

St Mary Federation Newsletter April 2018

Better Weather

We have had several days of lovely weather and, although I believe the forecast is for the weather to become more seasonally unsettled and cooler, do remember that, if it looks as if it will be hot or sunny, that children need sunhats and suncream to protect themselves and they should have water bottles – (water only, no juice) so they can keep hydrated.



SATs

Y6 will be doing their SATs the week beginning 14th May. Although these have to be sat under exam conditions and we try hard to help the children to achieve their best, we do try to keep them as low key and stress-free as possible. Results are not usually received until July, often near the very end of term, and they will be reported to you as soon as we receive them. Please ensure that your child is in school that week, if at all possible.

Y2s have to complete their SATs during May and these are also kept as stress-free as possible. We mark the tests in school but have to have our marking moderated before we are able to report results to you. Again, we will inform you of results as soon as we are able.

Y1s will do their phonic screening test in the week beginning June 11th. Y2 children who did not reach the threshold will retake the test at the same time.

If you have any concerns or questions about any of the above, please do come and ask.

Respect

Staff and pupils have discussed what we feel to be the one core value that underpins everything we do. There were many suggestions, including inclusivity, being caring etc but the one value that everyone named was RESPECT. As it was agreed that if we respect each other, then all the other important values follow, we have decided to make this our value for the term. By the time you receive this, all children should have had an introductory assembly where we define respect, think about what it would look like if we respect each other, staff/pupils, ourselves, our school environment, the world etc and all staff and children will have (hopefully) signed up to this. If we see anyone not respecting others, including swearing, name calling etc, we will hold them to account, remind them how to behave to show respect, and give them a chance to put things right. I hope that you will be able to reinforce this at home.



Relationship and Sex Education

Thank you to everyone who attended our RSE meetings on Friday last week. It was very helpful to us in our planning and, as a result, we have tweaked a few things on our curriculum. This will now be finalised and then added to our website. We have also taken on board some of the things that you would find useful and plan to send more information out as it becomes appropriate. I think that all who came said they felt “relieved” to hear our approach and our curriculum and I think that between us we can equip our children to live as safely and happily in the modern world as possible.

Josie did share some useful websites that we promised to pass on:

<http://www.vodafone.com/content/digital-parenting.html/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Talkingaboutsex/Pages/Talkingtoyourchild.aspx>

<https://www.lil-lets.co.uk/advice/advice-for-parents>

These links will also be added to the website as part of the curriculum document.

Ofsted

Brancaster had their Ofsted inspection at the end of last term. The report is now published and we are delighted that Ofsted has recognised our strengths and has judged that the school continues to be good. Many thanks to everyone from all schools who helped make this possible.

The Inspector praised the good progress that all children make, including those with needs, celebrating our programme of nurture activities that enable children to reach their full potential. Ofsted also commended our work towards equality and stamping out discrimination; how we promote independent thinking and how articulate and confident our children are.

The highly positive comments Ofsted collected from staff, parents and pupils were particularly impressive. One parent told the Inspector “The school has been a huge influence in our world and it is excellent for our children. The support and encouragement for the children is fantastic. Issues and requests are dealt with swiftly and professionally. The staff are clearly a team on the same page, with the children’s progress in mind at all times. My children’s learning preferences are known and built on.” You can read the full report on our website www.stmaryfederation.co.uk



Sedgeford should be next to have their Ofsted Inspection (July if Ofsted are running to time). We believe that many of the comments for Brancaster apply across the Federation and hope this will be recognised. If you do have any issues, please come and tell us so we can sort them out. If you have anything good to say, then please share it with everyone and spread the word!!!

Transition



We have had verbal confirmation that the Smithdon transition days are June 25th - 28th. For Alderman Peel, Wells, the dates are 4th – 6th July. We should receive letters with more information shortly.

Our Y2 to class 2 transition dates are the mornings of 9th, 10th and 11th July.

A couple of small moans

Can we please remind everyone that PE kits plus outdoor footwear should be in school at all times as recently we have had children unable to take part in lessons or events as they have no kit with them.

MR. GRUMBLE
By Roger Hargreaves



Also, if you have signed up for a sports event, then pleeeeeease, do turn up as, if we have too few children to field a team, then it can mean withdrawing from the whole event, which impacts on the whole tournament (rejigging the draw) and those children who have turned up expecting to play. Of course, there are occasional emergencies – please let us know as soon as possible if there is something unexpected that prevents you participating.

