

Year 6

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope you all had a relaxing break and look forward to seeing you at various events during the year. Year 6 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.

Reading Record

Every child has been supplied with a Reading Record that they can use as their homework diary. This will be used to record homework tasks, as a reading record and a home-school communication system. This should go home every night and come back into school the next day.

In preparation for Secondary School, it is important that the pupils are independent in organising their homework tasks. We have devised a clear system to support them with this. Therefore, homework will be set on Fridays and is due on Thursdays. When homework has been set, your child will have copied it into their reading record. We would be grateful if you would check and sign this weekly. We will be running additional homework clubs on Tuesday (Maths) and Wednesday (English) lunchtimes in order to give your children more opportunities to complete tasks.

If you feel that your child has struggled with a task, we would appreciate you signing off the reading record or their piece of work, so that we know they have made a good attempt. You might also want to jot down any difficulties encountered. In addition, we encourage the pupils to be self-reflective and speak to the teacher if they have any problems. The Reading Record is a two-way document, so feel free to write comments or concerns.

Recording Reading

In Year 6, we encourage children to share their enthusiasm for reading and to become more discerning in their choice of reading materials. Please support us by encouraging your child to read widely 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. Alternatively, the pupils may bring in a book from home. The pupils are expected to read daily. We do ask that the children keep a brief record of the reading they are doing at home in their Reading Record. We request that they record independent reading twice a week and reading with an adult once a week.

What's 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. During the year, we will be using Shackleton's Journey by Will Grill and The Island by Armin Greder as texts to inspire our English work. In addition, we will be studying classic literature including: The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe, A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens and selected stories by Oscar Wilde. Ideas of how to support your child with English can be found in our free English parent guides at the school office.

Spellings

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). Spelling lists will run over two weeks. They might also include revision words. We will be working on spelling lists on a two-weekly cycle. At the end of week one, we will have an investigative spelling session and at the end of week two, we will test the children on their understanding and application of spelling rules with a dictation that will include words from the list and 'ambush' words that follow the rules we are working on. Pupils will have a Spellasaurus to explore, practise and revise spelling rules and embed strategies. We expect that will complete at least three different activities each week, as part of their homework.

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. It is also crucial that children know their number operations well and are able to use formal written methods to solve problems. Any extra help at home to consolidate work in school is always greatly appreciated. This could be in the form of involving your child in 'real life' situations where every-day skills, for example working with time and money, can be practised.

Science

This year we will be learning about living things and their habitats, evolution and inheritance, light and electricity. Each topic will include scientific enquiry where the children will be taught investigative skills (planning, obtaining and presenting evidence, considering evidence and evaluating). In the Spring term, we will also be covering sex and relationship education. There will be further information nearer the time.

Foundation Subjects

These will be covered through topics throughout the year through our topic-based creative curriculum. In History, we will study chronology and key historical events through studying The Tudor Dynasty and historic revolutions. In Art, we will study a variety of artists and craftsmen, including Henry Moore and Frida Kahlo. We will study Geography through our Rivers Topic, later the year. All units involve independent research, collaborative work and presentational skills – valuable skills that your child will continue to use in years to come. Miss McGurk will be teaching ukulele to Year 6. That will be great fun!

MFL

The pupils will be taught French by Mrs Skinner every week on a Friday. This year she will be teaching using a new scheme called, 'Euro Stars'! There will also be opportunities to attend Spanish club.

PE

Children are taught Games by professional coaches on a Friday afternoon to ensure the best teaching of a wide range of activities. In addition, the pupils will be taught Dance and Gymnastics skills on Monday afternoons. Pupils must have their full, labelled 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.

Support in the classroom

Support will be provided in the classroom and through interventions as appropriate by our own team of Teaching Assistants and support staff. Targeted Teaching will take place on Tuesday mornings and we will run focused groups, for the whole year group, on Thursday afternoons.

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. In the autumn, we have already attended The Henry Moore Foundation. We also plan to visit The Houses of Parliament and Tate Britain later in the year, not to forget our optional school journey in the summer which will take us to France this year (full details to follow).

Production

In the summer term we will be putting on our end of Year 6 Production. This is an opportunity for everyone to get involved whether in a performing, technical or other capacity.

SATs

The children will be taking SATs in English (Reading Comprehension and Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Maths in the Summer Term. Whilst they are an important indicator of a child's progress, they do not dominate the broad and balanced learning opportunities in our school.

We support the year 6 children greatly with their SATs preparation in the following ways:

- We have half-termly assessment points during which the children take past papers and we assess their strengths and address their gaps.
- SAT papers may be sent home to support the learning in class. In addition, children will have plenty of practice questions in class.
- We provide extra support for those children who are less confident leading up to the tests.
- At the start of the Spring term, we offer the opportunity to purchase revision guides at a reduced cost.
- We will hold an information evening for parents will be organised in the Spring Term.

For those of you wishing to work with your child at home on certain topics, many bookshops and supermarkets now stock SATs preparation books that you can work through.

We look forward to working with you to support your child during this exciting and important year. As the Year 6 team, we relish the opportunity to make your child's last year at Whitehill productive, fun-filled and memorable whilst getting them ready for their move to Secondary School (more information on transition will follow after SATs).

Please feel free to pop in at the end of the day to discuss any worries or concerns – we are usually around school somewhere for a brief chat. You can, of course, always make an appointment if you prefer.

Kind regards

Clare Bailey and Theresa Bryan