Dear Parents

Another great week in school. I have been particularly impressed with the children in EYFS as I have received some lovely ‘Good morning, Mr Watts!’ greetings as I have been in classrooms.

Our assembly theme this week has been ‘different families’ and the children have enjoyed two stories. The Pirate Mums tells the story of two mums who take their son on a pirate adventure. Billy wishes his family could be more like everyone else's. Until a swashbuckling adventure changes everything!

And Tango Makes Three tells the true story of two male penguins living at New York City's Central Park Zoo who fall in love and start a family by taking turns sitting on an abandoned egg until it hatches. A heart-warming story.

Arts Week

The first week after half term will be our annual Arts Week. It is one of my favourite weeks in school. The theme this year takes its inspiration from the beautiful book ‘The Lost Words’.

The book focuses on words disappearing from children’s lives. These are the words of the natural world; Otter, Bramble, Thistle, Newt and Acorn, all gone. The Lost Words stands against the disappearance of wild childhood. It is a joyful celebration - in art and word - of nearby nature and its wonders.

Each year group will take a different theme from the book and create art work using a range of media.

EYFS will focus on ‘Found Words’ and create art using natural materials from the local environment. Year 1 will study the fox and explore how they can create texture using different media. Year 2 will study wild flowers such as blue bells/dandelions and use clay to create ivy inspired art. Year 3 will study reptiles and amphibians using watercolours to paint newts and adders. Year 4 will study birds, creating detailed pencil drawings, digital art and work with ceramic paint.

We will also be supported by The Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust who will lead sessions on the Heath with Year 2 and Year 3.
NSPCC Speak Out Stay Safe

Our assembly theme for week beginning 6th February is ‘Looking after Ourselves’

As part of our theme we will be introducing children to resources provided by the NSPCC Speak Out Stay Safe programme. It has been three years since we last led a whole school focus on how children can keep themselves safe, using the NSPCC resources.

Children will take part in child friendly, age appropriate assemblies that cover the following themes:

- children’s understanding of their right to be heard
- behaviours that are OK and what is not OK
- privates are private
- trusted adults
- reminders about Childline

Please see the information letter, sent with this newsletter, which provides more information and useful links.

Internet Safety Day

Tuesday 7th February is Internet Safety Day with learning based around the theme ‘Want to talk about it?’ As part of our preparations for this, assemblies will be focused on keeping safe online – especially when playing games, as some of the children tell us that they play games and use apps which are not recommended for their age group.

Information about Safer Internet Day 2023 can be found here: https://www.saferinternetday.org/en-GB/

M & M Productions - Beauty and the Beast

Thank you to all those parents who sent in their contributions for M&M Theatrical Production’s performance of Beauty and the Beast which the children watched last Friday. They thoroughly enjoyed the drama of the story and the music.

More pictures are available on our website.
Y2 Titanic Assembly

As mentioned in our previous Newsletter, Year 2 parents are invited to a special ‘Titanic’ assembly on **Thursday 9th February**. During this assembly the children will be displaying what they have learnt in their topic this half term. You are welcome to attend at either of our two performances at 9.00am or 2.30pm. **Please note: Due to health and safety regulations, we are only able to offer 2 seats per child on this occasion.**

To help the children get into character for this assembly, we would like them to come to school dressed up as either a passenger or crew member of the Titanic. Some ideas could include a Victorian lady or gentleman, a captain, or even a chamber maid.

Children will need to either wear their school uniform underneath their costumes, or bring it with them in a separate bag to change into after the assembly.

Entry to the hall for the assembly will be through the staff entrance and doors will be opened 10 minutes beforehand. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Year 2 are also looking forward to their visit form the Sea City Museum on Wednesday where they will learn more about the Titanic and get a chance to handle artefacts and dress up in historical clothing.

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Perimeter Fencing

New perimeter fencing has now been erected along the back of the school and the fencing contractors will shortly start work replacing fencing between the first and middle schools. We would like to thank parents for their continued support during this period of disruption.

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Traffic Management

We are pleased to inform parents that Dorset Highways will be installing double yellow lines along Mountbatten Drive during half term. This should ease the traffic issues.

During half term we will see new car park lift barriers being installed in the car park. These will be used by staff to access the staff car parking spaces. The barriers will be just after the turning point that parents currently use.

Unfortunately, a member of staff was very nearly knocked over by a car this week. It happened where the temporary lights have been placed along Church Road. The car drove through a red light and only just missed the adult. We were able to get the licence plate and report the dangerous driving to the police. The car was not taxed.

Please can we do all we can to keep our local roads safe for pedestrians and drivers.
Yr 4 - Avon Tyrrell Residential Visit

We are all really looking forward to our trip to Avon Tyrrell in May. Thank you to those parents who have paid their deposits. Please refer to your recent ParentMail letter for further information on payment. If you have any queries then please contact the office.

Breakfast Club Price Increase

The daily cost of our Breakfast Club has been £3 since September 2020.

A recent review of our income and expenditure showed we are currently running our Breakfast Club at a loss. It is important that income from the Breakfast Club covers the costs that the school incurs in running it.

We are therefore providing parents with plenty of notice that with effect from Tuesday 18th April, the daily cost of our Breakfast Club will increase to £3.25. This will support the increasing costs of running our Breakfast Club and bring the cost of our Breakfast Club in line with other schools, whilst still providing a value for money service.

Our Breakfast Club remains popular with parents and bookings will remain on a first come first served basis.

Strike Action

Following on from communications that Rhonda Moore, Castleman Academy CEO, sent home to parents recently, we are pleased to advise that there were no disruptions to teaching due to the teachers’ strike on Wednesday 1st February and school operated as normal.

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Dates for your Diary - Remaining Staff Training Days - Reminder

We are pleased to confirm that Monday 17th April and Monday 10th July are the two remaining Staff Training Days for this academic year.

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If Your Child is Unwell

If your child has been sick or has diarrhoea then it is essential that the 48 hour rule is followed, ie your child must not return to school for 48 hours from the last episode. Please encourage your child to wash their hands regularly.
Adverse Weather – Information for Parents re School Closure

As the weather can become unpredictable at this time of the year, arrangements need to be in place to cope with sudden snowfalls or severe weather that may prevent staff from reaching school.

- Parents are advised that, in the event of a heavy frost, there may be occasions when site staff have to lock all access gates until gritting of key areas has been completed.
- There may be days when we have to close the waiting areas and bring year groups in to school from doors at the front of school.
- Parents will be notified of any changes to the entry and exit arrangements but this might be at short notice, so we ask for your patience, understanding and co-operation.
- Parents must:
  - adhere to the designated, gritted pathways into school only
  - supervise their children before and after school whilst on school premises
  - ensure that their children are wearing sensible footwear and warm coats

- Please check ParentMail text messaging service and updated notices on our website.

Parents can also access information on:
https://mapping.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/closedservices/Service/schools

This will be the final Newsletter for this half term. We have one more week in school before we break up for the half term holiday on Friday 10th February at the normal time. The next Newsletter is due to be published on Friday 24th February.

Many thanks to Elsie in Y4 for the lovely ideas for stickers linked to our values. Elsie, I’ll see if I can make it happen!

Have a good half term, when it arrives.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Watts
Acting Headteacher