



Newsletter



Issue No.2

Headteacher: Mr J Emery

20 September 2024



W/B 9 September	
Year 3	99.5 %
Year 4	99.4 %
Year 5	96.9 %
Year 6	98 %
TRJS Overall	98.5 %

W/B 16 September	
Year 3	98.4%
Year 4	99.7%
Year 5	97%
Year 6	97.3%
TRJS Overall	98.1%

Wow! This is an amazing start to the term in terms of attendance! At TRJS, we believe it is possible for children to achieve 100% attendance. However, we are aware that there may be understandable reasons why a child may need a day or two of absence. This year we are aiming for every child to achieve at least 97.5% attendance over the year. Well done, everyone. Remember: “the more you attend school, the better you learn”. Thank you to the vast majority of parents who support excellent attendance for your children. A reminder for parents to avoid any leave of absence during term time. Please see the information at the end of the newsletter confirming the system for issuing penalty notices to parents. This approach is not just our school deciding to do this, but it follows the current government guidelines for schools to work together with parents to improve attendance where we can.

HOT CHOCOLATE WITH MR EMERY

Congratulations to everyone who received the **TRJS Weekly Values Award** last week and then shared hot chocolate and biscuits (and a few jokes) with Mr Emery.

Year 3	Poppy N, Ted C
Year 4	Elsie W, Georgie F
Year 5	Bella H, Ada H
Year 6	Callum H, Bea-Lea S

Keeping Safe: We are a Nut Free School

Due to having some children in school with an allergy to nuts, we welcome the support of parents in being a **NUT-FREE SCHOOL**. Therefore, we ask your co-operation to avoid sending snacks or lunch into school that contain nuts. We thank you for helping to keep everyone safe.



Please can we ask all parents and carers to download the free Schoolzine app onto your mobile device as this is the method that we will be communicating with you from now on. Thank you to the 200+ parents and carers who have already done so.

SZapp is available on both Apple and Android devices. Click the link below for information on how to download and set up SZapp on your mobile device: <https://www.schoolzine.co.uk/szapp-installation>

To ensure that your device is tied to your child's details, we ask that you register with SZapp using this same email address that you are receiving this newsletter on, as this is the email that is recorded in our system.

From next week, all our communication will be via notifications on the SZapp and email. We will no longer be sending text messages. Please check your emails and the SZapp for notifications.

If you are not receiving any messages and think you should be, please check with the school office that we have your most up-to-date contact details. Please note that the school newsletter will be sent out every fortnight on a Friday. We may also send out reminders and information on other days.

Sporting Achievements

In the last Newsletter we were delighted to share Eryn Spong's horse riding achievements. Her photo is now also on our PE board in school! If you have any sporting achievements to share, then please email Mrs Vardy with a photo and some information about what you have been up to. We are looking forward to celebrating! lvardy@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk

OPAL – Watch this space!

We are very excited about our plans to develop play opportunities at TRJS. We are working in partnership with OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) to plan changes to the structure and resources of lunchtimes. Free PLAY is so important for the wellbeing of our young people. It is wonderful to see children happy and engaged in their own creative and imaginative play. This is a very important part of our school improvement plan for the next 2 years. We will be sending out more information in the coming weeks as we get the plans off the ground. We might also be asking parents for some donations of equipment/resources that may be really useful! Other local schools have been involved in this project, with over 10% of schools adopting this approach across the UK. A playtime questionnaire has gone out to parents. Let us know what you think. Watch this space!

Amazing play, every day, for every child

OPAL is an award-winning, mentor supported school improvement programme that addresses all the areas that schools must plan for if they want to strategically and sustainably improve the quality of their play opportunities. OPAL is the only programme of its kind that has been independently proven to sustainably improve the quality of play in British primary schools.

Its success comes from a series of interrelated actions undertaken with specialist support from an OPAL mentor. This embeds play into the school's policies and practices and establishes clear guiding principles and strategies for initiating lasting changes at playtimes.



