

Farsley Farfield Curriculum Newsletter



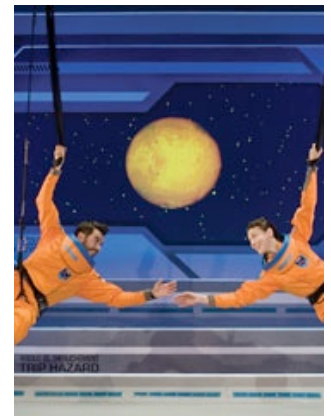
January 2011

We hope that everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas and New Year break. This forthcoming term is typically busy and a key time for children's educational progress. I am looking forward to twelve weeks of high quality teaching and four hundred children eager to learn and work hard. As always in life: the more you put in, the more you get out.

Mission to Mars



Year 6 pupils will be heavily engaged in a drama in January and February based on a 'Mission to Mars'. This project, led by Miss Hurree, will be based around a multimedia website accessed through Fronter that will engage the children in a series of challenges to support characters from the Unlimited Space Agency in their training for a mission to Mars. The finale to the project is a visit to the West Yorkshire Playhouse to see the play related to the mission, including characters with whom we will have engaged during lesson time. This work is part of the **'Is there anybody out there?'** topic for all Y5 and 6 children this half term. A new 'Space' room has been created in Fronter, and Y5 and 6 children are encouraged to log in to learn more about the topic.



Christmas Fair

Thank you so much to everyone who supported the Christmas Fair. We are very grateful to members of the PTA and lots of other parents who baked fantastic cakes, made donations, staffed stalls and spent money on the day. It was great to have staff from the school kitchen providing turkey sandwiches. Particular thanks go to Mrs Lukeman for a great hamper donation - despite the fact that John left years ago! The fair raised £800 - thank you so much!

Thank you to everyone who made a contribution for tea and coffee at the Christmas performances. We asked for donations, which raised £77.32 for St George's Crypt which provides homeless people with food, drink and a safe place to sleep.

Funding and minibus

We await, with trepidation, the details of our budget for 2011-12. It is thought that 75% of schools will have a real cut in funding. We have been working on a 0% growth model and we will clearly need to make savings. With this in mind, we have decided not to lease a minibus as originally intended.

The money raised last summer towards a minibus will remain with the PTA to fund other projects.

Residentials

There are two residentials planned for this year: Year 6 to Northumberland in April and Year 5 to the Yorkshire Dales in May.

Residentials are important elements of the KS2 curriculum, providing rich learning experiences and an opportunity for children to develop independence. We try to keep costs to a minimum, and we hope that everyone is able to join us.



Year 5 get the opportunity for some adventurous caving in the Dales.

West Leeds Schools Sports Partnership

The highlight of the Y5 residential will be caving at Ribbleshead led by Charlie Pyatt from the West Leeds Schools Sports Partnership (based at Priesthorpe) - funding for which is being cut from next summer. Campaigners have secured a little funding for a short time from a government partial 'U turn' but the future of these partnerships remains very much in doubt.



Farfield benefits greatly from the West Leeds Partnership through the organisation of huge numbers of competitions, coaches, some specialist teaching, advice and the promotion of sporting links. The school may need to pay much more for this sort of provision next year - an example of how school budgets will be under severe pressure even if the government argues that the headline school budgets have not been cut.

Alive & Kicking

Our partnership with Alive and Kicking drama begins this term with 'Cinderella' in Miss Stewart's class. This work will later be replicated for children in Mrs James/Galbraith's class. Nursery children and their families will have access to an A&K practitioner for specialist story telling workshops - in conjunction with the Children's Centre. We are planning for Key Stage 1 to enjoy a dramatic day in the woods later in the school year - with Mr Wilkinson and a number of actors due to be involved, it is sure to be memorable. Years 3 and 4 can look forward to 'Granny's Underground Garden' in June as part of a growing topic. Year 5 will be working with 'Martin' on story writing. Year 6 will not be involved directly with A&K (due to their Mission to Mars curriculum, and engagement with an immigration-based drama project in April), but will benefit from teachers being able to discuss lessons with A&K staff on site.

New staff

We welcome a number of new staff into school this term:

Julie Snellgrove joins us in lower Key Stage 2 in the mornings as a learning support assistant across all Y3/4 classes. In the afternoons, Julie will take on a 1:1 support role in KS2. **Parveen Kaur** and **Nicola Smart** join us as special needs assistants in the Foundation Stage. **Jane Hickson** has already joined us as a new administrator in the Children's Centre. **Miss Gemma Dormand** returns to school for two days a week covering Zosia's maternity leave.

Community Cafe

Work on the Farfield Farm shop and associated Community Cafe space is on-going and is on schedule for official opening in March in time for the Parents Evenings on the 15th and 16th. This work is being enhanced by funding secured by our partners 'Farsley Youth Development Project'. FYDP are also expanding their Spin Community Radio station in the school's 'Youth Base'.



It is hoped that the farm shop will be open a couple of times a week after school, stocking our own produce, fruit and vegetables from other local growers and miscellaneous 'green' products. The cafe facilities will be used by a range of different groups including FYDP, Farfield Fun, the 'Walking Bus' children and, hopefully, parents.

Solar panels

Farfield appears to have been successful in an application to the British Gas 'My Solar School' programme. One thousand schools applied and 1 in 5 have been awarded £20-40,000 worth of photovoltaic solar panels for the roof. Subject to a



site survey, the panels should be installed before the end of the academic year. The electricity that is generated will be used by the school, although any income will go to a British Gas charity to extend the scheme to other schools. Once installed, these solar panels will help the school to reduce its carbon footprint and will further develop the environmental ethos of the school.

