



ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CHURCH of ENGLAND (VA) FIRST SCHOOL

Year 4 Newsletter 2 8th November 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to school after a hard-earned half-term break for your children! I hope that you have had a lovely time and that you are excited as we enter Autumn 2.

Firstly, I would like to put on the record my thanks to not only your wonderful children but also everyone associated with the school for the incredibly kind welcome I received in my first term at this school. You have made me feel very much at home here and I cannot believe that it has only been nine weeks – it feels like I have been here so much longer and that I have known the class for far more than just one half term! The class have been incredible and I am so grateful to you, their families, for the consistent warm support that I have received. Additionally, special thank you to the many volunteers who came to Beamish on Monday and helped make the trip all the more enjoyable and quite a bit easier!!

It also is a good time to reflect on the many achievements of last term. The residential to Dukeshouse Wood is a particular highlight of mine as it showcased the children's astounding maturity, resilience and kindness to one another as they overcame their own fears and also helped to start a new tradition at the school of a Year 4 night away. There was of course their play, written by the children themselves, which they performed to families at the very end of last term as a culmination of their work on our 'Go Green' topic. That topic was a delight because the children really ran with it themselves, investigating a wide variety of ecological issues and giving hope that the next generation will be excellent stewards of God's green earth. The children appear to be enjoying sharing their work via Seesaw too! I could spend many paragraphs writing about the wonderful speed with which the children developed their addition and subtraction knowledge, or their wide variety of writing pieces inspired by fairytales, or their Science work in understanding how to classify living things in our school grounds, but I will move on to what's coming up this term!

This term, our topic is a History-focused one on 'Childhood', with a particular focus on schooling. This is fulfilling the curriculum objective of an 'extended chronological study' where the children track a theme over a number of years, in this case one that they will find easy to identify with! They will be working on their understanding of chronology in the sense of knowing just how far back 150, 100 and 50 years is in terms of lifespans and tracking what changes and what stays the same in that length of time. We will begin with looking at what it was like to be a child in a Victorian school (hence the Beamish trip!), then looking at the many legislative educational changes in the early 20th century, followed by an understanding of life as a child in the Second World War and then looking at the changing concept of 'play' since the Second World War. I am sure that any conversations between themselves and you, their grandparents and other relatives about how children's lives have changed will be enlightening and helpful! If there are any older relatives with particularly exciting stories, please get in touch if they'd be interested in visiting!

Alongside this, after an initial English focus on World War One poetry to prepare for our Remembrance worship (Monday 11th November at 9:00am), we will be reading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* for our Reading and Writing. There's much we can get out of this book, from its setting in an evacuation era to its Christian allegory, and is something I will be excited to read with the children. My only request is that, if the children have not read the book already (or seen the film), that they don't read it at home (yet!) so we can work on our prediction skills. Thank you.

This term's Maths is based around multiplication and division, meaning that times tables will be a focus this term and for the rest of the academic year. I will be asking the children to spend some time on Times Table

Rock Stars weekly and giving them time to have a go a few times a week in school too once our new iPads are set up – your support with this at home is very much appreciated.

Those of you who attended the playscript performance will have met our student teacher, Miss Burn (not to be confused with Miss Burns!), who will be spending the next four weeks with our class as well as some time in the new year. She will be working alongside me over the next three weeks and she has already settled in well as the children have, unsurprisingly, been delightfully kind to a new member of the team. She is very excited to be working here and has commented on how lovely the class is.

In terms of changes this term, there will be a slight timetable change as we will be receiving some special PE lessons from Katherine Ginns, a PE expert for Newcastle PE and Sport Services, on Tuesday mornings. This will replace the longer Friday slot. (Maths will be taught in the afternoon as a result.) The shorter PE session, which was originally on Wednesday afternoons, should continue on that date, dependent on whether we get approval to spend some time at Gosforth Central Middle School's computer suite, but the exact day may be subject to change. I will of course let you know if there are any further changes and thank you for your patience in advance – as a general rule, it would be helpful if their PE kits and trainers are in school every day, especially for the Golden Mile.

There has also been a date change for an upcoming trip, with the trip to Durham University for their Ancient Greece topic now moved to Tuesday 4th February. Further details will come this term alongside letters and cost information.

As ever, reading at home is crucial and may I ask for them to read to an adult as often as possible, daily in an ideal world but of course I understand that this is not always possible! Asking as many questions as possible to check their understanding of the text is a great way to ensure that books are at the right level for your child. Alongside this, homework will continue to be set every Thursday – I only ever ask that homework is attempted, not necessarily completed, so there are no concerns if your child cannot manage all of it, especially if I set homework as pre-learning before we engage with the topic in class! 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!'

Lastly, spellings will continue to be set for a Thursday test but may I please ask for your own close attention to the children when it comes to spelling. I can only set a certain amount per week and it is natural that children will forget certain ones over time. I am going to make a big push on spellings this term in all of their books, but any support at home is deeply appreciated. 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.

May I also say thank you again for your kindness and generosity over the past eight weeks. I am so excited for the next half term and for the rest of the academic year!

Yours sincerely,

Mr Booth