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Dear Year R Parents and Carers,

It has been a great start to the Spring term already, With the children returning, happy to see their friends and ready and eager to learn.

We have lots planned for this half term, which we would like to share with you. Please be aware that children learn at different rates so the information we give you is just a guide. Some children may move beyond what we have listed below whereas others may require some additional support.

Phonics

This half term we have begun Phase 3 of the Little Wandle Programme.

In this phase we learn the following digraphs (two letters that make one sound) – ai, ee, oa, oo, **oo**, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, er and the trigraphs (three letters that make one sound)- igh, ear, and air. We will continue to let you know when we are teaching each digraph and trigraph in the weekly email.

The tricky words we will be teaching the children this half term are - was, you, they, my, by, all, are, sure, pure.

We teach the children to identify the digraphs and words in simple sentences.

Also, in our Phonic sessions, the children have started to learn how to segment words to have a go at spelling. They each have a whiteboard and will have a go at spelling out and writing a word. We will show them first so please don't worry; we are not expecting them to do it all by themselves.

Reading

We will continue to share a variety of books with the children across the week, in whole class and small group reading sessions as well as during informal book sharing sessions.

During taught sessions we will look at comprehension skills, where we ask children to explain what might have happened in a story or why a character might be feeling the way they do. We expect them to have a go at giving us a reason for their answer so we use 'because...' a lot.

Please continue to support reading at home. The reading books we send home may seem a little easy as reading at home should be enjoyable and successful for your child.

It's so important that children understand what they are reading so don't forget to talk about what is happening in the story. Using puppets and re-telling stories also supports children's reading.



Writing

We will continue to support children in a multi-sensory way to form their letters correctly. Children who need to develop their correct pencil grip will be supported to develop their hand strength with fine motor activities like squeezing squishy balls at story time.

We will also be finding many opportunities to write for a purpose e.g. shopping lists, writing about experiences from home, writing about their play experiences and writing cards etc... We encourage you to do the same at home and add any examples to Seesaw.

We do talk to the children about the use of capital letters and ask that you support us at home by reminding children, when writing their name, to only use a capital letter at the beginning.

When learning to write, we also support the children to write the sounds and the tricky words that they have been learning in phonics. We have introduced our sound mats, an example of which we sent home for you to use if your child would like to write at home.

Mathematics

We will continue to have daily mental maths sessions, which will support children to extend their number skills.

We will focus on early addition where children are taught to combine objects in practical situations. Practical experiences are the best way to develop children's mental maths skills and understanding of mathematical concepts. Therefore, we do not focus on formal recording of addition sentences. Instead, we place emphasis on the mathematical language related to addition e.g. add, plus, altogether, total, count on, how many?

We will continue to count forwards and backwards from different numbers. We will make comparisons of numbers using language such as more, less, fewer, equal.

In shape, space and measure we will continue to look at shapes, both 2D and 3D, naming them and describing their properties. We are also looking at direction linking this to maps and road safety.

Much of the maths that we teach also comes in the everyday experiences that we offer children e.g. using positional language in P.E, talking about the language related to time in our everyday routines, measuring time using sand timers in play situations to name but a few things.

Other things that are happening in Year R...

Our learning enquiry

We will be kick starting the Spring term (after discussions about Christmas) with discussions around the question 'How can I keep myself and others safe?' We will start by thinking about the importance of being in a community and how communities look after each other. We will then look at jobs where their role is to keep us safe. We will also look at keeping safe within our immediate environment as well as thinking about the wider world and other people's experiences of feeling safe. This will include road safety when we take a trip out into our local community.

Seesaw

The main way we are currently using Seesaw is to share with you some of the things that we get up to in school. We hope you enjoy seeing some of the thing we get up to. We know we have mentioned this before, but please be aware that our priority is to interact with the children so whilst we try to capture as much as we can, it is not possible to capture everything.

The children will also be encouraged to access Seesaw themselves, where they can use it to share some of their 'wow' moments with you. We will be training the children to do this over this half term.



Your role in Seesaw

It really helps us to find out more about your children when you share things from home. Please do upload photos and/or comments about any significant moments at home or whilst you are out and about. It does not have to be school related; it might be that your child has eaten broccoli for the first time!

Philosophy for Children (P4C)

Philosophy for children or P4C is something that runs throughout the school. It is an approach to teaching and learning in which children take part in philosophical enquiry. It is said to enhance thinking and communication skills, boost confident and self-esteem, and improve behaviour and well-being. We have been leading up to P4C lessons as children need to be able to listen effectively, take turns and take on board other people's ideas. We have been doing this by playing listening games, having regular conversations and supporting children in their play. This half term we will be introducing Philosophy Bear who helps us to think deeply about the concept we are talking about. This concept might be love, friendship, loneliness, trust etc... to name but a few. Children will get the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and opinions, providing reasons as to why they might think something. We find P4C lessons really helps children to express themselves and understand that their thoughts and opinions matter. We are looking forward to seeing where our discussions will take us.

We hope the above information is useful and gives you an overview of the next half term. Please don't forget that the weekly email will give a more detailed overview of our learning across the week.

Please let us know about any other information we can provide for you.

Early Years Team

