Blog w.e. 15.11.19

Welcome to the first weekly blog of this half term! I hope that you all had a lovely half term break. It has been a very busy start to the term as always! The children all settled back into school well last week and returned from their break refreshed and ready to learn!

This week we have held our Remembrance assembly where Sgt Clarke visited us once again to speak to the children about the importance of this very special day. The children behaved impeccably and showed amazing respect towards this commemorative event - we were all extremely proud of them. Sgt Clarke talked to the children about his own experiences and the reality of the impact of war on soldiers and their families. This was delivered very sensitively and helped the children to understand the true meaning of this day. Some of our pupils did a super job of reading poems about the topic as part of our assembly – well done!

Also this week we all came to school a little mixed up, wearing odd socks to recognise Anti-bullying week. Every class discussed celebrating and recognising difference and ways that we can ensure that there is no bullying in our school.  Today we celebrated Children in Need by wearing spots – the whole school was awash with colour!  Thank you for all your kind donations and support to both Children in Need and the Dove charity.

After a well-deserved rest, the children in Year 3 have come back ready and eager to learn. The topic for this term is the Stone Age and already the children have researched and learnt about the infamous village, Skara Brae, located on the Orkney Islands.

The children have been captivated by how these ancient dwellings have remained so well preserved after all these years and how they have provided us with a greater understanding of how early Britains survived all those years ago. The children have begun to gather this information ready to write a non-chronological report next week. In maths the children have been finishing off their addition and subtraction unit. They have been challenged to recognise when there is cause for exchange and understand how the numbers are linked along with the impact they can have on the digit in the adjacent column. In Art and Design Technology the children have begun designing their own settlements. They have had to think about what natural resources they would use in preparation for constructing their own miniature model – I can’t wait to see the finished products!

Year four have also had a fantastic start to the new term and have had a busy week as they launch into their new topic - The Wonder of Ancient Egypt. Their learning journey so far has allowed them to answer the questions ‘Where is Egypt?’ and ‘Why was the river Nile so important to the Ancient Egyptians?’ The children have amazed their teachers with the facts they now know about the river Nile – please ask them about their learning! In English, Year 3 have started to read their class text ‘The Egyptian Cinderella’. The story has an interesting twist on the traditional tale the children already know. So far, they have read an introduction to the character and have written their own character descriptions. Children enjoyed the opportunity to use drama to interview Rhodopis and ask her questions to gather information. During Maths pupils have been completing a unit of work about problem solving, using addition and subtraction. Alongside all this exciting learning, the children have begun to learn how to say what games they like to play in French and describe what makes them marvellous in PHSE (however, we know that each and every single child is marvellous in Year Four). Keep up the fantastic learning Year Four.

This week in Year 5, the children have been reading ‘Beowulf’ for their new topic ‘Who were the Anglo-Saxons?’ The children have been gripped by the drama and tension in Beowulf and are thoroughly enjoying reading this story. They have been reading about how Beowulf tackles a hideous Sea Hag and have been using their drama skills to recreate this scene in small groups. In maths, the children have been looking at how to interpret data in line graphs and have then used this knowledge to create their own line graphs from given data. Topic lessons this week have been about life during the Anglo-Saxon times. The children have learnt the hierarchal structure of the Anglo-Saxon period including the Cyning, Thanes, Ceorls and slaves. They were very shocked to hear about the punishments that Anglo-Saxons received for committing crimes - they had to pay shillings, the cost dependent on the crime they committed and many suffered many other cruel things to test their innocence such as having to hold hot iron for 9 paces and if their hand didn't heal in 3 days they were guilty. Finally, the children moved on to the topic of portraits in French and learned how to read, write and say colours in French. The children were great at using their best French accents to pronounce the different colours – I am sure that they would love to demonstrate this to you at home!

In year 6 this week the children have become immersed in our new topic: the Vicious Vikings and their battles. Our focus in English has been on the poem The Charge of the Light Brigade by Lord Alfred Tenyson. Using technical vocabulary relating to poetry, the children have unpicked the meaning behind the poem and explored how the poet has been able to portray strong images of battle. They will then use this imagery to write their own battle scene! In maths, they have been using metal strategies to solve a range of problems. These life skills will help the children in their SATs Arithmetic paper – I am delighted to say that they have really grasped the new methods that have been taught. Why not ask your child how they could solve the following calculation: 1.99 + 2.99 + 3.99 = I am sure that they will be keen to explain it to you. On Monday, Year 6 gathered as a year group to watch a Horrible Histories episode on the Vikings. The children came away with lots of facts about the Viking era - did you know that Vikings didn't actually wear horns in their helmets? The children are really looking forward to finding out lots more fascinating facts over the next few weeks.

I am sure that you will agree that the children have thoroughly enjoyed beginning their new topics – I am excited to see all of the fantastic work and experiences that the staff have planned for them.

This week we held our first ever coffee morning with a focus on Mental Health. We are lucky this year to be taking part in the ‘Trailblazer’ pilot where mental health practitioners are deployed to work in schools with any pupils who may benefit from this support. We have already completed many referrals for pupils to work with this amazing team. The coffee morning was an informal opportunity to find out what the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) offer in school and about the work that we already do in school to support wellbeing and good mental health. I am sure that those parents who attended would be happy to speak to parents about what a lovely morning it was. We plan to offer further events for parents where we will share further strategies for supporting your children at home; and have now identified some parent ‘mental health champions’.

As you know we have made some trial changes to our lunchtime structure. This has been carefully planned and implemented taking into account pupil voice. As you know we are quite limited on space currently with the essential roof works that are taking place. We are continuously evaluating our new approach and adapting it to make improvements. We are confident that this will have a positive impact on lunchtime provision and can already see a huge improvement in behaviour and reduction in accidents and incidents. In PE this week all of the children have been learning a range of playground games which we will integrate into the different playground zones. Please bear with us whilst we grow, develop and adapt this approach – there is a letter on our website covering this in more detail

Wishing you a lovely restful weekend

Mrs Carrigan