Assemblies



We have such talented, articulate and thoughtful children at TRJS that we love to encourage them to share their interests, achievements and talents in our assemblies. On Wednesday 2nd October we have another opportunity for children to help lead our assembly on the theme of '*Home is Where the Heart is*' to answer the question '**What makes a home special for you?**' We would

like children to share their personal ideas about customs and practices, which may be religious or not, which they enjoy doing with their family at home. For example, grandparents visiting every weekend, having a particular meal on a certain day of the week, a calming bedtime routine, eating meals at the table, friends coming to play, family reading time, watching a programme on television together, daily prayer together, or board games night. We will be talking about: Why is it important? How does it make you feel? What do you think you would miss most if it stopped? What do you think you would like to carry on doing when you have a home of your own? (Miss Branson)

School Collaboration with JTMAT

One of the key roles of a Governing Body is to discuss and agree the strategic plan of the school to ensure that we are in a strong place to continually improve. The current improvement plan of Thomas Russell Junior School highlights the importance of working collaboratively with other local schools so we can share good practice and learn from each other. To this end, the Governing Body have explored the benefits of being part of a Multi-Academy Trust. Following several meetings and discussions with some MATs over the last few months, we have agreed to develop further links with JTMAT. At this stage, the collaboration will not involve any legal or financial arrangements. During the next few months, there will be opportunities for staff to network with leaders from other schools in JTMAT and for governors to share ideas in terms of effective and efficient governance.

This is an informal agreement and no decision has yet been taken regarding joining a MAT or remaining as a County Council school. We will keep parents and staff updated as the year progresses. Please be assured that the Governing Body would formally consult with parents if there were any proposals to join a MAT in the future.

Positive Behaviour Policy

Parents are reminded that we sent out an update about our Behaviour Policy this week. The draft policy is available on the school website. The main changes are intended to help children reflect on their behaviour and explore restorative conversations on the day on which things may happen. We also plan to continue to reward all those children who maintain positive behaviour each week. Although there is no Golden Time on a Friday, the children still have 75 minutes of afternoon playtimes during the week, something that many junior schools do not provide. Overall, TRJS is such a positive place of learning and we have very few behaviour concerns. Keep it up everyone – a great start to the term!



**Professor Poopenstinken's
MAGICAL MATHS**

Your Magical Maths Invitation!

Dear Parent/Carer,
We are excited to announce that Magical Maths is coming to your school!

Magical Maths is an exciting after-school club where your child will meet some wonderfully crazy and inspirational characters and learn some truly mind-blowing maths tricks. They will learn to calculate impossible numbers in their heads, read minds, play maths sport and solve unbelievable puzzles... all with the power of maths!

The club is fun and exciting whilst also highly educational (but don't tell the children!). It is designed to boost your child's confidence and further engage them with maths!

Each week has a super fun theme - here is a special sneak peek at the first four weeks:

