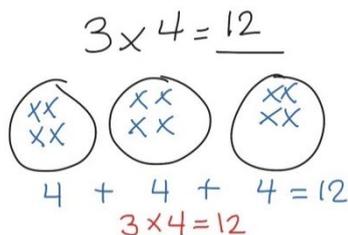
Concrete is the 'doing stage' using concrete objects to model how to solve the problem. The concrete stage brings concepts to life. For example, if young children were adding quantities of apples, then they would use real apples. Of course older children when approaching 4 digit numbers couldn't use apples so this is when there is a representation of counters or base ten resources.

Repeated grouping/repeated addition
(does not have to be restricted to cubes)
 3×4 or 3 lots of 4



Pictorial

Pictorial is the 'seeing' stage using representations to model the problem. This is the stage when teachers will be encouraging children to make mental connections between physical objects and abstract levels of understanding. Drawing a model at this stage supports children to grasp concepts that can be difficult to understand; in turn this then helps children to visualise a problem and make it more accessible.

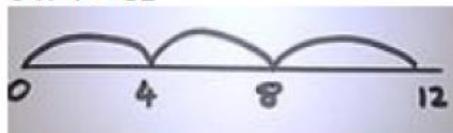


Abstract

Abstract is the 'symbolic' stage where children use mathematical symbols. Once a child has shown they have a good understanding of the concrete and pictorial stage, the teacher will introduce the abstract concept. Although we use CPA as three distinct stages, teachers will go back and forth between each representation to reinforce concepts.

Both of these would be examples of abstract.

$$3 \times 4 = 12$$



Or $3 \times 4 = 12$

Times Tables

With the National Curriculum stating that all children need to know their times tables, and division facts up to 12×12 by the end of Year 4, the new maths lesson structure emphasises a bigger focus on times tables at the beginning of the lesson. In addition as reported to parents before, children can choose which times tables award to go for (bronze, silver and gold) on their achievement card.

Please help us by supporting your child to learn their tables (see homework information below).

A good interactive game for both times tables multiplication and division facts can be found at:

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games/hit-the-button>

English

This year has seen a great deal of development in our approach to writing which has subsequently had a huge impact on the quality of writing. This has been confirmed by our annual County monitoring visit, and KS2 moderation (as reported in a June newsletter). Next academic year we will continue to use enriched texts and engaging hooks to inspire children's writing.

At Vernham Dean Primary we value reading enormously and the teachers' love for books comes across when they are teaching. One aspect we would like to promote more is 'free reading' and so we are going to introduce 'Free Reading Friday' as of next term. Each Friday during Guided Reading time, all children will be able to participate in different activities including:

- Reading comics and annuals
- Exploring different books in the library
- Reading and sharing books with an older/younger child from other classes
- Participating in reading challenges

FEET Marking for Writing

Over the summer term, we have explored different ways of marking to maximise the progress of children and empower them as writers. Now the trial is over, we are ready to embed this into our English Curriculum next academic year. The key principle is to empower children to take ownership of their writing as an author.

Focused Effective Evaluation Time (known to the children as FEET) is a coded way of marking whereby children have 10 minutes focused evaluation time to use their knowledge of what has been taught to edit and improve their writing. The teacher uses a series of codes T1 – T3 for KS1, and T1 – T5 for KS2. For younger children, the code would be placed next to the piece of writing that needs editing; for older children this would be placed in the margin. In Year 6, the code would be placed under the paragraph and towards the end of Year 6, at the end of the piece of work to deepen knowledge and understanding. The codes are always linked to the same area of English:

T1 - punctuation

T2 – vocabulary

T3 – sentence structure

T4 – current grammar being taught

T5 – text features based

The child utilises these codes to re-read their work, think about what needs to change, and then make corrections. Teachers encourage children to do this independently but they assess those who need guidance.

Extra Support

What if my child needs some extra support with reading, writing or maths?

Teachers use lessons to make judgements all the time about your child's progress, called 'in the moment assessment', and will adjust their teaching accordingly. However, there will be times when children need some additional support; this happens in three ways:

Pick Ups

This is where a child may need some additional support linked to what they have been learning and a certain area of the curriculum for reading, writing or maths. An adult will 'pick up' and carry out some additional work to consolidate or address a misconception.

Challenge Pick Ups

This is where we take a child, or group of children who are working at a greater depth to challenge them further in an aspect of the curriculum.

Booster

This is carried out over the course of a few weeks (between 2 and 6) to address areas where a child may need a little more support. Activities are carried out in various ways to support learning and are tailored to the child.

Intervention

From time to time a child may need intervention to support their additional learning needs. This may be where they have special educational needs such as speech and language or their learning needs require regular extra support.

In all three areas, the teacher oversees the progress and development of the child no matter who is leading the work

PE and Sport

As with this year, our sports coach from Premier Sport will return next academic year to enhance our PE opportunities for our children. For those parents who do not know, Premier Sport is a company whose delivery, training and ethos is carefully planned with Educational Specialists. They will also continue to provide lunchtime activities for all ages and an after school club.

After the successful year running our Tag Rugby Team, Mr Reilly has kindly 'offered' to continue next year. The school appreciate all that he has done to improve team skills and we are looking forward to successful matches in the autumn term.

