

TermTimes

Your free education newspaper from Portsmouth City Council

Issue 31 Spring 2008

Building Schools for the Future

What needs to improve?

Through 'Building Schools for the Future' we've got an opportunity to improve the future of learning and schools in Portsmouth.



The government funded multi-million pound programme means that over the next five years the city's secondary schools will be redesigned, rebuilt or refurbished.

This term the city's secondary school pupils have been asked to identify their concerns about learning and schools. The consultation, which has included focus groups, has asked pupils to identify any major issues for improvement.

Mike Fowler is Director for 'Building Schools for the Future' in Portsmouth. He said: "Feedback is crucial in helping us make sure that 'Building Schools for the Future' provides the very best opportunities for the future of learning in Portsmouth.

"Thank you to everyone who has made the effort to feedback their concerns to us so far.

"We would now also like to invite parents and primary school pupils to have their say on what they think the issues are that we should be tackling."

Feedback will be used to prepare a 'Strategy for Change' that will outline the challenges and objectives of the programme in Portsmouth.

Mike Fowler concludes: "Please help us by taking a few minutes to consider what issues and concerns that you have. All the views you express will remain confidential."

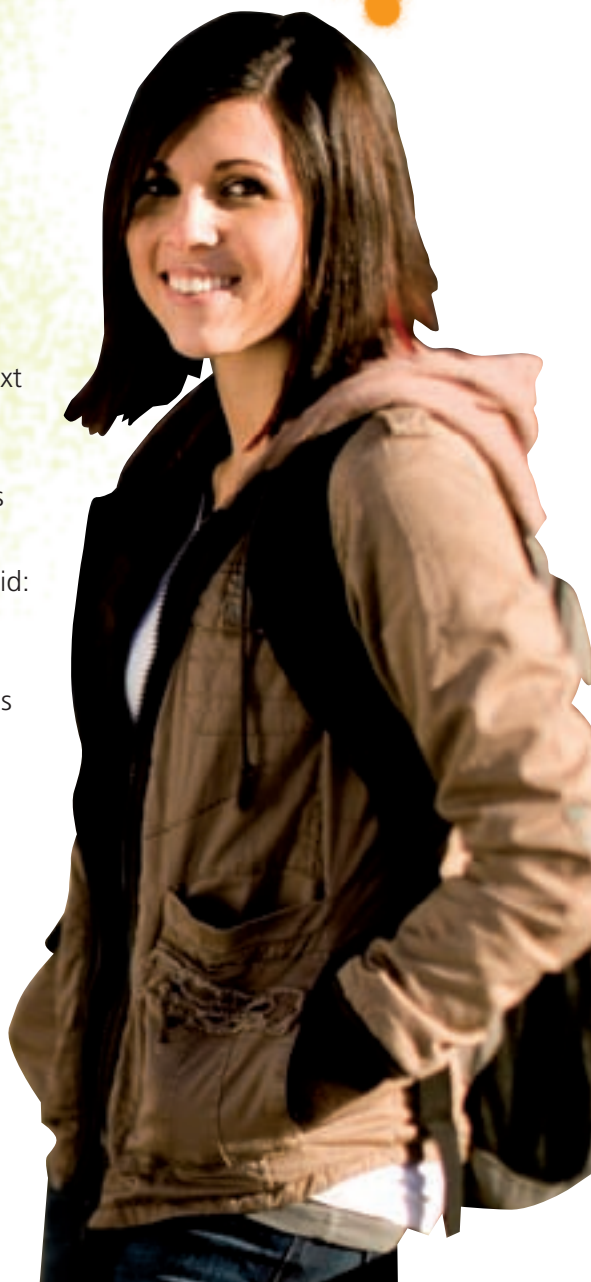
For more details of the national programme, check out www.bsf.gov.uk

Please let us know by 18 April what issues you think should be tackled:

• email bsf@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

• telephone **9268 8767**

have
your
say



Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is the largest single schools capital investment programme for over 50 years. The aim is to rebuild or renew every one of England's 3,500 state secondary schools during the 15-year lifetime of the programme.

Primary schools also set to change

At least half of our primary schools are set to benefit from a major rebuilding, refurbishing and remodelling programme, as part of another government scheme.

The government is providing the finance for the 'Primary Capital Programme', to support the national Children's Plan. This plan aims to provide a road map for the delivery of world-class services that will enable every child to achieve their potential and have a happy, healthy and safe childhood.

The city council will now begin working with primary schools to draft a 'Strategy for Change' to be submitted to the government this summer. The improvement work at the schools is set to begin from April next year.

The programme is intended to enable the rebuilding or replacement of the 10% worst condition primary schools and the rebuilding, refurbishment or remodelling of at least 50% of all the primary schools.

Welcome...

...to the spring edition of Term Times, packed full, as usual, of news of some of the great work that has taken place in our schools and early years settings.



The standards of our schools continue to improve and we are proud to report that recent Ofsted inspections, for our secondary, primary and special schools, reflect the excellent progress being made.

All of our schools offer at the very least, a satisfactory standard of education, with an increasing number recognised as good schools with outstanding qualities.

The 'Building Schools for the Future' programme will allow us to strengthen this progress even further.

As you can read on page one, this programme presents an opportunity to make long term and fundamental improvements to schools and learning in Portsmouth.

We are working hard to make sure that we make the most of this opportunity. It is essential at this stage to make sure we identify any major concerns you have about learning in Portsmouth and we look forward to receiving your feedback and views.

Enjoy the spring break.

Lynda Fisher
Strategic Director, Children, Families & Learning

How are local services for children shaping up?

Services in Portsmouth will be reviewed this summer to see how well they contribute to children and young people being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

The Joint Area Review (JAR) will look at the work taking place in schools, the voluntary sector, the police, Primary Care Trust and Portsmouth City Council to see how effective they are together in helping young people to achieve.

The review will look particularly at:

- any areas of work deemed to be weak
- safeguarding
- looked after children
- children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Outcomes from the review will highlight where things are going well as well as where improvements can be made and will help to shape services for children and young people in the future.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Joint Area Review, visit www.portsmouthchildrenstrust.org.uk or telephone Paddy Bradley at Portsmouth City Council on 9284 1703.



