



Swanton Morley VC Primary School

Manns Lane, Swanton Morley, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4PX

Tel: (01362) 637219

Head Teacher: Mr Matthew Richards

E mail: office@swantonmorley.norfolk.sch.uk

Web Site: www.swantonmorleyprimary.co.uk

Spring 2024 – Newsletter 2

Introduction

With some encouraging signs of spring in the air, it is now only a few more days until we break up for the Easter holidays and it certainly has been a packed term with so much to look back on and celebrate. In this Newsletter, I will be reflecting back as well as providing you with some more important information and reminders as we look ahead to the Summer Term.

Staffing

I am delighted to inform you that after a rigorous interview and selection process we have appointed a new Deputy Headteacher to take over from Mr Vokes in September 2024. The Local Authority, Governors and I were very impressed with the quality of applicants (especially as other similar schools have struggled to fill such posts) and we know that we have selected a person that is a great fit for this school. I am currently liaising with the appointee's current school and will let you know more details in due course.

We look forward to welcoming Mrs Kerrison back from Maternity Leave after Easter. She will be teaching once again, in Beech Class. Mrs Aston will be moving to Acorn Class where she will be teaching 2 days a week.

Mrs King's teaching contract in Acorn Class finishes at the end of this term but I am very pleased to inform you that she will remain as our SENCO.

Funding

I have been working closely with 'Active Norfolk' in recent weeks to try and secure funding to improve our playground facilities. This has not been a straightforward process and it has involved gathering considerable evidence as part of a very detailed application. However, this has certainly proved worthwhile, as I have just been informed that we have secured a grant of £10,000 to spend on our school playgrounds! I will now be working with staff, pupils, governors and FOSM in order to make best use of the funding.

Parent Consultations

We were very pleased that so many of you were able to make appointments to come into school and speak to your child's class teacher as part of our parent consultations meetings. It really was a very positive time and many of

you spoke to me about how useful and informative the meetings were. We will continue to have the meetings in the school hall where possible, as we feel that this encapsulates the 'togetherness' that we want to promote as a whole school.

Parent Survey Results

The feedback from our parent survey in the Autumn Term 2023 was overwhelmingly positive. A considerable number of you took part in the survey and I have gathered the results in the table below:

Statements	Agree/Strongly Agree
My child is happy at this school	96%
My child feels safe at this school	96%
The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved	90%
No issues with bullying/ school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively	85%
The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year	77%
When I have raised concerns with the school they have been dealt with properly	87%
My child has SEND and there are no issues with the wider support provided in order to succeed	75%
The school has high expectations for my child	80%
My child does well at this school	90%
The school lets me know how my child is doing	82%
There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school	97%
My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school	92%
The school supports my child's wider personal development	90%
I would recommend this school to another parent	94%

Despite the positive feedback, we are aware that things can always be improved and we want to strive to do better. Therefore, as a result of the survey, we have made more information available to you about your child's learning including class newsletters, Reading/Maths Cafes and adapting the end of year report format. We have also managed to secure a significant

amount of new SEND funding to help bolster the support that we can offer to children with additional needs (see Teaching Assistant jobs below).

If new issues do arise or you feel further improvements can be made to the school then please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Teaching Assistant Jobs

As part of the improvements to our SEND provision, we will be looking to recruit a number of new Teaching Assistants after Easter in order to add to our existing staff team. These will be advertised on the Education Job Finder website (www.educationjobfinder.org.uk) and we will put them on the school website. If you think you might be interested and would like more information, then please get in touch with me via the school office or come and speak to me on the gate.

School Trips

We are very pleased that we can offer you child such a rich and diverse range of trips during their time with us at primary school. However, we do understand that in the current financial climate, these trips can be expensive and costs mount up. Therefore, from September 2024 any child who has a Free School Meal (part of our Pupil Premium Funding) will now have the full cost of all school trips paid for.

Sports

We have continued to immerse our children in the sporting opportunities on offer from the West Norwich and Dereham School Sport Partnership (WNDSSP). This membership is made possible through our Sports Premium Funding. In the last term, we have had:

- >Yr3-6 football tournament for children who are not involved in football clubs outside of school
- >Adapted Sports event for children across the school
- >Cricket Assembly delivered by Gt Witchingham CC - a day of coaching to follow in the summer term
- >Yr1-2 Disney themed football day

On the 8th March, we also took part in the 'Let Girls Play' campaign which coincided with International Women's Day. A record breaking 465,000 girls from 5000 schools across England took part in this FA initiated event and we certainly contributed to these fantastic numbers!

A very big thank you to Mrs Sadler for helping to organise all these events.

Celebration Assembly

In addition to our 'Star of the Week' certificates, we have now added a 'Good Neighbour' Award. This gives us the opportunity to reinforce our key values and school vision statement as well as include more children in our celebration assembly each week. Look out for the new certificates coming home!

Lincoln House Care Home

It is a privilege to continue building our relationship with Lincoln House Care Home as we took the choir to perform there just before Christmas and visited again last week in order to sing some Easter songs for the residents. These occasions really are very special and mutually beneficial. As a result, we have got to know a resident, Mr Ogden, who is an author and has written many children's books as well as leading countless school assemblies over the years. Therefore, I made the most of the opportunity and invited Mr Ogden to take our World Book Day Assembly on the Thursday 7th March. The children (and adults) thoroughly enjoyed it and I have now asked Mr Ogden back to lead some of our Collective Worship after Easter.

