



8th January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back! I hope that you have had a restful winter break. I am looking forward to another great term ahead, working closely in partnership with you.

We have lots of exciting learning planned for the term:

Our big questions this term are **'How were Mayan settlements organised?'** and **'Is population increase one of the greatest risks to the planet?'**

Class novel: *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* by Jules Verne

English:

We will start off by using William Shakespeare's *'Romeo and Juliet'* as our key text, which will enable us to explore a range of text types, including diary entry, poetry, prose and persuasion. We will use drama to absorb ourselves fully into the text and understand the performance aspect of playscript, with a specific focus on the rhythm of speech and iambic pentameter. Children will have the opportunity to consolidate their learning at the end of the unit through a mock trial based on the question - 'Is Friar Lawrence responsible for the death of Romeo and Juliet?'. We will also use Lindsay Galvin's *'Darwin's Dragons'* to explore explanation texts, linking to our Science unit of Evolution and Inheritance, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's epic poem *'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'* to explore poetry. Throughout all units, we will embed reading skills, where we will focus on developing clear written responses using point and evidence. All pupils will continue to focus on the grammar skills needed to become better writers. We will embed reading skills and SPaG knowledge into our units. We will practise spellings daily and handwriting several times each week.

Maths: Year 5 will start by developing their understanding of multiplication and division, where they will use formal written methods to multiply a 4 digit number by a 2 digit number and divide a 4 digit number by a 1 digit number. Following this, they will apply these skills, and their understanding of fractions from last term, in their second fractions unit, which focuses primarily on multiplication with fractions.

Year 6 will start the term with ratio, where they will learn about scale factors and proportion. After this, they will start their algebra unit, where they will use function machines and explore different methods of finding unknowns. The children will have daily arithmetic sessions and regular times table practice.

Science: This term, we will be learning about evolution and inheritance. Within this unit, we will identify how a range of animals and plants have adapted to their environments. We will explore Darwin's study of finches and use practical activities to test our hypotheses relating to the strengths of



different shaped beaks. Following this, we will also explore genes and the physical features passed from parent to offspring.

PE: This term, the class will have PE on Tuesday and Thursday. Children will learn the skills of creative games, including dribbling, tactics of invasion games, team work, and attacking and defending. In their gymnastics unit, they will create a gymnastic sequence using a range of counter balances and counter tension with a partner.

RE: We will start by exploring Christianity through the question - 'Why do Christians believe that Good Friday is good?'. Our learning will centre around Jesus' crucifixion, the Eucharist and Easter; we will study the story of Jesus' crucifixion (and what this might teach Christians) before exploring the different ways this is commemorated by Christians today.

Next, we will focus on Hinduism', where our learning will be led by the question - 'Is there one journey or many?'.
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Geography: We will focus on population and migration. We will start by exploring population rates over time and the advantages and disadvantages that come with an increasing global population. We will also identify the factors impacting the peaks and troughs in population throughout history and the factors which impact birth and death rates. Following this, we will focus on migration, where we will identify push and pull factors, advantages and disadvantages of migration and study the Windrush generation. We will conclude our unit with 2 questions:

'Population increase is one of the greatest risks to the planet.' Do you agree?

'Migration has more disadvantages than advantages.' Do you agree?

History: This term, we will be learning about the Mayan civilisation, using the questions 'How were Maya settlements organised?' and 'What was important to the Maya population during the classical period (approx. 250-950 AD)?' to guide our learning. We will start by exploring the concept of a 'civilisation' before delving deeper into the structure of the Mayan civilisation and settlements, making comparison with the first four ancient civilisations. Following this, we will focus on the values and achievements of the Maya and the impact this has had on life today.

French: We will be learning about hobbies and expressing our preferences before moving onto the topic of family when we will consolidate all of our prior learning and extend it by learning how to use verbs in the third person and how to count to 100.

Art: We will be developing our skills in using a range of media to create portraits. We will start by creating continuous line self-portraits, before developing these pieces into poem portraits. Then, we will focus on developing the background and using a combination of paint, sketching and collage to



create a mixed-media self-portrait. Throughout the unit, we will explore and analyse famous portraits from artists such as Chila Kumari Singh Burman and Vincent van Gogh.

DT: We will be following a design brief and specific criteria to design and program a micro:bit for multiple purposes, including a compass, pedometer and light. We will develop skills in programming as well as testing and debugging.

Computing: We will use physical computing to explore the concept of selection in programming through the use of the Crumble programming environment. Learners will be introduced to a microcontroller (Crumble controller) and learn how to connect and program components (including output devices- LEDs and motors) through the application of their existing programming knowledge.

Music: We will continue to develop our knowledge of notation and rhythm, consolidating this through individual compositions, which will be performed on glockenspiels. We will start by exploring theme and variations, using *'The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra'* to compare and contrast. Following this, we will focus on rhythm, with a specific focus on complex rhythms, and different time signatures.

PSHE: Our focus this term will be 'Living in the Wider World', where we will explore Communities (diversity, prejudice and stereotypes) and Economic well being (aspirations, careers and work).

PE and Outdoor learning

Please ensure that your child has their PE kit in school at all times. We will be taking our learning outdoors often so it would be useful for your child to have a pair of wellies that can be kept in school at all times.

Snacks

Children can buy toast at breaktime for 20p a slice. They can also bring in a piece of fruit from home.

Homework

This term, we will be focusing on key skills in maths and English, both in class and for homework. We would be very grateful if you would support your child at home with the following:

Daily reading - All children should read a quality text of an appropriate level that they bring into school each day and take home each night, completing their reading record daily. We ask that everyone reads for a minimum of twenty minutes each day. Reading records will be checked daily and if not completed, children will be supported with their daily reading at the lunchtime reading club.



Weekly spellings - These will be set on Monday and tested each Friday and following Monday. We will then test again later in the term to ensure consolidation. A spelling letter will be given out in the first week.

Times tables - These should be practised regularly at home; knowing these is crucial and the expectation of the national curriculum is that all children should know their times tables up to 12 x 12 by the end of Year 4. This means being able to recite times tables i.e. 0 times 5 is 0, 1 times 5 is 5, 2 times 5 is 10 etc. and knowing related division facts i.e. 0 divided by 5 is 0, 5 divided by 5 is 1, 10 divided by 5 is 2 etc. We will test times tables on a Friday in school.

Maths and Reading - The children will be set a page of short questions to complete for homework. The questions will be set on Google Classroom and answers should be recorded in children's homework books. This will be set on a Tuesday and due in by Friday, where we will mark together.

If you would like to speak to me about anything at all, please do not hesitate to contact me either by email or in person at the beginning or end of the school day or by phone.

Best wishes,

Miss Whinnett