



Inclusion Newsletter

12th July 2024

Welcome to the final Inclusion Newsletter of the year.

Our annual Inclusion Quality Mark review was carried out this term and the report from the assessor is absolutely glowing. The report states that, “The commitment to inclusive education is exemplary at Riverside Primary School” and “Staff are relentless in providing the best opportunities for all children.” The report confirms that we will continue to hold Flagship status for another year. This is fantastic for us all and I would like to express my thanks to the whole school community for their contribution to this achievement. You can read the full report by visiting our website and choosing the ‘About Us’ tab, followed by ‘School Awards’.

This term, all classes have received their Relationships and Sex Education lessons, with many beginning to learn about aspects of puberty and reproduction. We are aware that this can be a difficult topic for parents to navigate, especially for those whose children have additional needs. This link is particularly aimed at parents with autistic children, but does provide some useful advice for all parents on when and how to talk to your children about these aspects:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/family-life-and-relationships/sex-education/parents-and-carers>

At this time of year, transition is a big focus for us all. We want to ensure that our children feel prepared for the upcoming period of change – the differences in daily routine throughout the summer break and then getting ready to return to school in a new class with a new teacher, and for some children starting a new school. Coping with change is a life skill that we all have to learn to manage. We have had lots of transition activities in school over the last few weeks and we hope this has reduced any anxieties children may have had about next year, but some children may benefit from continued support over the holidays. If your child does find transition difficult, you may find it useful to look at the following link:

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/transitions-and-times-of-change/>

Finally, I would like to wish all the very best to the children who are leaving Riverside next week. We are very proud of you and know you will take your ‘Riverside Attitude’ with you as you all go on to achieve fantastic things in your new schools!

I hope you all have a lovely summer and look forward to seeing most of you again in September.

Mrs Z Huggett
Assistant Headteacher/Inclusion Manager



Spotlight on.....

Visual Stress



Some people experience visual discomfort or disturbance when they read. Common symptoms that may significantly impair reading ability, or make reading very tiring, include:

- ~ headaches and eyestrain associated with reading or other close work
- ~ text appearing blurred or going in and out of focus
- ~ text appearing double or alternating between single and double
- ~ difficulty keeping your place in the text
- ~ difficulty tracking across lines of text
- ~ discomfort with the brightness of the page or the contrast between text and background
- ~ text that appears to shimmer or flicker

Symptoms such as these have a variety of different causes, some of which may be due to disease or abnormality, so they must be investigated by a professional who is qualified to diagnose them correctly and give appropriate treatment. Anyone who experiences difficulties like these with reading should consult a registered optometrist for a full assessment of eye health and visual function.

Visual stress is sometimes called Irlen's Syndrome. Some people believe this to be a symptom of Dyslexia. However, whilst those who have a diagnosis of Dyslexia are more likely to also experience visual stress, it is not specifically a symptom of Dyslexia.

- ★ As this problem is perceptual, rather than visual, standard prescription glasses cannot help. Children will require a full assessment with an optometrist who is trained in visual stress. This will rule out any possible underlying conditions that may be causing problems similar to visual stress.
- ★ Some people with visual stress find that a specialist coloured reading ruler or overlay placed over the page can reduce glare. Likewise, when using technology, accessibility features can easily filter the screen colour. However, it is very important that these aids should not replace or discourage full professional assessment. In particular, coloured overlays and similar aids must not be promoted as the first strategy to help children with reading difficulties. If children have visual difficulties, then it is essential that these are diagnosed and managed correctly by qualified, registered professionals. In some cases, coloured tinted prescription glasses can then be purchased which may make reading and other visual activities easier and more comfortable.
- ★ It can help to allow children to sit near a window for natural light.
- ★ Provide short breaks during activities which heavily focus on reading or other close work.



<https://www.dyslexiauk.co.uk/visual-stress-irlens-syndrome/>

Useful websites:

<https://www.eyesite.co.uk/childrens-eyesight/what-is-visual-stress/#:~:text=Visual%20Stress%20is%20a%20perceptual,distortion%20and%20fatigue%20when%20reading>