

12th September 2020

Welcome to Oak Class

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Oak Class! A new class and a new Key Stage.

The children have settled quickly and are working really well on our settling in and assessment activities. In the early weeks the aim is to build on the positive experiences of Chestnut Class and continue to provide an age appropriate learning environment. More structured sessions across the curriculum build gradually as the term progresses. We are mindful of the unusual experiences 2020 has brought us so far and our approach reflects the need to allow children to settle back to school gradually and happily whilst giving the comfort of familiar routines.

The Oak Class team this year will be Mrs Holden (class teacher), Miss Collins (learning support assistant every day) and Mrs Ridley (learning support assistant Tuesday to Friday mornings). On Thursday afternoons Ms Kerr joins us for Forest School.

Curriculum

Learning Challenge Curriculum

Our topic this term centres around 'Percy's Park'. We will also focus on seasonal celebrations around Autumn, Harvest, Bonfire Night and Christmas. I hope the Curriculum Overview attached is useful and helps you to understand our learning pathway this term.

Reading

Children will be involved in daily group reading activities including structured guided reading sessions with their teacher and may also read to other adults in the room. Children would normally bring a reading book home but this year we have invested in an online reading scheme where you will be able to access the same books your child would have been bringing home. I will send logins and further information in the coming weeks. We assess carefully and build on individual benchmarking assessments to ensure children have books at the correct level. Guided texts read in school tend to be more challenging and the books we send home will be aimed at promoting confidence and independence so may be at a slightly less challenging level in order to consolidate skills. Online books will be changed once a week, we usually send two texts each week. We aim for a range of texts to include stories and non-fiction books. It is important that children engage in sharing a wide variety of texts and enjoy the full reading experience rather than simply decoding words. We spend a great deal of time enjoying books, discussing events, characters and illustrations as well as learning to read the words.

As part of our classroom environment we are growing a 'story tree' I would like each child to make a 'leaf' showing their favourite story. Whilst I am not asking you to send in the actual book please could you pop in a note of the author and title so that I can find a copy in school or find it online.

Children will shortly bring home a reading diary. Please ensure your child brings this to school **every day** as it forms a key element of our home school reading provision. Key words to read, phonics activities, spellings and other homework are usually included but this year we will be moving to sending these in an online format. Please do comment in the diary when your child reads or engages in the other activities at home.

Spelling

It will be a while before spelling homework is set for Year 1. Once children are ready, weekly spellings will be shared.

Phonics

Phonics is high profile in Year One and we continue to progress through the 'phases' of Letters and Sounds. You may be aware that there is a National Phonics Screening test in the Summer Term for all Year 1 children and we will provide plenty of information to help you support your child's learning in this area.

Mathematics

Children will be working with numbers to 20 and concentrating on "teen" numbers. They will be adding, subtracting and counting in ones and tens. We will also be looking at shape, measurement and time. Detailed assessment takes place initially to ensure learning is at an appropriate level.

PE

Our PE sessions will usually be Monday and Tuesday. **We are asking that children come to school in PE kit on these days.** They will not need clothes to change into. Thank you for your feedback regarding this new system. As the hall is being used as a safety 'bubble' for After School Club most of our sessions will be outside so please include tracksuit bottoms and of course the normal school sweatshirt on top of the PE kit T-shirt and shorts.

Forest School

Forest school takes place on a Thursday afternoon and children will need a coat each week as we go outside in most weathers. Boots would also be a good idea for wet Thursdays. We do not plan a full clothing change but I would recommend 'outdoor suitable' uniform choices on a Thursday (long sleeves, covered legs etc).

Morning Routine

Children have settled very well to coming in independently. There are always welcome activities at their table and they are already used to the morning routines. Every child has their own peg and tray to organise belongings.

Belongings

Many thanks to all those parents who have named belongings clearly, including coats. We do try to return things to you, but can only do so if we can see a name. It is really helpful if the name is easily recognisable for your child. It is also helpful if 'inherited items' have the

original name removed and the new name displayed clearly. With all the fabulous new shoes and PE trainers everyone is sporting this term names really are essential because when there are 56 shoes on the carpet one Clarks size 10 looks very much like another!

Snack and Drinks

Free fruit is available every morning but there is not usually a choice so if your child only likes a specific item then sending their own snack is a good plan to avoid disappointment. Children are welcome to bring their own fruit or vegetable snack if they prefer. In Year 1 we do not have a 'rolling' snack time, we eat just prior to or during our 10.30 break. Please could we limit children to one snack item. If you have any specific requirements around snack please do not hesitate to let me know. **Plain water** in a clearly named bottle is essential each day. We encourage children to drink regularly throughout the day and offer refills frequently but as we have already had a few spills it would be really helpful if they could have a 'sports cap' bottle rather than a pouring cap. *Please name these clearly as we have several bottle 'doubles'.*

Please **discourage** children from bringing toys and other items to school unless specifically requested as part of our topic work. Children get very upset when toys are lost or damaged but it is particularly important we avoid this in the present climate. We are also trying to minimise items coming to and from school for safety reasons at the moment.

Hand Sanitiser

Hand washing or sanitising takes place very regularly through the school day. If your child brings their own sanitiser it must be in a named container and stay in their tray in class rather than in the cloakroom so that it can be used safely with adult supervision.

Collecting Children

At the end of the day safety is our priority. It is important for you to inform us of any changes in terms of who will be collecting your child. We are very careful to ensure children do not leave the room until we have sight of the appropriate adult. My apologies if this slows the end of day routine down in the early days whilst we get to know new adults. It is helpful if you can be easily visible from our doorway.

We also need to have up to date contact details including mobile numbers. If children regularly attend After School Club it would be helpful if you could let us know. If you are held up at the end of the day please do call school, we can then ensure your child is aware of the situation and remains happily with staff rather than worrying.

We are aware that school feels a little 'different' particularly if you are dropping off and picking up at slightly altered times. It is more challenging to have a chat at the end of the day for example but please rest assured that during the day routines are in place and hopefully the transition to Key Stage One remains a positive experience as always (albeit with additional handwashing and a teacher who now always smells of table cleaner!).

We look forward to working as partners with you in your child's education and value any comments you wish to share with us about their learning. We are usually available for a brief chat at the end of the day but for a confidential or lengthier discussion please do make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Here's to an excellent term.

Yours sincerely,
Catherine Holden

PS. A little plea, as always we aim to make our classroom environment welcoming and calm space. We would like to 'bring the outdoors in' by incorporating some additional house plants for the children to look after. If you have any you could donate please just send them in...the more the merrier!

Many thanks.