

DUNSTER FIRST SCHOOL

7th October 2016

Dear Parents,



Thank you to those who attended the Reception Class curriculum meeting. The following information outlines some of the main points that were covered.

Reception children work from the Early Years Foundation Stage, just as they would have in their nurseries and preschools. This makes sure that their time in school follows on smoothly from their previous experiences.

The two elements of the Reception Curriculum- *what they learn, how they learn:*

<p>What the children learn Children in Reception will take part in a range of activities from seven areas of learning. These areas of learning are a bit like the 'subjects' the children will study as they move through the school. Children will:</p>	
<p><u>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish strong relationships with adults and children, • develop the confidence to work independently or with others, • become interested, motivated, enthusiastic learners, • develop an awareness of self and of the needs of others. 	<p><u>Literacy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience a range of texts- fiction, non-fiction and poetry, • work through a specific programme of phonics and letter formation, • begin to segment and 'sound out' in their own writing, working towards writing simple sentences independently, • blend words to 'sound them out' to read them. • develop their recognition of words by sight.
<p><u>Communication and Language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and extend vocabulary and description, • develop imaginative play to begin writing stories, • learn to communicate with one another and with the adults around them through speech and gesture, • listen, respond, ask and answer questions. 	<p><u>Mathematics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take part in whole class activities, small group or individual work, • practise number skills, including quick recall of facts. • experience ordering numbers, counting for purpose, adding and subtracting, measuring, using money, shape and space and problem solving. • take part in mainly practical activities to try out new skills, with little being recorded by the children, • have access to independent play activities that support mathematical learning.
<p><u>Physical Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have PE lessons allowing development of multiskills, gymnastics, dance and swimming. • spend time outside using a large equipment, going for walks and playing in the school field. • refine fine motor skills by using play dough, construction toys, painting, colouring, drawing, using tools and so on. 	<p><u>Expressive arts and design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a foundation for Art and Music, • plan their work and use a range of media to create various effects, • discuss their work, • look at the work of famous artists • learn a variety of songs and try out different percussion instruments and musical techniques. • Listen to a range of different music.
	<p><u>Understanding of the World</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a range of first hand experiences, both indoors and out. • be given opportunities for exploration, observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking decision making and questioning.
<p>How the children learn</p> <p>To make sure children are learning best, and are enjoying and feeling involved in their learning, we make sure that they are exposed to these characteristics of learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play and exploration • Active learning • Creativity and critical thinking <p>A large part of the children's time in school will be spent with them learning through play, where they can make choices about which activities they try first. These characteristics of learning are brought into the children's learning by the adults talking to, questioning and encouraging the children.</p>	

Other information

Reading

Please read with your child every night. Share books with your child- encourage them to run their finger under the words from left to right. Talk about the pictures, predict what might happen, suggest alternative endings.

After half term, the children will be introduced to reading scheme books which they should be encouraged to read to an adult. The books we use at our school are mainly Oxford Reading Tree (Biff, Chip and Kipper stories).

If you have time you can spare to come into school and hear some children read, please look out for information in future newsletters.

Reading Diaries

Once the children start bringing home reading scheme books after the half term holidays, you will need to write down and sign each day when you hear your child read these books. There is a space at the bottom of each page to note down any other books you have enjoyed together- from home, from the library or the school sharing book they will continue to bring home each Friday.

In these yellow diaries, there are also some other important pieces of information, some for you just to read, and some that you are required to sign.

Please read the Home-School Agreement with your child and sign this, as well as the Acceptable Use policy on the following page which outlines safe use of computers and the internet.

Phonics

We follow a structured programme for Phonics in Reception. This has started with activities such as the children breaking words into sounds, matching sounds around us, and playing rhythm and rhyming games. Once the children are playing with sounds in this way confidently, we start linking sounds to letter shapes and learning actions to help remember which sounds are made by each letter. We then begin segmenting simple words to write them and we start to blend letters to read words.

From time to time, the children will bring home 'tricky word' cards. These are words we have been learning at school that we can't work out by using phonics.

Writing

At our school we use a cursive handwriting script. An example of how the letters are formed is with this letter. We focus on writing lower case letters to start with and will think about using capitals when we need to later in the year. The letter shapes we use have 'tails' which will help the children when it comes to joining their writing in Year Two.

Children are encouraged to try their own (emergent) writing, rather than copying what adults have written. Sometimes children call this 'magic writing'. Often children's 'magic writing' starts as squiggles, zigzags or random shapes, but as they learn more about letter formation and phonics, recognisable letters and then words will start to appear in their work.

