

NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2016



Cleves School
Learning Together

Dear Parents and Pupils

The first half term has flown by and it is nearly time for the pupils and staff to have a well deserved rest. We have enjoyed a fantastic start to the academic year and I would like to congratulate all the children on their hard work and progress. They have all settled in well, and we were especially impressed with our new year 3 pupils who are already happy, comfortable and familiar with our systems and expectations.

The year got off to a busy and productive start with our new building handed over several weeks ago and year 6 are now in their temporary new home. Our new playground should be finished on our return from the half term and then the final phase of work begins with a dining hall extension and extension to the year 6 block.

Whilst the building work progresses and the facilities are improved we have continued of course to focus on school improvement work and developing teaching and learning . There are a number of a new developments for this year which I would like to share with you.

Project 1 - SEND support - To develop more support for pupils struggling with Maths:

We intend to extend the Numicon maths intervention so more pupils are supported in the lower school. One Learning Support Assistant has been on training for a new maths intervention called Maths Catch Up. We are trialling this and if it has an impact we will train more staff and run the programme more widely.

Project 2 - Working with parents:

We have written to parents requesting support and I am delighted to say that 15 more parents have volunteered to come in and support with early morning reading, spellings or maths games. Volunteer parents will be better trained and prepared so they know how to support pupils.

We have advertised and recruited to our new Parent Forum which had its first meeting earlier this week..

Project 3 - Maths:

You will be aware that we currently set by ability for maths lessons and, following a whole school review with staff, we intend to continue with this approach. We have children with a wide range of mathematical ability, including many very able mathematicians who need extending. We continue to believe that setting is the best way to extend all pupils; however we have decided to take a more flexible approach. Whilst ability setting allows us to target support, deliver lessons at an appropriate pace for different ability groups and extend all pupils, it can present disadvantages.

There are two particular issues we intend to address. A rigid approach to setting can create unnecessary barriers to pupil progress where very capable mathematicians are not moved into a higher group because there is no space. Throughout last year some year groups trialled running parallel sets where appropriate,

so we had two top sets in one year working from the same material and two equal middle sets in another year. Each year group will tailor the groups to the needs of the cohort and where required we will run parallel groups to ensure there is no cap on pupil attainment or progress. If we have 60 very able mathematicians in a year group we will provide two top groups.

Secondly, whilst we currently support pupils who can struggle with maths by creating small groups, these pupils do not benefit from working with their friends. This can lead to them feeling excluded which can affect their self-esteem. This year, pupils previously in our small support groups will re-join a larger group and be supported by LSAs or Mrs Tope within the class. They will receive the same level of additional support and differentiated work matched to their needs, but they will no longer be isolated.

Project 4 - Literacy developments

We are putting a number of changes in place this year to further improve our daily focused reading sessions. We now have a system where every child reads to their teacher at least once a week and these sessions allow time to practise reading aloud, develop decoding skills, work on comprehension skills and higher order skills like inference and deduction. Pupils read differentiated texts appropriate to their ability level and our planning ensures they read a range of genres across the year.

We want to extend our practice and establish a culture of reading for pleasure. We want the library to be better used and for pupils to use their library books in free reading time rather than just grabbing a book off the class book shelf, reading a few pages and putting it back.

Mrs Arpesella has worked with our year leaders to create recommended reading lists for each year group. These are nearly ready to publish and will be given to pupils and sent home to families to guide book choices. We intend to set pupils the target of reading at least one book from the list every half term (there are 45 to select from). Mrs Arpesella has ordered multiple copies of these titles for our library which is another project kindly funded by the PTA.

We have developed a new format for our weekly spellings, which will be ready after half term. Rather than issue separate spelling lists to each ability group we are going to publish a single sheet to the whole year group which will have four levels of spellings. Pupils will learn words appropriate to their ability but will also be expected to practise some high frequency words each week as well as some more challenging words.

Project 5. Monitoring and looking at new lesson plans

Although we monitor frequently and maintain good records, we are introducing a new more strategic layer of monitoring. Much of our monitoring is focused on the standards of teaching and learning, behaviour, attainment and progress and delivery of the School Development Plan. Whilst focusing on detail is vital, we also want to ensure we step back and consider the bigger strategic picture. Each term the leadership team will consider a number of overarching big questions and be asking parents and pupils for feedback .

