

Dear Parents/Guardians

We hope you all had a relaxing break and we look forward to seeing you at various events during the year. Year 4 is a very exciting (and busy) year with many new experiences and opportunities on offer. Hopefully, you will find the information in this leaflet to be a useful reminder of our expectations for the year.



Homework

Homework sheets are used to inform you about the homework. These will come home in the homework folders on a **Friday**. Homework is usually handed in on the following **Friday**. Please could you sign the sheet each week to show that you have seen your child's homework, and that it has been completed. We will do our best to check off the previous week on the Friday morning - as you can appreciate this is quite an administrative task. If you feel that your child has worked for 20 minutes solidly but still hasn't completed a task, please sign to let us know and if necessary send in an accompanying note especially if your child is at all worried about their progress.

Reading and Reading Records

In Year 4 we encourage children to share their enthusiasm for reading and to become more discerning in their choice of reading materials. The children will be encouraged to share their reading experiences with others. This might include activities such as reading play scripts together, discussing books that they are currently reading or sharing a short story. Please support us by encouraging your child to read widely, perhaps by taking them to browse in Hitchin Library, and by discussing what they are reading with them. We know from research that children who experience this support make better than average progress.

The school will supply your child with up to two library books. The children may choose their own books but one of them must be a narrative.

Please record the reading your child does at home (book title, pages read and any relevant comments) in your child's Reading Record. Expectations for reading at home depend on your child's age and stage, please see the last page of this booklet for guidance.

Reading records will be checked in school on a **Friday**.

What is happening this year?

English

During the year your child will read a variety of texts (poetry, fiction and non-fiction) and will investigate the features of each type, as well as grammatical features, to help them to be able to write independently in various styles. They will also be reading a longer novel in class to support some of their work. Also, your child will be given a fortnightly spelling list. These lists generally consist of 20 words but may be altered according to the individual pupil's needs. The pupils are expected to learn the words each week, using a variety of strategies as they have been taught in class. Ideas of how to support your child with English can be found in our free English parent guides at the school office.

In line with the 2014 curriculum and best practice, the teaching and learning of spelling at Whitehill focuses on rules, commonly misspelt words and developing an understanding of the roles of morphology (word meanings) and etymology (word roots). Although some words simply have to be learnt, teachers help pupils to understand relationships between meaning and spelling where these are relevant. Pupils are helped to spell words with prefixes and suffixes correctly through being taught some of the general principles for adding them.

Spelling lists (containing words related to the taught strategy and words from the 2014 National Curriculum statutory list) will run over two weeks. They might also include revision and topic words. Pupils will be tested on the words from this list and new words that follow the same rule. Pupils will have a Spellosaurus with suggested activities to complete to explore and embed strategies.

Mathematics

The most important thing that your child can learn is their times tables up to 12 x 12- to a point where they can be automatically recalled - as this knowledge is applied and manipulated in many contexts. This year we will continue using Times Tables Rock Stars which can be accessed on any computer via a web browser or on both Apple and Android devices via the TT Rock Star app. You will have received details of this in a separate letter. We do understand that not everyone has internet access and therefore your child may use the school facilities to complete tasks.

This year, the DfE has introduced Times Tables tests for Year 4. We will do our best to prepare your children for these, but if they regularly use the Sound Check section of Times Tables Rock Stars, they will be very familiar with the test format.

Science

This year we will be learning about Teeth and the Digestive System, Rocks & Soils, States of Matter, Sound and Electricity. Each topic will include working scientifically where the children will be taught investigative skills (planning, obtaining and presenting evidence, considering evidence and evaluating).

PE

Children are taught Games by professional coaches on a Thursday afternoon to ensure the best teaching of a wide range of differing activities. Mr. Miley oversees the co-ordination of

this. During the first half term Orville Class will be swimming on a Thursday afternoon. In addition, the pupils will be taught gymnastics or dance every week.

Pupils must have their full PE kit in school at all times. Should your child be unable to participate due to injury please ensure that a letter is sent into school.

MFL

The pupils will be taught French by Mrs. Skinner every week on a Friday.

Foundation Subjects

These will be covered through topics throughout the year based on units from the International Primary Curriculum. Separate information will be sent giving an overview of the unit being studied, together with suggestions of how you can support your child. All units involve independent research, collaborative work and presentational skills – valuable skills that your child will continue to use in years to come.

Trips and Visitors

Trips and visits greatly enhance your child's learning and so we try to incorporate these into the curriculum. However, we do realise that trips can be expensive and so we aim to keep the cost as low as possible, whilst providing a learning experience of high quality. A visit to the Natural History Museum to develop their knowledge and understanding of has already been booked for the Autumn Term and we have booked a visit to the British Schools Museum at the start of December (the cost of this last year was £5.00). During the Spring Term, we are planning to hold a Roman themed architecture workshop (the cost of this last year was £5.00) and a trip to Hudnall Park, where we will be spending the day studying Rocks and Soils (the cost last year was £12.50). Finally, not forgetting, our optional school journey in May which will take us to Overstrand, Norfolk.

Help

If anyone would like to offer help in hearing children read, coming to talk to the children about a particular topic being taught, or if you have a particular expertise that you could share with the school we would love to hear from you.

Uniform

Please ensure that all items of uniform are labelled with your child's full name. We will be checking jumpers and if we find any without names, we will use a permanent marker pen to add their name.

I look forward to working with you to support your child over the course of the year.

Best wishes

Glenn Denney

Reading with your child: Expectations

Reading is, without doubt, one of the most important skills that pupils will be acquiring and perfecting over their time in Whitehill. The ability to read fluently provides access to the rest of the curriculum, so has an impact on success in every subject.

The expectations outlined below are given as the best case scenario and meeting them will maximise the chances of your child making good progress with their reading. They are especially important if your child is working below age related expectations. However, given how busy life is, we understand that it will not always be possible to stick to them. If you have difficulty in supporting your child's reading, *for whatever reason*, please let us know and we will do our best to help.

Pupils on graded reading scheme & for the first 6 weeks after coming off the reading scheme

- Read daily for at least 20 minutes (*approximately* 60% of time reading and 40% of time discussing what has been read).
- You will both need to see the text, so that any incorrect or missing words can be identified. Please take care to point out punctuation and talk about how it helps with understanding. If your child is reading each word correctly, but not making sense of the whole sentence, it is worth taking time to review the overall meaning before continuing to read. Quality is far better than quantity.
- Please be particularly vigilant when your child has just moved up a level – their new books will contain more unknown/trickier words and they might need extra support for their reading to be fluent/make sense.
- After reading with your child, please note (in their Reading Record) the book title; pages read; and make any relevant comments.
- Reading Record will be reviewed regularly in school. If you are making a note that requires immediate attention, please ask your child to show it to their teacher.

Pupils who are free readers

- Independent daily reading
- Read & discuss what has been read with an adult at least once a week. Please note in Reading Record.
- NB Even confident readers often need support with using punctuation when reading aloud. They would certainly benefit from high quality "book chat" about what they have read.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 will take increasing ownership of their Reading Record. They will make a note of what they are reading and complete the comments section at least twice a week. Pupils can use this as a "reading diary" for example to:

- begin a critical evaluation of what they have read: e.g. what they enjoyed & why; how characters are portrayed; what they think about the plot
- note down things that have puzzled them: e.g. unknown/tricky words (& record their definition); inconsistencies in plot/character (why did Goldilocks go to sleep in a house she knew belonged to three bears?) and predict what might happen next.