

# Swanton Morley VC Primary School

# NEWSLETTER



September 2017

## Exciting Times Ahead



It's great to see that the children all returned after the summer break in a vibrant and positive frame of mind. I don't know what you fed them over the summer, but it certainly seems to have worked a treat! Early evidence suggests (after just over a week of learning) that we're heading for yet another successful year at Swanton Morley.

Exciting times lie ahead, and a few changes too. The most obvious of these changes is that, following the departure of Mr Lord, we will be welcoming a new Headteacher to the school when Thomas Snowdon joins us in January 2018. Until then, it will be my familiar old face at the helm, guiding the school through this period of change and transition.

One valuable constant at Swanton Morley is our ethos and this is testament to the staff, children and parents alike. Your continued support is valued and very much appreciated in making this a thriving, friendly and welcoming school. It's good to be back.

## Harvest Festival

This year, due to the increased numbers of children at school, we will be holding two separate harvest assemblies, one for the infants and one for the juniors. The juniors (Y3 to Y6) will be performing a musical called 'Harvest Hope' which will take place at 09:15 on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October. The infants will present their take on the harvest celebrations at 09:15 on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October. Parents are more than welcome to join us at both assemblies.

As is the usual custom, we will be collecting non-perishable food items for charitable causes (tins, jars, dried foods etc.) If you would like to make a donation the collection will open on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October and items should be left outside the Y6 classroom.

## Staff Transfer Window



The summer's 'ins' and 'outs' make it feel a bit like football on transfer deadline day, but without anyone having sold for £200m! Having said bon voyage to Mr Lord and Mrs Alderton in July, we musn't forget there's one other teacher who's left us, albeit temporarily...

Mrs Kenyon has quietly slipped away unnoticed on a year's sabbatical travelling the globe with her family. However, don't fret, she will be back in a year's time armed with tall tales of distant lands, adventure and piracy on the high seas!

Two new staff have joined us, both of whom many of you will have met already: Mrs Barnes has taken up the reins in reception from Mrs O'Dell, and Mrs Day who has filled Mrs Alderton's boots and taken over the hot-seat in the office. We hope you will join us in extending a warm and hearty welcome to them both.

## Healthy Eating Project



This term we will be having a big drive on healthy eating and physical fitness. The children will be looking closely at their diet and nutrition in lessons, in particular the make-up of snacks and packed lunches. We will also be reviewing the school's own Food Policy and how it is applied at break and lunchtimes.

A good balanced diet and physical activity are known to be associated with improved attainment, attendance and concentration levels in school. That and improved resistance to the more familiar medical issues such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease mean there will be tangible long-term health benefits from this little project. Not only that, it'll be fun too!

## Uniform, Swimming & PE Kit

Whilst the vast majority of children are wonderfully well turned out in their school uniform, we do from time to time get the odd child who's attire doesn't quite comply with school policy. Below is a list of some of the most common issues we experience:

- Wearing of make-up/nail varnish
- Skirts that are shorter than knee-length
- Jewellery and inappropriate earrings
- Trainers worn instead of shoes
- Not bringing correct kit for PE/swimming

Please could we take this opportunity to remind you to ensure your child comes to school appropriate uniform and PE/swimming kit on the correct day.

## Attendance

Swanton Morley Primary School has always had an excellent attendance record, something we are very proud of. Excellent attendance is inextricably linked with excellent attainment, one of the reasons why our school is the sixth highest performing school in Norfolk at key stage two. However, we don't rest on our laurels and are always looking for new ways to actively encourage better attendance and improve standards of learning.

This year we will be rewarding children's good attendance in a slightly different way so as to open the chances of earning an 'attendance star' to more children. Previously children have earned a bronze star for having 100% attendance in any one term and silver/gold for two or three consecutive terms at 100%. The problem with this system is that if a child loses just one half day in a term, they don't get any reward even if their attendance still works out at 99.7% (which is very good indeed and more than acceptable).

The new system is much fairer and much simpler to understand; it gives every child a genuine chance of winning an attendance star during the course of the year. More importantly, it means that children will not be penalised if the odd day or two is missed.



*Attendance continued...*

Here is how the new attendance reward system will work in the 2017/2018 academic year:

- No stars will be issued termly (just at the end of the school year in a celebration assembly).
- Attendance will be measured over the course of the whole academic year.
- A '**Bronze Star**' will be awarded for >99%
- A '**Silver Star**' will be awarded for >99.5%
- A '**Gold Star**' will be awarded for 100%

## Before and After School Organisation

The changes made to the way the children line up in the morning is going well; much calmer and less chaotic. Thank-you for helping make this change a success.

We would like to gently remind parents to try their best to keep out of the yellow-marked box in the corner of the playground so that children can be swiftly lined up and led to class, and also safely handed over at the end of the day. With the sheer volume of people on the playground now, if the 'hand-over' area is not clear, problems can arise.

After the half term break, once the clocks have changed, in readiness for the winter months ahead, there will be a further adjustment to the morning routine. A cunning plan is being hatched as you read this, one that will hopefully go some way towards reducing congestion and ever-present parking issues. All will be revealed nearer the time in mid-October...

## Dogs at School

A recent minor incident has highlighted a safety concern relating to dogs tied up and left outside the gates. Whilst absolutely fine to walk a dog to school, if you do, could you please refrain from tying it up to the fence and leaving it unattended.



Please remember that not all children are used to dogs and many don't feel safe or comfortable around them. We want you to enjoy walking your dog to school; just be considerate, keep it under close control, never leave it unattended and don't bring it into the school grounds.