Last year many of our subject coordinators planned new topics and lessons which now link our subjects together more and tie in better with the national curriculum. Schemes of work in Art, Design and Technology, RE, PSHE and History and Geography were all reviewed and improved . We therefore intend to seek feedback from staff and pupils on a half termly basis to ensure the changes have added value.

Project 6 - Kagan teaching strategies

Mrs Lintin spent some time last year looking at group work and group teaching strategies for us, including visits to lead schools. As a result she has shared some valuable strategies which staff are adopting. In the Kagan teaching style pupils are grouped on tables of four and deliberately in mixed ability groups. There is an emphasis on teamwork, partner talk and high levels of participation.

Project 7 - Most able

This will be another ongoing thread in our work this year. We intend to develop both in-class provision

through differentiation and extension activities but also through excellence groups where children are withdrawn from class for special stand-alone projects. The stand-alone projects will focus on skills which can be transferred to class work to ensure they are relevant.

On our return I intend to publish our full school development plan list for your reference.

CURRICULUM

Year 3

We can't believe that it is only 7 weeks since our 'littlies' started at Cleves! They have had an action packed half term coming to terms with the pace and new ways of doing things at Cleves and have all done so well. They thoroughly enjoyed their first 'Immersion Day' focusing on animals and learned a lot about animal classification and the responsibilities that we have to our own wildlife. Several parents have commented that their children are enquiring about creating 'hedgehog highways' through their gardens - perhaps some of you will pursue this with your neighbours. We have been doing a lot of art - investigating texture, layering of different media to create their own versions of animal skins. In Literacy the children have developed their descriptive powers to write character descriptions inspired by Roald Dahl (as well as us teachers dressing up as Roald Dahl characters for a day), written poems about the playground sounds inspired by Allan Ahlberg, and are finishing off the half term developing their ability to write an explanation text of various life cycles - great cross-curricular writing! On the first Wednesday back we will be moving off site to undertake a geography survey of the local area and have our first outdoor learning morning at Oatlands Park - parents, if you haven't offered to help there is still time! Thank you for working with us to help your children settle in so splendidly. We really look forward to the rest of the year with your enthusiastic children. Mrs Flaxman

Year 4

At the beginning of the term, year 4 embraced their new topic of 'Discovering India' through immersing themselves in a variety of cultural experiences, including Indian dance, Indian music, Kabaddi and Indian tea. Our Geography lessons have investigated comparisons between the human and physical geographical characteristics of India and England. The art focus this half term has been Rangoli patterns, which the children will use next term to create their own waistcoats. In Literacy, we have studied a range of Indian stories and created our own playscripts which some of the children read out on the school radio. We have also looked at texts by 'Jamila Gavin' such as 'The Paradise Carpet'. Science this term has focussed on 'States of Matter' where the children have carried out numerous investigations relating to the water cycle. In RE the children have begun to explore Hinduism. Miss Bye

Year 5

So far this term, year 5 have settled in quickly to life in the Upper School. The children have embraced our new topic of the Tudors, and enjoyed their trips to Hampton Court Palace as well as learning about how the Tudors came to power in the Battle of Bosworth, amongst other things. The children have already shown us what they can do with their writing, and we have enjoyed reading their fantastic instructions for curing Tudor ailments. We have also been impressed with their fantastic Tudor dancing, which is more than can be said for their teachers. In Science, we have enjoyed learning about light and shadow, as well as developing our investigative skills. Luckily, the sun has generally shone on our experiments which have involved shadows and sundials. Starting to learn brass instruments has been an enjoyable challenge for two of our classes, and swimming has also begun in earnest. A successful start made by all - now the children just need to keep up the good work up until Christmas! Mr Tuck

Year 6

Year 6 have had a super start to the year and are rising to the challenge of setting an example as the oldest members of the school. We have started our studies on the Victorian Era, including a fantastic Victorian workshop full of genuine artefacts where the children tried their hands at being servants in a large Victorian household. Activities included laundry, carpet sweeping, shoe shining and even rat catching. In that same

week, the children had a taste of a Victorian school with their nail inspections, chanting times tables and strict discipline. Our Science topics have been Classification of Living Things and now Evolution and Inheritance. In Literacy we have been writing first person narrative accounts in a Victorian workhouse and writing biographies of famous authors. We are about to immerse ourselves in Shakespeare with studies on Macbeth including lots of drama, art and descriptive writing which will continue after half term. Mrs Flaherty

EARLY MORNINGS

Please remember that you should not drop your child off before 8.00am. This half term we have had a number of children waiting unattended outside the gate as early as 7.45am.. You may drop them between 8.00 - 8.30am at the Early Risers club in the Dining Hall. There is a small charge of £1.50 per day for this.

