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Headteacher's Update February 2023

Dear Parents and carers,

It has been a short and busy half-term of learning and activity. Children in different classes have been enriching their knowledge and engaging in wide-ranging curriculum topics. I hope that you have accessed the Knowledge Organisers which are summary of the key facts, essential knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to be able to speak and write about in the curriculum subjects they study at school. Children have been engaging with these new tools to secure the vocabulary and core knowledge across the curriculum.

In the first week back after the half-term, more Knowledge Organisers will be added to the One Drive as the children start new units of work to help you as parents see what children are covering and for learning to be supported and explored at home. Please help by encouraging children to talk about their learning and explaining vocabulary during everyday activities and discussions.

Linking to their History topic 'Travel and Flight', **Class 1 at Norton** enjoyed a trip to the Fleet Air Arm at Yeovilton. This term they have been learning about hot air balloons, the Wright brothers and that Bessie Coleman was the first black female to earn a pilot's licence.



As they look forward to their trip to the Tutankhamun Museum in Dorchester, **Class 2 at Norton** undertook the unusual task of mummifying tomatoes. I wonder if they will still be preserved when pupils return after the half-term!

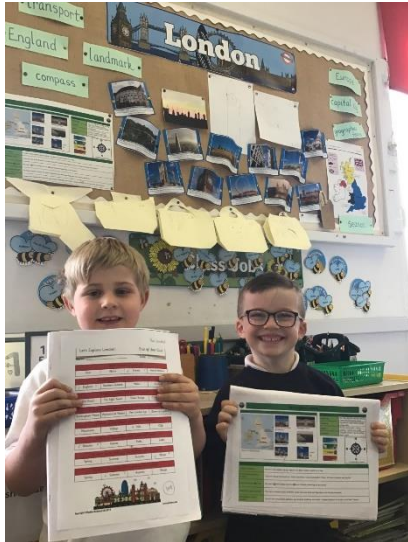


Class 3 at Norton had an interesting visit from Chloe, an Archaeologist. She told them all about the process of archaeology and pupils asked many, many questions! In the afternoon they were able to have a go at being archaeologists; handling, analysing and identifying Roman artefacts plus looking at and drawing Roman coins. Chloe's visit has inspired poetry writing with all the children writing a poem called 'The Discovery'.



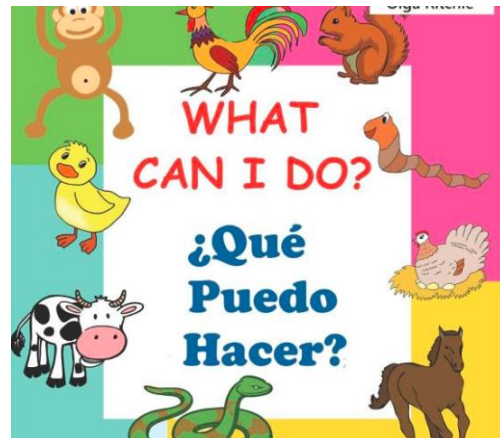
Pupils in **Class 4 at Norton** took part in Taskmaster activities for children's mental health week working as a team and putting their lateral thinking skills to the test. They have been fascinated by their unit of work on light including studying the angles of reflection.





I was impressed by the recall of facts and vocabulary of pupils in the **Infants at West Chinnock**. As geographers, they have been learning all about London's landmarks and features. Here are a couple of budding geographers scoring well on their end of unit quiz.

In addition to building their geographical knowledge about rivers (Year 3 & 4) and the UK (Year 5 & 6), **West Chinnock Juniors** have been securing their understanding of Judaism learning about the Torah and Jewish festivals and ceremonies. They are certainly looking forward to the Synagogue visit in the summer (more details to follow soon). Language skills are improving with pupils now able to say in Spanish which activities they can do.



The roles of the two Headteachers are changing to make sure that we are best placed to make the necessary improvements to the curriculum as well as working with School Improvement Partners to shape the next steps for the Federation on its improvement journey. I will now head up the schools as the main Headteacher in charge of the day to day running of the two schools.

Ms Stiddard will continue with her two days a week but with a change of focus to a more consultative, training and monitoring aspect. In this role, she will be supporting me in ensuring a rigorous monitoring of the curriculum and teaching and learning so that there is a clear understanding of the Quality of Education. This will inform all leaders so that necessary improvements are implemented. To this end, she will be developing the expertise of subject leaders to improve middle leadership across the schools.

As well as her ongoing work as SENCO across the schools, Mrs Jaggard will now be leading the improvements to our Early Years Curriculum. Staff are visiting another setting early next half-term to meet Early Years leaders and see great provision in practice. Teaching and support staff have attended recent training and come back equipped to better create inspiring, knowledge and vocab-rich learning environments both inside and out.

In all areas of improvement, we are working closely with external partners from county and local trusts to ensure that we put in place the best possible curriculum which builds on previous learning so that pupils understand how previous learning is relevant to what they are learning now and to ensure that pupils learn key knowledge including vocabulary.

Our INSET day, led by the new Curriculum & Topic Lead at Somerset Local Authority will focus on developing teachers' practical application of Knowledge Organisers and quizzes in the classroom. We're looking forward to the opportunity to hone our practice and learn from a specialist's enthusiasm about curriculum development.

In response to feedback from recent parental surveys about being informed about how your child is getting on, we are putting in place a standardised format for parents evening. During the meetings, this will help guide the discussion and give you a more accurate picture of how your child is progressing with their learning across the curriculum.

TT Rockstars

This week is the TT Rockstars Battle of the Bands. It has been quite a battle and at the time of writing it is neck and neck between West Chinock Year 6 and Norton Year 6 with over 40,000 points scored in total across the schools! A fantastic achievement by everyone. Winners will be announced after half-term and Mrs Callaghan, Maths Lead has an idea for the winning year group. Watch this space!

Please continue to encourage children to do their timestables practice over the February half-term 🍀

Reading & Spelling

Keep up the readings and spellings over the February half-term. Regular opportunities to read and enjoy books are so important and really support us with the work we are doing, not just in English but with knowledge and vocabulary across the curriculum. Please see the attached poster from English Lead Mrs Byrne about activities happening in Book Week, 27th February-Friday 3rd March.

Chirpy Chinnock

Our much anticipated pupil newspaper from West Chinnock, has been published. This half-term, please take the time to read the Chirpy Chinnock which is attached with this newsletter and will be published on the website. A huge thank you to West

Chinnock's budding reporters for sharing some of the highlights of this short half-term. At Easter, it will be the turn of Norton's pupil reporters with the Hamdon Hoot.

Dates

Upcoming dates are now included in new parental weekly updates which I hope are proving useful and are helping to improve our ongoing communication with you. These are also published on the website. An important reminder that the U10 football at Millfield is on the 21st February (the first day back!)

I would like to thank everyone in our school communities for their continued support and wish you all a peaceful and rejuvenating rest next week. We look forward to welcoming you all back on Tuesday 21st February.

Yours Sincerely,



Mr J Caswell

