

We are half way through this academic year and you may be wondering where the time has gone. We've had lots of memorable events and experiences for the children so far, and more are coming their way during this half-term. Thank you for all the positive support you have given the school over the first half of the year.

Class Updates...

Year R Bumble Bees



Highlights in Bumble Bees during last half-term.

We all thoroughly enjoyed pirates and princesses although Aoife did have to remind me "Mrs Ross we haven't done much Princess stuff yet!"

We made maps, wrote lists, and learnt how to make a recording of photos and speech using 'Photo Talk' a great free app on the iPads.

We learnt two stories to help us with our writing, 'The gingerbread man' and 'The princess and the pea'.

In Science we made some simple predictions about which biscuits would be the best to use for a gingerbread man, because they wouldn't soak up too much water, we were surprised to find that it wasn't ginger, but hob nobs!

We have done lots of addition work and are now much more confident, thanks for your help with the home learning. Special mention to all of you who encouraged plate making home learning, what a fab display!

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

Mr Jenkin and Mrs Ross have planned the half term around the theme of 'People Who Help Us. (PWHU) We have chosen this unit because many of our children independently play with resources which enable them to be Police, Doctors, etc.

We plan to focus on the following areas:- week 1 PWHU at home, 2 PWHU at school, 3 PWHU in hospitals, 4 PWHU by protecting us, 5 PWHU in our community, 6 PWHU look after animals (We also say goodbye to Mr Jenkin in week 6). If your occupation relates to one of these areas and you would be willing to come into school to talk to the children, or lend us some uniform or equipment to look at, please let us know.

In English we are learning two talk for writing stories; 'My Brother' and 'The Little Red Hen' and writing labels, captions, and sentences independently. If your child does independent writing at home please bring it

in to school to show us. In Maths we will be concentrating on Subtraction, Weight and Capacity. In Art we will be experimenting with clay, learning a spring dance, singing Easter songs. In Science we are hoping to hatch some eggs and look for evidence of change in the environment in school and around us. In PE we will teach apparatus and encourage safe practices when moving equipment. In Technology we will be using programmable toys, iPads and a painting program.

We will begin the half term by sharing home learning, thank you, and undertaking a phonics assessment before we start Phase 4 of letters and Sounds.

On a personal note from Mrs. Ross: I have recently lost my father, so will have some short periods of absence. I know these will not affect the children as Mr Jenkin is doing a great job on his final teaching practice.



Year 1 Ladybirds

Highlights in Ladybirds during last half-term.

During Spring 1 Ladybirds enjoyed finding out about the Great Fire of London, using their knowledge to role play being Thomas Farynor in his bakery. The children spent some time creating news reports and were very excited when they filmed themselves and were able to watch their performances back. Throughout the half term we considered change and how this can affect us – is change good or bad? The children were able to discuss this concept and reflect upon what has changed in their lives so far.

What will Ladybirds be learning during this half-term?

In Spring 2 we are going to be getting very creative making houses from the Great Fire of London and using different printing and texture techniques to decorate them. We will also be creating some music and a dance for the Great Fire of London. We will be using the iPads again but this time to make animations about the Great Fire of London. All this will be in preparation for our celebration near the end on the half term, date to be confirmed shortly.



Year 2/3 Butterflies

Highlights in Butterflies during last half-term.

We have had a busy half term learning about India. We compared Whiteley with another locality and learnt that there are a number of facilities available to us compared to the people living in villages in India. As part of this learning the children printed their own Rangoli pattern, learnt to basket weave, and presented all this learning to the parents in the form of a fantastic India experience.

We have also learnt about hygiene and how important it is to keep our bodies healthy. We talked about healthy foods and how easily germs can spread without us knowing. A big thank you to Dr Ellis who carried out a workshop with the children to help them be more aware when washing their hands or when they have a cold.

What will Butterflies be learning during this half-term?

Spring 2 looks to be just as busy. We will be learning about key people from the past and how they influenced the future. It will be History led with cross curricular links made. As well as learning about the past we will be reflecting on the choices we make and the things we do. We will also be working hard to improve our writing ability and our maths learning. Especially our mental maths skills.

Church School Values

We have a series of home learning discussions and a parents and governors evening workshop coming up over the coming months to involve all members of our school community in helping to define our current Value of **Love** and **Hope**, and to consider which Value to choose as our third. We will be considering: Courage, Forgiveness, Trust and Wisdom.

There will be a separate letter coming out shortly to clarify the process the school will be undertaking and the rationale behind it. We hope that you agree that having meaningful and powerful values in their lives help your children grow and mature as well rounded, thoughtful and considerate people.

