

Newsletter 49: February 2018

Browsing through some old staff meeting minutes from 1994 the other day I was intrigued by the nature of what was being discussed at Ruislip Gardens almost a quarter of a century ago. The items on the agenda for one of the meetings were as follows:-recording TV programmes, coloured paper, stock cupboards and stock, hall displays, the music centre, wet lunchtimes, marbles and gate monitors.

Nowadays the focus of our Continuing Professional Development (CPD)-a more appropriate title for our weekly staff meetings- has a very different aspect to it as we concentrate almost exclusively on Teaching and Learning. This more forensic approach to what we are doing in the classroom and beyond has certainly paid dividends as we have recently received two favourable reports from the Local Authority in relation to the progress that we are making in relation to all four of our Ofsted targets.

Despite the resolute focus on school improvement there are still plenty of extra curricular events for all of our pupils to enjoy. In this edition of the newsletter we reflect on a very successful storytelling week and also look ahead to some exciting times in the approach to the end of the Spring term.

Mr. Titeux.

Staff news

Congratulations are in order to both Mrs McCaffrey and Miss Radburn who have secured promoted posts in different schools in Buckinghamshire for September 2018. Whilst we are delighted for them on an individual level we will be very sorry to see two such fine professionals leaving Ruislip Gardens. They have both contributed an immense amount to our school over the last few years and I will be providing a more fulsome appraisal of their achievements in a later Summer newsletter. We will be advertising their posts and interviewing for replacements in the next few weeks.

Ms Simos will be leaving us at the end of this term. She is keen to broaden her teaching experiences in England before heading back to Australia towards the end of the year. We are delighted that Mrs Smith will be available to teach Red Class for the Summer Term. Mrs Smith has had a lot of experience in working in our Early Years over the last few years.

Congratulations are in order to Ms Gorge and Mrs Lefevre who are both expecting babies towards the end of the Summer Term. The vacancy for a new Headteacher for the school is currently being advertised and the interviews will take place on March 27th and 28th. This will allow Governors to meet before the end of term to ratify the appointment and hopefully make an announcement to our community before we break up for Easter on March 29th. Finally we welcome Nerissa Sharman to our Inclusion Team. She will be working in Year 2 for the remainder of the school year.

School Office

We will be a little short staffed in the School Office until the end of term and we would appreciate it if you could show your usual support and understanding if you have to wait just a little bit longer for an enquiry to be addressed.

Thank you for your patience.

Attendance - School attendance target 96%

This is in line with the national averages although we would like our pupils to do even better than this. At the end of this term all pupils who have achieved 96% will be entered into a raffle for the chance to win a selection of prizes. Last term we were just short of our target at 95.9%.

Congratulations to 1I, 2J, 4G and 6B who were winners of the class attendance prizes last term.

Despite the recent adverse weather and traffic problems which caused unusual delays the vast majority of pupils attended school on these days. Please always make contact with the office if you are unavoidably delayed.

Absence line - If your child is unwell please place a call to the absence line 01895 632895 (option 1) by **9.30am** each morning. Unexplained absences will be followed up throughout the day. Our Attendance Policy now specifies that two contact numbers must be provided for each child in case of emergency situations, please let the office know of any changes as it is important to keep the information updated. Thank you.

Messages regarding after school collection

If your child is being collected by another parent or family member please can we ask where possible you inform the office by **2.30pm** on the day of collection.

Holidays during Term Time

Please be aware that we will not authorise any leave of absence during term time as directed by the Department for Education (DFE). In exceptional circumstances where a child's absence is unavoidable, please write to the Headteacher and our Attendance Officer, Mrs Thompson, to determine next steps.

Important dates & Upcoming Events



Enjoying Learning

PLEASE NOTE: The school will close at **1.30 pm** on the last day of Term: **Thursday 29th March**

March 2018:

Thursday 15th 9.00am -9.20am
6D Class Assembly

Thursday 15th 3.30-4pm
Y3 Woodrow House 2019 Briefing

Monday 19th All Day
SCHOOL CLOSED: TRAINING DAY

Tuesday 20th 3.45pm
Y3 & Y4 Production 'Porridge'

Tuesday 20th All Day
Year 6 Brunel Citizens Trip

Tuesday 20th 1.30pm
Reception Bubble show

Thursday 22nd 7.00pm
Y3 & Y4 Production 'Porridge'

Wednesday 27th All Day
Year 1 Odds Farm Trip

Wednesday 28th
NURSERY BREAK UP FOR SPRING HOLIDAY

Thursday 29th 1.30pm
BREAK UP FOR SPRING HOLIDAY

APRIL 2018:

Monday 16th: All Day
SUMMER TERM BEGINS

Wednesday 18th – to – Friday 20th
Year 4 Woodrow Residential Trip

Current Year 3 2019 Woodrow High House Residential Trip

Looking forward into 2019 we will be holding a meeting for the current Year 3 parents to discuss what the residential trip next year:

Thursday 15th March 2018 at 3:30pm

Year 6 2018 Bournemouth Residential Trip

In preparation for this year's Bournemouth Residential Trip we will be holding a pre-trip briefing:

Tuesday 22nd May 2018 at 6.00pm

We hope to see you all there as we will be sharing important information about the trip.

