



SPARKENHOE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2015

'Together we can...'



Here we are at the end of 2015 already, looking forward to the holidays and the New Year. It has been a very successful term with many outings, assemblies, performances and sporting events. It's a great time for Leicester too, with the football team doing very well and after the disappointment of the Rugby World Cup, Leicester Tigers have got off to a flying start. The children continue to make outstanding progress and are all working hard in their lessons. As a school we continue to go from strength to strength but are always looking for ways to improve further.

Additional Closure Day for Children

The term dates published by Leicester City Council include 3 flexible Inset days where the school is closed to children. These are decided by the school. Two of these were taken on the 27th and 28th August so that we could start the term after the August Bank holiday.

The final closure day for children will be on Friday 12th February. This means school will close for half term on Thursday 11th February.

Curriculum Enhancements

It's been another busy term with plenty of visits and workshops to enhance the curriculum. Year 5 children visited Fleckney Primary School to take part in outdoor activities and make new friends. Last week they went to the theatre to see a performance of Chotto Desh. Year 6 had a day of reflection at the National Arboretum as part of their Word War topic and also took part in architecture workshops where they designed and made a memorial. Year 2 had a lovely time at Clipston Primary School where they had a tour of the village and took part in activities with the children from Clipston. Year 4 were very lucky to take part in the Light up Art project. They learnt all about printing and produced some fantastic work. They have made a beautiful display in the Saxby building and their work was also displayed at the Leicester Print Workshop. Year 1 went to New Walk museum to look at different environments and Year 3 are currently having chess lessons every week. You never know, we may produce a world champion!

Sport at Sparkenhoe

It has been a very active term so far. The Year 5 and 6 football team have played matches at Judgemeanow every fortnight. They had some success, winning 2 games and drawing 6. They will play in Division 2 next term and will be aiming to score a few more goals! All the children who played have showed commitment and perseverance as well as a fantastic team spirit. One of the children has been chosen to play for the District League which is a huge achievement. Well done to Nelson in year 6. Year 4 learnt to play Rugby this term with sessions led by Leicester Tigers. They had a great time. Foundation 2 have been taking part in weekly Kimbles sessions which they have really enjoyed. Year 4 went to Moat for a Zumba session and Year 2 enjoyed skipping activities at Moat. Next term, the LCFC Community Trust will be delivering a sports programme to Year 1. There will be further activities at Moat Community College and opportunities for the older children to take part in swimming galas and cross country competitions. Year 5 will finish their swimming lessons this term and Year 4 will start lessons in the Spring Term.

Assemblies and Performances

We have seen some fantastic assemblies and performances this term. The Year 4 Diwali Assembly was stunning; with beautiful costumes, fantastic singing and enthusiastic acting. Year 6 performed a very moving Remembrance Assembly showing sensitivity and maturity. The acting and recitations of poems was brilliant. At the beginning of October, the whole school came together to celebrate the Rugby World Cup Finals, as we were the host nation. We were joined by Ted Cassidy, the Lord Mayor of Leicester and Welford the Tiger. They were both very impressed with the children's dancing and themed performances. Thank you to all the parents who came too. It was a lovely morning. All the children in Years 3 to 6 took part in assemblies and workshops led by a team of police officers. They learnt about personal safety and being a responsible citizen as well as finding out what to do in an emergency.

Residential visits

The children are really looking forward to the residential visit to Kingswood in January. Of course we should have been going to Paris this week but in light of the terrible attacks, the decision was made to postpone the trip until March. Mrs Patel worked really hard to make these alternative arrangements and quickly inform the parents of the children going. Thank you to her for this.

Even though the Paris visit will now be in March, we will still be offering the camping residential in May so there is plenty to look forward to.

Uniform

We have plenty of school uniform in stock and we now have the cardigans with the new logo which some parents were waiting for. The children should not wear red, grey or black tops but tops can be bought from other sources as long as they are the school colour. There are still some children who are still not wearing plain footwear. Plain, dark trainer style shoes are widely available and are acceptable but trainers with stripes, logos and other colours are not.

For PE, children must have trainers (any colour) or plimsolls and will not be able to take part in these activities if they do not. Navy PE kit is available from school but can also be bought in local shops. Please make sure all uniform and PE kit items are named.

We will not be selling uniform during the last two weeks of term. Uniform sales will start again in January.

Music

We are thrilled that our school has recently been awarded the Silver Music Quality Mark. The certificate is on display in the Saxby reception. We achieved this because of the range of music experiences that our children take part in and because of the quality of the music curriculum. All children from Year 2 to Year 6 learn different musical instruments and Year 5 are enjoying learning to play a range of brass instruments. Some of the Year 6 children have continued with their lessons as part of an after school club. Year 3 and 4 had a wonderful time watching the Philharmonic Orchestra perform at De Montfort Hall recently and the school choir performed brilliantly at the Lord Mayor's concert as usual.

Fundraising

Thank you to everyone for your very generous donations for our Harvest collection. The support from parents was overwhelming. Some Year 3 visited Open Hands with your contributions and I know the recipients will be very grateful. Children in Need was another very successful fundraising day with a final total of £835. We also raised £265.50 for the annual poppy appeal. Thank you for your continued support and generosity. Next term we are hoping to support a local charity which offers aid to refugees around the world and particularly in war zones.

Road Safety

As you probably know, there is no crossing officer in the morning or after school. If your children go home on their own, please talk to them about the importance of using the crossing and waiting for the green man before crossing. There are some older children (and some parents!) who do not always use the crossing.

There are still quite a lot of cars parked illegally on Sparkenhoe Street at the end of the school day. We would like to remind parents that it is not appropriate to park on yellow lines or half on the pavement. It causes an obstruction to other road users and pedestrians and you could be given a fixed penalty notice. Thank you for your support in these matters.

