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Together we care, inspire  
and achieve excellence

20<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to the new term! After such a short-lived return to the classroom last term, it has felt so good to be back in the swing of things in the classroom as we have started the Summer Term. The children have settled back in really well and also seem to be delighted to be all back together again. It has been really pleasing to see such positive attitudes to learning in all of the children. The sunshine and being able to play on the field again has certainly also made for a positive start to the term!

This term much of our work will be linked to our topic which is a mixture of rivers and Anglo-Saxons. As yet, nobody has made use of the banqueting table that has appeared in our classroom!

### **English**

It has been fantastic to see so many pupils reading Shipwreck Island – the sequel to our first class novel this year (Orphans of the Tide). This term, we have continued to read Song for a Whale which is really enabling the class to consider the impact of being deaf, in a world made for those who can hear. It has created some fantastic moments of reflection (not just for the children!).

In writing, we have started the term with a short film entitled Swing of Change. The children are desperate to find out more about the barber with the sign 'Whites Only' on his shop. The short film is inspiring a range of writing such as monologues, character descriptions and story-writing, as well as a lot of discussion around judgement, prejudice and discrimination.

*Non-fiction:* A range of texts including newspapers, persuasive writing and formal letters.

*Fiction:* A range of text types inspired by quality texts, to include letters, monologues, diaries and short stories.

### **Maths**

As a continuation of the plan we put in place after lockdown, our Maths lessons will focus on assessment, reactivation of prior knowledge, teaching and pre-teaching. This adapted approach is aimed at maximising progress and ensuring that the children cover new learning as well as reactivating any prior knowledge. During the Spring Term lockdown, we rearranged our curriculum to ensure that some learning was reserved for face-to-face teaching.

We will work on the following topics this term: percentages and their equivalence to decimals and fractions, multiplying and dividing fractions, division (including long division), ratio and proportion, algebra and 2D/3D shapes and nets.

## **Science**

In Science we are exploring 'Materials'. Here we will learn about; solids, liquids and gases; evaporations, condensation and the water cycle; solubility and recovering dissolved substances; heating and cooling, separating mixtures and changes to materials that create new materials that are usually not reversible.

## **Geography**

Our topic this half- term is called 'What is a river?' The key enquiries will focus on the following questions: How does the course of the River Axe change from source to mouth? How does the course of my local river change from source to mouth? Why are river estuaries such important places for wildlife? Why are rivers such an important part of the water cycle? How has the Isle of Dogs changed since the reign of Henry VIII? Why is river flooding such a problem in Bangladesh? How did Bedřich Smetana use music to describe the course of his beloved national river? How do we know what happened to the River Thames during the Little Ice Age? We are also hoping to arrange a trip to a local river.

## **History**

After half-term, the children will be starting their History topic about the Anglo-Saxons. The key enquiries that we will cover are: Why did the Romans leave Britain? Who were the Anglo-Saxons and why didn't they choose to live in the towns the Romans left behind? How did the lives of Anglo-Saxons change after Ethelbert met Augustine? How did converting to Christianity change the lives of people in Britain? What does Sutton Hoo tell us about the Anglo-Saxon world?

## **Religious Education**

We have already begun our first unit of learning in RE – we have started to think about how religions help their followers to cope with hard times in their lives. We read the story 'Heaven' together and have generated questions that we have got about what happens after death. We then thought about what our soul might be, and will be learning about ways in which religions explain what happens to souls after death. I have explained to the children that should they feel that they need emotional support linked to this learning, there are adults in the school who are always ready to listen and support them. After half term we will move onto Hindu beliefs about gods and what Hindu religious artefacts can tell us.

## **Design Technology**

The children will work on a D.T project 'in a day', designing, making and evaluating their own energy bars fit for taking on a mountain/river adventure.

## **Computing**

Mrs. Kennard will be teaching Computing to Gershwin Class on a Tuesday afternoon. We are piloting new curriculum resources from TeachComputing.org and our first unit is all about website design and creation. We will be building our own websites using Google Sites and considering copyright and use of images, linking pages together and how to create a site which is easy to navigate. It promises to be useful and a lot of fun.

