

Cornerstone Chronicle

January 2015 No 10



Building our Community with Love and Hope

Welcome back from Christmas after an important and exciting Autumn term. It was wonderful to see how much everyone enjoyed, learnt and grew last term. Lots of fantastic highlights, wonderful projects and successful events. We hope that 2015 continues the journey of growing our school in a similarly positive way.

Class Updates...

Year R Bumble Bees



Highlights in Bumble Bees during last half-term.

We have made a great deal of progress in Bumble Bees, we are busy, independent learners. We are confident in our environment and ready for all new challenges.

Highlights of the term were all the celebrations we enjoyed, including our christening and Christmas celebrations.

We have also learnt lots of new sounds which we are using in our reading and writing. We have excellent speaking skills and have also become really good at listening to each other.

The children have also been very flexible and have coped well when staff have been absent, this is admirable in children so young.

What is going on in Bumble Bees during this half-term?

Bumble Bees are involved in a unit called Pirates and Princesses; much of our learning will be based around this theme.

In Writing, we are working on improving our handwriting, making sure we hold the pencil near the point, in a tripod grip, and begin to form letters correctly. We will be writing labels and captions and learning oral stories so that we build a repertoire of stories in our memory to help us write.

In Reading we are going to think about characters, settings and the way stories are organised, sometimes thinking about alternative endings to stories

In Physical development we will practise catching, including using "cup" and "flower" hands, patting, kicking and throwing a ball. We will do some gymnastics, gaining confidence in our ability to travel over, under and through apparatus. We will be finding out about healthy eating and exercise, comparing our lifestyle with pirates.

To improve our Speaking skills when we ask questions, we are going to try to ask 'how and why' questions. In the classroom we are going to have a vocabulary tree

where we display new words we learn, in an attempt to broaden our vocabularies.

In Maths we will be writing teens numbers; 13, 17 etc. we will reinforce 3D shape, and using the language of time and money as well as that of subtraction and addition.

In Science we will be looking at similarities and differences, patterns and change in the environment, in the weather, in water and ice play and in cooking and food, biscuits first!

In Technology we will look at retrieving information from the internet.



Year 1 Ladybirds

Highlights in Ladybirds during last half-term.

Last term we enjoyed learning about the countries in the United Kingdom and writing about what we found out about them. We also enjoyed learning new skills in art using charcoal to show light and dark parts of objects which we then used for our 2015 calendar.

We really enjoyed our topic of animals especially our class zoo where we were able to share all that we had learnt. We loved dressing up and acting like animals too!

What will Ladybirds be learning during this half-term?

This term we will be learning about the great Fire of London and the children have begun to think about what they would like to find out such as how big the fire was, how hot the fire was, and also learning how to be safe around fire.

We are also going to be thinking about change and how we feel about change, is it good or bad?



Year 2 Butterflies

Highlights in Butterflies during last half-term.

Another busy half-term learning about a variety of things. The children started being very reflective and respectful on Remembrance Day. They tried hard to imagine just what it would have been like to have been a soldier all those years ago.

We have also respectfully learnt about other cultures in RE, celebrating festivals such as Diwali. In DT we evaluated bird boxes, designed our own and made them. The children reflected on their plan and talked about what they would change next time.

What will Butterflies be learning during this half-term?

The key to our learning is 'Comparison'. We will be comparing life in Hampshire and India. Comparing ways to stay healthy and looking closely at baskets and their many different uses.

Alongside all this learning the children will be working on recognising past tense in text and trying to use their mental maths knowledge in other mathematical ways.

Church School Values

As you are aware our school has two key Values: **Love** and **Hope**. These Values were chosen as the school was being set up.

Our aim this term is for Richard Wharton (Diocesan Schools Advisor) to run an evening workshop for parents and governors. During this evening we will discuss our two Values and consider options for a third Value which will help clarify our shared vision for us as a Church of England school. You will be informed about further details later this term.

We hope to follow this workshop with a series of home discussion tasks about the potential new Value for you and your children to explore. The children's understanding will also be supported by Collective Worship discussions with staff in school.

We will then canvass the opinions of the children, parents, staff and governors to come to a collective agreement and understanding of our school vision.

