

Year 6 Newsletter: Autumn Term 2020

Welcome to Year 6's first newsletter of the new school year. I hope that you and your families were able to stay safe and well over these past months and had a restful summer break. It was such a strange time for us all, but I was so impressed during lockdown with the quality of the children's work on Google Classroom. I know how difficult it must have been for you all, but I would like to thank you for your support and kind words. Unfortunately, we were unable to finish Year 5 together, but now we are back at school, I am delighted to be teaching the children again in Year 6.

During the first week and a half, I have been so impressed with the class's behaviour and their attitude to their learning. Daily routines are now quite different, but they have quickly adapted to them and understand that we need to follow the new rules to ensure everyone's safety.

I hope that we have an uninterrupted term as we have lots of exciting learning ahead. Please see the following information for details of what the children will be studying:

English: During our first few days back at school, we read an uplifting book called *'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse'* by Charlie Mackesy which the children loved. It has such an important message about kindness and is full of warming quotes. We had lots of discussion and practised our comprehension skills. The children also created their own inspirational quotes to help others.

Last week, we started reading a lovely story called *'Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth'* by Oliver Jeffers. We are using this as a stimulus for our writing as we reflect on being back at school and discuss our feelings. We have written poems and letters and will look more at the importance of looking after our beautiful world. It also has a key message about the need to be kind to others.

For the remaining part of the first half-term, we will read Roald Dahl's *'Boy: Tales of Childhood'*. The children will be reflecting and responding to the text in various ways to develop their writing, comprehension, spelling, grammar and punctuation skills. We will be covering a range of writing genres, using *'Boy'* as our stimulus. These will include some of the following: descriptive writing, instructional texts, persuasive writing, diaries and letter writing. In addition, the children will be looking at the features of biographies and autobiographies. The children will produce a biography about a famous person who they feel inspired by, followed by their own autobiography.

For the second half of the term, we will be linking our English work and Guided Reading sessions to our History topic on 'The Ancient Greeks' by reading *'The Adventures of Odysseus'* by Hugh Lupton. We will use this text to write across a range of genres, including discussion texts and non-chronological reports. In our narrative writing, we will focus on the use of figurative language and personification to create strong imagery. This will also be achieved through our poetry work.

Throughout the whole term, we will also be looking closely at grammar terminology and revising the different word classes and applying them in our writing. We will also look more at different sentence types and in particular the structure of complex sentences, as well as the use of higher-level punctuation.

Maths: As a school, we will continue to follow the White Rose Maths scheme and supplement it with other resources. This has been slightly adapted this year to include revision of some of the key Year 5 objectives. During the first half-term, the children will focus mainly on 'Number and Place Value', 'Addition and Subtraction' and 'Multiplication and Division'. The key focus will be on securing and enhancing their arithmetic skills. Here is a brief overview of the key objectives that we will cover during the first half-term:

Number and Place Value: Read, write, order and compare numbers and determine the value of each digit in numbers up to 10,000,000; round numbers to the nearest power of ten e.g. 10, 100 and 1000; interpret negative numbers in context; solve number problems that involve place value.

Addition and Subtraction: Add and subtract numbers using formal written methods; solve addition and subtraction multi-step problems in contexts.

Multiplication and Division: Practise short and long multiplication; use the method of short division including with remainders; understand and use long division; revise factors, multiples, square, cube and prime numbers; use mental calculations for estimation; understand and use the order of operations (BODMAS); solve multi-step problems which involve all four operations.

During the second half-term, we will focus on 'Fractions' as well as 'Geometry'. Here is a brief overview of the key objectives that we will cover during the second half-term:

Fractions: Find equivalent fractions and understand how to simplify them; convert between mixed numbers and improper fractions and vice versa; compare and order fractions; add and subtract fractions / mixed numbers; multiply and divide fractions / mixed numbers; find fractions of amounts.

Geometry: 'Position and Direction': Read and plot coordinates in all four quadrants; translate and reflect shapes in all four quadrants; solve problems involving coordinates, translations and reflections.

Throughout these topics, the children will be looking at developing their using and applying skills, mathematical reasoning and mental arithmetic.

Science: This term, we will study two topics:

1. **Animals including Humans (First half-term) –**

We will be identifying the main parts of the human circulatory system and describing the functions of the heart, blood vessels and blood. The children will then look at the importance and impact that diet, smoking, exercise and drugs have on the body.

2. **Evolution and Inheritance (Second half-term) –**

We will be learning about how living things have changed over time and how fossils provide us with information about living things that inhabited the Earth millions of years ago. We will also learn about how animals and plants are adapted to suit their environments in different ways and that adaptation may lead to evolution.

Religious Education: Our topic for the first half term will be 'The Kingdom of God'. The children will be looking at scripture closely and eliciting its message about God's Kingdom and what it means to them.

After half-term, our topic will be 'Justice'. The children will discuss this key value and think about the need to be committed to their faith. They will also learn about the preparation for Christmas during Advent.