Students help fill the governor gap

More and more students in both primary and secondary schools across the city are becoming Associate Members of governing bodies as the number of adults becoming governors is still too low.

Involving SAMs (Student Associate Members) in the governing body of a school is a relatively new approach, but as most are already part of their Student Council and are very much part of the day to day issues, they are able to add a new dimension to discussion on how best to run the school.

SAMs generally join a committee or working party as associate members to the full governing body. They then come along to meetings to feedback on any issues they have been looking into or a governor comes along to their meetings to find out what is of prime concern to them. Although they can attend the full governors meeting, as associate members they don't have voting rights.

New building works, new headteacher appointments, staff appraisals, curriculum areas, bullying and student welfare are all things SAMs are helping to deal with in our schools.

Daniel Frampton has been a SAM at Mayfield School since October 2007 and has seen a number of suggested changes from students implemented in the school during that time. He said "It has been fantastic being a SAM and just getting your voice out there. What is the point in running a school without the pupils on your side? We have been able to input so much and it has been great to see it have an effect on our school, in a good way of course!"

As good a job as SAMs are doing, there is still a real need for adults to volunteer to help schools too. There are currently 143 school governor vacancies in Portsmouth and most of them are for parent governors.

For more information or to find out how to apply to become a school governor, contact Governor Services on 9284 172. or email governoradmin@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Competition to capture time

The start of work on the Mountbatten Centre's new Olympic size swimming pool was marked by the launch of a time capsule competition for city pupils.

The groundbreaking event was a major milestone in the 18 month £20 million project to redevelop the Mountbatten Centre into state of the art multi-sports facilities. Sport England is contributing up to £5.49m towards the cost of the scheme, with the council funding the rest.

The Lord Mayor celebrated the start of work on the 50 metre swimming pool to the west of the Mountbatten Centre, and kick off a competition for local children to nominate up to 10 items to be buried in a time capsule.

Children from Stamshaw Junior School, who currently have to travel to Victoria Pool for their swimming lessons, were guests at the ceremony. The pool will be close to several local schools and there will be free use of the new pool for all Portsmouth schools.

Children from across the city are able to nominate their list of 10 items to be included in the Time Capsule 2009, which will be buried on site early next year when the pool is opened.



The closing date for entries is Friday 16 May 2008 and an independent panel of judges will select the winning entry. The winner will help with the burial of the time capsule and receive a sporting prize.

Items should reflect the city, the year 2009 or have a sporting connection.

To enter the competition email mountbatten@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Ofsted inspections reveal improvements

Positive Ofsted reports have been received by city primary schools following government inspections this term.

Portsdown Primary School is a rapidly improving school with many strengths, according to the findings of an inspection report.

It observes that there has been a "rapid increase in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching" and effective leadership and management of the school has successfully tackled significant challenges.

Government inspectors have also praised the continued major progress at a school that was in special measures for just over a year until November 2005.

Copnor Junior has been rated a good school by Ofsted and highlighted its "significant and continued improvements since 2004."

The report noted that: "Inspection evidence shows that pupils now make good progress and achieve well.

"This turnaround is the result of much improved teaching and robust programmes of work to improve pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

A "high quality provision for pupils with complex needs" is the verdict for **St George's Beneficial Primary School**.

Their Ofsted report confirms that St George's is a good school and well regarded by parents and pupils, that offers a caring and nurturing community where pupils feel safe and secure. As a result pupils enjoy school and attend regularly.

It recognises that rapid progress has been made at the school, with it now being ranked fourth in the country for its 'Value Added' score.

Pupils are valued and develop well personally because of an excellent caring and supporting ethos at **Arundel Court Infant School**. The school has some good features and been assessed as providing a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils.

Their Ofsted report confirms that "recent work to improve achievement and standards, particularly in reading and writing, has resulted in improved pupils progress."



Pupils at Portsdown Primary School

Langstone Infant School has been assessed as "a satisfactory and improving school with many good features." Inspectors found during their visit to the school that pupils' personal development was well provided for as was their care, guidance and support.

Positive reports have also recently been received for **Solent, Cumberland and Westover Infant Schools** - check out the next edition of Term Times for more details.

Captain Cholesterol calling!

Captain Cholesterol and the Grannies from Mars were among the VIP guests at a Cosham school's Health Week.

They helped year 1 and 2s at Court Lane Infant School understand the importance of a healthy and a balanced diet. Other guests during a busy week included police, firefighters, a dentist, the school nurse, the school crossing patrol officers and there were also yoga bugs and soccer skills sessions to improve fitness levels.

Laura Peterkin, Court Lane's PSHE subject leader, said the event had helped to further cement the school's strong community relationships as well as raising the profile of safety issues with young children.

She said: "This annual event is proving to be more and more successful each year, and is warmly welcomed by both pupils and parents. Each year group enjoyed making and eating fruit kebab or salads."



Racing to glory

Pupils from St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School will be racing at Goodwood in June – in a car that they've built themselves.

A group of 15 year 5 and 6 pupils have met every Monday after school since November to build the 'Goblin' kit car, under the supervision of Miss Leach and Mr Vacher.

The car has been supplied by Greenpower, a non-profit making company dedicated to promoting engineering and technology as careers in schools in the UK. It is designed to offer primary school pupils a chance to get involved in a simple, practical engineering project that embraces many relevant aspects of science and technology in a fun and exciting way.

The team raced the car and came second at a race at the Mountbatten Centre in March.

Miss Hobbs, Headteacher at the school, said: "The Kit Car Race was a wonderful experience for the children. It was great to see the enthusiasm and team work of the children. We are all absolutely delighted with coming second. The trophy has pride of place in our entrance. I can't wait to see them at Goodwood."

The club is sponsored by V.T. Group, whose engineer attends the club to advise children and provide safety.

Year 6 pupil Vinh Lengoc has produced his own website documenting the making of the kit car. www.engineeringclub.co.nr

Working up an appetite for school dinners

Arundel Court Junior School and St. Paul's Primary School were chosen to take part in a day of workshops and activities recently to help boost the take up of school meals.

Portsmouth primary school children are being encouraged to sign up for healthy and nutritious school meals to help combat the growing problem of childhood obesity in the city.