We also need letters back by the date specified, please so that we can plan teams without constantly reorganising as new names come in.

Finally, please make sure that children wear full school uniform, including appropriate shoes.

Thank you to everyone who I don't need to moan at – I know there are a lot of you out there!!

The Big Sing – Thursday 3 May 2018

All children will be going to the Big Sing at the Royal Norfolk Showground next Thursday. We will be leaving school at 8.40am, so please could everybody arrive at school at 8.30am ready to leave promptly at 8.40am. We aim to arrive back at school before 3.15pm.

Royal Norfolk Show

Class 2 will be visiting the Royal Norfolk Show on Thursday 28 June 2018. Full details to follow.

Music With the Norfolk Music Service

We have been fortunate to secure lessons for the whole school with the Norfolk Music Service on Monday mornings. We will be playing the Djembe, a type of African Drum.

Screen Time

In response to recent discussions with some parents who have shared some concerns about their children, we have been exploring the latest information around use of technology. A recent report on current research shows that children used to a constantly high tech life, who have unlimited access to computer games, social media etc struggle more with attention and focus, and can show aggression, depression and/or anxiety as well as an inability to control impulses. It also has a negative impact on learning behaviours and results. Children are also often extremely tired as they are up late into the night on their devices, and they find “real life”, including school, boring and uninteresting.



The report suggests that, while technology can be very useful, we can have too much of a good thing! Simple changes like a cut-off time at night, and some outdoor activity, make for a much healthier balance and, ultimately, happier, more settled children.

We have noticed some of these issues in school and would love to work with you if you think your child may be addicted, in order to support them towards a healthier lifestyle. The article will shortly be on our website if anyone wishes to read it.

Another article investigated what had the biggest difference on transforming children who were disengaged, unwilling to co-operate with family and school, showing difficult behaviour etc. They found that the two biggest factors in improving family life were enforcing early bedtimes and eating meals together (without technology). Children were (after the initial shock!), happier, more confident, more communicative, could concentrate for longer and did better at school.

Food for thought...

The Federation

We are fast approaching our third anniversary of the Federation and so much has been achieved. We are looking forward to maintaining and strengthening this even further as time goes on! We have asked the children what have been their favourite events and they mentioned the following:

Trip to the Panto – Docking and Sedgeford

St Nicholas' Chapel – Sedgeford and Brancaster

Number Day – all schools

Drama for World Book day (John Giller) – all schools

Federation Science Day including a rare chance to handle some fragments of rock from space including the Moon (following on from Starlincs Planetarium for Brancaster & Sedgeford)

Sports Events including sports council, shared clubs to offer wider range of activities, tournaments etc

Smithdon Science Club

Smithdon Taster Days

Beach Fun & Coastal Safari trips – Docking & Sedgeford

The LELE project including our ambassadors' visit to Norwich

Coming up, we also have, amongst other events, The Big Sing; Crucial Crew

I have so many photos of happy children sharing exciting activities and I think it confirms that by combining we are able to offer wider opportunities than we could as individual schools.



Future Dates

Thursday 3 May	The Big Sing, Royal Norfolk Showground
Sunday 6 May	Bespak Mini Gear in King's Lynn
Monday 7 May	Bank Holiday, School closed
Friday 25 May	Reports to go home
Wednesday 13 June	Federation Day at the Beach – letter to follow
Monday 18 June	Year 3 to Whitlingham Activity Centre – Letter to follow
Wednesday 20 June	Area Sports at
Monday 25 June to Thursday 28 June	- Transition for Year 6 to Smithdon
Wednesday 4 July to Friday 6 July	- Transition for Year 6 to Alderman Peel
Monday 9 July	Year 2 children in Class 2 for the morning
Tuesday 10 July	Year 2 children in Class 2 for the morning
Tuesday 10 July	Sports day at 10.30am
Wednesday 11 July	Year 2 children in Class 2 for the morning
Wednesday 11 July	4pm Country Dance Party at Hunstanton Primary
Friday 13 July	Smithdon KS1 Sports Festival – details to follow
Friday 13 July	Celebration Reports to go out
Saturday 14 July	School Fete at 2pm
Week beginning 16 July	Arts Week
Monday 16 July	3.15 – 4.30 – parent's drop-in session
Thursday 19 July	Children's University graduation at College of West Anglia, King's Lynn
Tuesday 24 July to follow	11am Leavers' service in Church followed by a BBQ at School – details to follow
Tuesday 24 July	Break for Summer Holidays
Thursday 6 September	Return to School