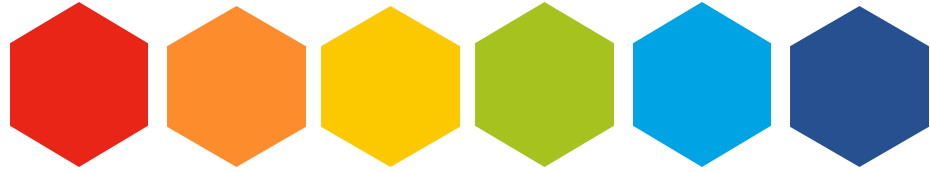


Curriculum News

for parents, carers, staff, governors and community

April 2019



A sense of time and place

Our history curriculum really came 'alive' last year when we discovered that our grounds had been a WW1 training base. Over the past 18 months, we have been looking at ways to further enhance and develop our already high quality history curriculum to make it even more vibrant and engaging for our children.

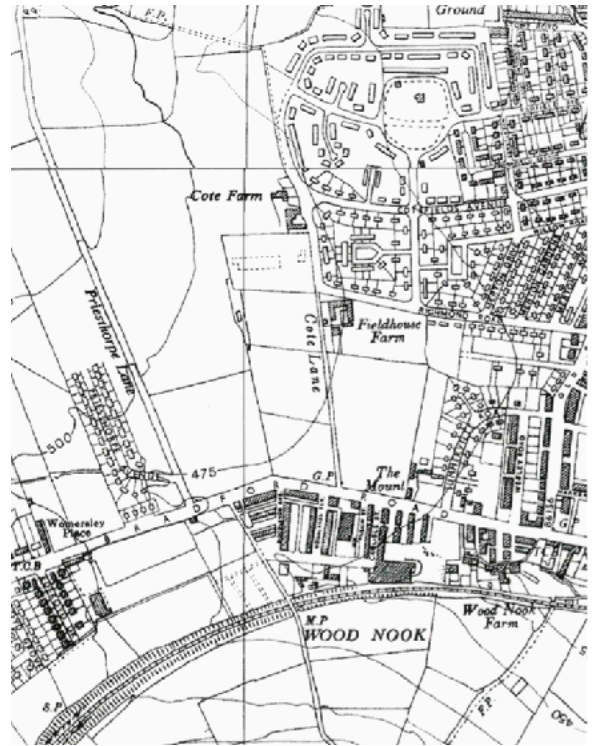
Our focus started with using historical artefacts to develop oracy and understanding of history. High quality artefacts are an excellent way to aid children's historical enquiry and thinking. They allow the children to make inferences and assumptions as well as use the skills of observation which develops and deepens levels of reasoning, questioning and analysis.

Following training from the Historical Association, we have deepened our understanding of key historical skills and concepts and how to make these accessible for the children. The main areas we covered have been chronology, continuity and change, similarity and difference, interpretation, cause and consequence, using evidence and the significance of evidence.

We have been incredibly lucky to have forged links with Historic England and taken part in a local project which focusses on local heritage. Teachers have received a series of training sessions with Julie Edwards from Historic England. Julie has made a series of bespoke historical maps with Farfield at the centre; the maps date onwards from 1852. We have also been provided with a set of historic aerial photographs. This is an amazing resource and we are very excited to use them with the children later in the year.

When the cafe space is refurbished (see Buildings News below) we will open the space from 8.45-9.30 and from 3-3.45 on a few days so that parents that are interested can pop in and have a look at the photos and maps over a cup of tea.

Mrs Loveridge, Y2 and History Leader



New Playground for Infants

Over the Easter holidays, we had a new infant playground installed on the site of the former trim trail. Part funded by PTA, school, Lottery and Healthy Schools Capital Fund monies, this playground is designed to be a challenge for the children and will help to develop upper body strength. It should also help the children develop balance and might even be fun too!



Due to the slight gradient affecting the fall height of a couple of additional elements of the installation, the opening of the playground was slightly delayed as we sourced some additional rubber matting. Following a recommendation after a H&S inspection by ROSPA, we will also be fitting some rubber matting around (and under) parts of the infant fort where the ground has gone really hard over the years.

Our grounds are exciting places for children to play and we hugely value this part of the school day. Despite our best endeavours, there will still, occasionally, be accidents. We have lowered the monkey bars slightly on this equipment after a child fell awkwardly.



New play equipment on the infant site

Any children playing on our equipment before or after school are the responsibility of the adults that are with them. The junior tree house is not designed for under 7s.

Training Days

I am sorry that I have been so late publicising the remaining training days. These will take place on Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd July (as well as Wednesday 24th July as previously announced). We **will** be training on these two newly-announced TDs, but we will also need to clear much of the school as KS1 gets its new roof and KS2 classrooms get new pipework and radiators. Teachers will not be in school on 24/7 as they will have already completed a number of twilight training sessions prior to this.

Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd September 2019 will also be Training Days (partly to help us to get the school back together after summer works).



Year 1 have a rich pond-dipping experience at the fabulous Ridley Nature Reserve

Parent Governor

We have had lots of parent governor nominations - thank you! Watch out for an election soon.

(Lots of) Staffing news

Mrs Kumar has gone on maternity leave and her class is being taken by Miss Sara Draxler. Miss Burland has left the school and we welcome Mr David Winfield to Year 3 for the remainder of the year.

We will need to have a new Year 6 team for next year. New father Mr Sharp has secured a teaching post much nearer to his home and Mrs Hoyle, after two decades at the school, is taking early retirement. Mrs Heap is leaving class teaching to explore other interests. All of these valued colleagues will leave the school in July after many, many years of fantastic service to our school. They will each be sadly missed but all leave with our very best wishes for their exciting futures.

Jane Hickson is leaving the Children's Centre soon as she pursues her other professional interests. Jane has been a central part of the CC team for many years and we wish her the very best of luck in her new venture.

We are interviewing for two new class teachers this week and a further job advert for an upper KS2 leader is currently advertised. If you know of any fantastic teachers that might fit well with the Farfield team, please direct them our way. The headteacher's secondment to Leeds City Council has been reduced from 50% to 30% of the working week - partly so he can lead on a number of recruitments and plans for transition!

Food Policy

Healthy eating is a key aim for our school. Last term, governors approved our revised Food Policy and it can be read in full on [our school website](#). The summer school meal menu is also available on [the website](#).

Key elements of the policy include:

- Comprehensive cooking and food education with huge opportunities to learn about and grow food plants
- Balanced school meals, with a meat-free day every week
- Guidance on packed lunches, and a ban on nuts in school
- Sweets not to be used as a school reward and no sweets/cakes brought in for birthdays
- Actions to minimise food waste

A next step might be to invest in 'hot composting' for kitchen and school meal waste as, sadly, we are not allowed by law to feed this to the pigs. We need to make a business case for this and source some funding. We would also need a ready supply of wood-chip/shavings - does anyone have a workplace that might be able to help? There's lovely video [here](#) that shows how it might work.

Sports News

We are engaging in lots of competitive sports again this year. Results and some reports are always available on the school website: <https://www.farsleyfarfield.org.uk/sports-results/> As well as lots of football matches for our four teams, our netball team have also had a number of fixtures and we have competed in rugby and tennis competitions. Erin (Y3) and Lillie (Y4) have excelled in cross country, each qualifying as 'wildcards' for the West Yorkshire finals and competing very well - finishing 7th and 17th respectively.

We recently installed a solar powered timing clock in the junior yard and lots of children have since been keen to set up PBs in their daily run!



Show Time!

A new club this year for Y5 and 6 children has been 'Show Time': a series of 7 events at local theatres and halls that is providing a rich cultural experience for our older children at an accessible price (£90 or free for children in receipt of 'Pupil Premium'). 33 children have been attending these evening and weekend shows and lots of staff have volunteered to drive minibuses and supervise the children. The shows enjoyed so far have included: a reading of War Horse by Michael Morpurgo, The Nutcracker Ballet, The Halle Orchestra performing music from Harry Potter films, a children's performance of The Magic Flute by Opera North and Matilda the Musical. Annie and Horrible Histories on Stage are the shows to look forward to this term.



The programme seems to have been a success and we will look to replicate it next academic year. Remarkably, to me, a number of children/families in receipt of Pupil Premium declined this opportunity this year. Reminds me of the old phrase: "Never look a gift horse in the mouth."

Communications policy

Teaching unions and the Minister for Education have recently highlighted the [stress that email can create for teachers](#). We have noticed a trend amongst a minority of parents to send emails with lots of exclamation marks, no salutations and unreasonably blunt language. This can be stressful for staff, especially when read at home, and contributes to difficulties in staff retention.

Our Communication Policy is on the website. This policy includes target times for responding to emails and other forms of communication. Staff will aim to respond to parental emails within 2 working days. Phone calls will usually be replied to within a working day and letters acknowledged within 3 working days. Parents need to be aware that part time staff are not expected to reply to communications on days that they are not working.



Hard at work in Year 2

We have, for many years, had very open communication with parents with published email addresses. Many other schools require parents to use a generic account. If you are upset about something, please pause before sending off a cross email. And remember, there are usually two sides to a story...

Buildings news

Work to refurbish the old 'cafe' area has begun this half term. Funded by the Chancellor's 'little extras' announced at the last budget, the area will be warmer, brighter, carpeted and slightly remodelled. There will be spaces for individual and small group work and a space for larger meetings.

We are trying to put together a plan for the resurfacing of car parks and paths. Ideally, we would reclaim the disused space in front of the Fun Club into the playground.

Finally, many thanks to [Abacus Garage Doors](#) who were exceptionally kind and generous when we had a problem recently.