Eden Food Services, the company that provides school meals, the city council, and Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, are working with schools to help increase the number of children having school meals.

With one in four of the city's 10 and 11 year olds officially labelled obese in a recent government survey, school meals offer a delicious and healthy choice for children at an attractive price.

A third of all primary school children currently have school meals - an average of 4,203 meals a day.

A giant breakfast

Once upon a time, year 1 pupils in College Park Infant School enjoyed a very special day learning about fairy tales. As part of the day, the teachers organised a Giants Breakfast, with pupils and teachers dressing as characters from their favourite fairy tales. Support and provision was given to this event by the schools' local Tesco and Co-op.



A tour of the universe

The solar system and beyond were explored by pupils in Portsea – without them having to leave their school.

The Science Dome, which included a mobile purpose-built planetarium, visited St George's Beneficial C of E Primary School in February.

Pupils were able to explore a mobile planetarium and enjoy a natural history show that featured rocks, fossils and dinosaurs.

Sandra Gibb is Headteacher at the school. She said: "All the children from the nursery class to year 6 enjoyed this visit to the school by the Science Dome.

"They all experienced an amazing planetarium effect first hand and it helped to bring science, geology and geography alive."

For further information on the Science Dome, please check out:
www.sciencediscoverydome.co.uk.



Showtime at Langstone

Pupils enjoyed a classic tale with a twist this term at Langstone Junior School, with an inspiring pantomime by the Rear View Mirror Theatre Company.

The unique theatre company performed the tale of Red Riding Hood, featuring High School Musical performances by three little pigs.

The performances, for the whole school, were held in January. Teacher Darran Cowell said: "This was a great experience for the pupils and the actors were more than happy to be interviewed about the performance and their motivation to become actors. The children appreciated this and it may have inspired one or two to be actors."

Pupils in year 6 also completed reviews of the pantomime to help develop their journalistic writing skills.

Fundraising forces of the Solent

Solent Infant and Junior Schools are joining forces to help raise funds with parents, staff and pupils of the schools working together for a fun-filled Summer Fair on Saturday 5 July.

Activities from 12 noon will include a magic show, judo display, a visit by the emergency services and Royal Naval Band, bouncy castles, birds of prey, stalls, games, cakes and refreshments for sale, a barbeque and many more activities and displays.

Further information on the event, contact Angela Clark on (023) 9237 0056.

Choir performs with top opera singer

Celebrated opera singer Natasha Marsh performed with the school choir of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School in a prestigious event at St Thomas Cathedral.



The top-selling international recording artist also visited the school to support the choir with a music session.

The school was chosen by the Portsmouth Music Service to sing at the cathedral last term. Zoe Killick is music co-ordinator at the school and said: "Natasha only visited five cathedrals in the country and we were delighted to be the only school in Portsmouth to support her. The children were excited and thrilled by this opportunity to perform with her which was a memorable experience for them all."

Extra time for Linvoy at Charles Dickens

Linvoy Primus launched a new after school reading club for year 2 pupils at Charles Dickens Junior School called "Extra-time" as part of his Faith and Football charity.

All the books for the club have been specially made and are based around bible stories.

Each of the families taking part has been given a special pack including a DVD about reading, books and some Pompey goodies.

The children involved have help every week from volunteers who come into school to read with them, as well as getting support at home from their parents.

All the children are having their progress monitored and will be part of a mid-year review with Linvoy, and again at the end of the project to find out how successful they have been.

By taking part in the project, it is hoped that the extra support from volunteers and parents in addition to reading in school will help the children taking part to improve their skills as well as their enjoyment of reading.





Cliffdale pupils enter Dreamland

Every pupil at Cliffdale Primary School took their part in a stunning 'Dreamland' concert with special performances for friends, family and pupils throughout the city.

The script for the show was written by teaching assistant Craig Maskell who left the school last summer. He returned to the school to watch one of the performances, directed by teacher John Vaughan.

The pupils put the show on four times, with performances especially for pupils from other special schools, parents, carers, friends of the school and invited guests.

The wonderful set and all of the amazing costumes were created by art teacher Margaret Adams.

A Child's Impression

City school children have been working with a well-known local artist as part of an exhibition at the City Museum and inspired to create their own works of art to reflect their feelings about the city.

Alongside the exhibition 'Portsmouth: An Artist's Impression', artist Baz Hobbs worked with pupils from across the city in February to produce the stunning artwork.

Supported by the Portsmouth Art Learning Community, the workshops gave pupils age five to 11 the opportunity to meet and work with a local artist, including exploring his techniques and applying them to their own work.

Many of the participating schools are now working towards their Artsmark Award from the Arts Council. Schools involved were Arundel Court Infant and Junior Schools, Devonshire Infant School, Flying Bull, Highbury, St John's, St Paul's RC, St Swithin's RC Primary Schools and Wimborne Junior School.

Portsmouth Arts Learning Community (PALC) is a network of schools that supports children's learning about the arts.

Dining in style

Pupils at Lyndhurst Junior School have seen their dinner times transformed thanks to a new kitchen extension recently built.

Proposals are also being considered for a pagoda that would allow kids to enjoy their food outside.

The school has also built a new foyer that has improved security as well as creating a proper reception area.

And it doesn't stop there. Plans were recently approved for a new two storey extension that, funds permitting, will deliver new toilets, a music and dance studio, and extensions to the staff room and possibly the library. As the new extension will replace an old building, it will also create more space in the playground.



Pupils put Court Lane on the map

Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) at Cosham have produced a 'safe walking routes to school' map for all primary pupils in north-east Portsmouth.



Developed from the ideas of pupils at Court Lane Junior, the map shows local schools and marks safer places to cross, school crossing patrols, subways and foot bridges.

It shows warnings about dangerous places to cross such as spots where visibility is restricted, places where traffic is coming from several directions, bus lanes and level crossings.

On the back, the map has safety messages such as 'stop, look, listen, think, live', and seasonal tips about wearing suitable clothing, the dangers of wet or icy roads and safe cycling.

It was produced with support from the community improvement partnership and the neighbourhood policing team.

The JRSO's key messages from their planning meeting were:

- It's important for children to know about being safe on the road
- We want to encourage more families to walk to school regularly
- Children will be healthier if they walk or cycle to school.

