

September 2023

Dear Parents,

It has been wonderful to welcome the children back to school, to begin their learning in Year 6. They all seem delighted to be back and eager to learn. I am looking forward to a successful year ahead. This will be a very important year for the children as they prepare for secondary school. In this letter you will find some information about routines which you may find useful as the year progresses.

Now that they are in Year 6, please encourage your child to be independent and to pass on messages to me themselves rather than asking you to do it for them. It is also important that they bring anything for the office into class themselves because this is also what they will have to do next year and they need to try to get into a routine of remembering messages. I have asked them to take home their water bottle and to bring it in each day. Again, they will have to do this next year.

The Year 6 pupils have already taken on the role of prefects and I know that they will do a fantastic job. Please encourage them to look after their badges. During the year they will also be asked to read at school masses and we would appreciate your help with practising these readings at home. We will be going to mass on a rota basis with Y5 and Y4 on a Wednesday or Friday morning. They enjoy being ambassadors for the school, so there will also be occasions when we will ask them to attend Masses at weekends, Open Garden days and other special days, when they will represent the school. There will not be a lot of these, so please support us by helping your child to get here when we ask for their help. The first Saturday whole school mass is at 4pm on 7<sup>th</sup> October. This will be the commitment mass for First Holy Communion and Confirmation and we will also give thanks for the harvest at this mass. Please try to attend or enable the children to attend if possible.

### **Homework**

Homework for English and maths will be given as part of class work and will sometimes be due in for the following day. This should not take longer than half an hour. If it does, then please ask me about it. There are no set days for homework as it will depend on what we are covering in class at the time. Times Tables will be tested regularly. They need to know these for mental maths work. Please try and grab a few minutes to practise them at home because this will really help. In this class we tend to test them orally as well as in a written test.

As “unhomework”, I will ask the children to undertake independent projects at home during the year, linked to topics. Please get involved and talk to them about it but let them work independently if possible, as I am trying to develop their skills for secondary school. They will be asked to present the project to the class when they bring it in. I won't give them lots of other homework if they are asked to do a project. There will be no set format for these projects. They can present them through art, models, ICT, scrapbook etc. They can be as creative as they like.

This term we are focusing on geography skills and after October half term our first history topic will be the impact of the Victorian Era and the Industrial Revolution on our lives today. I have booked a visit to the **Black Country Living Museum** on the last day of this half term – **27<sup>th</sup> October** – to introduce the topic. Further information will be sent out on a separate letter. As we are a small class, we will try to keep the cost down by using the school minibus and a teacher's car, where possible, for trips.

### **Spelling homework:**

Last year the children were introduced to lots of strategies to help them with spelling and I would hope that they will continue to use these in Year 6. Each week we will focus on different spelling rules and the children will have spellings to learn. At times you may feel the words are too easy but these will be the words they are spelling incorrectly during independent writing. They will also have the list of Y5/Y6 words from the national curriculum to work on during the year. These are words which the government expect all pupils to be able to spell by the time they leave primary school. It may seem a lot at first but we will take it slowly and of course extra support will be given to children who find spelling difficult. Spellings are usually tested on a **Friday** but it is a very informal test, which they sometimes mark themselves. They need to have their spelling book in school every Friday.

### **Reading**

The children need to be encouraged to read every night. They may have chosen a book from the library or one of their own. This is probably the most important homework you will do with them. They have been given a reading record to record their progress. In Class, we have a reward scheme for reading which involves them completing a book review to earn stickers, which can be exchanged for a small prize. At this age it is still very important for you to listen to your child read and also to read to them. Don't be afraid to read a picture book as there are some amazing ones out there. This will help your child to focus on story structure and vocabulary. I will be encouraging the children to read as wide a variety of books as they can as this will help their writing to improve. We will continue to have a big focus on reading for pleasure this year. Studies by the National Literacy Trust have shown that children who enjoy reading are five times more likely to achieve above the expected levels in literacy.

### **PE Times**

PE will usually be on a **Friday** and will be taught by Mrs Annis; however, kit should be left in school all week as we often have short activities on other days and may need to change the day at short notice. It would be helpful if PE kit was labelled. Pupils must wear the **school PE kit** for lessons. They can wear a tracksuit for the winter months. Jewellery must not be worn for PE. They will be going swimming on Fridays in the Summer term.

### **Equipment**

Each child has been given a school handwriting pen but I always encourage them to use a pen they are comfortable with, so you may wish to provide them with a fountain pen. Please encourage them to leave the gigantic pencil cases at home, but instead bring a small one which will fit in their tray. It is not necessary for any child to have a pencil case as all equipment is provided.

### **Special Person**

We have "Special Person" every Friday. Each pupil gets a turn and they can bring in some items (3 or 4) which are special to them and talk about them to the class. They are presented with a certificate from the rest of the class. They are also invited to bring in their favourite book to talk about it to the class.

## **SATS**

SATS tests will take place during the week beginning the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Year 6 pupils are tested on: Reading, Grammar, punctuation and spelling, and Mathematics. I will let you know how your child is progressing at parents' evening but if you have any concerns, in the meantime, please have a word with me. Please do not book holidays during school time, especially before or during their tests.

## **Alton Castle**

The annual residential trip to Alton Castle has been booked for June 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> 2024. There will be more information closer to the time and Mrs Doyle will let you know this year's cost as soon as she receives it from the castle. It will be in the range of £200. You have the option of setting up a payment plan, as in previous years, which you can start as soon as you want to by contacting the office.

Some pupils are now walking to and from school independently and, as a result, have been bringing a mobile phone to school. Please let me know if they have a phone in school. The phone must be turned off and placed in the locked box as soon as they arrive in school. It needs to stay switched off until they have left the school premises to walk home. Please make sure the office has **written permission by email or letter** if your child is leaving the school premises on their own, after school.

If you have any questions about anything over the coming months, please send me an email or ring the office to arrange a time when I can ring you back. I will do my very best to ensure that the children have a successful year of learning and that they are prepared, both emotionally and academically for the next stage of their education.

Best wishes,

Mrs Olive Williams