Music Lessons

If you wish your child to learn guitar or Ukulele, please contact the office. Lessons happen on a Monday afternoon and cost £75 per term.

Health and Citizenship

As reported last year, the school made the decision to write curriculum plans to ensure that children were provided with good quality health and citizenship education covering many life skills. This has been very successful for all children across the school and parents have made many positive comments to myself and teachers about the children coming home enthusiastic about many a topic whether it be about internet safety, making and keeping friends or saving money. Due to the success of this curriculum, we shall continue to write new plans for next academic year.

Homework

Over the term, I have been researching the benefits and pitfalls of homework with the view to making some changes next academic year. Therefore, it was with interest that on our recent parent questionnaire returns, there were a few comments about how our homework going out on Thursday was confusing, and that homework impinges on the weekend.

As of September, homework will go out on a Monday and be due back on a Thursday. Homework club will be held on Tuesday. Just like this academic year, the club is there for all children to use and the adult running it will be happy to support your child. However, please note that it is also there to support parents and families in keeping up-to-date with 'how things are done'. It doesn't matter if you don't know what a subordinate clause is, or how to do grid method, if you wish to ask a question, please feel free to drop in. All homework will cover areas that your child has been learning in class with no unknown work set.

During my research, I looked at what would be the most useful and effective use of time during homework and have now made a decision that homework will be only for those aspects of English and Maths that underpin the majority of the rest of that subject's curriculum.

English

Homework set will cover two key areas:

- Spelling – these will be statutory words for the year group, or spelling activities linked to a rule that your child is learning
- Grammar – this will be the current grammar being taught, or the consolidation of previous grammar learnt

Maths

Homework set will cover two key areas:

- Times tables (please note for key stage 1, this includes number bonds)
- Place Value (the numerical value that a digit has by virtue of its position in a number) related activities which underpin the vast majority of Maths' curriculum – this could be identifying the place value of a digit; counting on and back in different amounts, or multiplying by 10, 100 or 1000 (KS2 only) to name a few activities

Outdoor Learning

Through the development of our outdoor learning, and in order to utilise our grounds more for science, we are introducing a long term science study. Each class will return periodically to their study area over the academic year to answer a key enquiry question.

In developing opportunities for outdoor learning, we will be improving the area outside Maple class to provide learning opportunities for reading, writing and maths for Year 1/2.

We are pleased to announce that the school will be holding a second Countryside Day on Wednesday 18th October (the Wednesday before half term).

Smart School Council

Since the change to including all children (and adults) in our Smart School Council, the children have made many decisions which have included:

- Changing the all-weather pitch rota to include some 'no football sessions' across the week
- Planting and growing to make money for the school
- Locking classroom doors whilst the school is in whole school Worship in the hall to ensure safety for all
- Asking the Headteacher for new, and more interesting, play equipment – this was provided

Housekeeping

Parents' Evening

In response to the parent questionnaire returns, I have made the decision that the next parents' evening will move from January to November approximately half way through the first term. This means that parents will have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress before the end of term interim report. In addition, I shall be re-designing the interim report to make it more informative to you about your child's progress.

Uniform

We feel that uniform looks smart, lends a certain expectation to school life and indeed, makes life easier for parents.

Children will need:

- Grey skirt/pinafore or trousers
- White shirt or polo shirt
- School sweatshirt with logo or School cardigan with logo
- Black shoes
- Grey/black socks
- In summer most girls wear green gingham dresses

PE Kit: Black shorts and green school T-shirt. Trainers or plimsolls are needed for games lessons in Key Stage 1 and the Key Stage 2 children must have trainers.

Children may wear, plain jogging bottoms and bring any sweatshirt for cold weather as we do not encourage them to wear their inside uniform. This kit can be kept, preferably in a drawstring bag, on the child's peg.

Packed Lunches

As a school, we promote being healthy so we ask if you could support us by not providing chocolate bags or bars of chocolate (such as Mars Bars or Yorkie Bars) for your child's lunch.

Volunteers

Parent support is crucial in supporting the education of our children and to those parents who volunteer within school, your help is invaluable and we thank you for your dedication.

We wish to increase volunteers within our school and would like to hear from you if you could help. Please do not hesitate to approach Miss Thompson.

If you don't feel volunteering is for you, but you have a skill you may like to share with a one off or occasional visit to the school, whether you are an artist, mathematician, gardener, bee keeper, scientist, cake decorator...we would love to hear from you too!

Our existing volunteers help us in many ways, including:

- Helping us by listening to readers
- Helping us by working with more able mathematicians
- Running our library
- Training and supporting our school choir
- One of our parents is leading the development of the wildlife area
- Supporting cooking within the curriculum

In addition to these examples, are those parents and families who offer their time and muscle power to 'dig, lift, pull and push' whenever we send a plea. We are extremely grateful to all those parents.

Finally, I would like to thank the children and staff for their hard work over the academic year. Our Year R GLD, KS1 and KS2 SATs results reflect their work. The team here are immensely talented and enthusiastic about all we do here and I wish them a well-earned summer break.

To all families, have a safe and relaxing summer.

Katy Thompson
Headteacher