Dear Parents

Where is the time going? One more week and then we break for the Easter holiday!

As a school, the creative arts remain an important part of our curriculum offer. This week we were pleased to be recognised as a **Music Mark School**. This is in recognition of the value we place on music education as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and our strategy for music which provides for all children.

I have enjoyed sitting in on some fabulous individual guitar lessons this week and it has been a delight to watch Year 4 perform with their ukuleles to other classes.

Isaac, in Year 2, showed off his piano skills in assembly this morning playing a piece called The Bold Escape – a powerful piano piece. Isaac, you played beautifully, reading the music carefully and using the pedals. Well done!

We expose children to a wide range of music traditions as part of assembly each day. Mrs Charters, our music coordinator, has taken children on a musical journey through the Baroque, classical and romantic eras. Children are currently listening to music by Elgar.

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**Celebrate Learning**

**EYFS**

We have loved learning about dinosaurs this half term. There was a mystery to solve this week. We needed to catch a dinosaur that was roaming the school! We talked about what it would look like and then built it using construction materials. In our ‘Understanding the World’ sessions, we have thought about what the dinosaurs have left behind.

We continue to enjoy drawing club. This week, we watched a short clip from the 1993 film, ‘We’re back! A Dinosaur Story’. The children then drew the adventures that the dinosaurs went on. Children then wrote captions to describe their drawing club creations.

In maths, the children used practical contexts to sort objects according to different criteria. They were encouraged to notice different attributes in groups of objects – such as colour, size or function – and to describe what they had noticed. Towards the end of the week, we sorted number blocks according to whether they were odd or even tops.
Year 1
Year 1 have been riding the high seas to an exotic island in our most recent fiction unit in English. We have been using, ‘Grandad’s Island’ by Benji Davies as our focus text and journeyed with Syd and Grandad on their adventure. The children have been creating, saying and writing successful sentences to retell the story.

We have been trying hard to remember our sentence writing ‘basics’, making sure that we include capital letters, finger spaces and full stops. Our unit for the end of this term is Non-Fiction Writing, focusing on non-chronological reports.

We will be revisiting some of our Science learning as we write about the seasons. We will be writing fun facts and information about spring as we learn about the ‘shape’ of a non-chronological report and the key features it must include.

Year 2
Year 2 have enjoyed reading Fantastic Mr Fox this term. They have recited lots of poems confidently and with enthusiasm - Pancake Day, Caterpillar, Caterpillar and Butterfly.

In English, the children have been learning how to use question marks and exclamation marks correctly. They have been practising extending their sentences with a wider range of conjunctions - when, if, as, while. The children really enjoyed writing their own story about a fairy tale character who loves reading.

In Maths, we have practised solving multiplication and division problems with a bar model. Please encourage your child to play on TT Rock Stars at home. By the end of Year 2, children should be able to answer x2, x5 and x10 questions automatically. We have also practised counting pounds and pence and found different ways to make given amounts.

In History, we have been learning about Rosa Parks, Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling as part of our 'Brave Women' topic. Next week, the children look forward to writing a diary entry in role as Grace Darling.

Year 3
In Year 3, we have been enjoying Letter to Pluto by Lou Treleaven. This is written as a series of futuristic letters to and from Pluto.

In English this week, we have started letter writing. We are writing a letter to Angela McAllister, who we were fortunate enough to meet on World Book Day. So far, we have considered the layout of letters and what we need to include. At home, you could write a letter to a friend or family member.
In Science, we have been learning about magnets. We know that a magnet is an object that produces a magnetic field. We have had great fun exploring this invisible force. Children have been taught that magnets have a north and south pole and that opposites attract, whereas same poles repel. This week, we started investigating which materials are magnetic. At home, children could research some every day uses for magnets.

**Year 4**

Year 4 children have been learning all about electricity. We have learnt what electricity is and how it works. We have really enjoyed using the electrical equipment to build our own electrical circuits. We have experimented with ways to make our bulbs brighter and explored which materials work as an electrical conductor or insulator. We are using this scientific knowledge to write an explanation text all about electricity.

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**Staffing Update**

**Mr Hunt - 4H**

At the end of this term, we will be saying goodbye to Mr Hunt who has secured a new position teaching at Clayesmore School, Blandford Forum.

Mr Hunt has worked at Ferndown First School since September 2020 and we will be very sad to see him leave. We would like to thank Mr Hunt for his contribution to our school and wish him the very best of luck for the future.

**Miss Trevett**

From Tuesday 18th April, Miss Trevett will be teaching children in 4H. Miss Trevett has taught with us before, comes with lots of teaching experience and we look forward to welcoming her to our school.

**Mrs Cload - RCB**

I am sure you will be delighted to hear that Mrs Cload is expecting her third child in June. Mrs Cload will, therefore, begin her maternity leave after May half term. We wish Mr and Mrs Cload the very best of luck with the impending birth of their baby and look forward to meeting their new arrival later in the year.

We will be communicating arrangements for Mrs Cload’s maternity cover in due course.
Drop Off and End of Day Collection Arrangements

As notified in a recent Parentmail, from Tuesday 18th April, we will be making a slight alteration to our morning drop off and afternoon collection routines.

There is no longer any requirements for parents to wait in year groups or stand in the parent waiting area next to the staff car park. At the beginning and the end of the day, all parents are asked to wait in a single line by the Youth club gate.

In the morning, we will continue to open the gate at 8.25am. The gate will remain open until 8.45am.

In the afternoon, we will continue to open the gate at 2.55pm, however, all children will now be dismissed from classrooms at 3.05pm. This brings the school back in line with timings published on our website and before Covid restrictions.

