

Dear Year R Parents,

We hope you have all had a great half term break and are ready and prepared for the second half of the Autumn term in school.

As mentioned in our Autumn 1 letter, we have placed great emphasis on helping the children feel settled and secure in school, developing their independence skills and motivation to learn so that they feel ready and able to move onto the next stage of learning.

So, what are we doing this half term?

Phonics

We will continue to teach our 'Little Wandle, Revised Letters and Sounds' programme which teaches children to recognise the shape of the letters (the **grapheme**) and know the sound that represents them (the **phoneme**). As children learn these phonemes, they are taught to **blend** them together for reading and **segment** them for spelling.

We will be using 'cued articulation' to support us in teaching the letter sounds. More information can be found at the following website:

www.soundsforliteracy.co.uk/cued-articulation.html

We will also send home a sheet with the actions. We teach 4 letters each week and our weekly emails will inform you about which letters and words we are learning each week so that you can support at home.

Reading

Children will start bringing home wordless books (which we know sounds odd!) whilst we get children into the routine of reading in school. There will be an information leaflet about these books and why we use them. Once children are showing that they are identifying the letters we have taught them, they will start bringing home books with simple words and sentences.

These books will come home, alongside the library and reading challenge books. Please ensure all books are kept in your child's book bag so that they are available when we need to change them.

Writing

"Reading and writing float on a sea of talk" (James Britton, English Educator).

We will continue to support children to develop their communication and language skills through their play experiences. This is a vital part of learning to write as it helps children to formulate ideas. We will also continue to develop children's gross and fine motor skills through activities such as dough disco, write dance and a range of 'funky finger' activities. This supports children to develop good pencil control. We will also be teaching children to form the letter shapes that we teach in phonics. This is taught in a multi-sensory approach e.g. tracing letters in sand, making letter shapes with playdough, tracing the letters in the air etc...

We teach children to write in print so that they are confident with forming the letters correctly.

Mathematics

We will be having daily mental maths sessions which will mostly focus on counting and number recognition. There are two types of counting: **Rote counting** is the simplest number concept that children develop and consists of **saying** numbers sequentially. **One-to-one correspondence** is being able to use this knowledge to skillfully count an actual number of objects. A child that understands one-to-one correspondence knows that 2 cookies = 2 or that 5 raisins = 5. It is important not to underestimate the skill of one-to-one correspondence as it forms the basis for all other mathematics. Without one-to-one correspondence, children will struggle with addition and subtraction further on in their development. Please find any opportunity to count with one-to-one correspondence at home or when you are out and about!

Mathematical language also forms a big part of mathematical development e.g. more, less, greater, smaller etc... and we place great emphasis on supporting children to use mathematical language within their play.

We also support mathematical development in the environment, through everyday routines.

Don't forget, we don't teach all the above in one go! Our weekly learning letter will give you an outline of what we are covering on a weekly basis, including the other curriculum areas that we teach.

Other things that are happening in Year R...

In Year R we have a mixture of adult initiated activities such as the maths and phonics, balanced with child-initiated activities (Cool time) where children practice and apply the skills they have been taught in the directed times. It is during this time that we follow the children's interests.

The lead up to Christmas will involve Christmas cards and Christmas activities. More information to follow on this. As the children lead up to Christmas, they do get very tired so be prepared!

Language groups

We are currently screening children on a programme called Speech Link where children are asked to play some games on an iPad, with a teacher. The programme identifies if a child is 'at risk of delay' in their communication and language. Any child who is identified as being 'at risk' will take part in a language group with other children. This involves lots of listening games and activities which will be led by the Learning Support Assistants in Year R. You will receive an additional letter if your child is to take part in a language group. Please do not hesitate to talk to your child's teacher if you have any concerns about this. We find that all children enjoy being part of a language group so there may be times when a child joins a language group for the odd session, so they do not feel they are missing out.

Outdoor learning environment

Our outdoor area is evolving all the time and we are in the process of getting some external outdoor companies to re-vamp our outdoor equipment as some of it is looking a little tired. We are really excited about this work so watch this space to see how it develops.

Seesaw

We are now ready to open Seesaw to parents and we thank you for your patience as this would usually be up and running by now. Your child will be bringing home a code for their Seesaw account which will have information on how to access it from home. Once you are familiar with Seesaw, please do send some photos of some the fun things your child gets up to at home as it is a lovely way of finding out more about them. Once parents have started accessing Seesaw, we will teach the children how to use it so that they can also upload their learning in school. In Year R, we use Seesaw as a way of showing you some of the things we get up to in school. Our priority as teachers is to interact with the children and join them in their activities. Therefore, we will only be adding a few photos onto Seesaw so that it does not take us away from the children.

P.E

P.E will start the week beginning **8th November**. Each class will have one P.E session a week and we ask that your child comes into school wearing their P.E kit. We will inform you by text message or email when our P.E days are.

Polite request

With the change in the weather, please can you ensure your child comes to school with a coat as we are outside all the time, in all weathers. If it is raining, please send your child to school in a waterproof coat/jacket otherwise they are unable to access the outdoor area.

Phew! We think that is enough information for now. We try our best to keep you updated with what we are doing in school, but we sometimes forget that what is regular to us is often new to many of you so please keep asking us questions.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support,

Early Years Team