



Thomas Russell Infants' School

'Our children blossom through nurture and challenge'

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End of the Spring term

Today we are breaking up for the Easter holidays, yet it only feels like 5 minutes since we were coming back to school after the Christmas holidays! The Spring term is always a busy but enjoyable one in school. This academic year is the first time we have been able to offer the children so much time in Forest school and this term we have seen some very wet and muddy forest school sessions taking place. It is lovely to listen to the children's conversations around how the forest school area is changing with each season and watch their resilience as they happily head out to forest school layered up in their wellies and coats.

We had our very successful school review early in the term where it was lovely to showcase everything that we do to Mrs Farmer (who used to be our Co-Headteacher) and the Headteachers from Fradley Park Primary School and Church Gresley Infants' School.

The traditional pancake race took place in the village which was enjoyed by everyone and we had a very successful world book day. The PTA have continued to work tirelessly to support our school and events like the Valentine's Disco and Easter coffee morning couldn't happen without their hard work and support.

Our staff have continued to access professional development opportunities and network meetings provided by JTMA. This week we had a visit from Amy Martin-Mills who is the English lead for the trust. She was able to chat through our English development work with Mrs Smith and offer her support and advice.

Our governors continue to play an active role in the school. As well as attending governor meetings they regularly visit school to work with staff. Tim Hopkins, our safeguarding link governor has visited to check that all of the relevant paperwork is in place for any staff or volunteers who come on site. Katie Manning and Jo Turrell have spent time in school observing lessons with us to see in action, the things that we talk about in governor meetings. Nik Antona, our finance governor is fully involved with checking our budgeting and supporting us with ensuring we always get best value for money.

We have also continued to support a range of different charities and to raise awareness of causes that are very close to our school. This term has seen the children take part in both the NSPCC Number Day and Comic Relief. It was also lovely to see so many colourful and bright socks on Thursday for Down Syndrome awareness day.

Today we have been sad to say goodbye to Mrs Jones, one of our lunchtime supervisors. She has been a fantastic member of our LTS team for a number of years and while we will miss seeing her every day she has agreed to be available for any cover that we might need.

We are also saying goodbye to Mrs Edwards who has provided violin and cello lessons in our school for a number of years.

We would like to wish all of our families a very happy and healthy Easter break and we will look forward to seeing you back ready for the Summer term.



Easter Bonnet Parade Winners



Down Syndrome Awareness

Thank you to everyone who came to school 'rocking their socks' yesterday for World Down Syndrome Day. It was lovely to see such a great selection of colourful and patterned socks around school, worn by both the staff and children. Socks are chosen to represent the day because how similar socks look to chromosomes! The 21st day of March was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome.



Easter Bonnet Parade

Thank you to everyone who was able to join our Easter events this morning. We were very lucky with the weather and it was wonderful to see so many people! A big thank you to the PTA for organising the refreshments and letter hunt and to everyone who donated cakes. It was a lovely way to end the term.



Easter assembly

Thank you to everyone who joined us in church yesterday for our traditional Easter assembly. We appreciate that it isn't always easy to get a seat, but it is always fantastic to hear the children speak and sing with so much confidence. Thank you to Rev Andy for hosting us and warming up the children so well with his pre assembly talk!



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

DEVELOPING HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Quality sleep is paramount for wellbeing as it impacts our cognitive function, emotional balance and overall health. A World Health Organisation study highlighted that 44% of young people reported difficulty sleeping – potentially affecting their mood, concentration and immune system. Our guide offers expert tips for helping children to sleep more healthily.

1 MINDFUL TECH USE



Encourage a balanced approach to screen time. While phones, laptops, tablets and so on can serve as a helpful means of stress relief, it's advisable to minimise their use right before bed. These devices can keep the mind racing long after they're switched off, impacting how easily and how well a person can sleep.

2 EFFECTIVE SLEEP PRACTICES



Offer practical advice on reinforcing certain habits that have a positive influence on sleeping patterns. Children could start keeping a diary which they add to each evening, for example – or they could use up excess energy by exercising during the day.

3 HYDRATION HABITS



Underline the importance of drinking plenty of water throughout the day, while limiting drinks close to bedtime to prevent disruptions during the night: it's a lot harder to switch off if you keep needing to get out of bed for the toilet. Avoiding caffeinated drinks later in the day also allows the body and brain to slow down naturally, without any chemicals firing them back up.

4 CONSISTENT BEDTIME SCHEDULE



Assist children in developing consistent bedtime routines that tell the body it's time to wind down, promoting a more relaxed state. Establish specific activities for young ones right before going to bed – such as brushing their teeth – to set up an association between that action and falling asleep.

5 OPTIMAL SLEEP ENVIRONMENT



Ensure that the bedroom is comfortable, dark and free from distractions, fostering an ideal space for quality rest. The room's temperature should also be suitable for sleeping – that is, not too hot and not too cold – while rooms should be kept as tidy and free of clutter as possible.

6 RELAXING EVENING ACTIVITIES



Recommend activities that have a calming effect on the mind – such as reading or gentle stretching – in the lead up to bedtime, to prepare the mind for a peaceful night's sleep. Doing something quiet, relaxing and low intensity signals to the brain that it's time to rest and makes falling asleep much easier.

7 PRIORITISING ADEQUATE SLEEP



Emphasise the crucial role of sleep in maintaining physical and emotional wellbeing. It's especially important to sustain a healthy sleep pattern during challenging and intensive periods in our lives: during the exam season for children and young people, for instance.

8 NUTRITIONAL BALANCE



Highlight the significance of a healthy, balanced diet – and its role in establishing a more consistent sleep pattern. Try to lean towards preparing meals with plenty of fruit and vegetables, served in reasonable portion sizes: not only is this a lot healthier, but it also reduces the chances of feeling too full to be comfortable in bed.

9 PARENTAL SUPPORT



Parents and carers, of course, are uniquely situated to support their children in establishing and maintaining healthy sleeping habits. Parents can review their own sleep habits (incorporating anything from this list that they don't do already) to model a balanced bedtime routine and reinforce the importance of self-care.

10 MILITARY SLEEP METHOD



Look up 'the military sleep method': it's a technique for falling asleep quickly, which incorporates deep breathing exercises. You could encourage children to try it or even use it yourself. While it can take a good deal of practice to perfect, eventually it will start to feel natural – and the results are often extremely impressive!

Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of the Social Enterprise UK: 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Gillett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at a large secondary school.



Dates for your Diary

Lunch menu from Monday 11th March will be Week 3 Revised Menu

Mon 8th April - Back to school new term starts

Mon 6th May - Bank holiday

Fri 10 May - Country dancing and whole school singing to parents 2.30pm

Thurs 23 May - 1SB parents invited to forest school 1.30pm

Fri 24 May - Inset Day school closed to pupils

Mon 27 May - Fri 31st May - Half term (school closed)

Tues 4 June - 2MS parents invited to forest school 1.30pm

Thurs 6 June - 1L parents invited to forest school 1.30pm

Wed 12 June - Sports Day & Summer Fair

Wed 26 June - Reserve Sports day

Fri 5 July - Inset Day - JTMAT Staff Training Day (school closed to pupils)

Wed 17 July - Year 2 leavers assembly to parents 2.00pm

Thurs 18 July - Year 2 leavers party 3.15-5.00pm

Fri 19 July - School closes

Have a lovely Easter break

Mrs Burton and Mrs Moore