We hope that you agree that having meaningful and powerful values for us to develop with your children, will help them grow and mature as well rounded, thoughtful and considerate people.

Collective Worship themes

During this half-term we will be exploring the themes of: Recognising God, Choices and Wisdom with the children. The children have opportunities to share their thoughts and opinions and will become more involved in leading sections of some of the Collective Worships. We will be learning three new songs: "Be bold, be strong"; "Give me joy in my heart" and "Don't build your house on the sandy land".

School Development Plan

The key priorities for school development have been discussed and agreed with both staff and governors. Recently Mr. Clarke has shared an update on the progress towards these priorities with governors. The priorities are as follows:

1. Ensure that all pupils achieve high standards so that from each starting point they make rapid and sustained progress and learn exceptionally well.
2. Ensure that teaching is never less than consistently good and frequently outstanding across all subjects,

providing the appropriate climate and support to secure this.

3. Senior Leaders and governors work closely to provide leadership that further develops the confidence and commitment of all stakeholders in growing Cornerstone as an Exceptional Learning Community.
4. Embrace and develop our strong Christian Values and bring them to life ensuring they are reflected and lived out in the daily life of our school and community.
5. Ensuring that the children and staff's well-being is high priority and that all members of the community demonstrate positive, thoughtful and Values based behaviours.
6. Develop the effectiveness of leadership at all levels in having positive impacts for children.

These priorities can also be accessed on our school website. Should you have any questions about them please speak to Mr. Clarke.

"Building Tomorrow's Schools Today"

This is the title of a book by Richard Gerver, formerly a teacher and headteacher, who is now an inspirational speaker.

I would like to thank Mrs. Hendley for lending me this book last term after a conversation about education in the playground. It resonates with many of the ideas that schools nationally are sharing about creating an education system which will equip our children for happy, successful and fulfilled lives in the 21st century, and also our initial ideas related to growing an 'Exceptional Learning Community' here at Cornerstone.

As staff we have already debated the concepts of 'powerful learning' and 'high quality teaching'. I have shared a few quotes from the book with the staff to help us continue to develop our thinking and thought that you may find them interesting as well:

"What kind of future are we preparing our children for?"

"We should look to the future to define the educational experiences we manage for our children. We must also learn to think more creatively about the way we package the learning, to make it exciting, relevant and dynamic"

"Education is not about studying to take exams; it is much more important than that...It is about relishing challenges, seizing opportunities and seeing mistakes as significant opportunities for development"

"Our children need experiences that open their minds to all the opportunities and approaches."

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"Education should be seen as journey of discovery. It should spark the flames of imagination and light the fires of curiosity and development"

Christmas Service

Thank you to the children and all the adults who supported in making the two services such wonderful occasions. The children's acting, singing and dancing were appreciated by everyone. The children in Butterflies were involved in creating the script. Thank you to all the parents for the help in providing costumes.

It was lovely to hear all the kind and enthusiastic compliments afterwards as well, and in particular to those in audience who said it really helped them and the children remember and reflect on the significance of the original Christmas story.

Car Park

It was noticeable at the Christmas Service that we had many vehicles on site and so we opened up the overflow car park. At future whole school events you are also welcome to use the remaining empty spaces in the staff car park as well.

Cornerstone PTA

Thank you to everyone involved in the PTA, which is a large number of enthusiastic and hard-working people. The highlight of the half-term was undoubtedly the Christmas Fair. With large crowds attending and enjoying the range of stalls, games and refreshments on offer we raised over £1500 – which is a fantastic total. Thank you everyone for your support.

However there was also the Film Club night during the last week of term which was very popular with the children.

There are more exciting events planned for the Spring term. If you are not yet a member of the PTA but would like to offer your time and skills in some way please talk to either Claire Nichols or Karen Davis (who are Chair and Vice Chair of the PTA this year), Mrs Gadd in the school office, or one of the numerous parents in the PTA who are on the playground every day.

