

Gayton Primary School/

MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back after Half Term, I do hope you had a lovely time with the children. We have a really short period until the Spring break (only five weeks!). This is the last formal newsletter that I will be sending out as Headteacher of Gayton Primary School, which (on a personal basis), gives me very definite mixed emotions as I write to you all.

Staff changes



We are pleased to welcome Mrs Emma Johnson of St Bridget's Primary School as the interim Headteacher with effect from 15th April 2019. Mrs Johnson has a wide range of prior experience and will be coming in to school to meet the children and staff and for a number of liaison meetings prior to the start of her contract. We will have news of the permanent Headteacher appointment by the end of term.

We have started the process of advertising for a replacement for Mrs M Morley in Year Four. As mentioned previously, Mrs Morley retires on April 30th. We will also be looking to appoint a permanent Year Six teacher to start in September, as Mrs Roe returns to part-time work. We hope to be able to tell you who has been appointed to these positions before we finish for the Spring break.

We welcome Mrs Elena Edwards as a new member of our Midday Assistant team.

Parent-teacher meetings

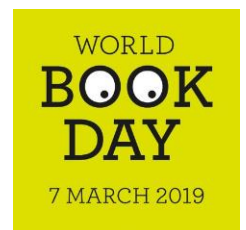
We hope you all found the parent-teacher meetings to be informative and useful. If you were unable to see your child's teacher before half term, please do ensure that you arrange a meeting as soon as possible.

Parking

We have noticed a number of parents waiting on the zig-zag lines outside school. Please desist from this practice, it endangers the children crossing safely and means that sightlines are limited. Likewise, the staff and visitor car park is not a waiting area for pick-up. Please do not use it unless prior permission for exceptional circumstances has been given.

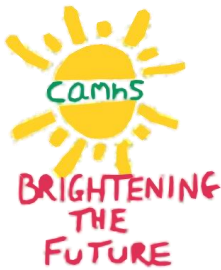
World Book Day - Thursday 7th March

For World Book Day, we are planning activities in every class related to Lucy Moroney's 'The Spider and the Whale' book. Some activities will involve collaboration between classes. For our Year Five and Six children, an '11 by 11' reading challenge has begun, encouraging the children to read from a list of classic and modern titles. The aim is for them to read as many as possible by the time they leave Primary School – they can earn certificates as rewards for the number of books they have read (this must be initialled as genuine by parents), from Bronze for 11 books, right up to a platinum certificate for managing all 44 titles!



Whole school 50th celebration commemorative photograph

On Wednesday 6th March, we would like all the children to come in to school in full school uniform so that we can have a professional whole school photograph taken, to commemorate the school's 50th anniversary. Copies will be available for purchase with details going out after the photograph has been taken. For those children that normally dress in tracksuits on that day, these should still be brought in.



'Helping your child thrive' workshop – Wednesday 6th March at 6.30pm

We would like to invite you all to this important workshop, which looks at how parents can support their child's mental health, helping them to cope with pressure and other important issues affecting their well-being.

This will be led by Vicki Dunham from CAMHS (Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Services) and should provide real help and insight into how to support children to deal with modern life. If you would like to attend, please let Mrs Longworth in the school office know, so that we know how many people will be attending.

Gayton Parent Teacher Association

The Spring disco went really well and the children evidently enjoyed the UV theme! Many thanks to all the volunteers that helped to run stalls and organize this event.

The Parents' Quiz Night was a lovely evening with a great atmosphere – thanks go to Chris Ball for compering so skillfully, to Martin Shaw for putting together another taxing but fun quiz and to all that helped to set up beforehand and clean up afterwards.

The next film night is on Tuesday March 19th (3.30-5pm).

On Friday 8th March, we will be hosting an adults' Bingo evening, with slightly stronger prizes than chocolate! The family Bingo evening will take place after we return for the Summer term, on Thursday 2nd May.

The next PTA meeting is on Monday 18th March at 7.30pm.

