KPR/SH

3rd April 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Parallel – Stretch and Challenge for Able Mathematicians

The maths department are always being contacted by parents asking for recommendations on things they can do at home with their son/daughter to further stretch and challenge them in their learning of maths. This letter is to encourage all top set parents who have a motivated mathematician at home to take on the challenge of completing the 'parallel problems' each week. It is an excellent example of a fun, free activity that you can do with your son/daughter on top of their learning in the classroom.

The website www.parallel.org.uk was created by Dr Simon Singh, author of Fermat's Last Theorem and The Simpsons and their Mathematical Secrets. It is a weekly set of maths challenges, just 15 minutes of interesting, fun and challenging material that goes beyond school maths. It covers topics from maths mysteries, maths in history, as well as fun maths puzzles and problems. It is completely free to sign up and once they have they will receive every Thursday at 3pm that week's challenges to be completed any time before Sunday 7pm. Answers are provided immediately so they will always discover how to solve anything they find particularly challenging. It is aimed at students aged 11 to 14 but can be a fun activity to do with younger or older siblings as well.

If your son/daughter is keen to take on the challenge then all they have to do is go to the website www.parallel.org.uk and click on 'create a free account'. I would recommend they sign up using their school email account and the teacher code they will need to be part of the St Crispin's scoreboard is **zaehpe**.

This is an entirely optional activity that we just wanted to share with you should you wish to stretch and challenge your son/daughter further.

Two examples of activities in last week's challenge are below:

1. Maths jokes

It sounds odd, but there are maths jokes. Lots of jokes. In fact, lots of mathematicians are very funny. Some of my favourite comedians (Dara O'Briain, Romesh Ranganathan and Dave Gorman) studied maths at university, and I have written a whole book about the mathematicians who write The Simpsons.

So, how good is your mathematical sense of humour? And how much maths do you know? Below are 4 jokes with 3 possible punchlines each. Can you spot the correct punchline? You will need to know a bit of maths in order to work out the right answer.

0.5 marks

1.1 Why is 6 afraid of 7?

- ○ Because 1, 2, 3
- ○ Because 7, 8, 9
- ○ Because 5 predates 6

2. Mini cross-number

2 marks

2 A cross-number is like a crossword, but with numbers instead of letters. Solve the clues to find the digit x in this cross-number.

1	2
3	x

Across	Down
1. A cube	1. One less than a cube
3. A cube	2. A number

$x =$ _____

Show Hint (−1 mark)

I hope you have some fun as a family working through these activities.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs K Prince
Head of Maths