

Early Years Topic Letter

Autumn Term 1 2020

Welcome to a brand new school year at Whittingham, we are SO excited to welcome you back and to meet our new starters. The classroom has felt so empty without you all and we can't wait to get back to some kind of 'new normal' making lots of memories and helping your children to continue to make lots of progress.

Please bear in mind that some things may still be quite different to normal due COVID19 but please rest assured we are doing everything to keep everyone safe and are following all government guidelines.

For this reason, in the first half term at least:

- There will unfortunately be no sand, shared play dough or soft furnishings in line with government guidance.
- We will not be using our PE kits in the first half term.
- We are unable to provide your child with spare clothes if they get wet or have an accident like we normally would so it is very important that your child has a set of spare clothes (and socks) to keep on their peg. If your child is likely to need pull ups/nappies/wipes please provide these in the bag.
- Please make sure your child has a waterproof coat and a named water bottle everyday at school. If the weather is cold, please also send a named hat, scarf and gloves as we cannot use school spares due to the current pandemic.

We can't wait to see lots of smiley faces brightening up our classroom!

Keeping in touch...

Due to the current COVID19 restrictions we are very aware that we will not be able to use our usual 'open door' policy and that there will be less opportunity for parents and carers to speak to us in the classroom and at morning drop off.

We are still here for anything you need, you can contact us in the following ways:

Tapestry - We will use this to send reminders, add observations and photos and provide assessment information along with targets and next steps that you can support your child with at school. You can also add photos and messages on here.

Email - Please feel free to email me on

toni.dick@whittingham.northumberland.sch.uk and I will endeavour to get back to you as soon as I can.

Contact the school office and ask for a **phone call** appointment with us.

A strong home/school link is vital to support your child's education and wellbeing and we are really looking forward to working with you (even if it may look a bit different to usual!)

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact a member of the EYFS team!

Miss Dick, & Mrs Marsden, supported by Mrs Manners and Mrs Lewis.



Don't forget **home time** has changed in line with the government guidance which asks schools to stagger home time, allowing for less people on the school site at once. Nursery **home time** is **12 o'clock** if they go home at lunch time or **2:50pm** if they go home at the end of the day. Reception children who are being collected by an adult can be picked up at **3:15pm**.

Please remember to socially distance yourself from all other adults on the school site and help us to keep everyone safe!

Personal, Social, Emotional Development

PSED is constantly promoted all day every day in Early Years for example, sharing, taking turns, understanding our own emotions, listening to our friends, compromising, managing friendships and following classroom rules. These are reinforced on an hourly basis in Early Years.

This half term we will place particular emphasis on supporting the children to settle in, build confidence and happily build relationships with the adults and other children. The last few months have been incredibly difficult for children, many of whom have been at home for a long time. The children's mental health and wellbeing will take priority when they return to school. We will begin the half term by talking lots about our families (don't forget to upload your picture to tapestry) as this will help build the children's confidence as they begin to share things about their own families.

We will also focus on a story called 'The colour monster' to help us think about our feelings and will spend lots of this half term becoming familiar with how we feel. We will make our own colour monsters and think about all of the things that make us happy. Later in the term we will introduce the 'Little Red Hen' story and this will help the children to think about how we can help our friends and be kind.



We will also focus on sharing and taking turns as we expect this to be an area which the children find challenging given the current circumstances.

The first half term will be strongly focussed on developing the PSED area of the curriculum.



Communication and Language

This half term we will be focussing on:

Promoting good listening skills and playing listening games that will help us with early phonics.

Promoting the use of why and how questions.

Anticipating key events in stories.

Being able to switch attention when busy doing something else and responding to other children appropriately while engaged in another activity.

Speaking in the correct tense.

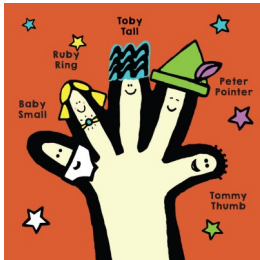
Recounting our own experiences.