Big Pedal – 25-29 March 2019

We would like as many children to take part in the above initiative during the last week of term. Each class will compete to see who has the highest percentage of children walking, skating, cycling or scootering to school for the five days of the week. We will also be competing against other schools locally and nationally. Do try to allow your child to participate on as many days as possible that week, even if it is only for part of their journey to/from school.

Further details can be found at: <https://bigpedal.org.uk/>



Curriculum developments this year

As for last year, having reached the halfway point of the academic year, we thought it would be helpful to let you know some of the key subject initiatives we have implemented from our School Improvement Plan, so that you are aware of our priorities.

English

Following three years of focus in this area of the curriculum, this year we fully implemented the Babcock spelling scheme across the school, to ensure a consistent approach in terms of curriculum delivery and graded content.

Use of resources such as 'Alan Peat 'structures' has helped the children to improve their word choice and use of vocabulary in written work.

A wider range of stimulus for writing has been used, including material from 'Literacy Shed' which provides a bank of exciting resources to fire the children's imaginations.

A review of core content from previous years' learning helps to ensure that the children have a good foundation of understanding prior to work on the current year's objectives.

Feedback and marking have been streamlined and are now a tool for rapid response to children's needs so that they act as an opportunity to develop or reinforce themes at an appropriate rate/point for the individual.

Maths

We have developed the use of our agreed scheme of work 'Busy Ants' which is based on the national Curriculum objectives for each year group. We have also refined our use of the White Rose planning tools to ensure clear coverage and to help with pointers for differentiation, as well as building the children's understanding and mastery of concepts. We now assess all maths work using a combination of end of unit assessment and tests of key concepts to identify gaps in learning and 'next steps' for planning.

We continue to emphasise a combination of concrete, visual and written methods for computation throughout the school, in line with our Computation scheme. We are developing our embedding of maths concepts into cross-curricular project work, so that children can see context for their work.

Science

We are using a combination of schemes to ensure the best range of investigative work and rigorous planning and evaluation of experiments. As part of our emphasis on cross-curricular work, staff have reviewed where units in Science can fit well within topics being studied, to ensure that children see how subjects interlink effectively.

Computing

We are adapting and refining our planning in consultation with our IT providers, who give us advice on best practice and help with equipment/training to deliver units of work. This supports us in ensuring that we cover the computing curriculum in a stimulating and exciting way, while retaining the focus on the range of skills that the children need to acquire each year.

Foundation subjects

Our Foundation subject leaders have been busy refining the planning and assessment of these subject areas and are working to look at where effective summative assessment in these areas can support planning. They will be working with colleagues to develop effective cross-curricular linkage of core subjects into these areas. They have been reviewing coverage to ensure that all objectives are covered in a developmental manner across the school.

Assessment

We have refined our processes for assessment of the core subjects over the last couple of years, to try to ensure there is real consistency in how we assess children's understanding and translate this into where they are on the continuum of learning in relation to the year group curriculum standards. This has been developed to ensure continuity across the school in how and what we assess, what the information is used for and how easy this is to be cross-referenced by class teachers, subject leaders and senior leaders.

Children's mental health

We have continued to develop Mental health as part of our curriculum studies and as a key element in assemblies and PSHCE work. This includes work on self-esteem, Growth Mindsets and values-based education. We have also designated a member of staff (Mrs Fletcher) to lead on various aspects of this important area, such as children's self-esteem and Growth Mindset work. Although the priorities change, we help the children to understand and deal with pressure from work, peers and external factors.

Other news

Y4 will be visiting Chester to participate in the Roman experience on Friday March 22nd. We have resumed our Y4-6 cross-country races, with the first race taking place as this newsletter comes out, at Arrowe Park. The last full race takes place on Thursday 14th March at Higher Bebington Park and a group of 12 runners will represent the school in the final competitive event on Thursday 21st March at the Arno field in Prenton.



We break up for the Spring holiday on **Friday 29th March at 2.30pm (please note early finish)**. I look forward to seeing you all during my final month as Headteacher of the school!

Yours sincerely

Mark Whitehill

Headteacher