



Sports is on the rise at Elstow 😊

Blog #6 W/C 19th February 2018. We had a great staff training day on Monday 19th here. We discussed as a staff, our focus on continuing to improve the teaching and learning through the reading and maths meeting sessions which are happening daily in every class. Our focus on reading, including vocabulary extension and access to high quality texts, is something we are keen to promote.

We have a visit planned by English leads across the Northampton Primary Academy Trust schools. They will have a day at Elstow, with a presentation and observations of reading being taught right the way from Early Years to Year 6. In addition, we have the English Lead from Caudwell School, part of our local cluster of primaries, coming to observe. Miss Holmes is continuing to see good practice both in Atwood Primary Academy in London and in Biggleswade Academy where similar practice is in place.

We are continuing to focus on knowledge, and Mrs Whiting has developed a five day sequence of maths meeting sessions for teachers, based on the reading sequence, which will help children embed their understanding of the facts we need in mathematics to help calculate. Learning the facts (for example, the names and properties of shapes, or numbers of mm in a cm or m in a km) reduces the cognitive load and allows children to focus on learning how to solve maths problems in the maths lesson itself. The leadership team are completing learning walks to see the success of these sessions in the next three weeks.

This week I have visited a lot of lessons around the school – I like popping in and out of class. I was rewarded by some great behaviour for learning. In year 4 the whole year group showed they could quickly and quietly put coats away and prepare for the afternoon with minimal fuss. They were seated and working less than a minute after hanging coats up. Early Years also showed the value of routines. The teachers are practising an amended way of asking the children to manage their coats – both taking off and putting on. We have all watched just how tricky little children find this and how time consuming it can be. Mrs Moulam came to tell me just how well they did, the slick routine, (prepared and practised by the teachers beforehand and carried out by all adults), meant the children were on the carpet and writing their letters in super quick time. No time wasted.

Meanwhile in Year 3 – I watched some wonderful singing in the maths meeting where the children have learned their roman numerals. Miss Orso even stopped the song to enhance the learning by making links with C for 100 to what the children already know (a century is a hundred years and the Italian for 100 is cento). I watched Hawks and Eagles both singing and acting their song – have a look [here](#) at what they used to learn the symbols for the numbers.

Year 6 PE was energetic and the children clearly were working and having fun. Miss Bennett had Ash class practising their 'beans' warm up – ask them about it! In the big hall, Oak were using mats to rehearse different strength moves using their bodies alone and in partnerships.

Next week is exciting as the sport offer which I heralded a couple of weeks ago, is now in place. The entry to different competitions for the summer term by teams from Elstow has been arranged; this is an improved and will be sustained effort, to involve the children in more external competitions. In school, we are setting up house competitions (of which you will all get details, and to which you will be invited). Extra PE slots on Mondays and Fridays taught by the Bedford Free School specialists are now offered across the school and you will be informed when the children need to come in PE kit. Today it was the turn of Year 2 – both the teachers and the children were delighted with their lesson. Thank you Michael Cox, PE lead at BFS! Finally, in addition, extra FA skills on a Monday afternoon are now starting, initially for Year 3 – thank you Mr Maker!. Mr Crouch is leading the PE across the school, as well as making sure all teachers have the best possible opportunities to develop their teaching. More to come!

Diary Dates

- 20th Feb 8.25 Gates open for the second half of the spring term. It's now Eagles Class' turn to go swimming on Friday mornings. Please remember their kit.
- 21st Feb Chief Constable Jon Boutcher in holding a whole school assembly.
- 22nd Feb 1 – 5pm Football Y5 tournament. Lincroft – (participating children notified)
- 23rd Feb KS2 Celebration assembly
- 26th Feb/5th March BFS extra supported PE lesson for Y3 – please send Y3 in PE kit on Mondays for 26th February and Monday 5th March.
- 1 Mar Y6 Ash visit Natural History Museum.
- 2 Mar KSI Celebration assembly
- World Book Day celebration – come dressed as a character from your House author.

World Book Day this year will be celebrated on Friday 2nd March. Children are encouraged to come into school in a costume based on their house group: Dahl, Carroll, Simon and Rowling.

We do ask that children do not come to school in football kits. However if you are struggling with a costume idea do ask your child's class teacher or Miss Holmes for some ideas.

- 6 Mar 9am Falcons Class assembly – parents invited
- Parents meetings 3:50 – 5.50pm

- 8th Mar Y6 Oak class to Natural History Museum
Parents meetings 3:50 – 7:20pm
- 9th Mar 9am KS2 Celebration Assembly
- 12th Mar Chick eggs arrive in reception! 😊
- 13th Mar 9am and 6pm Year 6 SATs parent workshop and presentations.
- 14th Mar 18:30 For information only – Local Governing Body meeting, Elstow

Have a lovely weekend and I look forward to the forecast ice and snow next week!

Samantha Baxter