The one way system will remain in place. This works well and keeps everybody safe. Thank you for your continued support.

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Parent Behaviour

We welcome all visitors to our school and aspire to work in partnership with parents and neighbours to establish a school community in which everyone shows respect for themselves and for others. We treat visitors and parents with respect and we expect that this will be reciprocated.

It is also important that all adults model appropriate language and behaviour and also follow our school rules and routines. Please treat all members of the school community with respect and refrain from swearing and any form of intimidating behaviour.

The safety and well-being of all the children must be the highest priority for us all.

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Slope outside Year 1

For health and safety reasons, we would ask that parents ensure their children do not play on the slope opposite the Year 1 door. Thank you for your continued support.
**Year 1 Phonics Meetings for Parents**

Your child will be taking a statutory Phonics Screening Check during the week of the 12th June.

A ParentMail has been sent home this week inviting you to a Parent Information meeting on **Monday 27th March**, during which Year 1 teachers will give you information about the Phonics Screening Check and how you can support your child at home.

The first meeting will take place in the hall at 2.30pm. The second **online** meeting will start at 6pm. A Teams link for this meeting will be sent home to parents in due course. *(Please note: These meetings will include the same information so parents need only attend one meeting).*

Please ensure you let us know which meeting you will be attending using the form that has been sent home via ParentMail.

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**Year 2 SATS Meetings for Parents**

During the month of May, your child will complete statutory assessments, called SATs.

Parents are invited to a Parent Information meeting, during which Year 2 teachers will give you information about the SATs, as well as ways in which you can support your child at home.

The first meeting will take place on Thursday 30th March at 2.30pm in the hall. The second **online** meeting will start at 6pm. A Teams link for this meeting will be sent home to parents in due course. *(Please note: These meetings will include the same information so parents need only attend one meeting).*

Please let us know which meeting you will be attending using the form that has been sent out via ParentMail.

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**Easter Service**
We are very much looking forward to our Easter Services at St Mary's Church on **Wednesday 29th March**, as follows:

**EYFS, Years 1 and 2** – service starts at 9.15am

**Years 3 and 4** – service starts at 10.45am

Parents, families and friends are welcome to join us at the service but we must allow the children into church first. The congregation are asked to wait in The Beacon or wait outside church for us to arrive. When all the children have been seated, the congregation will be asked to find their seats.

We would be grateful for help so if any parent is available to help walk the children down to the church, please speak to your child’s class teacher. Parents of those children attending the EYFS, Yrs 1 & 2 service may wait in the playground for the children before walking to the church as we will be leaving school at approx. 8.50am. Parents of children in Yrs 3 and 4 are asked to wait outside the main gate until children are ready to walk over to the church. We will be leaving school for the Yr 3 & 4 service at approx. 10.20am.

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**Easter Bonnet Competition - Reminder**

We will be running our very popular Easter Bonnet Competition again this year. This competition is free to enter.

Children are asked to bring their bonnets into school on **Wednesday 29th March** when children will wear them to the church. Bonnets will then be judged and the winners announced and celebrated.

More information about this will be coming home shortly. We look forward to seeing some fabulous creations!

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**Save the Date – Open Evening**

**Our school Open Evening is taking place on**

**Thursday 18th May from 5pm – 7.00pm**

Further details will be sent home in due course.

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**Strike Action**
We are pleased to advise that there were no disruptions to teaching due to the teachers’ strike on Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th March and school operated as normal.

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**Community Outreach Drop-In Sessions**

As mentioned in our last Newsletter, Mrs Bramley, our School Support Worker, will be available at the Heatherlands Centre, Ferndown on **Thursday 30th March** between 9.30 - 11am to discuss any concerns or answer any questions you may have regarding your child(ren). This will be a ‘drop-in’ session so no appointment is necessary.

Details of monthly ‘drop-in’ sessions have now been sent out via a ParentMail flyer.

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**2023 Year Group Trips**

School trips enhance children's curriculum experience and learning.

Following on from trip information provided for each year group in the last Newsletter, we can now confirm that Year 3 will be visiting Brownsea Island on Thursday 18th May.

*More details regarding all the year group trips will be provided in due course.*

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**Yr 4 - Avon Tyrrell Residential Visit – Online Meeting**

There will be an online parents meeting to discuss the final details of this trip and to answer any questions you may have on **Wednesday 29th March at 6pm**. A link will be sent out closer to the day.

Thank you to all those parents who have made their payments for their child’s trip. In order to guarantee your child’s place, first instalment payments should have now been paid. The outstanding balance is due by Friday 21st April.
Summer Term - Uniform

Children will be able to wear their summer uniform to school when we return from the Easter holiday. Parents are reminded of our uniform requirements, as detailed below:

- Yellow and white summer dress
- Grey skirt/pinafore/tailored trousers/shorts with yellow polo shirt
- Navy blue sweatshirt or cardigan
- Black shoes/sandals (covered toes)
- Navy, grey or black socks or tights

Long hair (collar length and longer) should be tied up and secured with a hair band in our school colours. Thank you for continuing to support our uniform policy.

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Staff Training Day - Reminder

Parents are reminded that **Monday 17th April** is a Staff Training Day so school will be closed to children on this day.

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EASTER BREAK

We break up for the Easter holiday on **Friday 31st March**. As this is the last Newsletter before the end of term, I wish you all an enjoyable holiday with your children, however you choose to celebrate.

We look forward to seeing the children back at school on **Tuesday 18th April** for a very busy final term of this academic year.

Kind regards.

Mr Sean Watts
Headteacher