



# Thorverton C of E Primary School

## Newsletter

School Lane, Thorverton, Exeter EX5 5NR

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10<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Parents,

### **From Mr Jolliffe**

On Tuesday this week we had our first Federation Review with Gill Winston, who is a school improvement adviser from Babcock LDP. During the course of the day we did a learning walk in each school, spoke to children and teachers about their work. She also spoke to governors and the Federation Leadership Team about the improvements that have taken place within the organisation in the last year or so. Mrs Winston was particularly impressed with all the children's approach to their learning, their engagement and enthusiasm. She was also very complimentary about the learning environments in the different schools and the use that is being made of the principles of Growth Mindset. She also commented on the effectiveness of leaders at all levels, including governors, and praised their understanding of the strengths and development areas of the Exe Valley Federation. I am very grateful to all the children who talked to Mrs Winston and all the staff and governors who worked so hard to get ready for her visit. It was certainly a challenging day but very worthwhile and an important part of our self-evaluation and preparation for future Ofsted inspections.

### **From Mrs Parkes**

What an amazing week we have had. Class 1 seem to be discovering more and more surprising goblin artefacts each morning, from a door to a machine and now actual footsteps! Class 2's trip to Forest and Beach was an amazing experience which Miss Holmes has written more about in this newsletter. Class 3 also had two celebratory days – more further down.

### **Thorverton Federation Review**

I would just like to tell you specifically about Mrs Winston's visit to Thorverton. It went really well. In her feedback she was very complimentary about the school, the staff, our children and the engaging environment that we all work in.

She recognised the huge amount of effort everyone puts in to make the school so successful and was particularly impressed by the strong leadership at all levels, from executive head to all of our hard working TAs.

Mrs Winston noted that the culture of learning in the school is very strong and this was reflected in the way children spoke about their learning and the pride they took in sharing their books. She thought that the work really showed what high expectations we have of the children. They were also very articulate when talking to her about their learning, and she was impressed with the progress and effort that they put into their work.

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When talking about teaching and learning Mrs Winston was impressed by the wide variety of different lessons she saw, and that the children were fully engaged in their lessons, with close relationships with the children clearly evident. She mentioned that the climate and working environment of the school is really great. For example, the displays set expectations for children to rise to.

Mrs Winston recognised the thorough way the books are marked, giving children next steps to work on. I was very proud of our lovely bunch of children, as they talked so openly and positively about their learning in Thorverton School.

### **Egyptian Day in Class 3**



The children in Class 3 had a great day celebrating Ancient Egypt. Many children dressed up and looked the part! They all took turns at cooking Egyptian flat bread, built a Shoduf, cracked a code to the pyramid and made decorative costume jewellery, all this between dancing to 'Walk Like an Egyptian'.

### **Celebrating the Oscars in Class 3**



Later in the week Class 3 also showed their films of their shadow puppet productions and then celebrated with an Oscars ceremony. Mr Martin donned his dinner jacket



to give the Oscar awards to the young filmmakers . Many of them also dressed for the occasion and they all celebrated with "champagne" . Awards were given to Erin for best actress and Greg for best actor and Neptune for the best picture. The winners then had to give a thank-you speech off the cuff.

### **Class 2's Trip to Forest and Beach**

On Thursday, Class 2 enjoyed an exciting trip to Forest and Beach, Slapton. Miss Holmes was very impressed by the children's behaviour and their willingness to give all the activities a try. The children spent the day learning about different habitats at the beach and in the forest. A particular highlight was skimming stones on Slapton Sands and exploring the muddy grounds of the forest. What a messy day we had!



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## Forest School Afternoons



Class 1 and 3 have also had an afternoon up in our forest with Sara Burnand, lighting fires, using machetes, building nests and carrying out team building and trust exercises, such as leading a blindfolded friend around a course. The children all thoroughly enjoyed these activities and were very good at caring for and leading their friends. Class 3 had a den building competition and a competition to see who could keep their fire going the longest. The winners were Neve, Emma, Will, Hannah and Greg.



## Veda's Goodbye Assembly, Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 2.45pm

We would like to invite current parents to a special assembly on Wednesday afternoon, 29<sup>th</sup> March at 2.45pm to wish Veda a happy retirement. Each class will celebrate Veda's time in school in their own special way. Afterwards, we will be serving tea for the parents and the children will go back to class. You will be able to pick them up as usual at 3.30pm.

After school, from 4pm to 6pm we will be having a tea party for present and past colleagues and past pupils. On Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> March, Mr Jolliffe will lead a Federation assembly at Thorverton, in which he will also wish Veda a happy retirement.

## Key Stage 1 Multi-sports After-school Club, Tuesdays, 3.30 to 5pm

We apologise for the confusion about the time this club finishes on a Tuesday. The club will carry on until 5pm.

## Class 3 at the Great Hall, Exeter University, Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

As you know, the children in Years 5 and 6 from across the Federation will be singing songs from Mama Mia at the Great Hall, Exeter University. We sent out a letter last week with details of the evening. Please return the permission slips as soon as possible so that we can organise the costumes.

## Top Table

On Monday Phoenyx, Solomon, Zach V, Ollie H, Lucy and Harriet had their lunch at Top Table with Mr Biggins.

## Exmoor Zoo Visit Class 3, Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Just a reminder that a zoologist from Exmoor Zoo will be visiting Class 3 on Monday afternoon, 13<sup>th</sup> March. Please let us know if your child has any allergies to animals and we would be grateful if you could pay the contribution of £4.50 as soon as possible.

