

Headteacher News

Welcome back everyone. I sincerely hope you all had an enjoyable Easter. There's just a couple of completely separate items I wanted to let you know about this week. The first is news about some visitors from Ghana and the second is to explain a recent addition to the way we respond to children's learning called 'Beat the Green'.

Ghanaian Visitors.

On Monday (24th April) we will be receiving some secondary school aged visitors from Ghana. They will be visiting us in the afternoon to spend an hour with one of our classes to lead a drumming session and possibly do a little dancing too. The Ghanaians arrive in England today, for one week, with a very busy itinerary. The connection comes through Plymouth High School for Girls (PHSG) who formed a very successful, 13 year ongoing partnership with Ahantaman Girls Senior High School in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana. Every two years, the schools have an exchange of both staff and students, where a common curriculum project is followed. These projects have varied from mathematics, to renewable energy and IT, to health and well-being. When PHSG are visited by staff and pupils from Ghana, they try to get them involved with as many students as possible but also aim to raise awareness in the wider community of the link between Plymouth and Ghana, and how the two very different cultures and communities can help each other - hence our visit. Over time, PHSG has collected and donated items to the Ahantaman School to improve the education of the students: their unused computers have set up two computer rooms for the school, sports equipment for the PE department, a wind turbine to help generate electricity, even items as basic as pencils and rulers. The Girls School has a primary school close by (see photos below taken on PHSG's last visit) which is also crying out for educational resources (reading books, simple games, matching cards, jigsaws, etc.). We felt it would be nice if we could support the primary school in the same way that PHSG supports the senior school. Therefore, we'd like to ask for donations of unwanted games, books or toys which PHSG could collect from us and then arrange to be shipped to Ghana for their use. If you're happy to, please you could start hunting around for any unwanted or unused items at home and start sending them into school next week.



'Beat the Green'

You probably already know that when we mark children's learning, we highlight the successful parts with a pink pen so they are very clear on where they've done well and succeeded, and we use a green pen to denote the areas where they need to develop. We've then recently split the greens into two broad categories; 'learning greens' and 'lazy greens'. All children will make mistakes because they're still learning new things and some learning they attempt will be challenging and tricky. This is good and we encourage them to give it a go and don't worry about making mistakes, because making mistakes and improving on those mistakes is how we all learn. These are learning greens. But then we have those mistakes that they just shouldn't be making. Things that they know, that they've proved they can do consistently but then they let them slip back into their work, perhaps because they're not concentrating enough, perhaps because they were being distracted, it can be for any number of reasons. These are what we term 'lazy greens' because the children can and should be avoiding those mistakes. We set high expectations in terms of pride in their work and avoiding common errors and we've found the reference to lazy greens is something the children can all understand and are keen to avoid. It really does seem to work and the children now relish the challenge to *Beat the Green*. We're very clear with the children that it's not a matter of laziness in terms of 'not bothering or not caring' but more in terms of letting our focus or concentration slip. We found that our Beat the Green approach is a very effective way of the children recognising and understanding these mistakes and being keen to improve and avoid them in the future.

Diary Dates

Mon 1st May 2017

- Bank holiday

Mon 8th May 2017

- SATs week for Year 6

Sun 21st – Fri 26th May 2016

- Bude Residential (Yr 6)

Wed 24th May 2017

- Tempest Photos – Class groups

Mon 29th May - Fri 2nd June '17

- Half term

Tues 25th July 2017

- Leavers' assembly
- Last day of term 2:30pm finish (Yr6 finish at 1.30pm)

Wed 26th July 2017

- Start of the summer holidays

Mon 4th Sept 2017

- Non pupil day

Tues 5th Sept 2017

- First day of term



Monty's Den

Monty's Den is our onsite after school care. Call on 07522 429599 for more information or to book a session. Flexible booking available www.thedens.co.uk

Lost Property

All lost property from last term, including coats, boots, hats, gloves and mufti clothes will be in the first aid room for collection until Friday 28th April after which time they will need to be disposed of.

Please may we politely remind you to label all items so that children can become independent in the care of their belongings and clothes can be easily returned to their rightful owner.

Foundation News

The children are all very excited about our trip next week and have been learning about the Devon Steam Railway and Rare Breeds Farm this week and writing what they would like to see. Please see the separate letter with regards to additional information for the day. Could you ensure that your child has a named PE kit in school, including plimsolls. The children will also need wellies in school for the outdoor area for wet days. Thank you very much for the fantastic Spring homework that has been sent in. We will be sharing them with the class over the next week.

Year 1 News

Welcome back! It has been lovely hearing about what the children have been up to over the Easter holidays, they have come back full of energy! This term our topic is Heroes & Villains... We have got stuck in writing a 'Super Chick' story, completing a terrific tennis challenge and finding out about Giles Andre's brilliant book character 'Nat Fantastic'. We look forward to more superhero challenges next week! In RE we will be learning about special books. To support this, we would like to ask for your child to bring in their favourite book from home next Tuesday. Have a great weekend!

Year 2 News

We have had a fun first few days back at school. It has been lovely to hear about the adventures the children went on over the Easter break. Water Warriors is our topic for this term and we have begun by investigating non-fiction texts about unusual sea creatures - we are all excited to delve deeper. As you may be aware, the children will be undergoing SATs assessments during the month of May. Please note there is nothing for you or your child to be concerned or worried about and a letter will be coming home shortly to give you a little extra information about the process. Have a fantastic weekend.

Year 3 News

What a great first week back we have had. The children have been introduced to our new topic and become Heritage Hunters for the term. We are going to be learning about how Plymouth has changed over the years and the impact that World War 2 has had on it. In Maths, we are learning about telling the time and any practice on this over the next couple of weeks would be amazing. Next week is our class trip around Plymouth, let's hope this good weather continues. Hope that everybody had a great Easter Holiday and we are looking forward to a great Summer Term. Year 3 team.

