

OLD CATTON NEWSLETTER



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Executive Headteacher:

Mrs. A. D. Best-White MA

Head of School Mrs. K. Connelly



Issue 1 Monday 7th September 2015

Dear Parents

I would like to take this opportunity in the first newsletter of the academic year to welcome you all back from what I hope was a wonderful summer. The first days back after a long break sometimes feel strange while we all adjust to the routine of school again but I have to say there were smiling faces everywhere I looked last week which tells me we are off to a cracking start! Our new year 3 children seemed very enthusiastic and ready to begin the next step of their education with us and our year 4, 5 and 6 children returned full of anticipation for the year ahead. The staff are all brimming with excitement for another great year at Old Catton Junior School. If you are an experienced Old Catton parent you may well feel you know many of the things on the newsletter. Please read them again to remind yourself of some of the systems we run and meet some new ones!

There are times when children experience problems at school and we would encourage them and you to tell us if they are upset or concerned in any way. Please discuss any issues of concern with your child's teacher. If you need further assistance Mrs Hewett and Mrs Wright are Senior Teachers and Heads of Lower School and will be happy to speak to you to resolve any problems. I am also available if needed and am now working full time so it should be easier to come and see me before or after school, Monday to Friday. We will always contact you if we have any concerns as we believe working together is best for our children.

Old Catton Newsletters will be issued every Monday of every full week of term. They will contain general information such as forthcoming events, term dates, proposed trips and other items we feel will interest you. If you do not receive your copy of the **Old Catton Newsletter**, spare copies may always be obtained from the school office or downloaded from our website www.oldcatton.norfolk.sch.uk. Please look in your child's bag as they may end up screwed up at the bottom!

School Uniform

Thank you for sending the children back looking so smart. Please remember that all children need a change of indoor shoes. This helps us keep the school clean and tidy and also ensures that children do not ruin their shoes playing football etc. at break and lunchtimes.

Please name all items of school clothing. It is extremely difficult to return items to the correct owner when items remain un-named.

P.E. kits are best brought into school on a Monday morning and taken home every Friday afternoon if they



need a wash. All children will then always have their kit when it is required. Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

After School Clubs

Teaching staff are finalising which clubs they will run either during lunchtime or after school. I will let you know these options ASAP.

However we have some after school clubs run by specialist practitioners which we are able to offer now.

On a Monday 3:20pm-4:20pm Nikki Christian will run a Gymnastics Club for years 3 and 4.

On a Tuesday 3:30pm – 4:40pm Cat Chapman will run a Dance Club open to any year group.

On a Friday 3:20pm-4:20pm Nikki Christian will run a Tag Rugby Club for years 5 and 6.

If your child would like to participate in any of these clubs, please complete the attached form and return to the school office. The clubs all have maximum numbers so we will operate on a first come first served basis for this half term. If your child does not get a place this time around their will be opportunities next half term or later in the year.

Child Protection

Because of our day-to-day contact with the children we are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. We have a duty to protect children from abuse; however, our role is in recognition & referral but not in investigation or intervention. It is the legal responsibility of the Executive Headteacher, and the Head of School to report any concerns about a child, who could be considered to be at risk from physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Obviously, this is a very sensitive area, but the law is very clear.

Child Protection Statement

Our school is committed to promoting the health and welfare of all pupils. We are required by law to follow procedures laid down by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board if we see signs which suggest that one of our pupils may have been the victim of abuse. Use of the procedures in this way is an obligation placed on the school by legislation and in no way infers that any parent/carer is being accused of wrong-doing.

Contact Information

We are moving over to a new system to log all our contact information and this has merged incorrectly! It seems a perfect time to kindly ask you to fill in an up to date contact information sheet. This is attached to this



newsletter and is relevant for new and existing children. It is so important that the school has up to date information about the children, particularly emergency contact numbers. Once this new form has been returned to school, if you change address or telephone numbers please inform the school office as soon as possible. Thank you.

Reading Homework

At Old Catton Junior we know that reading is important in developing your child's literacy skills and ability to access the whole curriculum and we continue to focus on developing children's reading skills throughout the school.