History: Our topic this term will be 'The Ancient Greeks'. We will study various elements related to this period of history including Greek civilisation, city states, democracy, warfare, beliefs, gods/goddesses, myths, daily life, theatre as well as the Olympics. We will complete lots of cross-curricular activities, particularly in English and Art.

Computing: This term we will be reminding the children about the importance of e-safety. They will know how to use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private. We will also learn how to use search technologies effectively, appreciate how results are selected and ranked. They will also learn about the opportunities available for communication and collaboration through blogging. We will also use 'Scratch' to design, write and debug programs. Through these topics, the children will also develop their vocabulary related to computing terminology.

Art: Our Art work this term will be cross-curricular, linking particularly to our work in English, RE and our History topic on 'The Ancient Greeks'. For example, the children will use pastels to draw their own Greek pots. They will also study the history of Greek theatre and create their own masks. When reading 'Boy', they will study and recreate illustrations by Quentin Blake. In the run-up to Christmas, they will also produce some artwork linked to the Nativity.

PE: This term, Year 6 will participate in PE lessons on Thursdays. The children must ensure that they wear the correct PE kit to school on this day along with their hats and blazers. They must also ensure that their trainers are plain black or white.

Homework: This year, homework will be posted on Google Classroom. It will be set on a Friday afternoon and will be due the following Friday by 9.00am. There will be individual assignments for the children to complete which they can submit once they have finished each task. Children will be given English tasks which may consist of reading comprehension, grammar and writing activities. Spelling lists will also be given for the children to learn for a test the following Friday. The children should be encouraged to practise spelling these words at home throughout the week. All children should also ensure that they read for at least half an hour at home each day. This should then be recorded in their reading journals and posted weekly to Google Classroom.

In addition to English homework, the children will be provided with Maths tasks to complete which should consolidate what they have been learning during the week. They should also be working on ensuring that they are fully secure in the rapid recall of their times tables up to 12 x 12, as well as identifying related division facts and square numbers. The children will also continue to complete timed times tables challenges in class to help increase the pace of their recall. In addition, they should practise finding cube numbers. Once the new classes have been set up on Mathematics (hopefully very soon), I would also encourage the children to complete tasks to strength their understanding. There will be times when I set tasks for the children to complete at home as part of their weekly homework.

Every few weeks, I will also set some work linked to our topics in History and Science which will require the children to carry out research.

In order to further enhance and develop the children's understanding, I will continue to set additional challenge tasks which the children may like to complete as extra work.

As the children will no longer be bringing their homework books to and from school, they will be required to self-mark their work at home. I will post the answers for the previous week on a Friday when I set the new homework. If children have some enquires about the answers once they've marked the work, they can message me via Google Classroom or talk to me in school. If I find that some children are having issues with their homework, I will be able to address these with them on

an individual basis. If there are several common errors, I can go through these with the whole class. I also plan to share excellent examples of homework with the children using the interactive whiteboard in class.

The children should try to complete homework as independently as possible. If you assist your child with a task or you feel they are spending a great deal of time completing work set, it would be useful for you to annotate on their work so that I am aware of this.

I would like the children to ask for help if they are not able to complete all of their homework or fail to post it to Google Classroom. I can then arrange time to give them the necessary support. In addition, if they experience some technical issues or have issues accessing Google Classroom, they should let me know as soon as possible.

I would also like to remind parents that the messaging facility on Google Classroom is for the children only. If you would like to communicate with me, you must do so via the school office (by phone or email). Any messages will then be passed on to me.

Please note that like last term, I will not be accessing Google Classroom over the weekend or after 6pm during weekdays.

Equipment: At the end of last term, the school sent a letter to parents outlining the equipment that children should bring to school. I have amended this slightly so that it is more specific to Year 6 pupils.

- Each child should bring a water bottle from home which they will keep on their desk. It is also important that this is clearly labelled with their name. *(Unfortunately, several children have been forgetting to bring a water bottle to school, so please remind them to do so each day.)*
- Children should bring a clear or plain pencil case to school which contains the following equipment: two HB pencils, two blue handwriting pens (not ink cartridge pens or friction pens), a green pen (for self-marking and self-assessment), a small selection of coloured pencils, a sharpener, a ruler and a glue stick. Children do not need rubbers as they are encouraged to cross out their errors neatly with a ruler and start again. Fortunately, we have been able to provide the children with some of these necessities, but we will not be able to replace them. The children need to ensure that their pencil cases fit neatly inside a plastic zip wallet which they keep on their desks. Several children have been bringing in large pencil cases which don't fit inside these wallets. Therefore, they have been asked to take them home and bring in something more compact and suitable. It is also very important that the children do not share any of their equipment with other pupils.
- The children can bring reading books to and from school. When they return books from the class library, they will be left for a few days and wiped down so that other children can then take them home.
- Children may also bring a small bottle of hand sanitiser (optional).

Thank you in advance for your continued support. I am looking forward to this term and the school year ahead.

Kind regards,

Miss Browne