

Newsletter 2.6 – Monday 19th October, 2015



CHARACTER WORKSHOP

Thank you to those parents/carers/friends who attended our Character Education Workshop last Friday. It was great being able to discuss a key aspect of La Fontaine's approach to education. As part of the STEP Academy Trust, one of our aims is to enable children to become world leaders and this is why we reflect carefully on what constitutes their 'educational diet' at school.



As a state-funded schools, our priority must be academic skills and knowledge – for this is what the Department for Education and Ofsted expect of us – but not solely. By being creative with our curriculum, we manage to include 'soft' skills such as GRIT, CURIOSITY, TEAM WORK, GRATITUDE, etc.

We encourage you to think about the key character traits we focus on at school and plan some activities for your children to do at home. At the end of this newsletter, you'll see a planning sheet which you can use to prepare activities. We've included definition of the Character Traits and linked them to swimming examples, to help you understand what they mean more precisely.

You can find a copy of our Presentation and Resources at www.lafontaineacademy.org/workshops.



SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

Kate (Paul, Maria, and Lizzie's mum) has uploaded 100s of photographs from last year on her website (www.see-photography.co.uk). She has created a private (password-protected) page which people will soon be able to access.

The photographs were taken by Kate, Tatyana (Daniil's mum, in Year 2), and Danielle (Dominic's mum, in Year 1) throughout last year. They are of professional quality. You will have seen some of their pictures on our Facebook page, on our website, and in our Newsletters, and I'm sure you'll agree that they are absolutely amazing!

The pictures are available for sale on ParentPay for £15 (a price which we think reflects the amazing quality of the photographs). Please, purchase them by Sunday 1st November. After 1st November, we will email you a password to access the 100s of professional photographs on Kate's website.

Obviously, this system – with the password being sent to individual parents/carers after 1st November– relies on your honesty.



COFFEE MORNING, EN FRANCAIS!

Eli (Coco and Benjamin's mum), Hshen (Sam and Jae's mum), Caroline (Gaspar and César's mum), and Fatou (Dariss's mum) would like to invite you to La Fontaine's French Coffee Morning on Friday 23rd October - straight after school drop off. This will be an exciting morning for anyone who wants to try out their French - whether complete beginner or advanced speaker. Come and learn new words and phrases; play French games with native speakers; order a coffee and pastry in French; borrow some French books, CDs, DVDs or a game from the 'Ludothèque'. *Pre-schoolers also welcome - a play area will be provided.*



INSET DAY ON MONDAY 2ND NOVEMBER

Please, remember that Monday 2nd November is an INSET Day for our teachers. This means that the school will be closed. Teachers will be receiving some training on that day.

Children should come back to school on Tuesday 3rd November. Our Breakfast Club will operate as normal on Tuesday 3rd November.

ATTENDANCE – OUR TARGET IS 97.5%

Every minute counts!		MARIE CURIE	YANNICK NOAH	ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY	SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR	GEORGE SAND	JACQUES-YVES COUSTEAU	TOTAL
ATTENDANCE	LAST WEEK	95.9%	95.5%	100% 🏆	93.5%	97.4%	100% 🏆	97.1%
	SINCE SEPTEMBER	96.3%	97.1%	97.7%	95.8%	96%	97.1%	96.7%
PUNCTUALITY	NUMBER OF LATE CHILDREN LAST WEEK	3	0 🏆	0 🏆	1	1	4	9

Attendance is monitored weekly and parents/carers whose children are absent regularly will be contacted by the school. If you have any questions, please let us know. You can also see our Attendance Policy here: www.lafontaineacademy.org/policies.



Our approach to the monitoring of attendance and punctuality is guided by government guidelines but also by our focus on the notion of **Children's Rights**. Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, for instance, states that: 'Children have the right to a good quality education. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level they can.'

RECEPTION RESULTS FOR 2014-2015

EARLY YEARS (RECEPTION) – GOOD LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT (GLD) AND EARLY LEARNING GOALS (ELG)
In 2014-2015, there were 44 children in Reception. Every child, as a percentage, equalled 2.3%.

GLD NATIONAL AVERAGE	GLD LA FONTAINE ACADEMY
66.3%	79.5%

	% of La Fontaine achieving ELG	% Nationally achieving ELG	% Boys achieving ELG in La Fontaine	% Boys achieving ELG nationally	% Girls achieving ELG in La Fontaine	% Girls achieving ELG nationally
Making relationships	93%	89%	90%	84%	93%	92%
Self-confidence and awareness	96%	88.7%				
Managing feelings and behaviour	89%	87.4%				
Moving and handling	98%	89.7%	95%	86%	100%	94%
Health and self-care	98%	91.2%				
Listening and attention	89%	85.6%	93%	80%	90%	89%
Understanding	93%	85.3%				
Speaking	93%	84.1%				
Reading	91%	76.1%				
Writing	88%	70.8%	88%	68%	92%	80%
Numbers	89%	77.4%				
Shape, space and measure	93%	80.8%	88%	75%	96%	83%
People and communities	89%	85%				
Technology	100%	91.7%	97%	84%	95%	89%
The world	93%	85%				
Exploring and using media and materials	98%	87.8%	98%	82%	100%	92%
Being imaginative	100%	87.2%				

Now that National results have been released, we can share our Reception results for last year.

Congratulations to our children for achieving such amazing results. A huge 'Thank You' to parents/carers for your support. And, of course, a big 'Well Done' to our Reception Team from last year!

