



Be the Best You Can Be...
Celebrate Success...
Respect Others...

Larkfields Update

Newsletter No 33- November 2017

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Firstly, it was great to see so many of you at parents' meetings - it allows us to work with you to ensure that our children become the very best that they can be. The response to the questionnaire we did was fabulous and a response letter about some changes we will be making based on your feedback was sent out on Tuesday (21st). We know that your feedback is important and do try to act on this. Miss Johnston will be doing some further work on obtaining feedback from you and how we can work together more after Christmas. Further information will follow on this later this term.

In the next few weeks you will also be receiving a letter and some information from Place 2 Be, they will be working in school 2 days a week (Thursday and Friday) from December to provide a range of counselling services for children, staff and parents. Dawn Campbell-Goddard has been appointed as our project leader and will be introducing herself to the children and parents over the next few weeks. If you have any questions about this please feel free to speak to Dawn or myself. Dawn and her team will be great addition to Team Larkfields and we are delighted to welcome them here.

I hate to mention the C word too soon (Christmas) but it will soon be here. We are sending out a Christmas countdown sheet with dates and information as a reference. We have lots of exciting things happening including the Year 4/3 Performance - rehearsals are well underway for this, 'A Christmas Carol' performed by the Quantum Theatre in school on the last day of term, Larkfields Got Talent and singing outside with parents. We hope that you can join us for some of these events.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Jess Scott



Thank you for all your support with this event, we raised over £170 for an extremely worthy cause. Photos from the day can be found outside the Year 4 classrooms.

Car Park

Can I please ask that you don't use the car park as a cut through to get into school. The size of the car park means that cars often have to be moved at all times of the day, posing a risk to anyone who uses this as a pedestrian route.



Lunch Times

We have been working closely with Coombs to look at how else we can improve lunch time. We have rearranged the hall and seating to create a more welcoming space and create a better flow through the hall. We are also asking each year group to choose the menu for a day. On these days we will also be inviting parents in for lunch. Year 6 are going first on 1st December, and other year groups will follow later on in the new year.

We are also looking at ways to try to ensure children get the meal that they want, even if they are on last sitting. As a trial, could we ask that you let us know on a Monday morning if your child would prefer the vegetarian option and on what days that week. The cook can then see how many meals of each type she needs to cook on each day. We are trying to gauge how many 2nd choice meals are required. If your child is a vegetarian, you do not need to inform us as they will automatically get the vegetarian option.



Please note the following menu change:

Monday 27th Nov - Spaghetti Carbonara (instead of ham and cheese macaroni)

Tuesday 28th Nov - Chicken Burger instead of Turkey Burger

Friday 1st Dec - Year 6 'Your Choice Day' - Macaroni with ham and cheese or Vegetable chow mein

Academy Update

Thank you for your responses to our consultation about academy. The closing date for this is the 22nd Dec.

We will send out a document compiling the questions and answers we have had towards the end of the consultation period. If you have any

questions, please email

larkfieldsconsultation@gmail.com or

speak to myself or Gavin Davies,

Chair of Governors.

Take Care Reps

The Take Care reps have been very busy in school, writing newsletters, being part of consultation meetings; and the Take Care of Each Other Reps have also been Mid Day Supervisors.

They will be reporting back to the the children on what this was like and what we can do to further improve lunch times.



Focus on... Fluency in Maths

Fluency in the new National Curriculum

One of the three aims of the new curriculum states that pupils (of all ages) will: become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics, including through varied and frequent practice with increasingly complex problems over time, so that pupils develop understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately.

What is fluency?

The first thing to say is that fluency is not only about number – there are other areas of the curriculum where fluency is important.

Fluency is broken up into 3 parts:

Efficiency - this implies that children do not get bogged down in too many steps or lose track of the logic of the strategy. An efficient strategy is one that the student can carry out easily, keeping track of sub-problems and making use of intermediate results to solve the problem.

Accuracy depends on several aspects of the problem-solving process, among them careful recording, knowledge of number facts and other important number relationships, and double-checking results.

Flexibility requires the knowledge of more than one approach to solving a particular kind of problem, such as two-digit multiplication. Students need to be flexible in order to choose an appropriate strategy for the numbers involved, and also be able to use one method to solve a problem and another method to check the results.

So fluency demands more of students than memorising a single procedure – they need to understand *why* they are doing what they are doing and *know when it is appropriate* to use different methods.

Why do children need to be fluent?

The phrase 'number sense' is often used to mean conceptual fluency – understanding place value and the relationships between operations. Children need to know both how and why in relation to numbers and problems. Children who engage in a lot of practice without understanding what they are doing often forget, or remember incorrectly, those procedures. Further, there is growing evidence that once students have memorised and practised procedures without understanding, they have difficulty learning later to bring meaning to their work.

How can we support children in becoming fluent?

As with much of mathematics, the key to fluency is in making connections, and making them at the right time in a child's learning.

Manipulatives

In mathematics education, a manipulative is an object which is designed so that a learner can perceive some mathematical concept by manipulating it, hence its name. The use of manipulatives provides a way for children to learn concepts through developmentally appropriate hands-on experience. This might be practical activities or apparatus that the children use before developing a more formal written approach.

Talking about their work

The quality of the talk is important. It is not simply children sharing how they did a particular calculation, but describing why and how it worked, and how their method is the same or different to those of others. In other words, giving children opportunities to use those higher-level skills of comparing, explaining and justifying. Being able to solve a problem in more than one way reveals the ability to make connections between and among mathematical areas and topics.

Concrete, pictorial, abstract

Objects, pictures, words, numbers and symbols are everywhere. The mastery approach incorporates all of these to help pupils explore and demonstrate mathematical ideas, enrich their learning experience and deepen understanding. Together, these elements help cement knowledge so pupils truly understand what they've learnt.

All pupils, when introduced to a key new concept, should have the opportunity to build competency in this topic by taking this approach. Pupils are encouraged to physically represent mathematical concepts. Objects and pictures are used to demonstrate and visualise abstract ideas, alongside numbers and symbols.

Concrete – Students should have the opportunity to use concrete objects and manipulatives to help them understand and explain what they are doing.

Pictorial – Students should then build on this concrete approach by using pictorial representations. These representations can then be used to reason and solve problems.

Abstract – With the foundations firmly laid, students should be able to move to an abstract approach using numbers and key concepts with confidence.

Consolidation in meaningful contexts

By offering children practice in context we help them to make links between the types of situations that a particular strategy might suit.