



Seal Newsletter

November
2013

Aspire, Believe and Achieve

On Tuesday 5th and Wednesday 6th November we had a two day inspection carried out by our sponsors, TKAT (The Kemnal Academies Trust). This was not a formal OFSTED inspection but is run in exactly the same way, with three experienced inspectors observing lessons, talking to staff and pupils, and making a thorough assessment of everything we do at the school. I am unable to report all the outcomes to parents until the report is passed through the TKAT moderation team—a groups of OFSTED inspectors who quality assure the report; however, I would like to let you know that the outcome was exactly as we expected and that the team were very impressed with the progress the school has made since January because of the changes we have put in place.

I would also like you to know that your children were amazing (as always!) and absolutely stunned the inspectors with the way they behave in and around the school. One inspector commented that the children were 'polite and well-mannered with a stunning level of courtesy'. I am, as I'm sure you will be, very proud of them.

The report, which is not published publicly, will be with us in the next week or two and at that point I will write to you to give further details. In the meantime, if you would like to see how the inspectors make a judgement I have put the OFSTED inspection handbook on the school website (www.seal-tkat.org) for you to look at. It can be found in the tab 'Link to OFSTED'.

As always, many thanks for your continuing support.

Matt Batchelor
Headteacher

Key Dates:

13th & 14th November—Parents' evening
15th November—Year 2 trip
21st November— Friend's of Seal AGM (3:30)
25th November—Year 6 'Democracy Day'
26th November—Year 4 'Tudor Day'
13th December—Christmas Fair
17th December—Reception & KS1 nativity (9:30)
18th December—Reception & KS1 nativity (5:00)
18th December—Christmas lunch (details to follow soon)
19th December—KS2 carol service (2:00)
19th December—**Whole School Pantomime trip has been cancelled due to lack of space in the theatre**
20th December—Last day of Autumn Term
7th January—First day of Spring Term

School uniform

If you would like to buy more school uniform from the Welcome Office, please could we ask you avoid the morning as it is the busiest time in the office. You are very welcome to drop in at any other time to buy uniform, including the end of the day. Please remember to clearly label your uniform. Although it takes time, we find the labels which are sewn-in have a better chance of staying in!

HOMEWORK

Last term we began our gradual change to homework in response to the overwhelming feedback about the homework policy which had previously been in place. The majority of the feedback focused on two key areas of concern:

The meaningfulness of the homework was not often apparent and some parents were finding it hard to motivate their children to complete it.

Homework was felt not to be pitched as appropriately as it could have been which meant that some children were not being stretched adequately at home.

We made a few changes immediately last term, with some further changes to take place this term, in order to make homework better for our children.

What have we done? How does homework currently work?

We have introduced Learning Logs which give children key tasks to do which are related to the topic they are learning about in class. Each task focuses on carrying out some research or presenting work and is aimed at developing literacy skills within a more meaningful context. Children have up to two weeks to complete their tasks but are limited to two pages in the Learning Log books. This work should be marked by class teachers.

We encourage children to read at least 3 or 4 times per week (but ideally every night) in order to strengthen reading skills. Children receive a Headteacher's sticker for every ten nights they read at home. Five or more stickers gain the children a certificate and book token at the end of term.

Where appropriate, some children may receive additional targeted work such as learning key words or spellings. These are not for all children, but focused on those that would benefit most from this work.

What else are we going to do?

This half term you will hear about an excellent Maths homework scheme the school has bought for every child. It is called Mathletics and is a web-based programme which will rapidly help strengthen Maths skills by targeting questions at the exact level each individual child is working at. Over the coming weeks, the children will receive a web address, username and password along with the instructions of how to set up and access this homework. Their progress is monitored in school with achievements recognised with certificates as the children move through their work. This a fantastic homework programme which we know will help stretch every child on an individual level. If you have any questions about it, please do not hesitate to talk with Mr Tow.