Friends of Swanton Morley (FOSM)

The Easter Fayre proved to be very successful as many of you stayed on after school with your children and enjoyed taking part in a number of activities on the playground. We managed to raise £437 – not bad for an hour's work!

Bingo is a new addition to our fundraising ventures and this was a real triumph last week. We managed to unearth a bright new talent as Mr Haynes turned from Site Manger into our 'Bingo Lingo' Master! If you have no idea what I'm talking about then you'll just have to come to the next school Bingo event and experience it for yourselves. Great fun was had by all!

Discos for both lower and upper school took place on Friday and as always, these were very popular events and extremely well attended.

All of these events help to raise money that really does improve your child's experience during their time at Swanton Morley. Therefore, any support that you can offer, however little, is invaluable to our small group of dedicated and hardworking Friends. Please contact the school office if you would like to find out more or join FOSM.

Attendance

I would like to remind you of the information from the DfE/NHS and Local Authority regarding attendance, which I was asked to share with you in the Autumn Term (see *Appendix 1 & 2*). As you know, we continue to monitor attendance very carefully and I will only authorise absence in 'exceptional' circumstances. We will contact you directly if we have any concerns but if you

require any additional support/resources then please follow this link:

<http://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/attendance>

Parking/School Gate

I would once again ask that you park considerately for the safety of all our children. At times, it is extremely dangerous on the road outside of the school and if you do need to drive then the village hall car park is by far the safest option and only a very short walk from the school.

Although we have limited powers outside of the school gate, once you enter the school premises, I will ensure that all children and adults feel safe, secure and are treated in a dignified and respectful way. I would remind you that, in line with Local Authority Policy, if anybody does not adhere to this then they may be denied access to the school grounds.

Social Media

There has been a lot in the news recently about the inherent dangers of social media use for children. I would like to remind you again of the paramount importance of monitoring your child's online activity and paying attention to the age restrictions for apps and games. Please see the accompanying attachment to this Newsletter.

Turning on the Subtitles

On a more positive note, there is an excellent campaign called 'Turn on the Subtitles' which is supported by the actor Jack Black and was also covered in the ITV News last week (see link below). Research has shown that if you turn the subtitles on whilst your child is watching TV, then in just one year they will read the same number of words as of all of the Harry Potter books, all of the Nania books, all of Lord of the Rings and everything that Roald Dahl ever wrote combined and it will therefore *double their chances of becoming a good reader*. It might be worth giving it a go!

<https://www.itv.com/watch/news/actor-jack-black-joins-turn-on-subtitles-campaign-to-improve-childrens-literacy/8244pym#>

Dates

Spring term 2024

- Monday 26th February - Wednesday 27th March 2024
- Easter holiday: Thursday 28th March - Friday 12th April 2024

Summer term 2024

- Monday 15th April - Friday 24th May 2024 (Monday 6th May is a Bank Holiday)
- Half-term holiday: Monday 27th - Friday 31st May 2024
- Monday 3rd June – Friday 19th July 2024

Other School Dates – Spring Term 2024

- **Easter Service** – Wednesday 27th March 2.00 @ All Saints Church

Finally...

I would like to wish you all a very happy Easter and we look forward to seeing you all again after the holidays.

Kind Regards,

Matt Richards

Matt Richards

Headteacher

Swanton Morley V.C. Primary

APPENDIX 1 - DfE/NHS

Dear headteachers and trust leaders,

We have been asked by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide you with a clinical and public health perspective on mild illnesses and school attendance.

We are aware that the COVID-19 pandemic may have caused some parents to feel less confident with assessing whether their child is well enough to be in school so we have laid out some information which we hope you will find helpful.

There is wide agreement among health professionals and educational professionals that school attendance is vital to the life chances of children and young people. Being in school improves health, wellbeing and socialisation throughout the life course. The greatest benefits come from children and young people attending school regularly.

It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above. We would encourage you to share the [NHS 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#) with parents and carers in your schools and communities which has further information.

In addition to respiratory illnesses, we are aware that more children may be absent from school due to symptoms of anxiety than before the pandemic. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it. DfE has published useful [guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance](#) and those who are experiencing persistent symptoms can be encouraged to access additional support.

Thank you for your efforts so far to facilitate immunisation sessions within schools. As we head into winter, encouraging high uptake of seasonal flu vaccination and routine immunisations for eligible children and young people will help to reduce absences and the disruption they cause.

You, and the teachers you lead, are already supporting families to build up children's confidence to attend school regularly. The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) recently approved [5 principles to promote school attendance](#). We hope this guidance will support GPs in having sensitive and reassuring conversations with parents, carers and pupils.

Thank you and your colleagues for your continued commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, England

Pat Cullen, General Secretary, Royal College of Nursing

Professor Kamila Hawthorne, Chair, Royal College of General Practitioners

Dr Camilla Kingdon, President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

William Roberts, Chief Executive, Royal Society for Public Health

Dr Lade Smith, President, Royal College of Psychiatrists

APPENDIX 2



Every Day
Counts 

Missing a day of
school a week

is the same as
missing over
2 years of school.



Every Day
Counts 

Every day at school counts, helping with learning, developing skills, and building friendships.