



English & Mathematics at Thorndown Primary School

English

Thank you to those who attended the 'Parent Grammar' and 'How to read with your child at home' parent sessions earlier this term. Both sessions were a success and the presentations and information from each session are available for viewing on the school website. Please have a look and if you have any further questions, ask your child's class teacher.

After the holidays, we will be launching some new ideas in school focussing on the teaching, learning and application of vocabulary. There will be more time allocated to discuss and explore new words, phrases and expressions, thinking about how they are used in reading, writing and speaking. This is all underpinned by reading and we will continue to immerse the children in a variety of texts to help develop their understanding and vocabulary. When at home with your child, please encourage them to ask questions about any words or sayings that they do not understand and have a short discussion to help them further their vocabulary. Talk is key, as well as reading!

We will also be investing in a new spelling scheme packed with exciting sessions, games and activities which will also come with an amazing app so children can practise their spellings at home in fun, competitive way. More information on this will be available in the near future.

Maths

Working with others

We've had another very busy term and it's great that maths at Thorndown is going from strength to strength. The school's reputation for the teaching and learning of maths is spreading and we are continuing to support other schools. At the end of last term, over 50 teachers from across the county and beyond joined us for an open morning to learn about how we are developing maths in the Early Years, and more than a dozen teachers from other schools have visited us this term to share practice in Key Stages 1 and 2. We are always keen to learn from others and working with local schools is also helping us to develop our own practice. We meet regularly with our cluster schools to look at children's work (in both maths and English) and we were privileged to visit the Year 6 teachers at Stukeley Meadows a few weeks ago, where we picked up some great ideas. Another exciting piece of news is that Thorndown was selected for a visit from an evaluator working for the NCETM (National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics) who will be publishing a report about how we have been developing Teaching for Mastery in maths. We are very proud of the hard work and enthusiasm of our children, upon which all our visitors comment, and of our dedicated staff, without whom, learning wouldn't happen!

Learning through games

Playing games is not only a great way of spending time with the family, but there is also lots of research to show that games are fantastic in developing children's understanding of important maths concepts, their confidence, number sense and fluency. We have been asked by many parents for recommendations for educational Christmas gifts, so here are a few!

Traditional games, such as Snakes and Ladders, Shut the Box and dominos are brilliant, and toy manufacturers Orchard Toys have a range of fun maths games for younger children, such as Spotty Dogs, Bus Stop and Insey Wincey Spider. Although a little more expensive, Tiny Polka Dot is also great and has 16 game variations aimed at children from 3-8 years.

For older children, Prime Climb and Rummikub are games that adults will enjoy playing too, and a simple pack of playing cards can be also used to practise all sorts of maths skills. Other great games and puzzles can be found at the Happy Puzzle Company (www.happypuzzle.co.uk) and ideas for many free games can be found at NRich (www.nrich.maths.org).

We have produced instructions for other games that we have shared at our parent workshops



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Please encourage your child to read regularly each week and discuss what they are reading with them.

If your child would like to write something over the holidays to share with their teacher, then please feel free!

Spring Workshops

In the spring term, we will be holding more workshops for parents. Planned topics include:

- How to help children learn times tables
- Useful apps
- Preparing Year 6 for SATs

If there is anything else that you would like to learn more about, please contact Mrs Gerrard via the school office.

Can you help?

With ever decreasing school funds, we are trying to save money by making resources for use in class. If you could spare some time to help with laminating and cutting, please let the office or Mrs Gerrard know. (Necessary training will be given!)

MANY THANKS.

Thank you again for your hard work and support so far this year. We hope you have an enjoyable Christmas break.