Following simple instructions and moving on to follow two part instructions.



Physical Development

We will take part in lots of physical activities this half term which will help the children to develop their gross and fine motor skills.



We will continue with dough disco, this helps the children to develop their fine motor skills and strengthens the muscles in their hands, which then helps them to hold a pencil and begin to draw and write with more accuracy.

We will continue to promote gross motor activities outdoors and at forest school to help the children develop their coordination and balance.

We will begin to form the Read, Write, Inc sounds that we learn accurately and the sounds in our name, we will do this in lots of different ways including with paintbrushes and water, paint, in the air and in messy play.

We will begin to chat about having a healthy diet and what happens when we do lots of exercise.

This half term we will place a huge emphasis on developing independence. We will be working on hand washing, hygiene, toileting and putting our coat and shoes/wellies on by ourselves.

We will support the children to understand the importance of hand washing and teach them to do this effectively.

You can help your child at home by supporting them to be independent! Let them have a go at getting dressed, putting their own coat on and putting their shoes on! Velcro shoes are very helpful!

Reception Literacy

This half term in Reception we will be focussing on securing our listening skills so that as the term goes on we can begin to learn our Read Write Inc phonics set 1 sounds through short and snappy 'speed sounds' sessions each morning, designed to teach the children to recognise and pronounce the pure sounds, before reading them in simple CVC words such as 'mat, top, sit, sad'.

We will be applying these sounds through carefully planned activities and play situations where we will promote and model different purposes for writing (making lists, writing in our mud kitchen, making plans in the construction area etc.). We want the children to be confident 'mark makers' and enjoy experimenting with writing and drawing, telling us what they have written (even if it doesn't look like that to us grown ups!)

It is important as the children pick up the Read, Write, Inc sounds that they practise forming these accurately, starting in the correct place. This will further help your child to write their name accurately, another area we will be placing lots of emphasis on this half term. We will do this through fun activities and using different things like sand, glitter, mud and paint.

We will also continue to develop our recognition of rhyming and alliteration through fun games, songs and rhymes. It is vital that the children develop their sound discrimination skills before they can become fluent readers.



We will begin to develop our 'Talk 4 Writing' skills later this half term by introducing our first focus text - The Little Red Hen. We will learn to retell the story and then alter it as a class to make our own version of the story. We will do lots of fun activities linked to the story across all areas of the classroom and outdoors! We will explore recipes and make up our own recipe for making bread!

Nursery Literacy

This half term in Nursery we will be focussing on talking about stories and making links with the children's own experiences. We will be sharing what our favourite stories are with our friends! We will be discussing key events and characters in stories and begin to predict what could happen differently or make up our own stories. You can help your child at home by sharing stories and letting them talk about what they can see in the pictures, what might happen next and who the characters are. We will have great fun looking at 'The Little Red Hen' story and learning to retell it with actions as well as taking part in lots of fun activities that will help us embed the story!

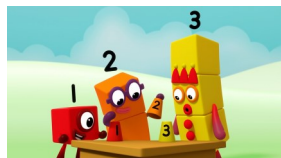
We will be securing recognition of familiar logo's and our names this half term and will be working hard to write our name. Again, this is something you can help with at home by pointing out logo's that mean something to your child (John Deere, Tesco, Macdonald's, Disney, Cbeebies etc) and their name. Recognising logo's helps your child understand that print has meaning.

We will also be working on Phase 1 phonics activities this half term, aiming to secure our listening skills through environmental and instrumental sound discrimination activities.

Finally, we will be promoting independent emergent writing and mark making this half term, we will be talking about what we have drawn and the mark we have made in different ways.

Reception Maths

Maths happens naturally and spontaneously all day in Early Years. Maths is covered in all areas of the provision and is enhanced and developed through carefully planned interactions with skilled adults. In Reception the children take part in short daily Maths sessions to learn key skills which they can then apply independently in the provision. We will use 'White Rose Maths' in Early Years, we have carefully considered what we will be covering in each half term so that the children develop a deep understanding of number, rather than memorising facts.