Last year, Court Lane pupils successfully campaigned to encourage parents not to park on yellow zig-zag lines or pavements outside the school.

Happy New Year – Chinese style

Chinese dancing, making lanterns and moving dragons and dressing in red, gold and orange were some of the ways that all pupils from Milton Park Infant School celebrated the Chinese New Year.

The school enjoyed a two-day Chinese New Year festival in February where they learnt how Chinese people celebrate their New Year.

Louise Cheung from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service visited the school during the celebrations to demonstrate a range of Chinese cultures including showing year two children the art of Chinese calligraphy.

Headteacher Julie Smith said: "This was a great celebration, everyone had a fun time and the whole school was alive with Chinese music."

Photo shows year 2 pupils Lauren George and Sophie Bishop dressed for Chinese New Year





EYCNNews

Welcome to the latest issue of the Early Years Childcare News for parents, carers and childcare providers in Portsmouth.



City's children continue to do well

Portsmouth's young children continue to do well in the foundation stage at school.



As a result of the commitment of their families, the Portsmouth pre-school settings and other partners, our 2007 Foundation Stage Profile results show that Portsmouth's 5 year olds have achieved high standards in all areas of learning.

Our children are doing particularly well compared to those in similar cities across the UK and are doing better than the national average. 52% of our children are achieving national targets in communication and in their personal and social development, which is above national levels.

In addition, the high quality of our settings has been recognised by Ofsted in their recently published profile of the city with 75.7% of our nursery education inspections rated outstanding or good overall compared to 62.8% nationally.

The leaders and managers of our settings are particularly strong with 75.6% of our settings rated as outstanding or good compared to 62.5% nationally.

Catherine Kickham, Head of Early Years, is delighted with the high standards across the city. "This is due to the hard work and dedication of all Early Years partners and is making a positive difference to our children."

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

From September 2008, all childcare providers offering care and education to children aged 0-5 outside of the family home will be working to the same framework and standards.

For all children, learning begins at birth. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will help providers to supply appropriate play experiences so your child develops in all areas. It will enable providers to recognise your child's strengths and areas they need more support with to develop new skills.

For young children it is important that they are made to feel safe in their surroundings. This is helped by having a 'key person' within the setting who gets to know you and your child well and builds a positive relationship with you both. The EYFS means that wherever your child is being cared for or educated between 0-5 years they will be following the same set of principals.

The EYFS encourages providers and parents to work together to help children develop to their full potential. For you, this means the opportunity to have an input in your child's development, and to discuss it with the provider and work together to provide a cohesive care package for you and your child.

How well do you know your babysitter or the people looking after your children?

Finding someone you can trust to look after your children can be difficult, especially if you don't have many friends or family around to help out.

Sometimes you may need to ask a friend or neighbour to babysit for your children. Before you do, ask yourself:

- Do I know this person really well?
- Have I seen them caring for their own children or other people's children?
- Have friends or relatives recommended them?
- Can I trust them to treat my children as I would?
- Are my children going to be really happy with this person?

When deciding to use a babysitter remember to:

- Follow your instincts – if in doubt don't use them
- Choose a babysitter over 16 years old
- Talk to your child about their babysitter and listen to what they have to say
- If your child is unhappy about a particular babysitter, find someone else.

Before leaving your children with anyone for long periods of time, find out:

- Are they registered to care for children?
- Have they got a registration certificate?
- If they aren't registered, why not?
- Have they looked after other people's children?
- Can you speak to other parents who will recommend them?

A list of local, registered childcare providers is available at Portsmouth CHAT Children's Information Service on 023 9269 5000.

Children's Centres delivery reaches 'top ten'

The names of the top ten local authorities that have been first to reach their target for phase 2 Sure Start Children's Centres were released recently by Together for Children with Portsmouth among them.

Jill Fitzgerald, Portsmouth's Children's Centre Strategy Manager is thrilled with the progress so far: "It's a fantastic achievement and down to a lot of hard work and partnership working from all those agencies and staff involved. We now need to build on the progress we have made so that all the children and families in the Children's Centre areas really begin to benefit from services and the extra support."

Contact Portsmouth CHAT for information about drop in groups and services offered at local Children's Centres on 023 9269 5000. Alternatively visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk/chat for a list of groups and activities available across the city.





Support for childminders, families and children

New 'Come and Play' groups have been set up around Portsmouth by the National Childminding Association and the Pre-school Learning Alliance to provide new play and learning opportunities for children in the city.

The groups provide new play ideas and promote learning associated with play in an informal and relaxed setting designed to promote a child's learning and development.

Meeting other parents and carers at these groups gives everybody the opportunity to gain and share knowledge, offer and receive support as well as make new friends.

If you would like more information about where these groups are being held please contact Tracey Hall on 9266 1227 or 9263 9146 or email: tracey.hall@portsmouth-pla.org.uk

Get your under 5's ready for some serious summer fun!

Want to do your bit for charity? And find a reason to get the kids exercising in the fresh air? We've found the solution – The Barnardo's Big Toddle.

This annual half-mile sponsored walk for under 5's saw almost 400,000 toddlers from across the UK register in 2007, raising £1.4 million for Barnardo's work with disadvantaged children and their families.

The Big Toddle can be as easy and as flexible as you like. There are Toddles organised by Barnardo's throughout the UK during June and July but they also encourage nurseries and pre-schools to host their own events.

Barnardo's Big Toddle Manager Terence Lovell said: "Taking part in the Barnardo's Big Toddle is a great way of teaching children about those less fortunate. This year we hope to see more Toddles than ever joining in, having fun and helping us to raise vital funds for vulnerable children throughout the UK."

Barnardo's encourages nurseries and pre-schools to arrange their own Toddles by offering them the opportunity to keep 25% of funds raised if they so choose, helping them to buy much needed equipment and materials.

For more information on Barnardo's Big Toddle and how to arrange your own event, you can visit the website www.bigtoddle.co.uk or call 0845 270 9900.

You will find information on any Barnardo's organised Big Toddles in your area on the website, as well as a selection of attractive family venues offering discounts to Big Toddles in June.

