

## Oak Class Autumn 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are wondering where the summer disappeared, but eagerly anticipating the new academic year just starting. The children are full of energy and getting used to new routines and timetables.

The medium term curriculum overview will be available on the school website. Our topic until Christmas is themed around the 'big question': "If you were a bear, what would your story be?" We will be looking at this through experiencing a wide range of bear themed stories, both familiar and with a more modern slant, for example 'Goldilocks and Just the One Bear'!

We are going to listen to lots of other stories as well; stories with familiar settings, stories with a moral message and traditional tales where the characters will be discussed. Well known authors: Dick King Smith, Julia Donaldson, Quentin Blake, Shirley Hughes and Janet and Alan Ahlberg will be enjoyed and story time will be a special part of the day. Family life, local communities and the World as a family will also be considered. The children will write from first hand experience, retell stories and embellish characters to enable their readers to 'make pictures' as they read- just as all good authors do! I aim to make the children into keen readers and writers, with an understanding of what authors are and do. Our Christmas production will be the culmination of the term, but we shall also look forward to a teddy bears' picnic, where the children can bring in their own toy bears for the afternoon.

We will continue using an online programme for 'SPAG' (spelling, punctuation and grammar). Despite the rather dull sound of this, the

children are really enthused when they use IT. We are also going to use 'Mathletics', another online resource, this time to promote the development of problem solving and mental maths skills. The children will be able to log on at home to show you what types of questions are asked.

Numeracy lessons will follow the National Curriculum guidance. There has been a 'raising of the bar' as regards content to be covered by the summer term, but we will continue to maximise consolidation and understanding to embed those important building blocks on which mathematical competence rests. Our lessons are fun and engaging, practical apparatus is provided at all times and confidence, perseverance and the willingness to 'have a go' and risk mistakes are fostered in our classroom ethos.

Our Science topics will cover materials and their uses, encouraging the children to think scientifically and use maths skills to collate data and findings. We shall encompass Geography and History links within literacy lessons, eg, hearing stories from other Continents and cultures and listening to the true stories of Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale . Knowing London as our capital city and learning the Continents and Oceans will help the children to understand the wider world and boundaries beyond Lincolnshire. There are many famous historical characters remembered for their contribution to society and we shall be thinking about the moral implications and emotions explored in the bear stories I have collated- these include losing a favourite toy, being left out, getting lost and finding a friend.

In Art and DT we shall be using sketchbooks to explore techniques and media. Skills such as using and selecting paint brushes, applying pastels, folding, creasing, cutting and scoring will all be practised.

Towards Christmas we shall be making calendars and cards, putting into practice the skills we have developed over the term.

Music this term will be about singing, listening, pulse and rhythm. The Christmas Production will afford the opportunity for many new tunes to be learned.

RE will be looking at the meaning of Christianity and important festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Divali.

Our PE days will be on Tuesday and Wednesday. Outdoor sessions will be undertaken when weather permits, so please ensure your child has kit for both indoor and outdoor sessions for the term. Earrings must not be worn on these days or if worn, your child must be able to remove them by themselves as we are unable to do so.

We will have a 'Show and Tell' rota on Fridays, and every child will have an opportunity to bring in items of interest to share with the class, please see the published timetable on the website.

Reading books will be exchanged on a rotational basis, where 6 children will change their books on a given day. (Please check the day your child can expect to change their books). Do encourage your children to read and talk about these at home, alongside continuing to read to your child, asking them to talk about the pictures, starting to think of favourite authors and illustrators and joining the library. I shall add comments to their reading record, including any areas needing emphasis, what strategies have been used etc and would invite you to write anything you would like to share. Never worry that a book may be "too easy"- periods of consolidation enable children to develop higher order reading skills and improve reading expression. Some children are now taking home longer and more complex stories. Please do not worry if these are not finished within the week. The important thing is for reading to continue to be

enjoyed, rather than how quickly a book can be finished. The new reading record booklets include sections of 'high frequency' words which can be practised during reading and writing. Please look out for any that have been circled, as these may need particular emphasis.

This leads on to spellings, which will take the form of 'word exploration' where the children may be invited to find words with the same spelling pattern/ rules. Spelling 'tests' are used intermittently to assess the blends and sounds which children are using, but spelling lists to learn by heart are not given. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves to learn some spellings, eg days of the week, months and common words from our lexicon. Creating word strings is very effective in giving children conceptual understanding of our word system. They may also be asked to learn commonly used "high frequency words" from The National Literacy Strategy.

Oak class is an environment where the children are encouraged to think, use initiative, explore and consider. I am excited about the year ahead and hope your child is too.

Warm regards,

Helen Barnes

Oak Class