## Lambing Day at Ratcliffe Farm, Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Michael and Tina Ayre invite everybody to come and see the new lambs at their farm next Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> March, 10am to 6pm. Children must be accompanied by an adult and, sorry, no dogs.

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### **Family Service in the Parish Church, Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

Everybody is welcome to come along to the Mothers' Day family service in Thorverton Parish Church on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> March. The service starts at 10am and the church will be open from 9.30am.

### **Athletics Event, Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

South West Athletics Academy is running an outdoors Athletics Event at Exeter Arena on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> March. This is an opportunity for young children aged 4 to 11 years to try athletics within a fun and safe environment. Please register online at [www.sw-athletics-academy.co.uk](http://www.sw-athletics-academy.co.uk) : advanced bookings are £5 or turn up on the day for £7.

### **Governors' News**

The governor's meeting this week was centred around teaching and learning. The committee spent time discussing the recent governors' learning walk at each of the three Federation schools. The focus for this visit was writing and the impact that our new resource, Cornerstones, was having on improving it. A summary of feedback can be found below:

#### **Newton St. Cyres – Governors in attendance – Alison Golby and Lisa Browning**

The governors had a great morning at Newon St.Cyres and enjoyed visiting all the classes and the pre-school. The governors saw four Cornerstones projects in use across the classes alongside lots of enthusiasm, imagination and sense of excitement. They highlighted the quality and quantity of the writing in books across the school and particularly in the KS2 classes. The governors could see that children were offered time for reflection when thinking about their marking and they all understood the purpose of their work. The language used for writing was very advanced across the school with children being able to clearly articulate complex matters linked to writing. This promoted a confidence in the children which encouraged them to be more experimental and creative with their writing. The governors also spoke to the children and were impressed with their willingness to share the work they were proud of. They spoke to staff as well and ascertained their views on the impact Cornerstones was having on writing in the school. Whilst staff felt it was having an impact on improving writing, they felt that particular mentions should also go to other writing schemes throughout the school.

#### **Cheriton Fitzpaine – Governors in attendance – David Alcock and Kim Knox**

The governors had another fantastic morning at Cheriton Fitzpaine and quickly noted the enthusiasm and engagement that emanated throughout the school. Children were motivated to do well in the lessons that were observed and displayed a keen interest in the varying topics. They identified that many of the lessons had very effective resources which helped the children to produce work to a high standard. Behaviour was noted to be excellent throughout the school which created a positive learning environment in all the classes. The children did well to remember their prior learning and this helped them to produce positive outcomes. All children produced written outcomes on the day and these took a variety of forms. In the child conferences, the children were proud of their work, interested in their learning and motivated to achieve. They talked about being supported and encouraged by the teachers and felt challenged by some of the activities set for them. The children showed a good understanding of the assessment systems across the school and could happily articulate how this improved their work. Discussions with staff revealed similar outcomes to Newton. St. Cyres. Staff felt that some of the resources were really good and helped their lessons, although they reserved judgement on whether Cornerstones was solely responsible for improving writing. They staff did note the benefits of working school to school and felt that cross-phase planning with the other Federation schools was beneficial.

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### **Thorverton Governors in attendance – Claire Theedom and Ann Varker**

As with the other two Federation schools, the governors had a very rewarding visit to Thorverton. The governors noted that Cornerstones was being used differently in the three classes with staff taking the ideas it presents and adapting them to fit their classes' needs. They found that children throughout the school were highly motivated and were engaged in their lessons. They noted that the display boards had excellent examples of children's work and the children were pleased to see their work on there. In Class 2 and Class 3, the children spent time editing and improving their writing and could articulate clearly the reasons behind their improvements. The governors saw some good working walls in these classes where children could add their own work based on the specific topic. Class 2 had some good examples of adjectives on their wall. In Class 3, the children enjoyed a variety of lessons, ranging from role play to more structured writing sessions. These all had a positive impact on the quality of their writing. In the child conferences, the children were enthusiastic about their work. They mentioned the growth mindset approach and being able to choose their level of difficulty. All the children in the KS2 classes mentioned the new homework system where they felt they had more freedom and creativity. During the staff discussions, all the teachers spoke favourably of the memorable moments which kick started many of the projects. Teachers felt that the planning enabled clear, relevant links between subjects, although sometimes these subjects needed to be supplemented with extra resources. As with the other two schools, the staff appreciated the time working collaboratively with other teachers across the Federation.

### *Collective Worship Dates*

Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 9.30am                      Easter service in church

### *Diary Dates*

Saturday, 11 <sup>th</sup> March	Exmoor Challenge practice walk
Monday, 13 <sup>th</sup> March	Exmoor Zoo come to Class 3
Mon, 13 <sup>th</sup> & Tue, 14 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 1 and 2 Parents' evenings
Tuesday, 14 <sup>th</sup> March, 3pm	Class 3 open afternoon
Wed, 15 <sup>th</sup> & Thurs, 16 <sup>th</sup> March	Class 2 Parents' evenings
Tuesday, 21 <sup>st</sup> March, 3pm	Class 2 open afternoon
Tues, 21 <sup>st</sup> & Wed, 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Class 3 Parents' evenings
Thursday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> March, evening	Class 3's performance at the Great Hall, Exeter University
Friday, 24 <sup>th</sup> March	Comic Relief
Friday, 31 <sup>st</sup> March	End of spring term
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> April	Year 4 residential to Beam House, Torrington
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> – Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May	Year 3 residential to Camp Wild, Escot
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 5 residential to New Barn, Dorchester
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> – Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 6 residential to Grenville House, Brixham

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With best wishes,

*Sarah Parkes*

Head of Teaching and Learning

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