Welcome to the Nursery Narrative scheme

by Lee Esposito-Webb

"I have been working with the Nursery Narrative programme over the last three months with children aged 3 to 4 at PAWs Nursery.

Nursery Narrative uses familiar songs, stories and curriculum topics such as the family, mini-beasts and people who help us, to improve the children's spoken language and vocabulary in sessions lasting around 20 minutes.

By using simple sign language the children learn how to tell stories and become more confident in speaking in front of others. Studies into the narrative scheme have shown that the programme reduces language poverty in reception age children and we are already seeing improvements in communication and confidence in the children we are working with.

Other benefits of the scheme include the promotion of turn taking and key listening skills. One of our children who has sometimes had problems in concentrating and listening thrives at Nursery Narrative time, engaging with the activities and simple sign language to such an extent that the techniques are being employed in his SENCO action plan.

The work to implement the scheme is minimal. Instead of thinking of the Nursery Narrative scheme as something extra I have implemented it as one of our regular activities and we have found stepping stones for all six areas of the foundation stage to compliment it.

The narrative has made a positive impact on our children and on our nursery's profile with Ofsted and our parents and would encourage other nurseries to work with the Nursery Narrative as well."

If you go down to the woods today...

Children from Somers Park Nursery Unit recently enjoyed the annual Teddy Bears' Picnic at Cafe Enham, Somers Town. The bears and children enjoyed a fantastic selection of cookies and drinks laid on by the cafe staff and a great time was had by all.



Portsmouth CHAT

Children's Information Service

NEW SMS Text Messaging Service

If you are interested in receiving free SMS text message alerts regarding activities, Early Years updates and other useful information from Portsmouth CHAT Children's Information Service then please text the word REGISTER to 07813 684234.

Or if you simply require some information and don't have time to phone us then why not send us your query with an SMS text message? Text us on 07813 684234.

PLEASE NOTE: Sending a text message will cost you the normal standard rate as set by your service provider. By registering you are agreeing for your mobile number to be stored on our system for contact purposes and in order to provide you with message alerts. To have your mobile number removed from our text distribution list please text the word REMOVE to 07813 684234.

What do you want to read about?

We want Early Years News to be really useful to you as a parent or carer, so if you have a story or area of interest please contact Katherine Evans on 023 9269 5000 or email katherine.evans@portsmouthcc.gov.uk



Sports college success for Mary Rose School

Portsmouth's newest school the Mary Rose School, has been successful in its bid to become a top sports college following news that it is being granted Specialist Sports College status.

The status means that excellence in PE and Sport at the school will now be developed further and used to improve standards in all subjects, especially English and Mathematics.

The school in Milton, Portsmouth is for pupils aged between 2-19 years who have a wide range of severe and complex learning needs. The award of the specialist status has been made by the Department of Children, Schools and Families.

The school will now work with and complement Priory Secondary School in Southsea, already established as a leading Specialist Sports College and a regional focal point for promoting excellence in physical education and community sport.

Headteacher Alison Beane: "We are absolutely delighted to have achieved Specialist Sport Status and so excited about what this mean to all the pupils.

"The PE and sporting excellence this status will bring will benefit the well-being and fitness of all the pupils and it will also help to improve the performance of the whole school."

A further space will now be developed at the school that will focus on sensory integration, movement and dance especially for pupils with more complex needs.

A visible Sports College character will be developed throughout the school and within their local community that inspires their students.

The award of specialist status at the school in Southsea follows a glowing report by Government inspectors last term when it was described by Ofsted as a good school with some "outstanding" strengths.

The school opened in September 2006 following an amalgamation of two special needs schools, East Shore, Milton, and Futch, Drayton, and moved to a new £9m purpose built premises in Gisors Road last February.

Ofsted echoed parents' praise about the quality of the new buildings and facilities and said the "move to the new school was managed so well that pupils settled very smoothly into their new surroundings."

The Specialist Schools Programme (SSP) helps schools, in partnership with private sector sponsors and supported by additional Government funding, to establish distinctive identities through their chosen specialisms and achieve their targets to raise standards.

Royal finale for theatre quest

Pupils from Admiral Lord Nelson School gave the performance of their lives as they took to the stage in front of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall at Unicorn Theatre, London.

Their performance in January was the culmination of a six-month TheatreQuest project, part of the Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts'.

Young people from 12 other schools across the UK also involved in TheatreQuest, joined the ALNS students in London.

The royal guests at the performance were joined by guests Penelope Keith, a long standing ambassador for Children & the Arts and author of the play Jamila Gavin.

Theatre Quest, launched in July 2007, was supported by Land Securities and has given 1,300 pupils a chance they would not normally have had: to engage with their local theatre and study a brand new play.

Julia Thirst, Head of Drama at Admiral Lord Nelson School said: "This has been a tremendous project for our students to have been involved in.

"Our students enjoyed a professional performance of A Christmas Carol at The New Theatre Royal, had the chance to get to know the people behind the scenes and worked on set design and costume making, using recycled materials, as well as developing their own productions of the play.

"The results of their hard work were there for all to see when they performed to a large audience of parents and friends at the New Theatre Royal on 17 December.

"This event in London was a wonderful finale to the whole project."



What's next after year 11?

It is often difficult to decide what to do when you finish school, with so many options out there making the right decision can be hard for pupils and parents.

That's why Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council have created a new website that for the first time brings together all the learning and training opportunities available in Portsmouth and Hampshire in one place.

www.myfutureinportsmouth.co.uk is a site for 14-19 year olds where you can search through information about all the courses available in schools and Further Education colleges across Portsmouth and Hampshire as well as training opportunities such as apprenticeships.

It also includes a diary of events with dates of taster days, careers fairs and open evenings. So if you, your son or daughter is facing the difficult decision of what to do after year 11, this really is the ultimate 'one-stop-shop' to get all the help and information you need.

Improving standards at secondary schools

Three glowing Ofsted reports received this term have further highlighted improvements in city secondary schools.

City of Portsmouth Boys' School:

'Rapidly improving'

Ofsted inspectors have praised the rapid progress made at City of Portsmouth Boys' School.

When the school was last inspected in 2003, a number of aspects were found to be unsatisfactory, but as the report says "things are very different now: all aspects are at least satisfactory and many are good ...Much has been achieved in the past three years and the school is well placed to continue its improvement."

