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Headteachers: Mrs Jackie Wright B.Ed (Hons)

May 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

As part of our new topic 'School Days' we will be taking part in a Victorian School role play session on **Monday 13th May 2024**. The session will start when the children arrive at school and will finish at lunchtime.

We hope you will support your children to take part in the session which, we hope, will help to give the children a better idea and understanding of what life was like for Victorian children at school. We want them to be able to make comparisons between their own experiences of schools and those of people from the past.

I want to stress that the children have nothing to worry about but if, at any time, they no longer want to take part then there will be members of staff available to take them out of the classroom. We hope the session will be fun, enjoyable and informative for all of them.

Below I have included some key information about the session that might be useful to share with the children beforehand in order to help them understand what might happen on the day as it will be a different experience of school than what they are used to. There are also some ideas about the types of clothes children could wear for our session.

We hope that the children will be excited to take part and look forward to an exciting day of learning. If you have any questions at all then please do come and see me.

Thank you, as always for your continued support.

Miss Candler & the Class 1 team



Some information that will be useful to share with the children before the session preparing the children:

The structure and expectation of a Victorian classroom session will be different to the children's everyday experience of school. It is important to prepare the children before the session by explaining that the role play will start and finish at a set time (Our session will just be for the morning) and Miss Candler's actions and words will be different because she is in role. Please talk to the children about the dunce's cap and explain we will have one in the classroom but no one will be made to wear it unless they want to as part of the role play session.

To make the experience more authentic, we are encouraging the children to dress in Victorian costume. Girls could wear dark skirts or dresses, white blouses, white aprons and ribbons in their hair. Boys could wear short trousers, long socks, white shirts, waistcoats, ties and caps. Please do not buy anything especially for the session, clothes and accessories you might already have at home will be fine.

Victorian lessons:

The most important lessons in a Victorian classroom were religious instruction and the three Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic. Geography, history and singing were also taught. As part of our session we will be completing reading, handwriting and some maths. During writing lessons, the children copied text from the blackboard. Children learned 'copperplate' handwriting which is a type of calligraphy. It is a neat, usually cursive and slightly slanted style. Copperplate required a lot of practice.

Victorian discipline and punishment:

Class discipline was different in Victorian times. Teachers were very strict and used a cane to enforce discipline in the class. They sat at the front of the classroom on a raised platform, so that they could see the children and monitor their behaviour.

Punishment could be given for many reasons, such as being late, being rude, answering back or poor work. Other punishments included writing lines, detention or the dunce's cap (as noted above no child will be made to wear this unless they wish to as part of the role play).

Victorian classroom practices that we will be taking part in:

The teacher would begin and end morning and afternoon sessions by ringing a handbell. When waiting to enter the classroom, children stood silently in a straight line with their hands out of their pockets. Boys entered the class through one door and girls through another. The teacher inspected the children to make sure they were clean and properly dressed. Boys and girls sat separately. The teacher welcomed the class by saying 'good morning' and the boys bowed, while the girls curtsied. The teacher took the register, noting who was absent or who was late. All children addressed the teacher as Miss or Sir, but not Mrs, as married women were not allowed to teach.

Victorian children were expected to be seen and not heard. Adults expected them to be exceptionally polite and well behaved at all times. Therefore, no child spoke without first putting their hand up and then waiting courteously to be asked for their response.

They sat silently with good posture when being spoken to. Boys were considered more important than girls and received special treatment. If someone important entered the classroom such as a vicar, councillor or headteacher, every child stood up silently and remained still until they were told to sit down.