Fronter

Our Fronter learning platform is growing as the year progresses. It appears to be particularly popular amongst the older children, and they have enjoyed creating their own pages. As the new topics are planned, there will be new Fronter rooms for the children to explore to support and build on their classroom learning.



Some rooms are aimed at the whole school. The new 'School Meals' room, for example, allows children and parents to find out more about this service and allows children to give some feedback. There are a number of quick 'votes' to contribute to - for example, 'Why do you have packed lunch?' - and some broader discussions.

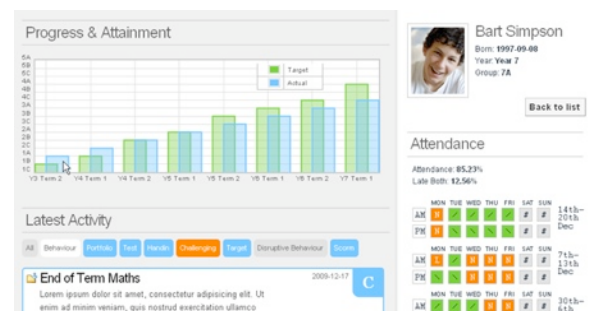
Regrettably, we have had one incident of a pupil's Fronter page being defaced by someone using another child's log in details. We have tried to keep passwords simple but we will be working with older children to devise some more complex passwords in the future. We shall be using this unfortunate incident to highlight the importance of online password security with the children. Fronter are helping us to track down the person that did the defacing - if we are able to identify this person it will be a great lesson in online accountability... These sorts of incident do, sadly, occur online, but in some ways it is better that this happens within school's Fronter project than in a less managed environment.

Next steps with Fronter this term include:

- Use of Creaza to create cartoons, film or audio
- Assignment of tasks and online feedback (KS2)

Online reporting

We hope to be able to offer online reporting to parents before our Parents Evenings in March. This service **should** give parents a snapshot of attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour and Special Educational Needs. This product is closely linked to Fronter, and parents of older children will also be able to access summaries of their child's most recent Fronter activities and tests through this interface too.



Farm updates



Kyle's successful time with us as a farm trainee is coming to an end and we will soon be recruiting our new farm trainee on another one year contract. We are looking for a local young person who is not currently in education, employment or training to take on this role. S/he needs to be reliable and hard-working, with a pleasant manner with children. If you know someone who might be interested, please get them to register an interest with the Junior school office. The recruitment will take place in February.

Winter work has included the preparation of a 'cutting garden' to produce flowers for sale later in the year. We are also planning for the introduction of chickens around Easter.

In a recent survey over 80% of Y5/6 children reported that they had particularly enjoyed their time working on the farm and only a couple of children had definitely not enjoyed it. Almost 80% of children reported that they had learnt new things about plants, food and nature during the sessions.



Shanet and Lois, the farm managers, with Kyle.

Medicines Policy

The school is redrafting its medicines policy in light of guidance from Education Leeds. This new policy is currently in draft form and is being presented to full governors in February.

The most significant change is likely to be the refusal of school to administer non-prescription medicines, e.g. Calpol or paracetamol, to children. We are not doing this to be awkward - it is the strong and unequivocal advice from the local authority. If your child needs a lunchtime painkiller, it will be necessary for you to come to administer it yourself, or get it prescribed by the GP. We apologise for any inconvenience. The full policy will be published on the website as soon as it is finalised and agreed.

Infant Car Park

Could we remind parents that the infant car park is for staff and visitors only? There is simply not enough space to open this up to others, and some staff cars have been damaged by cars that should not be there. Only families with disabilities are permitted to use this parking area. I will soon be challenging the very few parents that flout this rule. Thank you for your co-operation.

Curriculum changes in KS2

Whilst Zosia is away on maternity leave, Miss Dormand will take music lessons in Years 3 and 4. She will also start French lessons in Y5 and 6 following a term of no French in these year groups. For the next two terms, the class music curriculum will be suspended in Years 5 and 6. I feel that this is justified given that the children in KS2 actually do far more music than is strictly required whilst Zosia is in school. KS2 singing practice will continue with a new teacher and peripatetic instrument lessons are unaffected. KS1 teachers will do their own music lessons. Miss Dormand will also be teaching for half a day a week in Mr. Wilkinson's class to allow him to work on curriculum development in Key Stage 1.

Every Child Counts

Four lucky children in Year 2 are beginning the Every Child Counts programme to support their learning of maths. This intense teacher-led individual programme was very successful last year when led by Mrs Singleton. This year, we are seconding a teacher from Shire Oak Primary School, Mrs Taggart, to run a more limited programme in terms of the number of children but we expect it to be equally successful. This intervention is relatively expensive and is likely to stop with the forthcoming changes to funding from April 2011.



Mrs Heap returns

We are very pleased to have Mrs Heap back at school following her maternity leave. Mrs Heap's role will include leadership of assessment and interventions in Years 3-6, 1:1 tuition in KS2 and some literacy leadership. She will also be teaching for half a day in Mr Garlick's class to allow him to work on curriculum development in Y3/4. Mrs Heap will also be teaching for a short time each week in the Reception/Y1 class.



Migration Stories

Later this term, Y5 and 6 will be studying the modern history of Bradford, and will, in particular, look at some of the reasons for immigration and the personal stories behind the journeys.

We will be working with, and contributing to, a website collection of migration stories (<http://www.goingandcoming.co.uk/>) and we will have a day of drama relating to an Afro-Caribbean family through an organisation called Primary Colours.



We are **very** keen to hear of some of the migration stories within the whole school community at Farfield (not just Y5 and 6). We would hope to be able to interview some family members - grandparents perhaps - or mums and dads if the migration was more recent. If you think your family might like to contribute to this project, please let me know.