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Maple Class Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back – I do hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year. It has been great to see the children coming back into school with such energy and enthusiasm.

Spring Term Topics

We're very much looking forward to our topics leading up to Easter. Our first - Lost in Space – has already blasted off to a flying start with our Astronaut Training Day, when children learned to walk on the Moon, made wrist communicators, filled out their intergalactic passports, hunted down aliens and tried real astronaut food. During the rest of the term we'll be designing rockets and robots, cracking alien codes, composing space music, and making up our own stories about Space. Our focus in maths is shape, pattern and positional language and will we be sharing and writing fantasy space stories in literacy. Our Letters and Sounds work will obviously continue alongside this. (See our Topic Wheel in class or online for more details)

Our second topic is Sailing the Ocean Blue – when we'll be learning about sea creatures, investigating floating and sinking, creating our own sea-scape pictures and becoming pirates! Our literacy focus will be poetry and in maths we will begin to look at calculation and money. (Topic Wheel available after half term)

Assessments, Support and Extension

Just before Christmas children were assessed in the maths work we covered last term and we are currently assessing phonics, reading and writing. All assessment activities are informal and involve observing children undertaking familiar activities rather than formal tests. The information these assessments give us, allow us to ensure children's progress is 'on track' and informs how we help your child to progress further. If they do require more support or extension in a given area I will speak to you about this.

It is quite usual for us to set up small groups in which children play games or carry out activities, once or twice a week, to help further support or extend their learning in maths and literacy. Having said this I would like to reiterate that we believe children learn best through well planned play and self chosen activities and this approach remains at the heart of the education we offer.

Parent – Teacher Consultations

We will be able to discuss your child's progress further at parent-teacher meetings on Tuesday 31st January. Please sign up for an appointment on the booking sheets in class from Monday 23rd January.

Reading and Homework

Children will continue to read with me on an individual basis, though a small number of more secure readers may start reading with me in pairs or a small reading group which allows for group discussion and sharing of strategies and ideas. I have been very appreciative of all your comments via reading diaries and would like to remind you how valuable it is if you can read with your child at little each day. Do also remember if you have any concerns please don't hesitate to speak to me.

Homework will continue to come home on a Friday. Your comments on your child's homework have been really helpful to me this year (especially in seeing which activities they've really enjoyed or struggled with), so thank you. Please remember not to worry if you don't get a chance to complete homework one week.

PE

PE will take place on Thursday afternoons this term – when children will be learning skills in games. Please ensure children have appropriate indoor and outdoor kit available each week and that it clearly named.

Sharing Time is Back !

Those of you who have had previous dealings with Class 1, will surely remember the popularity of 'sharing time'!

On Thursday afternoons we will allow children a 'sharing time' when they can bring in toys, books, items of interest from home etc. which they would like to share with other children. This is not a show and tell session, but an opportunity for children to interact directly with each other sharing something that interests them. This session has always been very popular in the past, but it is obviously essential that children only bring in things that they are willing to let other children touch and play with – so no prize possessions or family heirlooms please! Children should bring their items into the classroom on Thursday morning and place them in the 'sharing box'.

If there are very special items or news that children want to show or tell us, we can of course arrange this, just let us know!

Just a few reminders.....

- Please remember that even in Winter, children have access to the outside area at most times and need suitable outer clothing. I know it's fiddly, but naming hats and mittens helps us to return them when they inevitably get left behind!
- The voluntary contribution for snacks this term is £3.60 (or 60p a week)
- Children should bring in a water bottle everyday – this ensures they have access to water whenever they want it (and is often less messy and time consuming than cups!)
- As always please do come and talk to us if you have any concerns

Regards

The Maple Class Team