Its status as a specialist college was highlighted as one of the factors making a considerable contribution to the schools improvement and its links with local business were considered outstanding.

Headteacher Mike Smith was praised for his good leadership and Ofsted also highlighted the commitment of the teaching staff in meeting the individual needs of every student.

Pupils are praised for their good behaviour and outstanding contribution to the life of the school's community.



City of Portsmouth Girls' School: where 'focus is firmly on learning'

An overall rating of good was the result of the recent Ofsted report for City of Portsmouth Girls' School, which highlights the improving standards of teaching and learning taking place at the school.

The report confirms that: "The headteacher and senior leaders are deeply ambitious for the school, have high expectations and have begun to set challenging targets for pupils. This is being felt across the school and the good progress demonstrated in Key Stage 3 in 2007 is now being seen in Years 10 and 11."

Headteacher Sharon Watt was praised for her passion for making the school better and giving a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The school is also "highly successful" in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being with very good systems for supporting pupils and ensuring their welfare. Pupils also know how well they are doing and what they need to do to fulfil their potential.

Admiral Lord Nelson: a good school with outstanding qualities

Government inspectors have highlighted a number of "outstanding" features of life at one of Portsmouth's newest schools.

Ofsted rated Admiral Lord Nelson School (ALNS), Copnor, as a good school that "meets the needs of its students well and has effectively raised educational aspirations."

The report said: "The outstanding care, guidance and support have an impact on the success of every individual student and make this a very inclusive school. As a result, their personal development is outstanding."

Headteacher Steven Labeledz was praised for his strong leadership and Ofsted highlighted the good quality of teaching and the students' positive attitudes to learning.

The report said: "The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher is well respected and dedicated to the school. There is a shared vision for the future development of the school and managers are enthusiastic in their commitment to lead new initiatives."

Mary Rose

Pupils at Portsmouth's newest school have also been given a glowing report by government inspectors.

The Mary Rose School in Southsea was described by Ofsted as a good school with some "outstanding" strengths, following a two-day inspection.

Ofsted echoed parents' praise about the quality of the new buildings and facilities and said the "move to the new school was managed so well that pupils settled very smoothly into their new surroundings."

Ofsted said pupils make good progress and achieve well – mainly due to the overall good quality of teaching and learning that ensures all pupils in a class have suitably challenging work.

Changes to 11-19 education

Big changes are underway for the education of 11 to 19 year olds, including a new curriculum for Key Stage 3, revised GCSEs and specialised diplomas.

Paddy Bradley, Head of Learning and Achievement at the city council explained: "These major reforms should see a new approach which will be driven by the learner, with far more options available to individuals to choose what, where and how they will study."

"By providing a curriculum which matches the individual needs of young people, we will increase engagement and motivation to learn. The reforms aim to encourage young people to stay in learning longer and to leave with much stronger basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT."

Changes will include

KS 3 Curriculum and revised GCSEs - that will offer development of a wider choice mixing general and vocational learning

Functional skills - these skills are the core elements of English, mathematics and ICT that allow young people to get on confidently and independently in school and the workplace. Functional skills will be introduced in reformed GCSEs, diplomas and apprenticeships, as well as being available as a stand-alone qualification.

Diplomas - an employer-led qualification that combines practical skills and technical understanding, run in parallel with other options.

A level - increased emphasis on independent learning and study skills.

Other workplace learning - NVQs are work-related qualifications available at level 1 and upwards, as are BTecs and OCR Nationals, which offer a mixture of theory and practice with some work experience.

Apprenticeships - provide work-based training to young people who want to learn new skills and gain qualifications while working.

Foundation learning tier - a new stepping stone for young people at entry level and level 1 who are not yet ready to move on to level 2.

To find out more about the option in Portsmouth check out the new on-line prospectus www.myfutureinportsmouth.co.uk

Community Improvement Partnerships



Want to be a 'Family for Health'?

Obesity is in the spotlight again as the government announces a new strategy to help people maintain a healthy weight.

Local figures show a worrying picture for both adult and childhood obesity. In Portsmouth 12% of children in reception classes and 24% of children in year 6 were recorded as obese last year, with 52% of adults overweight or obese.

As a result the Community Improvement Partnerships have worked with Portsmouth Primary Care Trust and the city council to roll out the 'Families for Health' project, a free 12-week course for the whole family. It includes two and a half hour themed activity sessions for children, whilst their parents learn together how to help their whole family lead a healthier lifestyle.

The whole family also learns about healthy eating, physical activity, family and social relationships and self esteem. Seven families are currently on the course and have found it life changing.

If you are worried about your child's weight and want to work together to be a healthier family then come and join us on 26 April from 10am-12.30pm at Admiral Lord Nelson School. The whole family is welcome as there will be different activities for children and parents to enjoy.

To qualify for a place you need to have a child below 11 years old in the family who is overweight. For more information, please call Zoe on 023 9236 4536.

There are five Community Improvement Partnerships (CIPs) in Portsmouth. They each cover a different area of the city and are made up of the local schools and health, public and voluntary sector organisations.

Here's how to get in touch with them:

Heart of Portsmouth (South West)

Contact: Helen on 07960 053 276 or email helencorkery@stlukes-southsea.org.uk

North East

Contact Jo on 07904 809677, email jderham@courtlanejnr.portsmouth.sch.uk or visit www.necip.co.uk

North Island (Central)

Contact Holly Miller on 07949726183 or email HMiller@alns.co.uk

North West (Axxcess)

Contact Julian Wright on 9232 1541 or 07801 286743 or email info@axcess.org.uk

South East

Contact Nigel Harvey-Whitten on: 07957 789 490 or email nharvey@southsea.portsmouth.sch.uk

Parent Power

Being a parent is one of life's most important jobs, but it is not the easiest and children are not born with an instruction manual. It can be a great experience watching your child grow up and it can also be very challenging. To help all parents the North Island CIP are running friendly, fun and informal workshops where you will get the opportunity to share experiences with other parents, build your confidence and give you some useful tips. Parents who have come along have said they now have even better relationships with their children, have more fun as a family and find parenting easier and more enjoyable. So come along to the next set of six workshops that run every half term by calling Sue on 9236 4536 extension 348.

