

FC NEWSLETTER

TERM

Autumn 1 2021

We hope you have all had a wonderful summer break and that you and your children are excited about starting this new adventure with us. This class letter aims to explain a little more about what we'll be getting up to this term and to help you to understand the different things we do in FC. The initial weeks will focus on supporting your child to settle into school, helping them to become familiar with the environment and to enable the staff to develop an understanding of each child. Our theme for this half term is 'Me!'

Child Initiated Learning (Play): A significant part of our day is dedicated to child-initiated learning (Play). It is in these moments of curiosity and interest – the 'teachable' moment – that the adult makes a difference. The adults are always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's wellbeing and learning (planning for the next moment). There will be three Focus Children each week and for these children we will also record these 'teachable moments'. This is uploaded to Tapestry at the end of their Focus week. 'Wow' moments of learning throughout the week for all children will be recorded on Tapestry alongside this approach.

Phonics and Reading We will be following the Read Write Inc scheme for phonics teaching. This term we will be learning the Set 1 sounds and beginning to blend these sounds to read words. The children will bring home a small green book with the sounds we are learning to enable you to practise them at home. Reading and developing an enjoyment of books at home is incredibly important. Once the children have settled into school and have begun their phonics work, we will begin to send home our reading books with those children who are ready. This will begin with an exceptionally important phase of encouraging storytelling and discussions about the texts. These are wordless picture books. This will then progress to Sound books which include short words using the sounds we have learnt to begin to develop their blending skills (knowing c-a-t is 'cat'). We then move onto the 'Ditties'. It is important to support your children to regularly explore these books. Please use the reading record books we provide to record when they read, how much they read and how they got on. These reading records and books should be brought into school every day to enable in class reading and book changes. Within the RWI scheme the timing of book changes is very clear and the books should be read at least 3 times at home to develop fluency and understanding as well as the mechanics of deciphering the words. The Oxford Owl website provides resources for parents to support your own understanding of phonics and also ideas on how to support your child <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/reading/reading-schemes-oxford-levels/read-write-inc-phonics-guide/>

Maths We follow the White Rose Maths scheme. The children will have a daily maths lesson. We will be using Numberblocks to further support our mathematical understanding. This term we will be focusing on exploring matching, sorting and comparing. We will investigate size, mass and capacity and explore patterns. We will then deepen our understanding of 0-5 to investigate how these numbers can be represented, how they are composed and to compare them. We will also develop our subitising skills – recognising an amount without counting it. Alongside our whole class teaching there is the continual opportunity for children to develop these skills during their own play.

Helicopter Stories Children are natural storytellers. In FC we encourage the children to 'tell' us their stories. These are scribed by the adult into our special storybook. The children are encouraged to write their names, draw a picture from their story and sometimes they are even encouraged to write some letters and words within their story, but the focus remains on their oral storytelling. The stories are scribed exactly as the children tell them. We will then sit as a class and the children act out their stories. This develops a huge variety of skills including communication, literacy and confidence. Photographs of your child's story will be uploaded to Tapestry for you to be able to read.

Message Centre This approach has been developed to sprinkle joy, excitement and a love of messaging into their play. This begins with secret symbols then moves to letters and words and the children hide and find these messages around our classroom and in their play. It aims to give children the confidence to have a go at mark-making/writing; it allows them to be creative and use their imagination and discover real purposes to writing. We have a message centre area in the classroom. We link this play to 'Adventure Island' where the Minpins, Snuffy the Cloudling and Grumpa live. This is all part of our co-play and engaging children in wonder of the world and the joy to be found in writing. Perhaps your child will begin hiding secret messages at home too!

Drawing Club These sessions explore the magic of stories through drawings. It aims to develop language skills, vocabulary, mark-making, mathematics and their imaginative skills. This term some of the stories we will be using are 'The Smeds and the Smoos', 'The Night Pirates', 'The Gruffalo' and 'Rainbow fish'.

RE and PSHE In RE we will be exploring the idea of "What makes people special?". Within this unit we will explore who is special to us and what makes us special. We will read about some of Jesus' miracles and consider why Jesus is special to Christians. We will develop our mindfulness strategies through our PSHE and our unit this term will be

“Being Me in My World”. We will focus on developing our awareness of our own feelings, the feelings of others and our relationships.

Swimming After the children have settled in, we will begin our swimming lessons. The aim of these sessions is to develop the children’s water confidence. We will have 4 sessions before the pool closes at half term. The dates of these are listed below in ‘General Information’. On these days the children should bring their named swimming kit to school. This needs to have a swimming suit/trunks, towel and swimming hat. Please ensure your child has uniform on which they can change independently – no tights please! We would love some parent volunteers who could commit to these four sessions. Please email the school office or speak to me after school if this is something you could help with.

Woodlands and Nature Study Once a week we will explore our on-site woodland. We aim to develop an enjoyment and curiosity of nature. This term our focus will be ‘Autumn’ and will also include learning about owls, leaves, sticks and the seasonal colour changes. We have all-in-one waterproofs and wellies for the children to use. Your children need to have coats, hats (sunhats or winter hats) and gloves as necessary for the weather. We have developed a nature area of the classroom and aim to develop these fascinations and curiosities throughout the week beyond the woodland visits.

Dough Disco, Cosmic Yoga and Just Dance We have sessions using one of these approaches several times a week. These aim to develop both gross and fine motor skills alongside our listening and attention.

Bright Ideas Time This is a whole school science initiative which we have adapted in FC. Every week we will explore ‘Big questions’ or discuss ‘Odd one out’. These questions have visual prompts and allow the children to share their own ideas and thinking where there are no ‘right’ answers.

Music Time During our music and singing we will be developing an understanding of beat and rhythm. We will use the book Tanka Tanka Skunk to support this. We will also then learn and perform a range of Autumn inspired songs and rhymes.

General Information

- **Name Everything!** If you do not have access to labels, stickers or a sharpie pen then please ask one of the FC staff and we will very happily write your child’s name in for you.
- If the weather becomes warm and sunny then please apply sun cream to your child before they come to school. They should then have a named bottle with them to reapply at lunchtime. *They should not have sun cream on before swimming on a Friday though.*
- Ensure your child has a set of spare clothes in their school bag every day.
- Remember to bring a named water bottle into school each day.
- A fruit snack is provided each day for the children’s snack. There is also milk available via the Cool Milk scheme.
- As part of the ‘Focus Child’ approach, we will send home an information sheet for you to contribute to when it is your child’s week. Please complete and return these to school as requested.
- All families should have received their Tapestry links to activate their accounts. If you are having any difficulties with this then please let us know so we can help you. Observations will be uploaded to enable you to see what your child has been doing at school. You are able to ‘like’ and ‘comment’ on these observations. You are also able to upload observations at home of things your child does which makes you think ‘wow’. Working collaboratively between home and school is the most effective way for us all to support your child and develop their learning.
- We will be sending home a ‘name’ sheet to support their name writing. We will have a school copy to use in school. It has their name typed out, their name using the Read Write Inc images (each letter has a ‘saying’ to help the children remember how to write it) and space to practise.
- Communication - We will be available at the end of the school day if there are any questions you have or anything we can help with. Alternatively, please email the school office and they can forward messages to us and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Dates:

- Pirates dressing up day – Friday 17th September
- Swimming Dates – Friday mornings: 24th September, 1st October, 15th October and 22nd October
- School Photo – Friday 8th October (**no** swimming on this day)
- Parent Outcome – Wednesday 20th October 2.30pm

(After half term, when the pool closes, our Friday morning will become our PE session)