

Welcome back to a brand new year at Park Street!

I hope that you have a restful summer holiday and are looking forward to the new term.

For those of you who may not know, my name is Mrs Holmes and I am the new teacher of Woodpecker class (year three and four pupils).

I have been busy over the summer preparing the classroom and planning our exciting topic for this term, 'Modern and Ancient Greece'.

There will be a few small changes to our school day as a result of recent events. Desks will no longer be laid out in groups, and we will be asking the children to wash their hands each time they transition to a new activity. However, I have endeavoured to keep the curriculum as close to 'normal' as possible this term and we will be working extremely hard to ensure we support every pupil in catching up on any learning they may have missed during the school closure.

During the first two weeks of term, the whole school will be following a special curriculum that has been designed to provide opportunities for pupils to get to know one another and their new environment. There will be plenty of opportunities to talk with staff and one another and to share their thoughts on recent events.

Belongings

Pupils will no longer be able to store their personal belongings in their classroom tray as these will be needed to store their exercise books and stationery. Please could belongings be left at home other than coats and jumpers which should be on their pegs. I am afraid pencil cases will not be allowed, but we will be providing every pupil with everything they need.

Once they have been given them (in weeks three or four), please could pupils bring their reading record book, reading book, times tables book and spelling book into school every day. It would really help them to have a book bag to store these items in safely and we will be providing those who do not have one with a plastic zip wallet.

P.E.

P.E. will take place each Thursday afternoon. They should not bring in their kit but should wear their PE kit to school, with trainers, and track suit bottoms if cold.

Meet the Teacher

At **4pm on Wednesday** next week I hope that you will join me for an online meeting. It will be an opportunity for me to explain the information in this newsletter a little more and for you to ask me any questions you might have. I will be putting together an accompanying PowerPoint which will be saved in Teams for anyone unable to attend.

Curriculum

Learning journeys will soon be available on Teams and work will also be provided here when pupils are unable to attend school due to Covid-19. Login information will be found inside homework diaries and these will come home this week or next week, once we have read with the children. Information about homework will also be available here.



Homework

We will give the children some time to settle back in and for us to get to know them, and will not set formal homework in Woodpecker class during the first three weeks of term. Over this time, children should do regular reading practice and work on recall of their times tables.

Once they have settled in, the homework will be as follows:

- Reading (10 minutes, 5 times per week):

Children should read aloud for ten minutes each day. Suggestions for questions to deepen their understanding as they read will be found in the front of their record book. Pupils should bring both these books in daily as a member of staff will endeavour to read with every child quickly in school each week, and support them in changing books where necessary. Please write a quick note or page number in the reading record book/diary each time you read.

- Times Tables (3 minutes whenever you can!):

In the next few weeks, each pupil will be given a times tables question and answer book. The instructions for how to use them are in the front of the book, but the book contains a number of challenges for pupils to work through, in order to improve the speed and accuracy of their mental recall of number bonds and times tables. Over the next couple of weeks, a member of staff will assess where in this book they should begin, and the pupils will work on one challenge at a time. When they can answer ten questions correctly in 30 seconds they will be tested (in school) and they can move onto the next level. Times Tables Rock stars can also be used to support this learning and I will be sending out logins early in the new term for those of you who do not already have them. I will explain this further during our 'Meet the Teacher' online meeting

- Spelling:

Pupils will be sent home a red exercise book with their spellings in to practise each week. There will be further guidance about this inside the book. Some might prefer to practise once a week for 10 minutes, or a little each day. We will check their learning each Monday.

- Topic Homework:

Pupils will be given an A4 exercise book with a grid of activities for them to choose from, found on the first page of this book. These are cross-curricular and linked to our Greece topic. There are 14 activities to choose from, but we do not expect them to complete them all. Some activities may take more than a week. 20-30 minutes a week is plenty for this. Pupils could try for one each week, or every other week for longer activities.

Thank you

I understand that this must all sound rather overwhelming at a time when we are all settling back into brand new routines. I do not want you to worry about anything and, as I said, the homework will be introduced gradually, with plenty of additional explanation. I will be very happy to answer any queries you may have in the coming weeks.

I am really excited to be working with your children and wish you all the best as we start the new term!

Mrs Holmes