## **PE**

On Wednesday afternoons, Gershwin Class will have a games session with our sports coach, Matt Ogilvie. During this time, they will cover rounders, tennis and cricket skills. On Friday afternoons,

Gershwin Class will be playing competitive games and applying basic principles. We will also continue with improving our running performance, comparing and achieving our personal bests.

A reminder that children will need a separate jumper for PE lessons – they will not be allowed to wear their school jumper for PE. Hopefully they won't need a jumper much this term though!

**Children will need their kit on: Wednesdays and Fridays.**

## **PSHE**

During PSHE lessons this term we will be focusing upon 'Being My Best' and 'Growing and Changing'. As part of Growing and Changing we will cover aspects of Relationships and Sex Education – this will include puberty for Year 5 and 6, and 'making babies' for Year 6 only. As part of this we will also look at how we are manipulated by the media in terms of our perception of reality, including body image.

## **French**

We will be speaking, listening, reading and writing about all 'things that are tasty!' The children will learn key vocabulary and phrases connected to a variety of food-based themes. They will learn vocabulary and sentence building connected to drinks, breakfasts, pizzas, sandwiches and favourite foods. We will be setting up a French café later in the term so that we can practise our French speaking!

Any help you can give your child in finding out the topics we are covering this term would be very much appreciated. Pupils in Years 5 are expected to complete two home learning tasks each half term and Year 6 are now expected to complete three. This term home learning will continue to be set on Google Classroom. Work should be submitted via Google Classroom and feedback is given on work that is submitted. We will set deadlines for tasks to enable the children to manage their time across the term. We will expect pupils to adhere to these deadlines – this is so important in Year 5 and 6 as they develop their time management skills.

As usual, times tables will be set on an ongoing basis depending on your child's achievements in the tests. Testing will take place on a Tuesday afternoon. Your child may have already reached the end of testing and will therefore not be tested at school, unless their knowledge of times tables changes noticeably in lessons. Please make sure that you continue to test your child on their times tables, even if they are no longer tested at school. Practice sheets are available to download from our website; this includes the 'grid', which can be downloaded and mixed up. I cannot stress how much impact good Times tables knowledge has upon Maths achievement in Year 5 and 6 – quick recall makes Maths so much easier at this stage.

Spellings will be set on a Thursday and will be tested the following Thursday. As before, the spellings will relate to a particular spelling rule and also focus on the Year 5/6 Statutory Words. The children will also continue learning spelling strategies to help them learn the lists set.

Mathletics tasks will be set on a Wednesday for completion by the following Wednesday. Please sign your child's diary when they have completed their tasks. Tasks have been set already and stickers placed in home learning diaries.

Talk Talks will take the form of a performance of a piece of poetry or prose and also act as an audition for our summer production. The production will still be going ahead in as close to our usual form as we are able to achieve at the end of June.

Reading with your child is still incredibly important in Years 5 and 6, and this should be recorded in their home-school diary. Children will be expected to change their books regularly and this will be recorded, monitored and discussed in school. Reading books can be brought into school and taken home daily – they will be taken out of the system for 72 hours on their return before children can take them home again.

With restricted contact between home and school this year the home-school diaries take on even greater importance. These diaries are also essential in helping to develop your child's responsibility for their home learning. Please do encourage your child to record their home learning (including reading, times tables and spellings) in their diary. The diary should also be used to record any comments that you feel are important for us to see. The diary should be signed on a weekly basis, by both you and us. Diaries will be checked on a weekly basis to ensure that they are being used well. Please remind your child to tell us if there is a message from you in their diary. Please do look out for comments in diaries – often these are positive comments and we would hate for you to miss out on hearing how well your child is getting on!

We have also included essential maths facts, that the children must learn in each year group in the school, in the diary. Learning these maths facts will make solving maths problems easier for your child – they are aspects of maths that can just be learnt but they underpin many problems that they will encounter.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us via email ([lfoley@furnexp.herts.sch.uk](mailto:lfoley@furnexp.herts.sch.uk) [djones@furnexp.herts.sch.uk](mailto:djones@furnexp.herts.sch.uk)) or write a note in your child's homework diary. Whilst we are limiting face-to-face contact at this time, we are still available and keen to maintain good levels of communication with you despite the measures that remain in place.

We look forward to a happy and healthy Summer Term.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Foley and Mrs. Jones