Year 4 News

Wow! The children have all made a great start to the summer term this week. Our 'Famous Victorians Day' was the highlight of the week and we would like to thank you for your support with the children's amazing costumes; it really helped to enhance the children's learning experience. They were involved in a variety of activities such as looking at Victorian artefacts, solving a Morse code message, researching famous Victorians, creating silhouette portraits, writing in the style of a Victorian and working as a team to create a Victorian timeline. Thank you for your support and have a great weekend.

Year 5 News

Great to see all the children back again and enthusiastic about our new Greek topic and the swimming sessions. During the initial session of swimming, the children were assessed and put into suitable ability groups by the instructors at the Life Centre. As the lessons continue, we will all get into a routine for the daily sessions. Please make sure your child has a jacket to walk to the pool, as in past years, we have often been caught out with fine weather walking there, but heavy rain on the return journey.

Year 6 News

Welcome back! It's been lovely to have a break and we hope you all enjoyed it too. However, it is now the final weeks before SATs so we do need to remain focused and continue preparing for the tests. We are doing all that we can to make sure the children feel prepared and ready to do their best. Please make sure that your child is keeping up with the homework tasks. In English, we are learning to write a movie review. Perhaps you could discuss films you have seen together and look at movie reviews online!

Parent SEND Conference

This year's Parent SEND Conference will be taking place on May 9th. As before there will be day and evening sessions in order to allow as many people as possible to attend & it's going to be bigger and better than ever... Amongst other things, it will feature a new format showcasing more of what parents have asked for, including the chance to choose between a number of workshops on various subjects - giving everyone the chance to find out more about specific subjects that they currently need more support with or information about... For more info or to book a stand space please email: claire@plymouthpcv.co.uk or call 07954048017

Football – Players Wanted

Railway Beacon Youth Football Club require players to form new U9 team for next season 2017/2018. Age qualification must be school year 4, starting September 2017. Contact Chairman Larry Reed on 07899893715 for training details. **SB FRANKFORT U10 (current year 5)** require players. Trials throughout May-August ready for the new season 2017/2018. Join a family friendly team, training is local on a Wednesday, from 7-8 and is free! FA Qualified and first aid trained coaches. Get in touch with Dan on 07837067138

Get Active with the Sports Development Unit

If you haven't been exercising for a while or you would just like to try something new, we have a variety of sessions to suit everyone, whatever your age or fitness, these sessions will help you get started. All classes are suitable for ADULTS all abilities and everyone is welcome. All classes must be booked in advance, to reserve a place call 307028 or for more information email nyrene.dudley@plymouth.gov.uk

21st April 2017

Dear Parents,

Re: Mixing Class Groups

Although the following change does not affect everyone this year, we felt it was important that all parents are made aware of a new approach we will be taking from now onwards.

Montpelier is a three-form entry primary school which means we normally have three classes in each year group. Our Published Admission Number is 90 pupils which we split into those three classes. Initially, we use information from our feeder nurseries, pre-schools, child-minders and parents to place children into class M, P and S. When we compile the classes, we make every effort to have a balance of the characteristics that are proven to impact upon academic achievement, such as: gender, ability, social background, language acquisition, absence levels, behaviour, date of birth and special educational need. The intention behind balancing the classes in this way, is to create a fair and equitable mix of children in each of the three classes. The learning environment is thereby as near as identical in each classroom as we can make it, with the same mixture of provision and support required for all pupils.

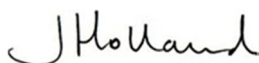
However, we're always very conscious that, although we do receive information about each child before they join us, we don't actually know them very well when they first start at Montpelier. We get to know them as individuals far better in those first few days, weeks and months. What we have found is that, had we known them better at the start of the Foundation Stage, we would certainly have put the classes together differently to create this balance of pupil capability and need. We therefore are proposing to do just this. **From now onwards, at the end of their Foundation Stage year with us, we will review the three classes and create three new class mixes for the start of Year 1.**

Furthermore, as the children get older, they develop very differently academically, and as individuals. Also, due to pupils leaving and joining throughout the years, a class make-up can change quite significantly over time. **We are therefore also going to review the three classes at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 4, with the intention of adjusting their composition as well.** We may feel that, following the review, *no adjustment to the classes is necessary*, but it may potentially mean moving a handful of children (discussions and explanations would take place with parents and children if this were the case) OR it may mean completely changing the make-up of the three classes as at the end of the Foundation Stage. So it might be that there was 1) no change at all, 2) a change of a few children or, 3) a complete change to all three classes.

We appreciate that, with any adjustment like this, there are disadvantages as well as benefits. The most obvious being that, if a pupil is very settled in their current class, why change it? They are with their friends at the moment - how will they feel if they are separated? However, we currently have classes where we have a disproportionate number of pupils who need support with their learning, compared to the other two classes in the year group. Also, there are classes who have a larger number of higher-performing pupils. There are also those where we have a greater proportion of pupils requiring support with either their behaviour or their social and emotional needs. This creates an unfair imbalance between the three classes which we feel we must resolve in order that all pupils continue to have an equality of opportunity to learn. Classes do, of course, receive different levels of support in response to their make-up (for example, in terms of additional adults) but, despite this, it does give those classes a different overall feel, and this is something we can change.

We will of course inform parents and children regarding the changes at the earliest possible opportunity. This is most likely to be late June or early July - just as soon as we've finalised staff deployment for the next academic year.

Many thanks,



Jason Holland
Headteacher



Wendy Tout
Chair of Governors