E Safety

During the year, the children will be introduced to various computer programs. They will be using school bought software as well as internet resources. To make sure the children are safe when using these online resources, we have developed an E Safety policy in school. The children will be introduced to stories and characters like Smartie the Penguin and Digiduck to encourage them to be safe when using computers, especially when online. From time to time, children will bring home information to share with you. Please refer also to the Acceptable Use document in the reading diary.

Outdoor Learning

We spend time outside every day, whatever the weather. Please ensure your child has the appropriate clothing in school. (coat, wellies, sunhat).

On Monday mornings, we go outside for the whole morning. Sometimes we will be up in the school field doing things like gardening, making things, finding and collecting. Sometimes we go for walks up to Conygar Tower, onto Grabbist Hill, to Dunster Deer Park or Packhorse Bridge play park. The children are always very busy, enjoy themselves and learn a lot from these Outdoor Learning sessions.

SEAL- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

Throughout the year we study different topics to aid the children's social and emotional development.

There is one topic per half term:

Autumn 1: New Beginnings

Autumn 2: Getting On and Falling Out (including Say No to Bullying week)

Spring 1: Good to Be Me

Spring 2: Going for Goals

Summer 1: Relationships

Summer 2: Changes

These are whole school topics. Each topic begins with a whole school assembly to introduce it and another whole school assembly to conclude and share the work we have done in each of our classes.

Anti-bullying work

As part of our SEAL work, we talk about what bullying is and how it differs from other times we fall out with our friends. We look at various scenarios and read stories about children who are having difficulties. We talk about how children should always tell someone they trust if they feel that they or someone else they know is being bullied. We let the children discuss the best ways of dealing with bullying if it were to occur. We work with the children to prevent bullying in our school as well as helping them in know what to do if it were to occur.

Golden Time and class rules

On Fridays, we have Golden Time with Year One. At Golden Time one person is chosen to be the Golden Person of the week. They get to choose all the toys and activities for everyone else to play with at Golden Time.

At our school, we have five golden rules:

1. We are kind and friendly.
2. We look after our school and everything in it.
3. We help and respect each other.
4. To are polite to everyone.
5. We move carefully around the school.

As well as reminding children about these rules, we also write our own class rules which the children and adults share ideas for. These class rules are rewritten several times throughout the year. The current class rules are always on display in the classroom. As long as everyone remembers the rules, their name stays on the big happy clown on the wall and they can have all their Golden Time on Fridays.

Attendance

Please inform the school if your child will not be in school for any reason. Unauthorised absences will be noted and kept on your child's record. If your child is absent and the school has not been informed, the school office will phone or text to confirm the absence.

Uniform

Children should wear proper school shoes to school, not trainers. Children also need a coat and a jumper in school with them every day.

In PE, all children with long hair must have it tied up. Our PE days will be Wednesday or Thursday. Please make sure the children have their PE kit in school all the time. It is also useful to check the children's daps from time to time to make sure they still fit! PE kits will be sent home at the end of each half term.

At our school children should not have haircuts with tramlines or hair styled with hair gel. It is not appropriate for children to wear jewellery in school. If children have earrings, they must be small studs. If children are wearing earrings, we have to cover them with tape for PE sessions. Please make sure that **all** clothing is named.

Buses

If your child travels to and from school on a bus, please let us know on which days this will happen. It would be very useful if you could let us know in writing or by telephone if there are ever any changes, rather than relying on the children to convey messages.

Medical Problems

Please inform the school if your child has any medical problems, including food allergies or asthma.

Free School Meals

All children in Reception are entitled to a free school meal each day. At our school, the children can choose from a hot main meal, a hot vegetarian meal, a jacket potato with a choice of fillings or a sandwich with a choice of fillings. There are also several pudding options every day. There are plenty of adults and older children to help the children cut up food and to encourage them to eat their lunch. Please go through the pink lunch forms with your child so they know what their lunch will be each day.

Work with Year One

We enjoy working closely with Year One. We join together for Outdoor Learning every Monday, for Golden Time every Friday and for other structured play sessions during the week. Our topics are the same, covered in different depths by each year group. This means that older and younger children learn from each other and Reception children can start to develop relationships with the Year One staff right away, making the transition next summer a smooth one.

FODS

The Friends of Dunster School (FODS) work hard to raise extra money for school. There are meetings throughout the year, as well as all sorts of fund raising events. There are many different ways to get involved, and we are always looking for new helpers, so look out for information in the newsletters.

Finally...

We aim to develop the children as happy, confident, motivated and enthusiastic learners. If you have any questions about this letter, concerns about your child or would just like a chat to see how things are going, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Louise Collins