Curriculum Information

The Curriculum at Sparkenhoe is regularly reviewed to ensure we are meeting the needs of all our children and statutory requirements. The children have been enjoying their topic work and we are very proud of the quality of the work in their books. The displays in school are stunning and reflect the varied work that goes on in the classroom. Information about the topics each year group study during the year are now available on the school website along with the RE curriculum map.

In maths, we now follow the Maths No Problem scheme of work. This has been in place since September 2015 and is based on the Singapore approach to teaching maths using the mastery teaching approach. The focus is on teaching to mastery by allowing enough time on a topic for a child to understand it thoroughly. The scheme emphasises problem-solving and pupils using their skills to develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. There are Parent Videos available to view on the website and we will be offering parent workshops in the Spring and Summer Terms.

Parents Views

Thank you to everyone who returned the parent view questionnaire in October. We had over 200 responses which were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Some parents said that they didn't know whether their child makes good progress at school. However, we have held parents evenings since then so hopefully this has been addressed. In future, we think it would be more sensible to send the questionnaires out after parents' evenings! There were a small number of parents who did not feel that homework was appropriate. We would like to know more about this. Please feel free to speak to your child's teacher or a senior member of staff if you wish to discuss homework.

The recent Foundation 2 reading and phonics workshops were very well attended. We hope these were useful and informative. We will be holding more workshops over the next two terms for Foundation 2 and other year groups.

The staff and children have been thinking about our values this term. They have come up with a list of values that they think are most important at Sparkenhoe. We would like your views on these. You can contribute by completing the comment sheet attached.

Bad weather

Now the weather is getting colder, it is important that all children have a suitable coat and shoes to wear outside. We have been very lucky so far this winter but if it does get icy, it is important that children are careful walking on the pavements. The school would only close if the weather was very bad and if it was dangerous for staff and children to get to school. If this was the case, there would be information and updates on the school website and BBC Radio Leicester.

Staffing News

Finally, we will sadly be saying goodbye to Ms Barrs in 4 Hubble, at the end of this term. She has been offered a promotion at St. Francis Primary School in Melton Mowbray. Over the past ten years, Ms Barrs has made a huge contribution to our school and will be missed by all. We wish her the very best in her new job. A new teacher, Ms Modha, will be teaching 4 Hubble from January 2016.

Governors

On Thursday 19th, the Governors interviewed candidates for an Executive Head over the Federation of Sparkenhoe School and Medway School. The panels included children, parent representatives and associate Governors. After careful consideration with feedback from all assessment activities and sub panels, the governors of the South Highfields Community Federation have resolved not to appoint to the vacancy of Executive Headteacher. If you have any questions regarding this, please email govs@sparkenhoe.leicester.sch.uk.

Dates for the diary

Date	Activity	Other Information
Tuesday 8 th December	F2 Nativity Assembly	The Ark - 10.00 am. Parents welcome.
Wednesday 9 th December	F2 Nativity Assembly	The Ark - 10.00 am. Parents welcome.
Thursday 10 th December	F2 Nativity Assembly	The Ark - 10.00 am. Parents welcome.
Thursday 10 th December	8 Year 5 children at Eco Conference	
Monday 14 th December	Christmas Festival day	Activities in class.
Tuesday 15 th December	F2 and F1 Rainbows Christmas Party	Afternoon party. Children can wear party clothes.
Tuesday 15 th December	F2 visiting St Peters Church	During school time
Tuesday 15 th December	Attendance Assembly: Years 1 and 2	Parents will be invited. 1.30 pm - Saxby Hall.
Wednesday 16 th December	Year 1, Year 2 and F1 Sunshines Christmas Party	Morning party. Children can wear party clothes.
Wednesday 16 th December	Years 3 and 4 Christmas Party	Afternoon party. Children can wear party clothes.
Wednesday 16 th December	Attendance Assembly: Years 3 and 4	Parents will be invited. 9.00 am - Saxby Hall
Wednesday 16 th December	Attendance Assembly: Years 5 and 6	Parents will be invited. 1.30 pm - Saxby Hall
Thursday 17 th December	Pantomime in the Ark	Beauty and the Beast: Years 2, 3, 4
Thursday 17 th December	Year 5 and 6 Cinema trip	
Thursday 17 th December	Flu inoculations	
Friday 18 th December	Carol Concert: F2, Year 1, Year 3, Year 5	Parents will be invited. 10.20 am. Saxby Hall
Friday 18 th December	Carol Concert: Year 2, Year 4, Year 6	Parents will be invited. 9.00 am. Saxby Hall
Friday 18 th December	Last Day of term. School Closes.	
Tuesday 5 th January 2016	Start of Spring Term. School opens.	
Wednesday 27 th January to Saturday 30 th January	Kingswood Residential: Years 4, 5 and 6	
THURSDAY 11 th February	School closes for half term	
Friday 12 th February	Closure Day for children.	School closed for children.
Monday 22 nd February	School opens	
Thursday 25 th February	Year 6 Warning Zone visit	Rearranged from December
Week beginning 8 th Feb	Year 1 Vaishakhi Assemblies	
Week beginning 21 st March	Year 3 Easter Assemblies	
Thursday 24 th March	School closes for Easter	

All dates and times for festival assemblies will be sent out nearer the time. Have a lovely Christmas holiday.

We welcome your views and thoughts and are always around if you need to talk to us. If you would like to raise an issue or ask a question to a member of our Governing Body, please email govs@sparkenhoe.leicester.sch.uk. As always, you can make an appointment if you need to speak to a member of staff in private.

Rhian Jones Acting Headteacher