

We have had a great start to the new year with lots of amazing learning taking place across the whole school.

There are lots of events coming up this term where you can get directly involved in school:

- We are running parent learning walks, where you can join myself to have a look at the school in action, ask questions and get a real feel for what your children experience in school.
- We are also holding a parent reading event - Mr Barber will be sharing information on how we teach reading, how you can support your child at home and in school and what we are doing in school to promote reading. This will be followed by an opportunity for you to go into a reading lesson and see the magic happen!
- We will also be taking part in World Book Day again - this year we have several events happening including another giant art installation, picnic (indoors), dressing up and a triathlon event. The Triathlon event is linked to Sir Chris Hoy writing his first children's book.
- 6th February is safer internet day and the children will be continuing to learn about being safe on the internet. The theme this year is create, connect, share and respect. I would also like to recommend an app, which is free and allows you to control your child's phone or tablet.

Have a look: <http://ourpact.com/>

- We will also be celebrating Chinese New Year with an assembly, lessons and a themed lunch on the 16th February. One parent/carer of each child in **Year 5** is welcome to join us for lunch on this day. Please contact the office to book your place.

Jess Scott

Transport Help from Parents

We appreciate all the help parents have given us in the past, transporting pupils to and from various sporting events.

Unfortunately, from now on, we are unable to accept help from parents unless they hold the correct business insurance and we would need to see a copy of your insurance before we can ask you to transport children to events. We hope this will not impact on the range of sporting events that our pupils can take part in.



We would like to welcome Dawn and her team of counsellors now working 2 days a week here at Larkfields. The children are already accessing the Place to Talk part of this service and we have had really positive feedback from the children. If you would like to find out more please join us at **2:30pm Friday 2nd February** for a coffee and a chat.

Good Mornings

Can I please just remind you that children should not be on the school site before 8:40am. This is for your child's safety; the children are not supervised until 8:40am.

Children should access school through the gate at the side of the playground.

Thank you for your support.



Reading Focus: Do you read with your child?

Parents should continue reading with their children throughout primary school, urges a report.

Too many parents ditch the daily reading habit once their child reaches the age of seven, according to research for Oxford University Press.

Some 44% of 1,000 parents of 6- to 11-year-olds polled said they rarely or never read with their child after their seventh birthday.

Former primary head James Clements said reading for pleasure was "vital".

The report includes a series of tips for parents from Mr Clements on how to keep pupils engaged with reading throughout primary school.

Variety

These include choosing as wide a variety of books as possible, taking it in turns to read, talking about the book and making sure the child understands any new or unusual words.

"It's a real shame that parents don't realise that just 10 minutes of reading with their child each day is one of the best ways they can support their education", said Mr Clements.

"Reading together six days a week means an extra hour of support for a child.

Top tips for parents

- Even 10 minutes a day reading with your child is a major help
- Choose a wide variety of books to introduce different types of language and style
- Take turns to read aloud to each other. They can learn from your expressive reading and you can check they are not struggling
- Ask questions about the book - maybe about what might happen next or a character's motivation
- Make sure they understand any new or unusual words or phrases
- Enjoy it - "try and lose yourselves in a good story!"

"It's definitely cheaper than an hour with a tutor and it could make a much bigger difference."

The report draws on research from the National Literacy Trust which suggested that young people who read outside class were 13 times more likely to read above the expected level for their age.



Focus on... Times Tables

This half term your child will receive a log in for Times Table Rockstars. This is a new app in which the children can compete with each other and their teachers to become top of the rockstar leader board. This is so that they can practice times tables in a fun and exciting way.

Why are times tables so important?

Just like learning to walk before you can run, learning multiplication and memorising the times tables are building blocks for other maths topics taught in school – higher learning such as division, long multiplication, fractions and algebra. Students who have not memorised the times tables will find these levels of maths much more difficult than they need to be. There is no time to pull out a calculator or to take 20 seconds to work out a maths strategy before coming up with the answer. Students who have not mastered their tables will very often fall behind in maths (and other subjects that use maths) and begin to lose confidence. All because they did not memorise the times tables! Knowing your multiplication facts is helpful not only in the classroom but we frequently use multiplication in our daily lives. We might need it when doubling a recipe, determining a discount at a shop or figuring out our expected arrival time when travelling. Maths calculations are subconscious elements in work, play and daily chores. Knowing the times tables can help simple tasks to be performed rapidly and save time and stress.

How Parents Can Help Their Child Memorise the Times Tables

1. Explain why they are important.
2. Demonstrate what fast recall is.
3. Be interested in maths yourself.
4. Find out what facts they already know.
5. Involve your child in the goal setting process.
6. Focus primarily on the facts they need to learn.
7. Use a chart to monitor progress.
8. Provide encouragement along the way.
9. Spend quality time together practicing.
10. Acknowledge their success.



And most importantly: Have fun!