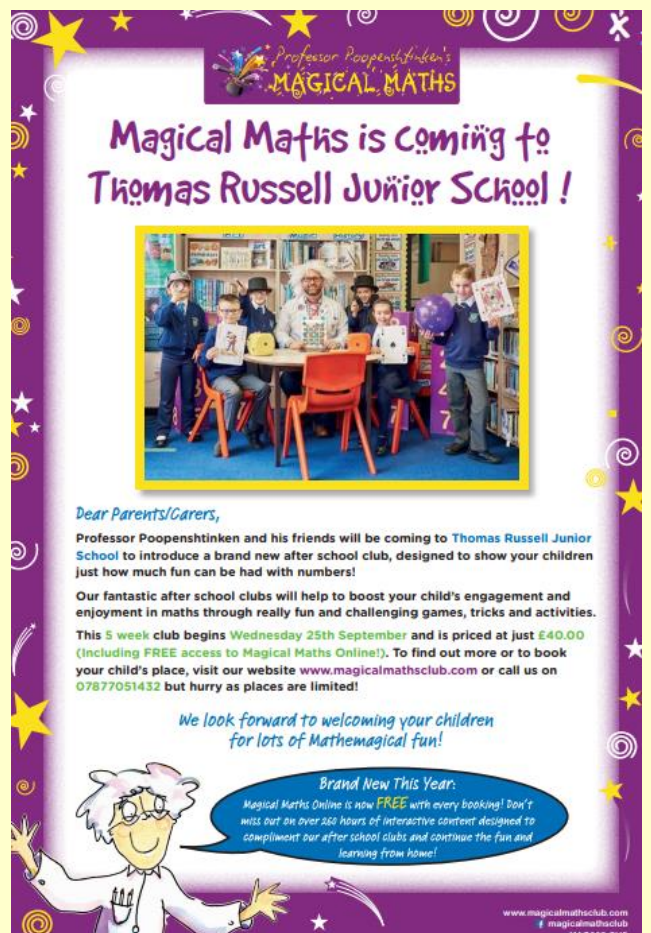
- Week One: Meet the Maths Genius
- Week Two: Become a Maths Detective
- Week Three: Be awed by the Mathemagician
- Week Four: Compete with the Olympic Mathletes

Please visit our website and enter your school name to find out the club dates and cost:
www.magicalmathsclub.com

Act quickly, because our spaces are limited.


For more information, scan our QR code, or call 07877 051432

The Magical Maths Team.



**Professor Poopenstinken's
MAGICAL MATHS**

**Magical Maths is coming to
Thomas Russell Junior School!**



Dear Parents/Carers,
Professor Poopenstinken and his friends will be coming to Thomas Russell Junior School to introduce a brand new after school club, designed to show your children just how much fun can be had with numbers!

Our fantastic after school clubs will help to boost your child's engagement and enjoyment in maths through really fun and challenging games, tricks and activities.

This 5 week club begins Wednesday 25th September and is priced at just £40.00 (including FREE access to Magical Maths Online!). To find out more or to book your child's place, visit our website www.magicalmathsclub.com or call us on 07877051432 but hurry as places are limited!

We look forward to welcoming your children for lots of Mathemagical fun!

Brand New This Year:
Magical Maths Online is now FREE with every booking! Don't miss out on over 260 hours of interactive content designed to compliment our after school clubs and continue the fun and learning from home!

www.magicalmathsclub.com
#magicalmathsclub
MAG002-CVA

Magical Maths

Following the visit to Y3-5 classes by Professor Poopenstinken this week, information was sent home with the children regarding Magical Maths. This is an after-school club which will be on WEDNESDAYS 3.30-4.30. Please use the QR code and book directly with Magical Maths.

Headlice

We are aware that a small number of children may have headlice. Please check your child's hair and treat if necessary. Thank you.

Football Trials

At lunchtime on Wednesday 25th September, Miss Marston and Mrs Hiatt will be conducting football trials for boys and girls in Y5 and Y6 who are interested in representing the school football team. Please bring shinpads, football boots and goalkeeping gloves (if appropriate) if you want to take part. Please note that football matches **will not** be on a weekly basis this year, with the school team taking part in a variety of tournaments instead throughout the year. We aim to provide all children with the opportunity to have taken part in a football match during the year but cannot guarantee equal amount of playing time for all players.

