

## Spring Term in Sycamore



Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you have had a great Christmas and a happy new year, and you and the children managed to get some well-earned rest over the holidays. Spring doesn't feel too far away and we've got plenty to engage ourselves with over the next term.

- **Value for Life** - The new value for life this term is wisdom. We have spoken about the story of the Wisdom of Solomon in class and what wisdom means to different people. Collective worship will focus this through the next term, and we will look to incorporate the value in our day-to-day classroom life.
- **Topic** - Our new topic this term will be the Stone Age. We will be looking at how early humans may have lived and survived, what tasks they would have to do on a daily basis, and how we can find out about their lives today. From a few weeks in, this will also form the foundation of our literacy work. We will be using books such as *Ug* by Raymond Briggs, *Stone Age Boy* by Satoshi Kitamura and *How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth* by Michelle Robinson.
- **Science** - To tie in with the topic of the Stone Age, this term we are going to learn about Animals and Humans in Science. The human side will be focused on food, digestion and teeth. We will compare the teeth, skeletons and muscles of humans to other animals and begin to construct food chains for our local environment. Please check the knowledge organisers for more information. To engage further with this we will also be doing...
- **The RSPB's Big Schools Birdwatch** - Over the next few weeks I hope to encourage some of the birds around school to visit feeders we will make in class in preparation for the Big Schools Birdwatch. This runs alongside the Big Garden Birdwatch, which takes place over the weekend of the 26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> January. This is the largest wildlife survey in the world and something that, in my experience, engages children readily and gives them a greater appreciation for the world around them.
- **Reading** - Please ensure that reading records are brought into school every day. We will record our guided reading sessions and individual readers in these. Guided reading sessions take place every day apart from Tuesday, and through this we hear everyone read at least once a week. Reading passports have now gone out, and prizes are available to

those who complete them. I will be looking to supply the classroom with a fresh supply of books in the not too distant future, so please encourage your children to explore what is on offer and be brave in choosing something new. Children still need supporting in learning new words - and often learn more from listening to an adult read than reading themselves. Discussions about phrases like “wheeling through the sky” and what these actually mean in context are invaluable to children, so please encourage this where possible. Anything that encourages a love of reading - including magazines, annuals and fiction books - should be cherished. Storytime at around 2.50 on a Friday afternoon is another chance to come and engage with the children and what they are listening to in school. You are always most welcome!

- **Own pencils and pens** - Please could we refrain from bringing our own pencils and pencil cases into class. Children will be reminded of this in class.
- **Dates for the diary** - Our next reading café is on the 25<sup>th</sup> January, closely followed by parent consultations on February 7<sup>th</sup>. We have world book week including world book day from 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> March and our Easter service is on the 5<sup>th</sup> April.
- **Homework** - Homework will continue to be given out to the class during the week. The day will vary depending on what we are learning, but I will always give a weekend for it to be completed.
- **Times table rockstars** - All children have access to times table rockstars. Please give them a chance to play at least once a week, as a secure knowledge of times tables will give them a much stronger grounding going into Year 5 and 6. Year 4 will be taking a trial times table test as part of a trial of a national test for Year 4s that begin next year. As such, the current Year 3s will be there first Year to take the national test. These will be online and are simulated by the sound check option on TT Rockstars.
- **Spellings** - The next batch of spellings will be given out early this term, along with dates for testing. Please help the children learn these; there are fun strategies for helping them stuck inside the homework books.
- **PE** - As a quick reminder, please ensure that all children have their P.E. kit in school every day. We continue to have our main P.E. sessions on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning with Coach Ian.

### **‘LEARN TOGETHER, WORK TOGETHER, GROW TOGETHER’**

I’ve really enjoyed getting to know your children over the past few months, and look forward to helping them move forward as young people and learners.

If you have any questions or queries, then please do come and see me.

After school when I am seeing the children out onto the playground is the best time to catch me as mornings are usually very busy!

Many thanks,

Greg East