Easter Collective Worship

The children in Ladybirds and Butterflies will be sharing what they have learnt about Easter and the events of Easter week in a special Collective Worship on Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd April at 9.15 am. We hope you will be able to join us on one of these occasions.

Collective Worship themes

During this half-term we will be exploring the themes of: Lent, Mothers and Easter with the children. The children have many chances to reflect on their own opinions and to discuss their ideas with each other. They also have more formal opportunities by sharing prayers they have written in some Collective Worships. We will be learning two new songs this half-term: "Shine Jesus Shine" and "Thank you Lord for this fine day". However we will also be occasionally singing other songs we have learnt this year at the children's request. They certainly have some favourites.

Lent 40Acts

During this half-term we will be encouraging the children to carry out a generous act each day. We will involve the children in selecting which of the suggested acts of generosity we undertake, as we are obviously not at school for 40 days.

Examples we may choose include: giving a compliment to someone, tidy your room without being asked, being the first to say sorry, chat with someone different and make an effort to smile more.

We will post the act for the day in the classrooms and on our Facebook page.

World Book day

World Book day is taking place on Thursday 5th March. Due to Comic Relief day taking place the following week we won't be asking you to find a costume for your child to dress up in, but we do want to promote the wonder and importance of books and reading to the children.

We would greatly appreciate any volunteers from among the parents, family or friends who would be willing to come in and read a favourite children's book (or part of it) to a group of children or if you prefer a whole class.

We will have two time slots during the day for this: 9.00-9.30 and 2.30-3.10. However if you cannot make one of these times but can at another point of the day please do let us know.

Please speak to your child's class teacher if you can volunteer. In particular it would be great to see some men setting positive male reading role models to the children.

We are also pleased to let you know that a letter will be coming out soon giving information about after school opening of the Library. This will enable families to come into the school library and enjoy, share and change library books directly with your child. Again this will be a superb opportunity to encourage your child's passion for reading.

Mental Maths Home Learning

Your child's class teacher shared a card at the previous Parents Evening, with some key facts for your child to practise a few times a week for short amounts of time. We have also be using these regularly at school, focusing on just one each day for a few minutes.

Educational research shows that the greater children's knowledge and recall of basic number information and other key maths words and facts the more confidence they have in their ability to use and apply these facts in other maths learning.

We would appreciate your feedback on how useful you have found these cards and your continued support in practising them regularly at home.

Growth Mindset

We are emphasising the benefits and importance with your children of a 'Growth Mindset' approach towards learning and life. Carol Dweck a world famous professor from America has been working in this field over the last 20 years. Her research shows how it helps children and adults in all elements of their life to be happy, positive, successful and fulfilled.

The table below describes some of the main differences between a 'Growth Mindset' and a 'Fixed Mindset' as explained by Dweck.

Fixed mindset	Growth Mindset
Intelligence is static / fixed	Intelligence can be developed / expanded
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Safe learning</i>• <i>Failure / mistakes are bad</i>• <i>Fragile</i>• <i>Avoid challenges</i>• <i>Give up easily when presented with obstacles</i>• <i>See effort as fruitless</i>• <i>Ignore useful feedback</i>• <i>Be threatened by others' success</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Adventurous learning</i>• <i>Failure / mistakes are useful</i>• <i>Resilient</i>• <i>Embrace challenges</i>• <i>Persevere despite obstacles</i>• <i>See effort as a path to mastery</i>• <i>Learn from feedback</i>• <i>Be inspired by others' success</i>

It is hugely encouraging each week to hear the reasons why children are being placed in the Golden Book. The children are also becoming very adept at identifying why others have been recommended, with reasons like perseverance, making progress, trying hard, improving at their targets, taking risks, overcoming difficulties on their own and supporting others being shared regularly.

Home Learning

Thank you for all the time and support you have given your child already this year with their Home Learning. Please do keep supporting your child with daily reading as it will develop their skills and their love of reading. This could be you sharing a book with them rather than your child reading to you, as we recognise children are sometimes too tired at the end of a long day. Thank you to all those parents who read and liked our link on Facebook to Chris Evans article in the Telegraph about the importance of parents and children sharing books at bedtime.

School development Plan

Just a reminder that the key priorities for this academic year are accessible on our school website. Progress towards these priorities are shared regularly with the governors and our Local Authority Inspector.

Cornerstone PTA

Thank you again to the wonderful and hardworking PTA, and in particular for the generous donation of £1500 that has paid for more books for our library, our class set of recorders and covers for our mini iPads.