Thank you

## Year 6 Goblin Racers



The 'Formula-Goblin' project was set up to inspire children aged 9 to 11 to take an active interest in science and engineering in a fun and innovative way. The idea is that children to build their own fully-functioning electric cars which have to be maintained, driven and raced themselves.

The school was lucky, successfully winning a grant to secure the purchase of the four Greenpower 'Formula Goblin' kits back in the Spring. Year Six then embarked on setting up two teams, 'The Dragonites' and 'The Fast and Furious 10', and building two of cars ready to tackle a race series which took place in July.



The whole project was a roaring success. The children quickly learned new skills in many different areas, and not just in engineering either. The children took on some diverse roles and challenges in design, publicity, team management, public relations and procurement. Above all, the fact that the project encouraged teamwork, competition, thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as strategy and tactics, meant everyone (including the staff involved) got a great out of it.



Of course the highlight for the children was the race series, an extremely close affair spread over three days and three events (time trial, endurance and sprint races)

with the 'Dragonites' eventually coming out on top.

The best thing about the project is that the kits are reusable; they can be stripped down, packed up and stored for subsequent years. Hopefully this recyclability will, over the coming years, ensure many more children at Swanton Morley will be able to get actively involved in this exciting project.

## Electronic Communication



The SMS text messaging service has been, and still is a very effective and efficient way of relaying information quickly; a good example of technology working to everyone's benefit. An SMS does have its limitations though, essentially the fact one can only send 160 characters at a time. Anything over that has to be sent out on paper, like this very newsletter! With printing/copying costs rising and the time-consuming nature of production/distribution, added to the basic fact that children lose letters (or fail to hand them over) means using paper is becoming a less and less attractive proposition. It isn't exactly good for the environment either!

The upshot of all this is that over the course of the year we are intending to phase in electronic communication and phase out paper - We're going to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and start using Email! There are plans later in this school year to introduce an electronic/online payment system for lunches and educational visits.

As part of this move to e-communication, you have recently received data collection forms to check. It is vitally important that you ensure mobile numbers and email addresses are correct and up-to-date.

## Key Dates for Your Diary



- Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September - JD Multisport after-school club begins (15:15 - 16:15)
- Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September - Individual and family school photographs (morning)
- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September - Friends of Swanton Morley School AGM (19:00)
- Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October - Key Stage 2 Harvest Assembly (from 09:15 in the hall)
- Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October - Key Stage 1 Harvest Assembly (from 09:15 in the hall)
- Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October - School closes at 15:15 for the half-term holiday
- Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October - School reopens at 08:55

**Every Tuesday from 14:00 - 16:00 Judith Crane (Parent Support Advisor) will be running drop-in sessions for parents in the Rainbow Room this half term.**

*Remember: The school diary/calendar can be accessed online by visiting our website at:*

[www.swantonmorleyprimary.co.uk](http://www.swantonmorleyprimary.co.uk)



### **Year 1 News**

The children have been extremely busy these last couple of weeks, have settled in very well and seem to be really enjoying their learning.

We will begin our Read Write Inc. phonic lessons next week. In maths we are practising our counting and working with Numicon. Our topics for this term include 'Ourselves' and a 'Local Study' of the Swanton Morley and its surrounding area. Just a reminder that swimming is on a Tuesday and PE on Wednesday.



### **Year 2 News**

This term we are learning about keeping healthy, life cycles and our village. The focus of our art lessons will be sketching and painting self-portraits and painting in the style of Van Gogh. Swimming will be on Tuesdays, PE on Wednesdays and 'Show and Tell' on Fridays. Your help and support is really appreciated!



### **Year 3 News**

This term we are studying Ancient Egypt in History and the children are very enthusiastic learning about this topic. Over the next week, they will be bringing home a homework project to complete, so any extra help you can give your child with the research will help to consolidate the work we will be doing in class. We have booked a trip to the British Museum linked to the topic and will let you know the details in due course.



### **Year 4 News**

This term we will be learning all about the Romans and the Celts. Later on this term we will be going on exciting trip to Norwich Castle to meet real-life characters from the deep and distant past! Further details about this trip will follow nearer the time.

PE is on Monday afternoon and we are going to be outside using the field and playground for much of this term. Correct outdoor kit is essential, including sturdy trainers and a warm top.



### **Year 5 News**

We are kicking off the term by studying the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. It's a great topic and there are plenty of opportunities for exciting learning experiences, including a trip later on in the term (details to follow).

PE will be on Tuesdays and outdoor kit will be needed throughout this term. Swimming is on Wednesday as last year, but in the afternoon. Maths and English homework days also remain the same as last year.



### **Year 6 News**

Over the course of this term we will be studying the Second World War and in particular, the Battle of Britain. This will form the basis of our learning in history, geography, art and design technology and will include a visit to IWM Duxford in November (details to follow).

English themes revolve around imagery in fiction writing and poetry. The focus in maths will be mental arithmetic, calculations, geometry and fractions. Netball, basketball and volleyball will be the basis of our PE (outdoor kit required).



### **Reception News**

Well done to all our Reception children; we have had a lovely time together in school this week. The children have been getting to know each other and have settled into their new class really well. The Reception team will keep you updated each week via a bulletin to be found inside the children's 'sharing books'.



### **Midday Supervisory Assistant (MSA)**

We currently have a vacancy for an MSA. We are looking for someone to work five days a week (1½ hours per day from 12:00 till 13:15). If you would like further details, please contact the office.