



MILLFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Governors Newsletter June 2014

Welcome

Welcome to our second Summer Term Governors Newsletter. Thankfully the weather is now warmer and the SATS are over. Congratulations to years 2 and 6, and thanks for all the hard work put in by the Head, teachers, LSAs and parents - your drive to maintain our excellent results is really fantastic.

The Governors and Mrs Meacock have recently been considering the changes to the National Curriculum and the impact they will have which are outlined below. However it's not all hard work, aside from our regular meetings and curriculum visits the governors get involved in all sorts of activities to help the school and you'll get a flavour of this here as well.

New National Curriculum - Maths and English - Jenny Davies *Chair of Curriculum and Pupil Committee (Parent Governor)*

At our last meeting we received detailed presentations from Mrs Barnard and Mr Battersby who are the Senior Leadership Team subject leaders for Maths and English.

Maths

In the new curriculum, children are expected to be able to recall basic 'number facts' (such as number bonds and multiplication tables), and be able to calculate complex problems involving multiplication and division by the time they leave primary school.

We looked carefully at some of the new features: children are expected to be able to discuss and explain how they calculate an answer, be able to read and spell mathematical vocabulary, solve word problems, and focus on mental calculation without using calculators.

Mrs Barnard is creating a new Calculation Policy and redrafting the Maths Policy which will set out exactly how each year group will teach the four "rules" (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division). The new topic areas will be number, measurement, geometry and statistics.

A timetable to put this in place has been created and years 3 and 4 are following the new curriculum already – this means they have to "catch up" to the new raised expectations this year and next. Years 1 and 5 will start in September 2014 and Year 6 in September 2015. Each member of staff has a maths curriculum "map" comparing the old and new learning objectives, which will help them with their lesson planning.

We agreed to hold briefing sessions for parents next term to help parents to support maths at home.

English

There are not quite as many changes here. The four elements are still: spoken language, reading, writing and spelling and grammar (SPAG) – which has more importance now.

Each element has also been spread over the year groups; for example punctuation starts with full stops, question marks and exclamation marks in Year 1 to the use of full punctuation – hyphens, colons and semi-colons in Year 6.

Grammar ranges from year 1 using spaces between words, capitals for proper nouns, common plural and verb suffixes, through to year 6 who are expected to be able to use passive voice for purpose, features to convey and clarify meaning, and the use of the language of subject and object.

Speaking and listening focuses on being able to listen and respond appropriately, ask relevant questions, maintain attention and participate in Year 1 to using questions to build knowledge, articulate ideas and opinions. Year 6 pupils are expected to use spoken language to speculate, hypothesise and explore to a high level.

Like Maths, elements will be taught earlier than before enabling children to achieve more creative writing at an earlier age – again there is a lot of catch up to do in years 3 and 4, but we'd like to reassure parents that this is all mapped out and not to worry.

If you want to see more detail on the changes, have a look at the Department of Education website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210969/NC_framework_document_-_FINAL.pdf

Sport at Millfields

We are receiving two years of Sports Premium funding as a legacy from the 2012 Olympics. The Governors have been discussing how best to use this so that we get the most from the funding and build capacity to continue afterwards. Some of the current activities are:

- Employing several outside coaches alongside our staff to teach dance, gymnastics and games.
- Encouraging the children who do not participate in out of school sporting activities to get fitter. The school have purchased three table tennis tables and Mr Battersby runs a "before school" table tennis club with Hassan Lotfi. We would love to encourage more pupils to take advantage of this great kit.

The results of a parent survey have been compiled and we will use the PE enjoyment marks to help us to focus our future sports provision. We want to develop the Playmaker scheme to train both children and staff.

The football team have been doing very well this year. Unfortunately they were beaten in the final of the Colchester and Blackwater Primary Schools Cup at the Community Stadium (oh that England got that far...), but congratulations to all of the team and coaches.

A new afterschool club for Key Stage 1 children called 'Rugby Pups' has started and 22 children have already signed up. However, we are still a bit short of organised girls team sports. We would be interested to know if any parents are trained netball coaches and would be willing to get involved with the netball team.

How governors get involved in the school

1. Gardening - Martin Meltzer (Parent Governor)

We put out a request through parent mail for parent support to assist Alan and Kate with gardening and maintenance chores round the school and had a great response. Preparation of raised beds and planting has commenced and some classes have been preparing seedlings to observe and monitor growth.

The willow garden, the orchard, the wildlife garden and the veggie patch in the courtyard all provide the school with a perfect resource to experience the outdoors with some fruit and veggie production thrown in. We even had a pheasant roosting in the wildlife garden!

We have entered the RHS Campaign for School Gardening and the schools progress can be seen on www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening: the user name is "millfieldspri" for all to have a look. There is still lots of work to do and the children are showing loads of enthusiasm. We are planning some exciting projects and looking forward involving the children throughout the year and not just springtime.

As always if anyone is available to take on a project of your choice or just want to do some exercise just come and muck in!



Year Two with Mrs Denny putting the "growing" topic covered in class into the ground!

2. Visit to Ipswich Transport Museum – Leigh-Ann Munt (Parent Governor)

I was lucky enough to join Reception, year one and year two on their trip to the Ipswich Transport Museum earlier this term. Each trip was a unique and fun experience. The trip was chosen to fit in with the 'digging up the past' theme. The museum hosts an amazing selection of vehicles including trams, trolleybuses, buses, emergency vehicles, bicycles and some mock up shops and garages, some dating back to 1732. The tour guides were all volunteers who work tirelessly to renovate and preserve the vehicles and memorabilia.

The highlight of the trip for year one would have to be the 'Penny Farthing'. They had already done some research and work on it and were excited to see the real thing. Also, they were excited to see another bicycle. They all shouted out 'bone shaker' and instantly pointed to the wooden bike from 1865. The reception children enjoyed climbing in the fire engine and taking turns to wear the helmet and ring the bell. Also, sitting in the police car was also a real treat. Year two all seemed keen to make extensive notes/sketches without being asked and were enthusiastic about the buses and receiving a real ticket from the conductor.



I'm sure the children learnt lots of interesting facts and seeing the vehicles and items on display reinforced their existence. I was amazed by the children's knowledge and their keenness to ask and answer questions. They were confident in coming forward and asked relevant and intriguing questions. I felt the trip was a brilliant way to support the theme and a worthwhile and enjoyable morning for all the children. Thank you to Mrs Cundy, Mrs Penny and Mrs Denny for inviting me. I thoroughly recommend a trip, there is something for everyone!!

Goodbye to Jane (Slade 1972)

Finally, we send out congratulations to Mrs Caswell on her retirement at the end of this term. I've known her since I started as a governor, as she has been inspiring children since September 1993. At various times she has been the school's lead on Modern Foreign Languages, Art and Design Technology, and Maths, and helped create the original library. I hear she is also the unofficial staff social secretary. We'd like to wish her a well-deserved rest and thank her for all the time and energy she has contributed to Millfields.



Have a great summer but please don't forget to leave your comments on the OFSTED ParentView website:

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results/survey/result/11243/current>

Nick White – Chair of Governors