

Reception Class Newsletter

TERM

Autumn 1 2023

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 Reception. 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 build relationships and develop an understanding of each child.

Our over-arching theme for this first half term is 'Marvellous Me!'

Child Initiated Learning (Play): A significant part of each of our days is dedicated to child-initiated learning (Play). We use these opportunities to interact and engage with the children and support their learning. Once the children have settled into school, we will begin our 'Focus Child' approach where for these children we will 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 also be recorded on Tapestry alongside this approach. Please ensure you have activated your Tapestry school account (an email should have been received over the summer). If you are having any problems with this then please let us know.

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 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 important phase to encourage 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. The books should be read multiple 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. 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 Reception 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 and draw a picture from their story. 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 (early writing) 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. This is all part of our co-play and engaging children in wonder of the world and the joy to be found in writing. 'Bob the Brick' acts as our messaging portal with the Minpins!

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 Night Pirates', 'The Gruffalo', 'Not Now Bernard' 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. We are currently aiming for these to start on Thursday 28th September which will enable 4 sessions before the pool closes at Half Term. The aim of these sessions is to develop the children's water confidence. On these days the children should bring their **named** swimming kit to school. This needs to have a swimming suit/trunks, a towel and a swimming hat. Please ensure your child has uniform on which they can change independently – no tights please! The children will swim in groups of approximately 10 children at a time throughout the Thursday morning. We require a parent volunteer who could commit to coming each week and being in the pool with the children. Please let us or the school office know if you are able to support with this.

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.

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 Reception. 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 we will be exploring emotions in songs, developing actions to songs, moving to music and exploring percussion instruments.

General Information

- **Please name EVERYTHING!** If you do not have access to labels, stickers or a sharpie pen then please ask one of our 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 (unless wearing an all day sunscreen). *They should not have sun cream on before swimming on a Thursday 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. Observations will be uploaded to enable you to see what your child has been doing at school. You can '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'.
- You will receive your login to access our Class Dojo account. This enables us to keep you updated on whole class learning and experiences and is an easy way for us to provide quick reminders about events. We only use the Story Feed element of this app. There are no 'points' awarded on here, and the messaging section is not used. If you send a message to us via ClassDojo we will not see it and will therefore not respond. Any messages should be sent via the school office email address.

Dates:

- Pirate day. Come to school dressed as a pirate! – Tuesday 26th September
- Swimming Dates – Thursday mornings: 28th September, 5th October, 12th October and 19th October
- School Photo (individual and sibling) – Friday 6th October
- Harvest Festival at St Matthew's Church, Harwell – Monday 9th October

(After half term, when the pool closes, our Thursday morning will become our PE session. Children should then wear their PE kit into school on the Thursdays after half term)