Blog w.e. 17.01.2020

Welcome to my weekly blog! The new term is now well underway and there is lots of exciting learning taking place across the academy. The children are now all immersed in their new topics and enjoying their new texts.

This week I have had the pleasure, alongside other leaders, of observing Science lessons across the academy. It was a real delight to see all of the children so enthusiastic and engaged in their learning and I have to say that we definitely have some budding scientists of the future in our midst! They all really wowed us with their scientific knowledge and ability to recall their learning. We also spoke to groups of children from each class about their lessons and it was fantastic to hear how much they are enjoying their new science topics and how they could confidently talk about their learning.

It’s been another busy week in Year 3 where the children started the week with their final investigation on forces. The children became scientists and explored the impact weight had on gravitational force with paper helicopters and paper clips. Using their scientific knowledge the children devised their hypothesis and discussed key elements such as how to make a fair test and how to accurately measure. Following this the children completed their post-assessment on forces and magnets, leaving staff in awe of the amount of knowledge they retained. I think it is safe to say Year 3 is full of science enthusiasts! During this week’s English lessons the children have rewritten the opening for ‘The Iron Man’ describing his features and the story setting through comparative writing with their use of similes. Why not ask them at home if they can describe something in the house using a simile? Maybe you have a sofa as big as an elephant! In Maths the children have been learning about fact families and related families. The children used these to help support them when solving more tricky multiplication and division problems such as 60x3=. The children were amazed by how many number sentences they could instantly produce.

This week the pupils and teachers have also been science mad in Year 4. They have really started to explore their topic question this week ‘What caused that racket and how can we change volume, pitch and frequency?’ They have learnt about the 3 main parts of the ear (outer, middle and inner) and the main elements within these areas and their job role. Children have learnt about how sound travels to the ear via soundwaves and that sound is made by vibrations. Each class made and used instruments to change sounds by focussing on pitch, volume and frequency, they even drew pictorial representations to show this. They listened to sounds and completed an investigation to see if they could still hear a sound the further away they got from the source. It was fascinating learning! In English children have continued to read their class text ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin’, making predictions and used their skills to draw clues from the text. They have learnt more about one of the main characters and have continued to discover how the rats invaded the town. Using the text to help them, children have focussed on key skills like adverbial and prepositional phrases and expanded noun phrases. In Maths Year 4 have continued to work on multiplication. It became tricky this week when they had to multiply a 2 digit number and a 1 digit number using the short column method. They have also been focussing on perfecting the 6 times table – please support this learning at home. In French children have learned the days of the week and have really enjoyed playing the games from our brand new French scheme.

Year 5 have had a fantastic week this week. In Maths, they have been looking at multiplying two-digit numbers by two-digit numbers using the grid method, short multiplication and long multiplication. The children have been discussing which methods they prefer and which are more efficient to use. In English, the children looked at simple and perfect tense types and identified what tenses different sentences were using. They have then begun writing a flashback of when Phillipe, from ‘The Man Who Walked Between the Towers’, walked a tightrope between the steeples of the Notre Dame Cathedral. In Science, Year 5 have been looking at how balance works. The children conducted investigations using a ruler as a lever and a triangular prism as a ‘fulcrum’ to find out where a fulcrum needed to be placed in order for different items to balance. The children have also begun their music topic for this half term based around the song ‘Livin’ on a Prayer’ by Bon Jovi and have very much enjoyed attempting to recreate the song themselves.

In year 6 this week the children have begun writing a dialogue between characters in the book ‘The Spider and The Fly’. They have been using direct and reported speech to convey conversations and have been successfully up-levelling (improving) expanded noun phrases. In maths, they have moved on to multiplying and dividing fractions, using visual images to demonstrate their arithmetic understanding. This has been quite tricky at times but the children continue to impress us all with their embedded understanding of mathematical vocabulary including simplifying, equivalence and converting. Why not ask your child to give you an example of these. In Science, the children have researched the work of Carl Linnaeus who created the classification system that we use today in the 1700s. From this the children have been able to identify the groups which all living things can belong to from mammals to amphibians. Boosters for SATs have now begun both in and out of school. We thank you for your continued support and working alongside us to ensure that our children achieve the very best that they can.

Please ensure that if your child has been invited to a booster that you take advantage of this and make sure that they are present for each session. These lessons are put into place by teachers to support the children in preparation for their end of year tests. Staff give up a great deal of their time to enable this additional support to take place and it really is of great benefit to the children.

I am sure that many of you saw in the Sentinel the ‘Real Schools Guide’ which ranks schools in Stoke-on-Trent. I imagine that you were as disappointed as me to see where Grove was ranked, due to its Year 6 attainment. I have been very honest with you all about the journey that Grove is on to improve its results rapidly and can see from last year’s results that we are starting to achieve this. I want to reassure you all that we remain totally committed to continuing to raise our levels of attainment and progress so that every child meets their full potential. I would like to thank parents for not commenting on the report, which feels very supportive to us as a school. Please come along to our ‘Meet the Leadership Team’ meeting on Thursday 6th February to hear about the improvements we are making at Grove and to ask any questions.

As always please ensure that you continue to support your child at home to enable us to work together to best support them.

Have a lovely weekend

Mrs Carrigan