



The social side of learning.

Teaching at St Christopher's has always been of a very high calibre. The standard of teaching and learning is not only monitored within the school, it's also moderated by Headteachers from other schools within the ILG group. Over the past year, our interactive whiteboards and teaching resources have further increased the effectiveness of teaching at St Christopher's.

However, a vital teaching resource that's often overlooked is parental input at home. Traditionally, parents at St Christopher's School have always been good at supporting maths and reading. Our structured home reading programme has supported our students' ability to excel in formal comprehension activities and develop an independent passion for literature.

Over the past year, we have also engaged our students with maths at home through the introduction of Mathletics and Times Tables Rockstars. TT Rockstars focuses on

the vital skill of memorising the times tables whilst Mathletics has a broader mathematical scope. We already have strong resources for children to practise reading and maths skills at home. We intend to introduce even more resources over the course of 2017-18.

Practising mathematics, comprehension and reading at home is often based on developing a simple routine. Routines involve a set time and place to study as well as a set time to relax and pursue hobbies or play. An essential part of this routine is planning 'quality time' where children get to have fun and educational experiences with the family. This 'quality time' is essential. It provides a firm foundation for the social confidence which every good student needs.

One other important area which the school wants to develop is creative and applied writing. During the course of the year, our teachers have focussed on teaching these vital skills across the school. We have introduced teaching criteria which become progressively more challenging as children transition from Year 1 to Year 6. For example, by Year 6 we want our students to be able to:

- Use a wide range of ambitious vocabulary accurately and precisely.
- Consciously vary levels of formality according to purpose and audience
- Use stylistic features to create effect (e.g. figurative language, passive voice or metaphor)

With creative writing, the best input parents can give is encouragement. As parents you can:

- Read a short passage from a home reading book to identify 'ambitious vocabulary' or simply to discuss how an author builds up powerful descriptions.
- **Co-write** a short descriptive passage with your child. Shared writing is an important way of supporting a young student. You could describe a character or animal in your home reading book. Or you could simply describe what happens next. Discussing ideas about what to write is just as important as putting pen to paper.
- Pick a brief opportunity to use more powerful language (adjectives, adverbs and metaphors) during an everyday conversation or activity.

Above all, writing should never be something that is practised alone, in isolation. Every good writer works within the social context of an audience and a literary community. Writing skills are best developed in short bursts with lots of discussion and active collaboration. Children need to see creative writing as something that is fun and which their parents and teachers are actively involved and interested in.

Creative writing, like music, is a complex art. It needs a supportive social environment and lots of short opportunities to practise. This is our aim for 2017 and 2018.



The Nursery

The Nursery has been very busy this Spring term! There has been a big focus on personal, social and emotional development. The children have been learning how to take turns, share resources and work together; be it making dinner in the home corner or taking turns to play on the drum during the music circle. They have shown great progress in this area.

We had great fun taking part in our first book character parade, decorating yummy pancakes for pancake day and creating the most beautiful mother's day cards. The Easter break is just what they need to prepare for the fabulous summer ahead!

Minisha Bist – Nursery Manager



Trips and Events

Year 6 had a fantastic day at the Science Museum to complement their study of Electricity. The highlight was the Wonderlab: a hands-on gallery of fascinating experiments; from making circuits and seeing lightning made by a Tesla Coil to gliding down giant friction slides and seeing ourselves in a heat sensitive camera. The pupils learned lots in a completely immersive way.

We were then treated to a 'Rocket Show' where we saw Newton's three laws of motion in action, courtesy of some home-made Pringle tube rockets and balloons full of extremely explosive Hydrogen.

Mr Kaffel - Year 6 Teacher



Year 2 also had their visit to the Harrow Synagogue and developed their knowledge of Judaism. Amba wrote:

"Me and my friends saw a real Torah scroll. Jeanette and David read the scroll and then took off the breastplate, bells and mantle. We all sang songs and danced. We ate chollah bread and mini chocolate rolls and drank grape juice. Before we ate, we said a blessing. I had lots of fun."



World Book day was also an opportunity to celebrate our favourite novels and the strange, wonderful characters within them.

