



ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CHURCH of ENGLAND (VA) FIRST SCHOOL

Year 4 Spring 2 Newsletter 28th February 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families had a lovely half-term holiday and that you stayed out of the epic winds that seemed to sweep across the nation!

As always, I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on the achievements of last term. Despite being a short six weeks, it was remarkable all the children managed. Studying and writing fables appeared to be a particular highlight for the class – from being shocked at the morbid ending of *The Hawk and the Nightingale* to discussing the way the moral of *The North Wind and the Sun* has changed as it has been retold, it was an absolute delight to teach and the children really seemed to run with the topic. Within Geography, the children's understanding of the geography of Greece often astounded me – please do ask your children about the topology of Greece and the role of tourism in changing the country!

I also could not write this without thanking the many parents who came along to Grainger Market to try some authentic Greek food provided by Acropolis Street Food (for free!). A thank you card from the children was hand delivered to the lovely team there over the half term break by Mrs Armstrong (who, like the rest of us, is a repeat customer now!).

This term, our topic follows very neatly on from that towards Ancient Greek history. The title of the topic is 'Why do we study the Ancient Greeks?' and is in many ways the most ambitious History topic the children will have studied so far. The focus is on understanding why the Greeks were so important and noting their influence everywhere, from the concept of democracy to the architecture of Grey Street to philosophy. By the end of the unit, children will be thinking like proper historians, considering the concept of historical significance and who decides and by what metrics do people decide what is worth studying in the first place. As a historian myself, I am beyond excited! This topic has a fantastic trip to Durham University in a few weeks' time where the children will handle real Ancient Greek artefacts.

In English, we will follow on from the Greek Aesop towards Ancient Greek myths, understanding their conventions and even writing one or two of our own! Our termly poetry writing will also happen at the end of the term – if it ends up anything like their First World War poems, there won't be a dry eye when they perform them (as before, it will be individually videoed and placed on Seesaw for you to hear). Alongside this, one ongoing grammar focus will be on apostrophes: already, the children have been told to go hunting for some incorrect apostrophe usage so if they have already started to try and edit your writing for you, you'll know why!

Maths-wise, I will as always mention Times Table Rock Stars and the importance of keeping this up. Further information about the times table test will come after the Easter break. Fractions was tackled last term and we are now applying that within the concept of decimals, going up to hundredths. Fractions and decimals are one of those topics that children can trip up on, so, as detailed in the last class newsletter, any links you can make to them in everyday life is fantastic, like grouping objects and making halves, quarters, tenths of things and spotting their relationship with decimals. Whilst percentages aren't in the Year 4 curriculum, many of them will see percentages all the time in real life – knowing that a 10% off sale is the same as 1/10 off which is also 0.1, or in a football match that one team has 60% which is 0.6 of the whole possession, will also stand them in good stead.

In RE, we had the hugely successful Lent worship led by Year 4 which was a delight. The Year 4s showed their prowess in leading an act of collective worship that had something for everyone, from drama for the

younger ones to the meaningful message to us all about reflecting on what we can do better. This spirit of positive reflection I feel always arrives at the perfect time, right in the middle of the academic year.

Whilst the full curriculum offer is in the topic web, I particularly wanted to draw your attention to the exciting Melva project which is going to form a chunk of the PSHE we do this term. The project is being run by a theatre group with many schools from the region taking part, focused on dealing with anxiety through sensitive, age-appropriate drama. The project involves a trip to the theatre on Wednesday 4th March 2020 but is far more than just that, with activities before and after to be completed in school. We are passionate about young people's mental health at Archbishop Runcie First School and this is an exciting project for the children to take part in. I look forward to them sharing what they find out with you!

The timetable continues as it was before the half term, with ukulele on a Tuesday afternoon and recorder and PE on a Friday (alongside the ongoing visit to GCMS for Computing most weeks). The new track and hopefully progressively lovelier weather will also mean plenty of opportunities to attempt the Golden Mile. I will attempt to take part in it myself as well, hopefully with fewer incidents of me falling over...!

I would be remiss to not 'plug' the importance of daily reading and how they are not too old to read to adults! Alongside this, homework will continue to be set every Thursday – just as last term, it is about attempting not about completing! Particularly in the Maths book, I will likely set work that builds upon prior learning and which the children may find tricky. I have had quite a few children coming to me worried that they did not finish all of it and every time my answer has been 'That's fine!!' Please ensure you mark the work with the answers at the back. Thank you.

Lastly, spellings will continue to be set for a Thursday test: I set a different spelling rule every week but, unsurprisingly by this point of the year, we are approaching completing them all, so if you spot any repeat spellings from earlier on in the academic year, it is deliberate!

As ever, my go to recommendation to any families interested in finding out more about anything curriculum-wise is www.theschoolrun.co.uk which has not only all the spelling rules the children have to learn by the end of Years 3 and 4 but also all of the curriculum areas that are focused upon in Year 4.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to catch me at the end of the school day. You can also email me at jonathan.booth@archbishop.newcastle.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Booth

Some relevant Year 4 dates this term:

Wednesday 4th March – Melva visit, Gosforth Civic Theatre

Friday 6th March – Library visit

Tuesday 10th March – Visit to Centre for Life

Friday 13th March – Forest School

Thursday 19th March – Swimming gala (selected children only)

Friday 20th March – Mothers' Day Service, 9am

Tuesday 24th March – Visit to Durham University

Tuesday 31st March – Cross Country (selected children only)

Thursday 2nd April – Year 4 visiting St Nicholas's for Easter storytelling

Friday 3rd April – Easter Service at All Saints' Church