We use 'numberblocks' and other stories which can help the children to engage with the activities. Given the current circumstances, and the fact that many children missed a huge part of their Nursery year, it is likely that things will be altered as we begin to assess the children's starting points and work out the areas which need additional time. Many of you may feel that your child knows numbers beyond what they are learning but the importance is to 'dig deeper' and to help your child 'master' their understanding of numbers so that they can understand and make links between numbers and their patterns. It is really important that they learn to use mathematical language to talk about numbers and to make links that will help them understand larger numbers and more complex Maths in the future. Early Years is vital in building the foundation for Mathematical success further up the school. It is not just about the answer but also about understanding, representing and being able to explain how they know something or why it is true. For example, it is not enough to know that 3 is the number 3. We learn to talk about how we know this, how we can represent this in different ways and make link to things like shapes with 3 sides.

This term in Maths we are aiming to focus on:

- Securing our counting skills using 1 to 1 correspondence and become familiar with numicon.
- Matching, sorting and thinking about things and amounts that are the 'same' or 'different'.
- Representing and comparing numbers 1, 2 and 3.
- Comparing mass, size and capacity and exploring pattern.

We will use stories such as 'A new house for mouse' and 'Monkey Puzzle' to help cover these concepts.

Nursery Maths

Maths happens naturally and spontaneously all day in Early Years. Maths is covered in all areas of the provision and is enhanced and developed through planned interactions with adults in the classroom to support the children to meet their next steps.

In addition to this, this half term we will also be focussing on:

- Counting to 10 through nursery rhymes, songs and games, counting objects (up to 3 objects) using one to one correspondence and explore numicon, using language relating to size (small, big, tall etc, using language like 'more' and 'a lot', looking at sorting and matching objects and thinking about what is the 'same' and 'different' and looking at simple patterns.



We will cover lots of these areas through stories, art activities and through play along with learning songs that help us understand these concepts.

Expressive, Art and Design

This term the children will have the opportunity to:

Paint for different purposes and begin to think about what their marks represent.

Develop their independent use of the craft area and the materials in it.

Use narratives based around small world toys and role play and begin to use imaginative play based around familiar experiences in the home corner and through stories.

Think about different sounds and make different sounds using instruments, body parts and our new outdoor music wall.

Learn songs, dance and join in with new Nursery rhymes.



Understanding the World

This term we will be:

Talking about our families, looking at photos and sharing things about our own homes and family customs. We will be thinking about what is the same and different and understanding that we all have different families.

We will be talking about special times with our families and things that we have done and celebrated together. We will learn about festivals such as Harvest.

We will be learning about our community and our local area and how some people live in places that are really different.

Learning about processes and how things change through experiences like baking bread and cooking on a fire.

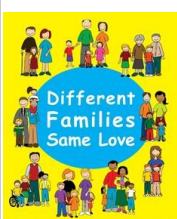
Thinking about how we were different in the past (when we were babies).

We will look closely at things around us when we are outside and at forest school and think about how things change in Autumn and notice detail in our environment.

We will be promoting independent exploration of technology in the classroom such as Ipads and the interactive whiteboard as well as toys that work with buttons and pulleys and things such as the telephone in our home corner.

RE This half term Reception will take part in RE sessions to understand Christianity and will focus on 'Communities'. This will link nicely with our Little Red Hen story. Nursery will also begin to talk about our school community and will talk about special celebrations such as Harvest Festival. We will look at the story 'Stone Soup' and make our own soup at forest school on the campfire.

Depending on COVID19 restrictions we may make food parcels when thinking about harvest time and make soup kits for our local Church.



SRE As part of our statutory SRE curriculum this half term we will be thinking about 'Family Networks'. The children will identify family members and friends and the role they play and think about and understand who they can talk to at school and home if they need help.