In Reception, Mr Forster has also had a busy time. She writes:

"The children have been excited to see their daffodils in bloom. The long wait has been worth it and later this week they will be doing observational drawings of our beautiful daffs! The children have been working hard and it's lovely to see the progress they're making towards their Early Learning Goals. We have been learning about Africa through the story of 'Handa's Surprise' so it was great to visit Lidl to buy



Handa's fruit. Later Reception enjoyed sharing the fruit with the Nursery children. "
(Mrs Forster – Reception Teacher)

Year 1 got to hide behind Mrs Graham. She writes:

"Year 1 visited the Natural History Museum to see the dinosaurs. Although the children 'pretended' not to be scared by the full size model of T-Rex, Mrs Graham had a few children hiding behind her! We also visited the new 'Investigate Centre' where we had an opportunity to use magnifying glasses and microscopes to observe fossils, butterflies and animal bones. Everyone agreed that the best part of the trip was the 'Gigantosaurus' lunch!"
(Mrs Graham – Year 1 Teacher)

Finally, Year 3 and year 4 spent a 'revolting' time at the Royal Academy of Arts learning about paintings inspired by the 1917 Russian Revolution. Sienna and Mya-Lee write:

"In the gallery we saw interesting abstract pictures like the one of a little white house in a glass cube and then we made our own abstract pictures. We did some printing of posters and also made messages without

words. We finally went in to a tiny theatre and saw a film about the revolution. On our posters we included different messages like – Don't Kill Tigers – or – Me for President -."



Sports

Despite some adverse weather this term, we've introduced a range of new sports activities based on new exciting resources.

In PE during the first half term, Early Years and Key Stage 1 covered dance, including full routines to songs from The Lion King and The Little Mermaid. Mr Musetti particularly enjoyed the Lion King dances and joined in. We all tried to guess what particular musical character *he* was. Year 3 and 4 have had a course of group pattern dance lessons. Year 5 and 6 have practised their swordsmanship in Midi-Fencing. In the second half of term, all years have been looking at HRF (Health Related Fitness), developing their co-ordination, speed & endurance.

In Games, in spite of our limited access to the field we split our time between rugby, football and our annual cross-country. We also attended a Cross Country Tournament, where our chosen runners represented the school admirably.



Music

On Monday, 6th March, the School Choir took part in the Inaugural Concert of Independent Schools in the Barbican Hall in aid of Barnado's. Over 500 children took part, including schools from as far afield as the Isle of Wight and Manchester. It was an experience of a lifetime and a most enjoyable day.

Year 6 Results

Year 6 have had tremendous results this year and gained places at a range of excellent schools. Two of our 11 students have won academic scholarships.

Offers include:

- St Helen's
- Northwood College
- Notting Hill and Ealing High School
- South Hampstead High School
- North London Collegiate
- Latymer Grammar School
- John Lyon
- Aldenham

- Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls
- Swaminarayan
- Christ's Hospital
- Archer Academy
- Ecole Internationale de Geneve

We will announce which schools our Year 6 students finally choose in the summer term.

Other Notices:

Please be informed that children will be expected to wear full summer uniform in the Summer term. Should you have difficulty purchasing items, please inform Mrs Almeida.

The Friends of St Christopher's have organised an afternoon tea and disco "Dress up and Dance". The event is open to everyone and aims to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support. The theme is 'Heroes' and there will be a raffle, silent auction and prize for best costume/dance moves. Please also try out your baking skills and donate a cake for the afternoon tea.

It promises to be the family dress-up event of the year so please don't miss it. Please note that the event is not in school so parents or adults with parental responsibility must accompany children.

Date: Sunday 21st May 2017

Time: 4pm

Venue: St Panteleimon Church, 660 Kenton Rd, Harrow, HA3 9QN

Tickets: £4 (incl one item of food)

Please purchase tickets from school reception in advance, as there are only 150 tickets available.

Thank you also to the Friends for raising money for Red Nose Day through their cake sale. A big thank you to all the parents who baked or contributed the cakes.

First Day of Summer Term: Monday 24th April 2017