



Principal's Blog

Friday 23 March 2018

I have just come out of the EY/KSI Sing into Spring – what an absolute delight. The children loved singing all their songs. Some were pop songs, some written especially for children's voices, but either way had all the lyrics and actions too. It was also wonderful that so many parents and younger siblings came to watch and celebrate with us too. Fantastic all around. It's these kind of events which make me so pleased and proud to be the Principal of Elstow. 😊

This week has seen Y5 and Y6 pupils engaged in Bikeability. As I drove the minibus with Y1 (I know – multi-tasking!) I saw them smiling and riding on the road in Abbeyfields. Great training for them to ensure they are independent and safe as they get ready for secondary school.

We continue to make sure the children have enriched school days with more and more sports on offer. This week 30 Year 1 children went to Biddenham to take part in multi-skills and dance. This is part of our School Sports Partnership programme of events. The pupils tried hockey, golf, curling and created and performed a short dance to 'The lion sleeps tonight'. Huge thanks to Mr Crouch for organising and to Mrs Ubhi for dancing and helping children so enthusiastically!

Next week, Y3,4,5 and 6 will have an orienteering event. It is on Monday morning in school and the children will need both PE kit and uniform (including shoes which may well get muddy). As the Y5 and Y6 are in their Sing into Spring in Elstow Abbey Church that afternoon they will need a uniform change so they are smart for that performance. Please do come to listen – it'll be about 20 minutes long or so and we will walk children who are not collected from the church, back to school afterwards.

This week has also seen two classes show their class assemblies. Y4 Falcons wowed us with their beautiful narrative writing and also sang a song to help with their knowledge of fractions. I particularly love seeing singing used in the school day to help children learn facts. The whole year group had a fabulous day on Monday learning about life as a London child in the 1600's. Meanwhile Year 1 Hedgehogs treated us to a wonderful class assembly where they told us all about the continents and learning about prehistory and archaeologists. They have made links and connections to this work by visiting Tring Natural History Museum, which they absolutely loved.

We continue to host visitors as part of our professional partnerships. In particular, 11 literacy subject co-ordinators and the network lead from Northampton Primary School Trust came to see how we teach reading. They spent the morning with me and Miss Holmes and we shared the rationale and specific planning and teaching of reading. They observed 7 reading sessions across the school and were wowed by the engagement and attention of the children, who so obviously clearly enjoy the lessons. We feel that supporting the outcomes for our children in Bedfordshire is key and continue to help the University of Bedfordshire in training their 3rd Year students in Literacy leadership. On Thursday morning, a group of 10 observed reading in Y5 and attended a presentation by Miss Holmes on the way we teach reading in Elstow.

Yesterday, I walked around the classes to see what kind of Thursday activities were taking place – Y6 were making clay pots and talking about good choices, whilst Y5 were making electrical circuits. Y3 and Y4 were rehearsing for Sing into Spring – goodness they sounded good! In Y1 and Y2 I saw high quality reading and writing. Some Early Years children were having a go at a reading assessment paper (don't worry, they were excited to show what they knew. There was no mention of the word 'Test') There was a lovely calm and productive atmosphere everywhere I went. Just so lovely.

The website will be updated shortly with an Advantage Schools look – the website as you know it now will be replaced with a smarter more stylish look which hopefully will also be easier to navigate and for you to use to find out what you need. In the meantime, the curriculum tab on the current website has the knowledge facts and timetables which let you know what your child is learning. On other tabs are letters and leaflets about behaviour, attendance and other things the school offers. You can get to the curriculum tab [here](#)

Some of you will have seen me standing with my notebook outside at the morning gates. I am taking taxi number plates to let Parking Enforcement at Bedford Borough know that they are double parking. They do add to the congestion as, when they do that, the parents who are waiting are unable to pull out or in of the lay-by.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP SUMMER TERM CHANGES

From the start of the summer term the school gates will open at 8.25 and close at 8.40. All pupils will need to be on site by then and the register will be taken shortly after. Early Years children will go directly into their classrooms but all other children will go to the playground. They will line up and be walked into class at 8.40 and the registers taken then. Children who arrive through the front of the school will be marked as late.

All teachers will help you by talking to all of our children during the next week about making sure they help themselves by getting up and being ready in the mornings! If you have particular problems with the timings do please contact the office and make an appointment to see me. I want to work with all families to make the school day as smooth and happy as possible. Please be assured that if children are late, they will not be told off on arrival at school, and we will contact you as parents to support if there are problems getting in on time.

Thank you for coming in to see children perform and supporting the school; it's always appreciated.

Have a lovely weekend.

Samantha Baxter

Diary Dates

26th Mar 2.30 pm Y5 and Y6 Sing into Spring Concert – Elstow Abbey Church

Children in the performance can be collected from the church at the end

Y3, 4, 5 and 6 Orienteering morning in school – please send to school in PE kits and Y5 and Y6 have uniform to change into for the Sing into Spring later that day.

27th Mar Friends of Elstow Easter DISCO £2.50 contribution – please send payment (correct money appreciated) in a clearly marked envelope to the schooloffice.

3.15 – 4.15 - Reception and Y1

(Please send change of clothes into school with the children in the morning. Children will go straight to the disco from class.)

4.30 – 5.30 Y2, 3 and 4

5.45 – 6.45 Y5 and Y6

Mrs Loose will be working with Mrs Jameson and Mrs Plater to help co-ordinate parents and helpers and will be encouraging you to get involved with the work of the Friends! We are hoping that lots of parents will offer little bits of time to help raise money for the school and help us enrich our children's lives at school even further.

28th Mar 9am Otters Class assembly

29th Mar Silly Sock Day Mufti Autism Awareness

Term Ends 2pm

SUMMER TERM BEGINS 8.25am Tuesday 17th April 2018

Please make sure your child is in the gates by 8.40am when they will be closed. Once through the gate – Early Years will go straight into class and parents will walk them to the door and if needed speak to the EY team as usual. Y1 – Y6 will go to the playground and line up at 8.40. They will be walked to the classroom by their teacher. Breakfast club children will be walked to the playground at 8.30am and will line up with the remainder of the school at 8.40.

If it is raining all children will go directly to their classes from 8.25am