HARVEST

This term we have been celebrating Harvest at Cleves with a thought-provoking presentation from 5T in the church and also through our Harvest collection. Thank you to everyone who donated items - it was great to see them pile up outside reception. Thank you also to the parents who volunteered to come in and sort the items out into gift bags. Your help was much appreciated. The bags are making their way to care homes in the local area who we know are grateful of the donations.

MUSIC NEWS

Already it has been a busy term for Cleves Choir, who performed at the Welcome Service and the Harvest Service. Both performances went extremely well with our new choir of 100 singers!! Mr. Kilhams is still investigating the best option for the school orchestra as he wants it to be a success and that means finding a time either during school or after school for it to take place. This is likely to start after half term.

All the Young Voices information has just been sent out to those singing in Cleves Choir and Funky Choir and there will be a dedicated team to deal with all enquiries.

Mr. Kilhams would love to remind all parents that we have a team of dedicated and extremely professional peripatetic teachers and they always welcome new pupils so please contact Reception or visit the website for more details.

SPORTS NEWS

As ever, there are lots of sporting clubs and teams to get involved with at Cleves, and although not many fixtures have taken place yet, training has already begun before and after school, and at lunchtimes. We are also currently exploring further links with other schools, which will give more children an opportunity to compete in interschool events and fixtures.

Football

The football squads have begun training in earnest, and with a strong pool of talent from both year groups, Cleves should have an enjoyable season ahead, in the leagues and the tournaments we will be entering.

Year 5 have yet to play their first fixture, but Year 6 have already competed in the Danesfield Manor 5-a-side tournament, winning the cup convincingly. Also, this week they beat a talented Royal Russell side 6 v 4 in the first round of the County Cup. Well done - a great start!

Netball

After only having a few practices of their passing and positioning this term, the Year 5 Netball team had their first competitive match last week against Grovelands School. Everyone played fantastically and were rewarded with a 4-1 victory. We have lots more matches coming up after half term, and with such a great start we will be looking to continue to build on our success!

The Year 6 Netball Club is now in full swing. The girls are keenly practising their footwork and shooting skills every week. We have two Netball matches later this term and it is going to be extremely difficult to pick an A team out of so many talented players. Fingers crossed for a winning outcome!

Running Club

This has proved more successful than ever this term with over 150 children attending on a weekly basis. It is a great opportunity to start the day with some exercise, so if you are interested please sign up by clicking on this link - <https://goo.gl/forms/un8MnOPM0hfENk3j1>

Cross Country

Congratulations to Mac Douglas (6S) who has been invited to join the annual training day for the Surrey Cross Country Development Squad. The invites are to Surrey's 20 most gifted athletes in each age group. A fantastic achievement!

Indoor Athletics

Indoor Athletics club will start for pupils in Year 6 after half term. This will take place on a Friday morning from 8.00 to 8.30am in the sports hall. Further details will be sent out straight after half term.

Play Leaders

The Year 6 Play Leaders recently joined other schools from the area to attend Sports Crew training, which helped them to develop their skills in developing accessible and inclusive games. The Play Leaders will be putting these newly acquired skills to use by organising and overseeing various games and events around the school.

PTA NEWS

The PTA is busy planning for its two main autumn term events and major fundraisers as well as Bags 2 School after half term on Tuesday 1st November. If anyone would like to assist with any of the upcoming events or volunteer for a class rep role if their class is still without one, please e mail PTA@cleves.co.uk

The fabulous Cleves Fireworks will be held on Saturday 5th November (gates open 5.30 with fireworks at 7.30pm) and our Xmas Fair takes place on Sunday 4th December (2-4pm) with all the usual fun stalls, great raffle prizes and a visit from the man in red!

See you there!

Uniform

Thank you to anyone that has already donated spare uniform. As Mrs Lockyer now has enough items, the PTA have decided to sell second hand uniform, so if you would like to donate any Cleves branded uniform please bring to Reception. We will advise further details after half-term.

AND FINALLY...

I wish you all a very enjoyable holiday. We return on Monday 31st October for what will surely be another busy and successful half-term.



Mr Hodges
Headteacher