In class the children develop their reading skills through a variety of activities. Timetabled guided reading sessions enable children to read and reflect with their peers and teachers. The focus of guided reading in Key Stage 2 is to ensure the children develop their comprehension, understanding and appreciation of texts.

Parent helpers and teaching assistants provide support for some children with individual reading. If you would be interested in helping with hearing children read please come and speak to me. Teachers do not have the time within the curriculum to hear each child read individually and therefore we have asked that you as parents support your child's learning at home and undertake this responsibility and aspect of developing your child's reading skills.

All children in the school have reading as a regular feature of their homework; regardless of their level of attainment. Children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are expected to complete 15 minutes of reading at least five times a week as part of their homework. We see this time as an opportunity for you as parents and children to share a book and enjoy reading together, and we are very grateful for your support with this homework.

We encourage children to borrow a reading scheme and a library book, which can be fiction or non-fiction, to widen their experience of different texts. If your child has any difficulty choosing a book, they can approach their class teacher for guidance.



Films with a PG certificate (Parental Guidance Classification)

At various times throughout the year, children may be given the opportunity to view selected films with a PG certificate. An increasing number of films are classified PG, following changes in guidelines. PG films sometimes contain 'mild peril' or 'comic fight' scenes – Tom and Jerry cartoons are classified PG for example. Films may be used to enrich several areas of the curriculum; all the films used, will have previously been viewed by staff. If you would prefer your child not to view PG certificate films please let his/her class teacher know.

Mobile Phones

Last year it became obvious, (bags ringing or vibrating in the year 6 corridor!) that some children were bringing mobile phones into school. We cannot take responsibility for these valuable items and ensure they remain safe and their use is appropriate. Mobile telephones are only permitted in school in exceptional

circumstances. The mobile will then need to be kept in the school office for the duration of the school day.

Thank you for your support in ensuring all mobile telephones, and any other valuable items remain at home.

School Lunches

School lunches cost £2.10. Drinks cost extra but water is always available.

Homework Timetable

Yrs 3 and 4

30 mins per day including 15 mins reading every day. Learning times tables and spellings when set and completing Talk Homework once a week.

Yrs 5 and 6

45 minutes per day. This includes a minimum of 15 minutes reading. Learning times tables and spellings when set and completing Talk Homework once a week.

This year ALL children will be set project/topic based homework every week. The homework will be set by the class teacher every Monday and the children will have until Friday to complete it and hand it into their teachers. They will all have a homework book where the task for the week will be written or stuck in. The children then complete the homework in the homework book and it can be marked and returned to the child ready for a new piece on Monday. Hopefully this will mean that you can see the feedback and have a clear record of the homework tasks throughout the year. We ask that you support these pieces of work and encourage your child to challenge themselves to produce their best efforts by working on the homework throughout the week, whilst completing the other tasks listed above. Getting homework right is a challenge we continue to work on. Some parents feel we give too much and others not enough. Please come and speak to us if you have any concerns. Thank you!



Talk Homework

This will be familiar to parents of years 4, 5 and 6 but new to year 3. Please support your child in completing this activity and enjoy doing it together!

When children learn their own language, they begin by listening, then talking and then trying out what they have learned in reading and writing. This is the same process by which they learn a foreign language – listening and talking always precede reading and writing.

Research shows that children need to gain confidence in using vocabulary orally before they will use it accurately in writing. In other words, if they can use it confidently in speech, then they will use it confidently in writing. We need to encourage the development of listening and talking skills in order to develop children's writing ability.

To this end, we have decided to continue to provide a weekly "Talk Homework" task, which will be given in the weekly newsletter. You will be informed of a topic and we would ask that you discuss the topic with your child in order to help them with the content and to prepare them to give feedback in class. We recognise that talking together is one of the most important factors in developing children's educational abilities. This homework involves discussion only, but is just as valuable as any written homework and should have the

same amount of time spent on it. Thank you in anticipation of your support with the Talk Homework.