Bringing Stories to Life

At the CIP we know how important it is to spend time together and books can be a fun way to do it. In all our schools we are currently running fun storytelling events for the whole family where we are launching family reading passports; 'Help Jack Climb the Beanstalk' and 'Wordsworth the Wizard's Adventure'. Families can read together to gain points, which will get them prizes.

Family Wellbeing

A series of workshops will take place on Thursday evenings from April 24 to June 19 in local schools. Sessions include 'talking to your child about relationships', 'dealing with anger', 'every Dad matters' and 'getting on with your teenager' and cost a maximum of £6 per session. Contact the North East CIP for more details.

Boogie Mites come to Saxon Shore

Free music and singing sessions are being offered at the Rainbow Room, Saxon Shore Infant School from 11-11.45am on the following dates: Monday, 10, 17, 31 March, Monday 28 April, Monday 12 & 19 May. For more details contact Hanli on 07932 424691.

Mums matter

Loads of activities are taking place for Mums in the South East CIP, including first time Mums groups, come and play sessions, baby massage classes and bounce and rhyme sessions. For more information, contact Nigel at the South East CIP.



Children and young people win respect

Children and young people have been showcasing winning creative performances on the theme of social behaviour at two award ceremonies at the Kings Theatre.

The 'Respect - Performing Arts Awards', organised by the Community Improvement Partnerships, were presented at the Kings Theatre in February.

Nearly 300 pupils from nine primary schools across the city performed at the event and pupils from eight secondary schools.

All schools, nurseries and youth groups across Portsmouth were given an opportunity to enter the awards with performances including for instance dance, singing, music, poetry, mime and presentation of art and crafts.

Each entry, up to seven minutes long, had to effectively convey one of the key messages of the Social Behaviour Policy of the Heart of Portsmouth CIP which include 'we will care for ourselves', 'care for others', 'care for our community' and 'care for our environment'.

Primary schools that were involved include Somers Park, Cottage Grove, Arundel Court, Charles Dickens Infant, Court Lane Junior, Highbury, Lyndhurst and Copnor. Secondary schools were St Luke's, King Richard, Priory, St Edmunds and Admiral Lord Nelson.

The language for success

The first conference exclusively about languages aimed at primary school teachers took place in March at the Dame Judith Professional Centre.

'More than words' brought teachers from across the city together to hear more about learning languages in primary schools and how it supports literacy generally.

Speakers included National Director for Languages, Lid King, who gave an update on what is happening nationally with language learning, and specifically language learning in the primary sector.

Yvonne Adams, a Southampton primary school headteacher also made a presentation on how introducing children to language learning and associated cultures can help to break down barriers of ignorance and build up greater tolerance and self-esteem.

There was also a series of practical workshops taking place including a 30 minute introductory lesson in Chinese or a session on blogging and podcasting.

Elizabeth Lord, Key Stage 2 Primary Languages Co-ordinator for Portsmouth City Council said: "More and more primary schools in Portsmouth are introducing language learning as part of their curriculum as there are clear links between learning languages and improved literacy.

"The conference was all about encouraging children to develop the skills they need to become successful language learners and to be able to take their place in the wider global community."

Free advice for parents

From toddler tantrums to teenage troubles, there's a lot to cope with when you're a parent.

At some time or another, all mums and dads need a bit of advice. And that's where Portsmouth's Parenting Guide comes in.

The free 56-page guide has just been updated and reprinted. It's packed full of tips on everything from bullying to brushing teeth, and has a full list of helpful organisations and websites.

Portsmouth City Council and NHS experts at Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust have put it together.

Copies are available from schools, health visitors, GP surgeries, children's centres or the Civic Offices in Guildhall Square. Parents can also call Chris Woodfine at the council on 9284 1607 and ask for a copy.

Or they can read and download the guide on the council's website, by going to www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living



Topics covered by the guide include:

- Babysitting and leaving children alone
- Behaviour at school
- Children with disabilities
- Depression and mental health
- Divorce & bereavement
- Drug, alcohol & substance misuse
- Eating disorders
- Talking with your teenager

Supporting religious education in schools

Term Times caught up with Peter Davies, a member of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) to find out more about how they support schools and colleges in the delivery of religious education.

What is SACRE?

"SACRE is an organisation that local authorities are legally required to set up to advise them on the quality, standards, and progress of religious education, collective worship and spirituality in local schools. In Portsmouth representatives from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish and Sikh faith communities are all members."

How do they affect how religion is taught in schools?

"Religious Education is not part of the National Curriculum, but it must be taught in schools by law. SACRE helps to produce a syllabus that all local authority maintained schools in the city follow.

Religious education is just one of the ways of prompting a wider understanding of the different cultures and traditions we have in the city."

Minutes from all the SACRE meetings can be found at www.portsmouth.gov.uk

Is your child being looked after by someone else? Or are you looking after someone else's child?

Private fostering is when a child aged under 16 (or under 18 if they are disabled) is cared for and provided with accommodation for 28 days or more by an adult who is not a close relative.

If you are looking after a child for a friend, or have entered into a business arrangement with someone to look after their child, it is a legal requirement for you to inform your local council.

If you think that this applies to you, then please contact Denise Lingham on 9268 8087 or email denise.ingham@portsmouthcc.gov.uk for further information.



CU Champions save Saturdays!!!

Crash! Bang! Wallop! Here come the CU Champions to help save Pompey's children from being bored on a Saturday! For the first time ever all of Portsmouth's CU Champions got together to discuss the Children's University (CU) in their city. Their job as a CU Champion is to tell everyone at CU what we're doing well, and of course, what we could do better!

The event was held on 1 February at the Pompey Study Centre. After a really useful morning of talking about new ideas the CU Champions created their very own Superhero comics. The Champions came from all over the city; Medina Primary, Westfield Junior, St. Paul's Primary, St. Jude's Primary, Langstone Junior, Corpus Christi Primary and Somers Park Primary

The project co-ordinator, Jo Valentine said "We asked our champions some important questions: Why do you and your friends come to CU? What courses would you like? Is there anything we could do better? Do you feel that the things you learn on our courses help you when you are at school? The children gave us some fantastic answers. The main response was that it was fun, they made new friends, they were able to try new and unusual things, and that they liked the learning. We have listened to the children and some of them suggested an after-school club which would offer children a taster of the normal Children's University Saturday courses. As a result of this we have started to put into place a five week pilot scheme. The children's opinions really matter to us- without them there would be no CU."

