

Dear Parents and Carers,

Hello and welcome to Whitehill, Year 3 and Mayan class. We hope you all had a safe and relaxing summer and we look forward to seeing you at various events during the year. Year 3 is a very exciting (and busy) year with many new experiences and opportunities on offer. I hope that you will find the information in this leaflet to be a useful reminder of our expectations for the year.



Homework

Your child will have a homework book. Each week they will have a number of tasks to complete, which should be completed in their homework book or on the computer/tablet. Their book needs to be handed in every Friday morning.

Spellings: New spellings will be sent out on a Friday, with children being tested on these words the following week. We ask that they practise their spellings in a variety of ways using their Spellosaurus book. The Spellosaurus booklet is attached into homework books and offers a wide variety of different spelling activities. Please encourage your child to pick activities that they enjoy. They can do the same activities each week, different or even come up with their own creative ways of learning their spellings.

Times Tables: They need to complete a minimum of 15 minutes of TT Rockstars each week. This is a magical programme and if they put the time into it, you will be impressed with how quickly they learn their times tables. We will set them the tables that they are working on each week.

If you feel that your child has worked really well, but still has not completed a task, we would appreciate you signing off their piece of work so that we know they have made a good attempt. You might also want to jot down any difficulties encountered. Some of the activities may not require any writing in the book, but we would love to see photographs, if possible. The homework book will be checked weekly, so your child will have plenty of time to complete the work set – but please do not leave it all until the last minute!

*Homework books will be sent home for the first time on Friday 23rd September. These will include log in details for the relevant online platforms.

Maths: Some children will receive a Maths homework sheet – they should spend no more than 20 minutes on this piece of work. Much of what will be included in this homework will relate to learning content that we have covered, although, occasionally, something new may be included that is coming up in class, as a way of seeing what the children already know. We will go through the answers to these questions in class on a Friday afternoon.

*Please note that Maths homework will not be sent out until after October half term.

Lexia: Some children will be asked to complete a minimum of 20 minutes on our Lexia learning platform (please note that this task will be instead of the Maths homework). Lexia is a program that looks to develop early reading skills. More information will be made available in due course for those children who will be using the Lexia software in and out of school.

Reading and Reading Records

In Year 3, 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. 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 book. We would expect children to have read their reading book aloud to an adult before it is changed. Please make sure they read a minimum of three times a week. This is a two-way document, so feel free to write comments /concerns. Please make sure that your child knows to show us any comments that you have written! You can, of course, write a letter if it is more appropriate, or call in to see us at the start or end of the day. The reading records will be checked every **Monday**.

At the back of this booklet, you will find some hints and tips about how to make your shared reading sessions worthwhile and fun.

Our main library day is **Monday** however, will have access to change reading scheme books on a more regular basis.

Technology

At Whitehill, we use various technology platforms (Google Classroom, Times Tables Rock Stars, Lexia etc.) to access work in school and for homework. You will find any relevant web links, usernames and passwords on the inside cover of their Reading Record and their homework book. If you need any assistance, please pop by and ask me.

House Points

At Whitehill, children and staff are part of a house; either Fire, Water, Earth or Air. Throughout the year, they are able to earn house points for their house – these points are collated on a Friday in our Achiever's Assembly, where the house with the most points is awarded the house cup. House points can be awarded for excellent work, superb teamwork, impressive homework and generally good effort and choices made both in and out of the classroom. Children are also able to receive five house points if they earn a Headteacher's Award from Mr. Mills.

Throughout the year, children will also be able to earn house points through various competitions, including rounders, football and Times Table Rock Stars.

Individually, children's house points count towards different milestones, starting at Bronze through to Platinum. Children each have their own house point book, where they will keep their house points in. Each milestone they receive will earn them a special certificate, which they can take home.

A Little Reminder about Uniform

We are proud of our team image and instil in the children the importance of being smart. Please could you ensure that your child wears the correct uniform for school. **It is also vital that all items of uniform are clearly named**, so that any 'lost' items can be returned quickly.

Please make sure your child brings a water bottle and **healthy snack**, such as fresh fruit, with them for break time.

Activities Afternoons & PE

Children are taught sports on Thursday afternoons to ensure the best teaching of a wide range of exciting activities. Your child will also have the opportunity to have their National Curriculum swimming lessons. These are held at Hitchin Swimming pool and you will have a letter outlining the costs nearer the time.

Extra PE lessons are also held on alternating **Monday** afternoons, so it is important that PE kits are in school each week. If you would like to wash them, please ask your child to bring them home on Thursday and then return them to school, ready for Monday. Please ensure that all PE kit, including trainers are named and in a well-labelled PE bag.

Teachers

Although I (Mr. Denney) am your child's class teacher, the class will also have lessons from other teachers. On Friday afternoons, the children will have specialist French lessons from Mrs. Skinner. On Friday mornings, Mrs. Small or Mr. Wells may also teach the children, as we split into smaller class sizes for Maths and Spellings/English skills.

Trips and Visitors

Trips and visits greatly enhance your child's learning and so we try to incorporate these throughout 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 high quality learning experience. We hope to go to Wymondley Wood and Shepreth Wildlife Park. You will be sent letters about any arrangements in due course. It is likely that these trips will require a voluntary contribution, which will cover travel and expert instructors. Based on last year's costings, Wymondley Woods will be around £5.00 per child and Shepreth is looking at roughly £11.00 per child. Please note that these costings are subject to change.

We look forward to working with you to support your child during this year. Please feel free to pop in at the beginning or end of the day to discuss any worries or concerns – we are usually around school somewhere! You can, of course, always make an appointment if you prefer. We look forward to seeing you and working together during the year.

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.

A flavour of what we will be learning about in Mayan Class. If you would like more information on the curriculum, please refer to the school website.



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

Best wishes,

Mr. Denney (Class Teacher) & Mrs. Williams (Classroom Teaching Assistant)

Key Days throughout the Week	
Monday	Reading Records handed in with at least 3 home entries PE on alternating weeks
Thursday	Activities Afternoon
Friday	Homework handed in and new homework handed out.

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.

Reading and Book Chat - Quality, not quantity is the key.

Read a few pages rather than an entire book. Do take time to work out tricky/unknown words together but try to let the reading happen without lots of interruption. Interrupting a reader -especially an emerging reader- can hamper understanding, following, and remembering a storyline. It can also affect prediction of words and sounds. More importantly, it can impact a reader’s enjoyment.

Spend a similar amount of time on book chat as you did with reading.

What's the point of book chat?

- To share enjoyment and interest
- To help clarify meaning
- To understand characters and events better
- To understand the intent of the author
- To make predictions



Some of the questions below should be useful as prompts.

- Clarify the meaning of a new/tricky word
- Remind me, what has just happened?
- (Re-telling is an important but challenging skill)
- What happened after....?
- Can you tell me why...?
- What does the word ... make you think of?
- Remind me what the problem is in the story
- What do you think of the story so far? (why?)
- If you were in the story, who would you be?
- How would you describe the main character? (Can you do it in 3 words?)
- If you were in the story, would you do anything differently?
- Who is your favourite character so far? (why?)

- Did anything surprise you about the story today?
- If you met (pick a character), what advice would you give them?
- How do you think it will end? (What makes you think that?)
- Ask about an illustration
- What would you say to/ask the author if you met them?
- What new fact from the book can you impress me with today?
- What do you think about the way the book is set out?
- Has today's read left you with any questions?
- What are you hoping to read next?