Years 3 and 4 Production – Porridge

It is almost show time! Year 3 and 4's musical production of Porridge will be showing

Tuesday 20th March 3.45-5.15pm and Thursday 22nd March 7-8.15pm.



For the Tuesday show, Year 3 and 4 will not be dismissed as they will need to get into their costumes in time for the show to begin.

For the Thursday show children will need to be returned to school by 6.30pm to be ready for the show to begin at 7pm. We would like to emphasize that ALL children are expected to attend BOTH shows.

We are looking forward to you seeing our efforts as all the children have been working incredibly hard!

You are able to book your seat (free of charge) using the Parents Evening System, the link for which is on the website under 'Parents: Everything in one place'.



When it comes to times tables, speed AND accuracy are important – the more facts your child remembers, the easier it is for them to do harder calculations.

As a school we will be rolling out 'Times Table Rock Stars', which is a fun and challenging programme designed to help pupils master the times tables! The children will be using the programme in class, but will have access to an online account and app at home, where they can practice, under their chosen Rock Star pseudo name, individually or against their peers. Can we have a school of Rock Stars?

QPR will be running their popular Holiday Courses at local venues during the Easter break. For more information visit <http://www.qprcommunitytrust.co.uk>

The Elms Holiday Camp: running over two weeks 3rd - 6th April and 9th -13th April 2018 at Ruislip Gardens Primary School

Smarty's offer a holiday club, please see www.smartysafterschoolclub.com for details.

The **Nursery** children have been learning about planting. We have planted some seeds and know how important it is to use the right things and do it all in the right order! Now we have to be very good at waiting patiently to see the results. We have done observational drawings of our efforts so far and look forward to being able to compare these pictures with some beautiful home-grown flowers in a couple of months. We will be checking regularly for progress!

We have been having a brilliant time in **Reception** over the last few weeks enjoying the changes in weather and learning during Forest School. We got out and played in the snow last week, and despite the chilly winds, the children tried to make some snowballs and enjoyed writing their names in using footprints in the freshly fallen snow. We had a great time during Story Telling week, learning all about meerkats and even meeting some new animal friends. This past week we have been learning about pirates and trying to build some pirate ships to help carry a treasure. Don't forget the Reception parent's maths workshop on Monday 12th March 2018 at 9am in the Upstairs hall (information is in the home school diaries).

Year 1 are having an eventful Spring term. We really enjoyed storytelling week where we were lucky to meet some African animals including Kitkat the meerkat. We also had visits from an author and a storyteller where we listened in amazement and joined in with props and actions. We then did some fantastic writing, retelling the stories. 1I performed their class assembly and did a brilliant job! 1n Forest School, 1E worked in teams to gather natural materials to create their own skeletons. We worked together to place the "bones" correctly and were even able to name some of them! 1I are excited to try this soon. We had our first look at fractions and we are practising identifying halves and quarters. We are looking forward to finding out more about 'Lila and the secret of rain' – our new text!

Year 3 Year 3 have been working really hard to improve their extended writing. We have been delighted to award many children with a pen licence as a reward for their incredible progress in their presentation. We have written in a range of different genres including: myths, non-chronological reports, diary entries and poetry, making links with our science, history and geography topics. We are really proud of the progress being made by our year 3 children and look forward to seeing continued growth in their efforts and outcomes.

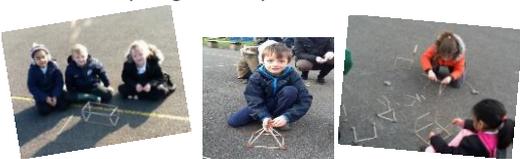
Year 4 has been incredibly busy this half term. We have been working hard on our acting and singing skills alongside all our other work as we prepare for our much anticipated show Porridge! We have begun reading our book The Iron Man by Ted Hughes and have written some informative police reports about the chaos he causes for all the farmers by eating their machinery! We have also been learning about Surrealist artists and how they used dreamlike ideas in their art to create interesting images.

Year 5 thoroughly enjoyed Storytelling week even though we were transported to the Kalahari Desert yet ended up being surrounded by snow! We innovated the story of Meerkat Mail, and pretended that Sunny didn't want to be a Meerkat anymore, so we set off on our travels around the world to explore the many wonderful animals that exist. We embraced our creative side and produced paper models, drew sketches and painted landscapes, all which represented Africa and its animals. We are now looking forward to learning about the Tudors and their weird and wonderful ways, as well as learning how to become newspaper reporters. Over and out!