In the afternoon the children thought about how they could help advertise the Children's University more effectively in their school. So together with Jo Valentine and Becky Maddock, the children created their own super hero comics, showing children that they don't need to be bored on a Saturday as there are lots of fun things for them to do in Portsmouth. Everyone had a great day and each child took home an A2 poster of their own comic to show their friends and family.

For more information on the Children's University and Kids' College project please contact the Children's University office on 9286 4121 or cu@pompeystudycentre.org.uk

Portsmouth School Sport Partnership

Last November 2007 annual Activemark for primary schools and Sportsmark for secondary schools awards were announced.

These national kitemarks reward schools for the delivery of the national PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy. Schools are automatically assessed for one of the marks through the national school sport survey, which all School Sport Partnership schools completed in June 2007.

This year schools have been awarded the kitemark if more than 85% of their pupils participate in two hours or more of high quality PE or school sport.

Congratulations to the following successful Portsmouth schools:

Goldsmith Infant, Charles Dickens Infant, Court Lane Junior, Meredith Infant, Devonshire Infant, College Park Infant, Meon Infant, Northern Parade Junior, Northern Parade Infant, Cumberland Infant, Solent Junior, Westover Primary, Medina Primary, Highbury Primary, Court Lane Infant, Solent Infant, Southsea Infant, Arundel Court Junior, Arundel Court Infant, Langstone Infant, Copnor Infant, Milton Park Infant, Penhale Infant, Stamshaw Infant, Wimborne Infant, Langstone Junior, Milton Park Junior, Westfield Junior, Wimborne Junior, Stamshaw Junior, Isambard Brunel Junior, Moorings Way Infant, Craneswater Junior, Manor Infant, Newbridge Junior, Paulsgrove Primary, Portsdown Primary, Saxonshore Infant, St. Jude's Primary, St. George's Primary, Corpus Christi Primary, St. John's Primary, St Swithun's Primary, St. Paul's Primary, Flying Bull Primary, Cliffdale Primary, Priory Sports College, King Richard, St. Luke's, City of Portsmouth Boy's, Redwood Park, Miltoncross, Mary Rose Sports College.

Dance festival

Following a very successful dance festival through the School Sport Partnership last year, schools in the Miltoncross and King Richard cluster were invited to take part in this year's dance festival. Over 300 pupils took part in a superb afternoon with performances ranging from reception classes to year 11 GCSE students. This was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the work in schools and to show that dance is enjoyed by all. There was great team spirit and all performances received much appreciation. Thanks to Miltoncross School and Paulsgrove Primary for hosting the event and for all the teachers who helped on the day.



Swimming

From a recent survey sent to primary schools in Portsmouth approximately 30% of pupils have not met the minimum standard of swimming 25m by the end of year 6. This is 10% higher than the national average, and in one area of the city there are 45% of pupils in year 6 who cannot swim 25m. To help tackle this issue, a number of schools are receiving funding for an additional teacher to work with non-swimmers during their school swimming programme. Pupils who still cannot swim by the end of their school swimming lessons are then invited to half term intensive crash courses at the Victoria Swimming Centre.

In April the swimming development group is offering a free one week crash course at Springfield School as part of the Amateur Swimming Association Level One Teacher training course. The course is for beginners and improvers, mainly for those who can't swim 25m and is open to any pupil aged 6 – 11. If you are interested in reserving a place for your child please contact Madeleine Campbell, Partnership Development Manager on 023 9281 9115 (Priory School).

School-club link

The School Sport Partnership is trying to improve links between the Out of School activities we provide on school sites and opportunities to continue the activity within the community. In the Easter holidays we are offering 2 day camps in a range of sports from cheerleading and street dance to cricket and rugby. If you would like an information leaflet please contact Michael Whitelock at Priory School on 023 9281 9115. There are also still places for the weekly trampoline, gymnastics and yoga sessions, contact Michael for more information.

City-wide competitions

There are a range of city-wide competitions available for infant, junior, secondary and special schools to participate in, including: boccia, tri-golf, athletics, swimming, dance, netball, cricket, basketball, hockey, cross country, trampolining, gymnastics, rugby, badminton, tennis and table tennis.

For more information on any aspect of the programme, please contact Madeleine Campbell on: tel: 9281 9915 x246 or e-mail: mcampbell@priory.portsmouth.sch.uk



New sporting opportunities at Newbridge

A new range of after school clubs have been set up at Newbridge Junior School to increase the sporting opportunities available to pupils there.

The clubs consist of cricket on a Monday, gymnastics on Tuesday, tennis on Thursday and football on Friday. Each club can cater for up to 20 pupils and they all run between 3.30pm and 5pm and cost just £2.00 per child.

The clubs are run by the school Sports Co-ordinator, Jamie Nottage and teaching Assistant Nathan Leworthy who is a registered Gymnastics Coach. Newbridge has been working closely with Mayfield School to organise and improve sports at the school.

Any Newbridge Junior pupils interested in joining any of the clubs should contact the school.

Free boxing training for children & young people

The Amateur Boxing Association has introduced Non-Contact National Boxing Awards to give children and young people a chance to learn boxing, and sessions are already proving popular in Portsmouth.

Children are taught all the skills and technique of amateur boxing without the fear of getting hurt. Boxing is a fun sporting activity that develops physical fitness, discipline and self confidence.

Sessions are taking place as follows:

Monday 3 March to Monday 21 July 2008

at St Luke's Sports Centre, Greetham St, Somerstown

5 – 10 yr olds (boys and girls) - 4pm – 4.45pm

11- 16 yr olds (boys and girls) - 5pm – 5.45pm

To book a place, just ask your PE teacher for a letter or phone Helen on 0796 0053 276.

Term Times is edited by Carla Driscoll, Corporate Communications Unit, Portsmouth City Council. For contributions or information telephone 9283 4239 or e-mail carla.driscoll@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

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