Parent Consultations

The Autumn Term parent consultations are planned for: Thursday 17 October and Tuesday 22 October. Please book via school interviews using the code below. For children in Year 3 and 4, please book the appointment with your child's base class teacher. In Year 5 and 6, please book with your child's base class teacher, unless your child is taught by Mrs Kerr-Delworth (Y5) or Mrs Rollins (Y6) in which case book the appointment with them. The booking system will open at 6pm on Friday 20 September.

www.schoolinterviews.co.uk

Year 3 – rxhju

Year 4 – txfmv

Year 5 – mctzw

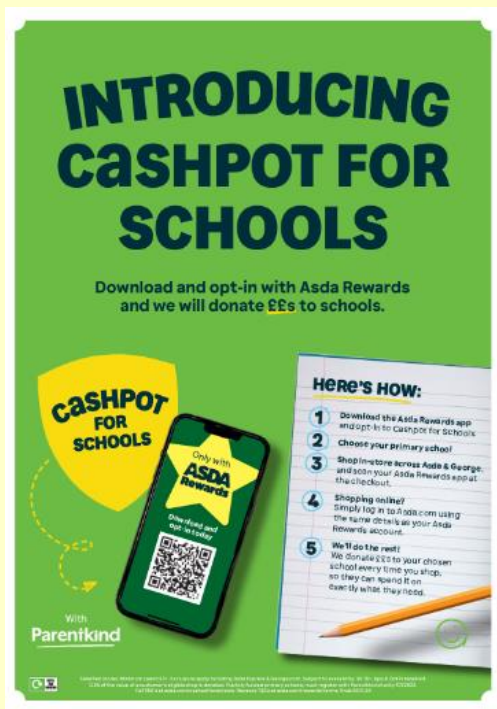
Year 6 – 5k4tj

Online Safety

Some of you may already be aware of the parent-led movements 'Delay Smartphones' and 'Smartphone Free Childhood', campaigning to raise awareness of the risks of smartphone use in children. A group of parents from the school are currently working to create a local network in Barton and surrounding areas. To find out more visit

www.delaysmartphones.org.uk and

www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk. If you would like to support the group or have skills that could contribute, please contact Joe and Anna Tipper at DelaySmartphonesBarton@Outlook.co.uk



CASHPOT for Schools

Parentkind – the charity that supports school PTAs - have teamed up with Asda, who is making millions of pounds available to donate to primary schools across the UK through their 'Cashpot for Schools' initiative. All you have to do is: opt in through the Asda Rewards app, choose our primary school and shop and scan in store or shop online at Asda.com, between 2nd September and 30th November 2024.

Asda will donate 0.5% of the value of your shop to our Primary school. Also, every time somebody opts in, Asda will give an additional £1 to the school Cashpot. Plus, it doesn't stop there – Asda are also giving £50 to every school to get them started.

Lunchtime Supervisor Vacancy

Are you interested in joining our hard-working, professional, passionate and friendly team? Please see the advert on the school website under Our School > Vacancies at TRJS. Closing date for applications is Monday 30 September. Please do contact the school or pop in for a chat if you are interested. Thank you.

STUDY SMART
Free Online Courses

spire Education

ncfef | cache

Education & Skills Funding Agency

Fully Funded School Support Course

www.studysmartuk.online

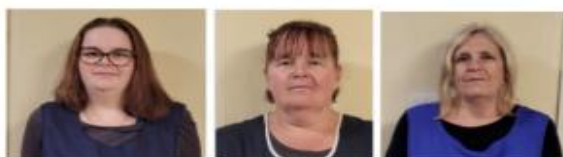
Next Start date 30th September

CACHE Certificate in Understanding Safeguarding & Prevent
 CACHE Certificate in Understanding Challenging Behaviours
 CACHE Certificate in the Principles of SEN
Levels 1, 2 & 3

Six Week Course
Mon - Fri
 9:30 - 11:30am
 12:30 - 2:30pm
 4 - 4:30pm
 (last optional session for reflection and support if needed)

Training for Parents

If you are interested in training to get back in the workplace, please visit this website to help you gain the necessary skills for FREE. This may be a pathway to a school support job that fits in with your family commitments.



Megan Hurdman, Dina Hurdman & Anne Corner

Deborah Ford wanted to say:

"I would like to nominate the entire cleaning team at Thomas Russell Junior School.