Parent View

Thank you to everyone who has completed the online questionnaire about your views of our school, we are pleased that we have 24 responses. Although we have asked before it is still the case that we would value hearing everyone's views to help us continually reflect

on the work of the school. Therefore if you have not completed the form so far we would appreciate it if you could log on to www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk or follow the link on our website under "Parents".

Mental Maths Home Learning

At Parents Evening last term the teachers shared a card with some suggestions for mental maths learning to be practised at home. Our hope is that if the children work on these 3 times a week both in school and at home for 5 minutes each time, their confidence and recall of many of these key facts will be significantly improved. This in turn helps them to apply this knowledge to a variety of learning tasks in school.

We would greatly appreciate your support by finding a short amount of time 3 times a week to practice one of the bullet points each week. If you have any feedback about these cards or would like further ideas on how to use them please speak to your child's teacher or Mrs. Riley who is our maths leader.

Home Learning

Thank you for all the time and support you have given your child already this year with their Home Learning. Home Learning for all classes is given out on Thursdays and collected in by the following Wednesday.

Please do keep supporting your child with daily reading as it will develop their skills and their love of reading.

Messy Church in Whiteley

More families are joining in these community occasions, which prove to be a special time for families and for children to think and explore. There are always a range of fun activities based around a theme which are followed by songs, a story and a meal.

If you have not attended before but would like to do so you will be very welcome.

The dates for the Spring term are: Sunday 1st February and Sunday 1st of March at the Community Centre, between 4-6 p.m. However there will also be a special Easter Messy Church which we will host at Cornerstone on Friday 3rd of April which will start at 11 a.m. and finish after a shared lunch at about 1 p.m.

Parentmail

You may not have yet registered with us for Parentmail. It is a quick and efficient way of us sending you letters and newsletters. It is also a useful way of storing previous communications to check details. Many schools in Hampshire use this system.

If you are interested in taking advantage of Parentmail please talk to Dawn Gadd in the school office. As a school we can make available copies of letters that have a reply slip to save you printing such letters out, although we will also happily accept hand written reply slips for those letters as long as they contain the same information.

Facebook and Twitter accounts

Thank you to everyone who has been following our Facebook (Cornerstone Primary) and Twitter (@cornerstonecofe) feeds. We also appreciate the feedback that many parents have given us about how useful they find these social networking platforms.

Our aim is to increasingly use these social media platforms as ways of celebrating achievements and sharing news and ideas. Please remember if you have any specific queries about your own child we would appreciate you coming into school to speak with us directly.

Website

Please remember our website is the central source of information for parents and the wider community about our school.

The range of dates for the year are available and are kept up to date. Our Facebook feeds are also linked, so even if you are not on Facebook you can enjoy reading about and seeing what the children have been learning and achieving.

Clubs

For details about other clubs on offer for your children please visit the school website and click on the "Parents" link on the homepage.

Governor Updates

The governors are working on a summarised format of the Full Governing Body minutes which we aim to put on the website for you to be able to share with your children.

Staff INSET days

Staff training days (also known as INSET days) are extremely important for the professional development of the staff and have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning your children will experience. The final three INSET days for the year have been set and are:

Friday 30th January

Monday 23rd February

Friday 1st May

On these days the school will be closed to the children.

Dates for your Diary



January 2015

05 Jan First day of Spring Term 1

13 Jan PTA meeting 7.00 p.m.

30 Jan INSET day – Children do not attend

February 2015

13 Feb Last day of Spring Term 1

23 Feb INSET day – Children do not attend

24 Feb First day of Spring Term 2

March 2015

3 March PTA meeting 7.00 p.m.

13 March PTA / Church Quiz night

17 March Parents Evening 3.30-6.00 p.m.
(Bumble Bees 3.30-7.00 p.m.)

19 March Parents Evening 3.30-6.00 p.m.

26 March Bumble Bees Parents Evening 3.30-6.00 p.m.

April 2015

2 April Last day of Spring Term 2

20 April First day of Summer Term 1

May 2015

01 May INSET day – Children do not attend

22 May Last day of Summer Term 1

June 2015

1 June First day of Summer Term 2

9 June PTA meeting

15 June Phonics week

July 2015

22 July Last day of Summer Term 2

Many thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Tim Clarke

Headteacher