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Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Curriculum Initiatives at CPS

As part of the Curriculum Information Evening back in September, I outlined our focus on reviewing the content of our curriculum to ensure that there is a much greater emphasis on the 'powerful knowledge' that children need in order to not only truly understand concepts, but also to enable them to apply the knowledge, offer informed explanations, make links and spot patterns. Crucially, it will also provide them with the essential foundations for the next part of their educational journey and beyond.

Like all maintained schools in England and Wales, we have to follow the National Curriculum. Whilst we will continue to use this as our framework, we will not limit our curriculum content to the knowledge, skills and concepts covered within it. Rather, in order to make good on our pledge to ensure that 'every pupil understands there is no limit to their potential', we will raise our expectations and not restrict the depth and breadth of children's understanding.

We are currently in the process of looking at each subject and identifying the essential knowledge that we feel is the children's entitlement – and then deciding how best to teach it. Already this has had amazing results, with children being exposed to and accessing content which is deeper and more sophisticated than we have taught before.

Predictably, these higher expectations are throwing up a range of challenges for us; not least, ensuring that we develop the structures and systems which enable pupils to effectively retain (and then apply) the knowledge we are delivering.

To help meet this challenge, we are producing 'Knowledge Organisers' which are the 'go-to' documents outlining the essential knowledge that the teachers will be covering across a unit of work; including dates, key personnel, vocabulary, definitions, and other contextual or technical information. These 'Knowledge Organisers' will be shared with pupils, parents and carers – with the aim that everyone knows exactly what is being taught, and what the children need to learn.

Attached to this letter is the 'Knowledge Organiser' for the Year 2 History Topic, 'The Great Fire of London', which the Year 2 pupils are covering this term. If you are a parent of a child in Year 2, please feel free to use this as a reference guide for what your child is learning, and also, as an opportunity to discuss the facts about the topic and how much they have learned. It can also be used to see if they are able to start making links or offer explanations about the Great Fire of London.

We will continue to develop the use of Knowledge Organisers based on this trial, and the plan is to produce them for the Science, History and Geography topics in Years 2, 4 and 6 in the Spring Term (sharing them with pupils and parents accordingly), and then rolling it out for Years 1-6 from the Summer Term. I would, therefore, welcome your views and any suggestions you may have on this initiative.

Best regards,

James Kilsby



Knowledge Organiser for Year 2 History Topic: The Great Fire of London

Timeline of key events	
Sunday 2 nd September 1666	1am – The fire begins 3am – The Lord Mayor goes to look at the fire, but decides it is not too bad, so goes back to bed 7am – The fire has spread 11am – The Mayor orders the pulling down of houses, having been instructed by the King, who was informed by Samuel Pepys 3pm – The King sails down the River Thames to observe the fire
Monday 3 rd September 1666	The government order fire posts to be set up A group of school boys successfully hold back the fires Midday – The fire can be seen 60 miles away in Oxford
Tuesday 4 th September 1666	The fire reaches its peak It has spreads from Temple in the west, to the Tower of London in the East (where gunpowder is used to blow up houses in order to stop the fire reaching the Tower) A number of prisons in London are destroyed by the fire, as is St Paul's Cathedral 11pm – The wind begins to die down
Wednesday 5 th September 1666	The wind changes direction, blowing the fire towards the River Thames Most of the remaining fires have been put out
Thursday 6 th September 1666	The final fires are extinguished

Key Numbers	
100	The number of houses an hour that caught fire at its peak
5	The number of days the fire lasted
50%	The proportion of the City of London that had been destroyed by Monday 3 rd September 1666
13,200	The number of houses that were destroyed by the fire
100,000	The number of people who were left homeless because of the fire
6	The number of people recorded as having died in the fire

Key Places	
Pudding Lane	Where the fire started
The Tower of London	Where many flee to escape the flames and where the wealthy deposited their valuables during the fire for safekeeping
London Bridge	The only crossing of the River Thames in the City of London
The River Thames	Where many people escape to
St Paul's Cathedral	Was raised to the ground during the fire and rebuilt using designs from Sir Christopher Wren



Key Figures	
Thomas Farriner	Owned the bakery where the fire started
Thomas Bludworth	The Lord Mayor of London
Samuel Pepys	Wrote about the event in his diary, and reported the fire to the King
Robert Hubert	Admitted (falsely) that he started the fire
Charles II	The King at the time of the fire
John Evelyn	Also wrote about the fire
William Taswell	A school boy at the time, who also wrote about the fire
Sir Christopher Wren	The architect who redesigned London after the fire

Why did it spread?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It had been a long, dry summer • There was a strong easterly wind whilst the fire raged • No rain fell • The houses were close together • Many of the houses had tar on the roofs • Many of the buildings in the area were warehouses containing alcohol and other flammable materials • There was no organised Fire Brigade

What happened as a result?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people were left homeless. Some never returned to London • People slept in tents around the Tower of London • Charles II made a decree that houses should be further apart, that they must be made from stone and that those businesses using fire (bakers, dyers, brewers) would not be able to reside in the centre of the city • An organised Fire Brigade was established • People began to insure their houses • Sir Christopher Wren was charged with redesigning the City of London - including St Paul's Cathedral