As well as running the events the members of the PTA give a great deal of their time organising events, preparing resources and submitting grant applications. If you have not been involved yet and would be interested in helping in whatever capacity is suitable for you please talk to Claire Nichols (Chair) or Karen Davis (Vice-Chair).

Upcoming events this half-term are:

- PTA meeting 3 March (7 pm)
- Quiz night: 13 March (7 pm)
- Disco: 2 April (4-5 pm)

PTA and Whiteley Church Quiz night

We hope you have received a flyer for this event. As well as enjoyable quiz, there will be a raffle and the possibility of a few additional games. Last year's event was a great success and many people have already signed up in teams or as small groups.

The profits raised will be split equally between the school's PTA and Whiteley Church. It is a fantastic opportunity to build greater links between the school and church.

Comic Relief day

Comic Relief day is taking place across the country on Friday 13th March, and here at Cornerstone we want to be a part of such an exciting and entertaining day.

This year the slogan is "Make your face funny for money!" So one of the ways we want to raise money is to ask all children (and staff!) to come in dressed up or dressed down, but with a decorated face. We will be asking for a donation of £1 for this.

However we will also be holding an after school cake sale, as it links with "Comic Relief Bake Off". We would appreciate generous donations of cakes to be handed into school in the morning and then even more generosity in buying others after school.

Finally we will also be creating a "Joke Wall" during the day. If your child has a favourite joke please help them to write or type it out on an A5 or A4 sized piece of paper at home. They can hand it into their teacher at the start of the day, and you can come into school to view the Wall with them at the end of the day. There is no charge for this, we would just like some laughs!

Bishop Lent Appeal

Whiteley Church will be supporting this worthwhile cause this year. The money raised will be split between two charities: local Mental Health charities and the Bethlehem Rehabilitation Centre. If you would like to contribute you can collect a Lent Appeal envelope from Mrs Gadd in the school office.

Walk to school week 2015

Walk to school week is a national initiative designed to encourage more children to be physically active. This year it will be taking place from 18-22 May.

We know that many families already walk regularly to school, but this is an ideal opportunity for more people to try it as often as possible for a week.

I have promised that I will walk to and from school every day that I do not have a meeting I have to drive to. I also promise not to try and book a meeting for every day that week!

End of the day collection

A quick plea from staff. Please could you make eye contact with your child's adult when collecting at the end of the day. On a few occasions the children are saying they can see an adult and make their way onto the playground before the member of staff has identified who is collecting them.

Messy Church in Whiteley

There are two dates remaining for the Spring term. Sunday 1st of March is the first and will be 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. If you have not attended before your family are very welcome. It would be lovely to have many members of the Cornerstone community coming together to enjoy Easter.

Parent View

Thank you to everyone who has completed the online questionnaire with your opinions of our school. We are pleased to have had 26 responses, however we would appreciate more. 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".

We are pleased that the overall picture of parental opinion is positive with 100% of parents saying they would recommend us to other parents and that their children are happy.

Please also remember that if you have queries or concerns about your child's education or the work of the school in general please do make an appointment to discuss this either with your child's class teacher or myself.

Parentmail

Parentmail is a fantastic system to receive all school communications by email. Along with our use of a text service it was one of the ways we contacted parents on the recent emergency closure day. If you have not yet signed up for this service please speak to Mrs. Gadd in the school office.

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. We would be interested to know how many parents are following each account and how we might encourage more families to follow. If you have any thoughts on this please speak to Mr. Clarke.

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.

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Building our Community with Love and Hope

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.

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 INSET day of this academic year is Friday 1st May.

The first INSET day of next academic year is on the first day of term, Tuesday 1st September.

On these days the school will be closed to the children. We aim to choose the dates for the next INSET days of next academic year as soon as possible, so that families have plenty of notice.

Dates for your Diary



February 2015

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.

5 March: World Book Day

13 March: Comic Relief Day

13 March: PTA / Church Quiz night 7.00 p.m.

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.

25 March: Little Performances (2.00 and 6.00 p.m.)

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

31 March: Parent Workshop on School Christian Values (7.00-8.30 p.m.)

April 2015

2 April: PTA disco

2 April: Last day of Spring Term 2

3 April: Messy Church at Cornerstone(11.00-1.00 p.m.)

20 April: First day of Summer Term 1

May 2015

01 May: INSET day – Children do not attend

18-22 May: Walk to school week

22 May: Last day of Summer Term 1

June 2015

1 June: First day of Summer Term 2

9 June: PTA meeting (7.00 p.m.)

15 June: Phonics week

July 2015

22 July: Last day of Summer Term 2

September 2015

1 September: INSET day – Children do not attend

Many thanks for your continued interest and support.

Yours sincerely,
Tim Clarke
Headteacher