The team is led by Dina Hurdman, with Dina's daughter Megan and Anne, all being part of a very dedicated, hard-working team. They consistently go above and beyond what is expected of them, often staying much later, and dedicating more of their own time to ensure the school is clean to 'Dina's standards' for the new term in September.

Thank you, Ladies, you deserve this acknowledgement. Your hard work and dedication don't go unnoticed."

TRJS Cleaning Team Award

Well done to our cleaning team for being nominated for an award. The team do a fantastic job and always go over and above to make sure the school is as clean as it can be for the children and staff. Keep up the good work, ladies!



Friday 27 September (9am-10am)

All our parents, grandparents, carers and extended family are welcome to come along. If anyone can donate or bake any cakes, please let the school office know by Wednesday 25 September. Thank you for your support.

Dates for your diary

Monday 23 September	Y6 Parent Meeting 6pm (This is intended for parents, but if you have childcare issues, please bring your Year 6 child along)
Friday 27 September 9.00pm	Macmillan Coffee Morning
Thursday 17 October	Parent Consultations
Tuesday 22 October	Parent Consultations
Wednesday 23 October 9.10	Harvest Assembly (All parents welcome)

Please note that the next newsletter will go out on Friday 4 October, as we send one out every fortnight. We may send messages in the meantime regarding specific activities or events.

Wishing everyone a pleasant weekend.

J Emery



School Attendance Changes from September 2024



*Thank you to all our parents who support their child's education
by ensuring that your child attends regularly and on time.*

The research around attendance is very clear: "The more a child attends school, the better they do."

Please be assured that the school will always be sensitive to children and families who are absent due to genuine health concerns. We always aim to work with our families and discuss support to overcome the barriers to attendance wherever possible.

Attendance is a national and a local concern. Since the days of COVID, the attendance figures for schools have dropped dramatically and the number of children who are absent for at least 10% of the time ("Persistent Absentees") has increased. Therefore, the government have issued a document outlining how schools and parents are expected to work together to ensure that children attend school regularly and achieve their best (***Working together to Improve School Attendance 2024***).

The main changes from September 2024 include:

1. The requirement for schools to share their attendance data each day with the DFE and
2. Changes to penalty notices from this date.

The government will now receive data from all schools regarding attendance each day. This will enable everyone to monitor attendance and, as communicated with parents in previous newsletters, if a child is absent for unauthorised reasons (such as taking a family holiday in term time) for 5 days or more, they may currently receive a penalty notice of £60 per parent per child. In this instance, the school will inform Staffordshire County Council who may then issue the fine. At present, it is possible for some families to receive several fines even if this is not having a positive effect on attendance.

However, from the Autumn Term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution or other legal routes regarding attendance.

At TRJS, we are proud of the high levels of attendance overall. However, we aim to work with all of our families to ensure that ALL CHILDREN attend school as much as they can. Please remember that the new approach is set by the government, not TRJS, and parents need to be fully aware of the consequences of unauthorised absence.

Thank you for your support.

J Emery



TRJS

Dates for 2024/2025



Monday 2 September	INSET DAY
Tuesday 3 September	INSET DAY
Wednesday 4 September	AUTUMN TERM STARTS for pupils
Friday 25 October	INSET DAY (School closed to pupils)
Monday 28 October-Friday 1 November	HALF TERM
Friday 20 December	AUTUMN TERM ENDS
Monday 23 December-Friday 3 January	Christmas Holidays
Monday 6 January	SPRING TERM STARTS
Monday 17 February-Friday 21 February	HALF TERM
Friday 11 April	SPRING TERM ENDS
Monday 14 April – Friday 25 April	Easter Holidays
Monday 28 April	SUMMER TERM STARTS
Monday 26 May-Friday 30 May	HALF TERM
Friday 4 July	INSET DAY (School closed to pupils)
Friday 18 July	SUMMER TERM ENDS
Monday 21 July	INSET DAY