School Council Elections

Your children's teachers will be talking to them about the School Councillor positions and the election process that will take place very soon. Everybody has the opportunity to put themselves forward to be their class School Councillor. If your child would like to put him or herself forward they will need to write a manifesto explaining why they think they would make a good School Councillor. They will then read their manifesto to the class, along with any other candidates and the class will vote for the child they feel would represent them the best. The role of a School Councillor is important. They are expected to always set a good example to others, take part in decision making within school, put forward the views of their class and even interview prospective new members of staff! We will be asking the children to write their manifestos this week and plan to hold elections on Friday. Good luck to all involved!

The PATHS Programme

If you are new parents to the school, here is an introduction to the PATHS Programme we run in school. It was written to help primary school children develop better thinking skills, more mature and responsible ways of behaving, emotional literacy and improve academic performance.

What are some of the goals of the PATHS Programme?

- Increasing children's abilities to think and solve problems for themselves
- Improving children's understanding of themselves and others
- Helping children with emotional literacy and awareness of feelings
- Improving children's feelings about themselves (that is, improving self-esteem)
- Increasing children's abilities to learn more effectively in the classroom environment

Problem solving, emotional understanding and knowing how to interact well with others are increasingly important for success in today's world. To best prepare children for the future, social-emotional learning is an important part of the primary school curriculum.

The goals of the programme detailed above will also develop children's ability to learn effectively. When children can think independently, feel good about themselves and act responsibly, then they are more motivated to work to their potential.

Friends of Old Catton Junior School

If you would like to join the Friends please contact me in school or contact us via office@oldcatton.norfolk.sch.uk and we can put you in contact with Cathy or Jess. They are wonderful ladies who have worked hard to help fundraise to provide some additional resources for our children and enrichment activities to enhance the curriculum. I am very much looking forward to working with them again this year and would be very pleased to hear from any other parents who would like to get involved and show their support for the school.

No Nuts!

We have a number of children (and teachers!) in school with very severe nut allergies and we have therefore



taken the decision to ban nuts in school. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Mindfulness – with Cathy Fiddy

6 Week Mindfulness Course beginning September 2015

Where: The Lodge, White Woman Junior School, Sprowston

When: Beginning Monday 28th September 2015

Time: 7:30 - 8:30pm

Cost: £7.00 per week, payable weekly or upfront for the 6 weeks.

Mindfulness is a way of being, allowing your attention and awareness to be fully present in the here and now without judgement and with acceptance. Not letting your past or future concerns and or thoughts overwhelm you. Helping you to create a sense of equanimity and develop compassion, empathy and kindness to oneself and to others. Mindfulness practice allows you to 'just be' and appreciate your one beautiful life. It can help you to reduce, and learn to deal with, stress and anxieties, improve focus and concentration and calm your mind. Over the 6 weeks you will learn various aspects of mindfulness beginning with mindful breathing and listening. Please feel free to contact me to book onto the September course or for any further information as to how mindfulness can help you. "You can't stop the waves but you can learn to surf" - Jon Kabat-Zinn
Mindful wishes, Cathy Fiddy.



TALK HOMEWORK & 'WOW WORDS

Each week we send a **Talk Homework** activity and **'Wow' Words** home and we would be very grateful for your support.

We are trying to help all our children develop excellent speaking and listening skills, which in turn will help them with their writing.

"If a child can't say a sentence then they can't write it either!"

Please spend at least 10 minutes talking with your child about the questions below;



Who saw the film "Inside Out" during the summer holidays? (I did and it is amazing!) Think about...

- ***What 5 emotions do you picture inside your head?***
- ***What do they look like?***
- ***What colour are they?***
- ***What are their personalities like?***

- ***Talking with your families - are your five emotions different?***

In Big Talk, we use 'WOW' Words to improve our vocabulary and 'big up' our sentences to make them more interesting!

Our '**WOW**' Word this week is;

Emotion

(feeling, sentiment, sensation, reaction, response)

Please encourage your child to use this word, in the right context, as much as possible.

- The 'Talk Homework' and 'WOW' words will be set every Monday; children will share their 'Talk' with their class on a Friday morning.
- We will encourage the children to use the WOW word throughout the week.

Thank you for your support in helping your child.

Finally, I have popped a box in the foyer at school for parents to put any comments, suggestions, ideas or feedback into. We appreciate positive and negative comments in order to improve and move forward so please tell us what we do well and how we can do better!

Many Thanks,

Mrs Connelly.