You'll notice, in the table on the left that our results reflect a healthy balance between hard skills (e.g. mathematics, reading, writing, etc.) and soft skills (e.g. creativity, making relationships, the world, etc.).

All our results – including Year 1's Phonic Screening test and Year 2's SATs – are available at www.lafontaineacademy.org/objectives.



INDIVIDUAL AND SIBLINGS PHOTOGRAPHS – HEADS UP!

A school photographer will be coming to school on Friday 13th November to take individual and siblings photographs. Put the date in your diaries to organise visits to the hairdresser (if needed) a few days before!

CHARACTERS TRAITS DEVELOPED AT LA FONTAINE (WITH DEFINITIONS AND SWIMMING-RELATED EXAMPLES)

 Grit  Zest  Self-Control  Optimism  Gratitude  Social Intelligence  Curiosity	<p>Grit: Building perseverance and passion for long-term goals</p> <p>Swimming is not something you master quickly, and it really takes you out of your comfort zone. Children learn to not give up because of initial apprehensions or setbacks.</p> <p>Zest: Developing an approach to a life filled with excitement</p> <p>One of our mantras at school is ‘Try something new’ and zest is one of the necessary preconditions for our children to try new experiences.</p> <p>Optimism and curiosity: Knowing that with effort the future holds positive possibilities</p> <p>Along with grit and zest, the idea that it’s important to want to try new things without fear has been reinforced by taking our children swimming.</p>
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Self-control: Regulating thoughts, feelings and behaviours when they conflict with valued goals

It was a challenge, but the children learned to get over the excitement of being in a swimming pool with all their friends to prioritise listening to a swimming coach who is asking them to pay attention to her instructions.

Social intelligence: An awareness of people’s feelings, and navigating social situations

Taking the bus every week with lots of people onboard, getting changed without help and putting your swimming kit in your bag without mixing up your friends’ socks with your own, these things can take years to develop for young children. Our children are now confident with all of these aspects, and similar issues in class and at home are now much easier.

Gratitude: Appreciating benefits we receive from others, and reciprocating

Where our school is located, there are quite a few independent (fee-paying) schools that have their own pools. Our children and their parents realise we’ve had to work hard to make things happen. We’re very fortunate that we have been able to use our PE and Sport Premium grant to make swimming lessons accessible to all our children, free of charge. And we will show gratitude by writing to Sports England and relevant officials to thank them.

Make a list of key activities you could organise over the next 2 weeks to support character building with your child(ren). What activity? Which character trait(s)? Why? When? Where? Who will be involved?

SWIMMING WITH 4-YEAR-OLDS

The sooner children learn to swim, the better. Not only is it a fun skill to gain, it's hugely character building too, says **Sebastien Chapleau**...

A recent survey by the Amateur Swimming Association points out that 45 per cent of seven-to-11 year olds are unable to swim 25m – the length of an average-sized pool – unaided. It also points out that nearly 1,300 primaries (6.6 per cent) do not teach swimming, even though it is on the curriculum. And even those kids who do get to splash about for a while only get, on average, around 10 hours in the water a year.

At La Fontaine Academy, a state-funded Primary School in Bromley, South-East London, we place a strong emphasis on character education (as defined by KIPP leaders: kipp.org/our-

approach/character) and have decided to take all our children to weekly swimming lessons for 12 weeks, from the age of four.

This, we quickly realised, generated some rather quizzical looks from parents, swimming instructors and other local schools. While it's acceptable for parents to take their very young children for swimming lessons on Saturdays, a group of 25 schoolchildren getting on the bus to the local pool seemed to many to be the strangest thing on earth. I'll never forget the faces of the swimming instructors when we arrived for our first lesson: we had told them many times, as we produced our risk assessments, that our youngest children were four, but for some reason they hadn't fully realised that four-year-olds are actually pretty small.

Swimming is very much part of our character education agenda at La Fontaine Academy. We strongly believe that education is something that should focus on academic success, while also encompassing character building. In broad terms, we believe academic skills are what will get you to an employer's door, and character is what will enable you to get through that door. So how does swimming contribute to character development?

GRIT: Building perseverance and passion for long-term goals

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ZEST: Developing an approach to a life filled with excitement

One of our mantras at school is 'Try something new' and zest is one of the necessary preconditions for our children to try new experiences.

OPTIMISM AND CURIOSITY: Knowing that with effort the future holds positive possibilities

Along with grit and zest, the idea that it's important to try new things without fear has been reinforced by taking our children swimming.

SELF-CONTROL: Regulating thoughts, feelings and behaviours when they conflict with valued goals

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SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE: An awareness of people's feelings, and navigating social situations

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GRATITUDE: Appreciating benefits we receive from others, and reciprocating

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there are quite a few independent (fee-paying) schools that have their own pools. Our children and their parents realise we've had to work hard to make things happen. We're very fortunate that we have been able to use our PE and Sport Premium grant to make swimming lessons accessible to all our children, free of charge. And we will show gratitude by writing to Sports England and relevant officials to thank them.

The children's progress, as you might expect, has been tremendous. The old adage 'the younger you start, the quicker you learn' is certainly true when it comes to swimming. I would strongly encourage others to give it a try. Organising swimming lessons can be a logistical challenge (particularly when public transport is involved), but the payback outweighs the headaches by far. In this sense, it is a clear investment, with high returns, in terms of things like learning behaviour, organisational skills and emotional well-being. These areas, by the way, are just other words for what we've called 'character'.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sebastien Chapleau is the Founding Headteacher



of La Fontaine Academy (@FontaineAcademy), a member of the STEP Academy Trust and a member of the Future Leaders Network.