

Dear Parents,

For some reason it feels like we have broken the back of winter. The mornings seem brighter and the evenings are drawing out. It is great to have clubs back up and running outside. The forecast looks cold for next week so please make sure your children are well wrapped up to be outside.

Monday marked the start of a two-week cycle of lesson observations as set out in the school action plan. Mrs Boyes, Mrs Jeffs and myself are observing the English, Maths and Foundation teaching staff respectively. We have also teamed up as part of quality assurance but the biggest advantage is the discussions focused on teaching approaches and pupil engagement with their learning.

I have had the pleasure of congratulating the pupils for their approach to their learning in the lessons I have visited. Examples include year 8 pupils constructing conversations in French focused on Reunion Island. Year 6 working as Artists in the style of Scarpace linked to their topic of Shorelines. Year 7 pupils carefully following the guidance of Mr Cotton in Product Design; some of the CAM designs are ambitious and the quality of their measuring and cutting impressive. I have been able to see first-hand the impact of staff demanding more from the pupils and the pupils rising to the challenge.

You are aware we have been working hard to address issues around homework. It is being regularly set across the school and in the main recorded by pupils in their diaries. With this established, more time is put into checking the quality and suitability. I welcome your feedback and comments where you see it working or not.

We have also started a homework club in the hall from 12.30pm. We bring in the Chromebook trollies and have at least two members of staff on hand to support the pupils. This also acts as a facility for staff to send pupils who have not completed their homework. There is also a Homework Club running in Room 18 on a Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime where the pupils can have access to Chromebooks.

As Spring approaches we begin to see pupils grow out of their uniform. It is more noticeable in the girls when their skirts no longer finish just above the knee. I would ask you to check this at home, and at school we will subtly speak to pupils who would benefit from a new skirt.

Fashion Fads! This year's trend is to tuck jumpers into the top of skirts. I have spoken to year 8, where it is most prevalent, to remind them that jumpers have to be untucked. My team will also speak to all pupils on Monday.

Other news across school, in no particular order, includes year 8 visiting QE on Thursday to watch their performance of Grease. Every pupil I asked had a wonderful time and enjoyed the opportunity of visiting the Upper School.

Key Stage 3 pupils all voted at the beginning of the week for the Dorset Youth Parliament. The polling booth was set up in the hall by Mrs Robertson and her school council. The actual voting part is a good experience for the pupils.

Next Tuesday, year 5 will be working with Paul Andrews focusing on internet safety in a workshop entitled Virtual Reality. This is being funded by the PTFA. Social media plays such a huge part in our pupils' lives and sadly it is also a source of much angst and upset when used inappropriately. If you require support or information about security settings and filters please contact school. Many of the platforms our pupils use have an age requirement but the reality is many of them have profiles despite not meeting the age recommendation. I pose the question of 'do you know what your child is doing on the internet?'

Best of luck to year 6 next week when they sit their Mock SATs tests. This is a really important week for all involved. It will provide us with meaningful information to assess the impact of all the hard work put in by staff and pupils alike. Thank you to volunteers who are supporting pupils with these. If you are able to assist please contact the Office.

I will sign-off this week by welcoming back Mrs Ponchaud (aka Miss Heaton) from her maternity leave. She will be working with Miss Smith through to half-term to ensure a smooth hand-over.

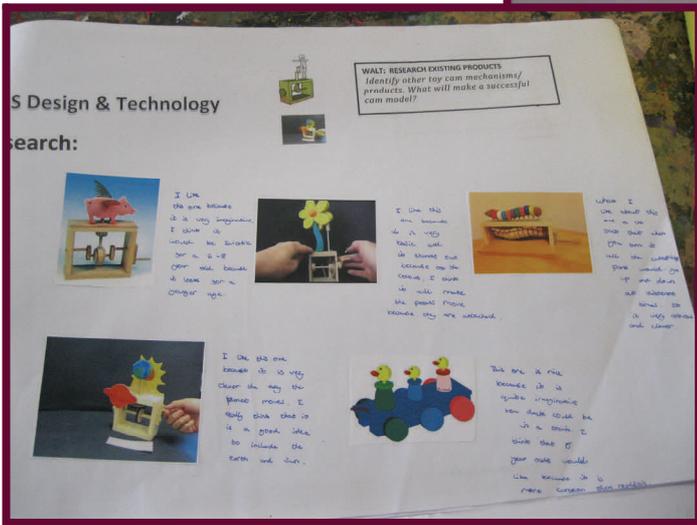
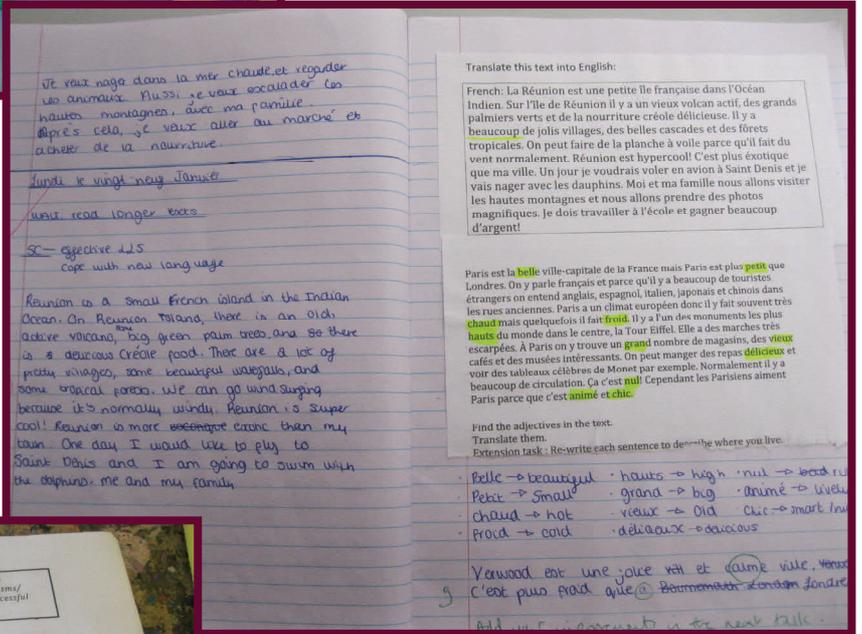
Have a great weekend.

Rob Christopher

A WEEK IN PICTURES



Examples of pupils' work



Youth Parliament Candidates