Year 6 continue to work hard as we head towards the middle of the half term. In English the children have produced some outstanding WW2 inspired writing, which has been displayed in the corridor. The excellent work that they produced during story telling week ranged from stop motion movies, to retellings of Sunny's adventures! The Science work on Electricity proves interesting, the children are looking forward to experimenting later in the unit. Remember: Keep logging into TimesTable rockstars. Have you managed to get Rock Star status?

Year 2 have had a fun-filled month! It all started with a 'Skip 2 Be Fit' workshop where the children used unique skipping ropes which count how many times they have skipped in a minute! We have been practicing skipping with these ropes every week and the children have been beating their score and improving every time.

We enjoyed learning about 2D and 3D shape the last fortnight, especially making our own 3D shape nets in Forest School from sticks and clay! It got messy but we loved their creations.



All month we have been developing our skills of being storytellers. The class teachers and teaching assistants have modelled how to act out stories such as, 'Meerkat Mail' or our new focus book, 'Jack and the Beanstalk.' The children love acting out the story and 'story-stepping' each part to follow the sequence of events.

Storytelling week was definitely the highlight of our month. The children got stuck into researching all about meerkats and retelling the story of 'Meerkat Mail' by Emily Gravett straight away. The children also loved innovating the story by taking Sunny the meerkat to different places around the world. He travelled to places such as Beijing, Paris and even Iceland! We also really enjoyed making our own meerkat cupcakes where the children have put into practice their maths knowledge to calculate the ingredients needed to make the yummy treats! Our favourite part of storytelling week was meeting Kit Kat the two year old meerkat. He was so gentle, sweet and loved being with the children.

Increasing Road Safety Awareness



Thanks to our Junior Road Safety Officers, our school has been able to purchase some large, bright yellow safety banners that are designed to increase road safety awareness. Last year, the JRSO's entered the Hillingdon Dragons Den and successfully obtained £300 to purchase the eye-catching and thoughtful parking banners. Parking on roads and access points near schools can be a big security, safety and access concern. Therefore, the JRSO's felt strongly that having these visual banners would help parents/guardians to think carefully about where they should stop and park. Thinking about the safety of both adults and children is their main aim and key message.

Skip2Bfit

Last month we had a very successful whole school skipping event with workshops for each class. Apart from being a lot of fun the idea was to promote the importance of rigorous exercise to contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Even pupils who struggled initially made some great progress with their technique by the end of the session and we hope that a new skipping craze has developed in the Ruislip area.

At the end of each session everyone took part in a two minute challenge to see how many skips that they could do in that time. Even the staff joined in!

The year group winners were:-

Year 1: Susan = 132 **Year 2: Lily –Ella = 146** **Year 3: Prijanka = 171**
Year 4: Anastasia = 203 **Year 5: Laylah = 206** **Year 6: Ben = 224**

Congratulations to all of the above, but none of them could get anywhere near the staff champion, Mr Davis, who managed a very impressive 239 skips in two minutes. There is just a hint though that Mr Davis might have used up all his energy reserves during the challenge and I am sure that there is someone out there who could overtake his score. Keep skipping!

Story Telling Week

Last week at Ruislip Gardens we held our annual Storytelling Week, which was thoroughly enjoyable for all concerned. It was the 'year of the mongoose' this year and every year group has been learning about 'Meercat Mail' and the adventures of Sonny the meercat. The children were delighted to meet a real life meercat and enjoy an assembly and session from an African storyteller. The children were entranced by her tale on how the sky came to be so high! We were delighted to welcome Gareth P. Jones, our author of the week, into our school on Thursday. The children thoroughly enjoyed his engaging manner, storytelling and even musical talents! We were looking forward to parents meeting him at Storytelling Evening but unfortunately the weather had other ideas and Gareth needed to return to his home in south east London. Well done to all the children who entered our different competitions and another well done to the winners!

A special big thank you goes to Miss Irwin for organising another fantastic week.



National Young Mathematician Awards: Round 2



Because of our success at Round One of the Junior Maths Challenge, the RGS team (Julia, Rajanan, Samina and Veer) headed off to the second round, nervous but prepared for what was set for us. We travelled to the Harrow Explore Learning centre with a member of staff, Mrs Wood.

When we arrived at our destination we ate lunch. A few minutes later, we were told the rules and that we had one hour to complete all the tasks. This kind of helped because in the last round we had time to spare, but we weren't relying on that! Time began and straight away we were deluged in the task. We quickly discovered that our strategy from the last round would not work because in order to move onto the next question we needed the answer to the previous question so we couldn't split up into groups. Alas, we carried on and finished in good time.

Finally, our hour was up and there was nothing else that we could do. Now we just have to wait and hope we get through to the final round.

Written by Veer (6B)

Since Veer wrote his report RGS was notified by Explore Learning that the team performed really well but they haven't managed to make it through to the "nationals." They were just 3 points out so it was a very close run competition. The representative from Explore Learning said the RGS team had done amazingly well. Congratulations and commiserations to our young mathematicians.