

# West Pennard Church of England Primary School

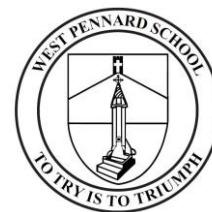


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Headteacher Miss J. Hale



7<sup>th</sup> January 2019,

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome back! I hope you had a restful festive period and are ready for a busy term ahead. Firstly, I would like to thank you for the many thoughtful gifts that I received in the lead up to Christmas. I felt truly spoilt. I would also like to thank you for the super support you provided over the last term, with reading regularly at home, supporting with homework, lines for the play and generally backing up what we do in school. It is very much appreciated. Enclosed with this letter is an overview of the curriculum that your child will be following this term, and below are a few notes that may help with the smooth running of school life. I hope you find it informative and of interest.

## A Squash and a Squeeze if You Please

We are using our class book – 'A Squash and a Squeeze' in to some really exciting areas of the curriculum this term. In Science we are going to be learning about the classification of different animals – as to whether they are carnivores, omnivores and herbivores and also as to whether they are fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. We will be looking at the habitat of different living organisms, particularly those specific to the Amazon rainforest, as this area of Brazil will be the focus of our major Geography topic this term. In Art and Design we will be designing alternative accommodation for the old lady in the book, to accommodate all of her animals, to make it less of a 'squash and a squeeze' and also using a variety of mixed media to produce art work to support our topic. I will share some of our creations with you using the 'Class Story' function of the Class Dojo APP.

## Homework

As last term, I will be expecting the children to become progressively more responsible for and independent in their learning. It is therefore their responsibility to ensure reading books, planners, notes and homework sheets are ferried to and from school.

Homework will continue to be given to the children in person every Friday during term time and will often consist of a game or activity as well as optional links to online activities to support the learning in Maths that week. In addition to this there will be games and activities to support the learning of phonics and spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The purpose of the homework is not to introduce something new or unfamiliar to the children, but to consolidate what they have learned during the previous week and allow you to keep abreast of what they are doing in school. There will be three different versions of the homework, an optional 'challenge' homework sheet and differentiated spelling / phonics lists, as well as an optional challenge spelling list. A 'support' list will also be provided for children that are in receipt of support outside of the classroom setting or for whom I deem List 1 to be too much of a challenge. Your child will be given the correct homework sheet and the list of sounds / spellings that they are to learn.

The children should, in the main, be able to do much of the work on their own and extend themselves with the online activities, challenge homework and challenge spellings, should they wish to. Spare copies of homework can be requested through Class Dojo. I will endeavour to check the inbox regularly through the week; however, a question earlier in the week is preferable, as it will ensure a prompt enough explanation prior to the hand-in date. No last minute Thursday night panics please.



## **Reading**

In addition to the homework, it is expected that the children read four times a week, and, where possible, to one of you. I realise that people lead busy lives, as a parent of three young children myself, but it is imperative that they are heard as much as possible, in school and at home, to improve the fluency in which they read but also to ensure that they understand what they have read. We the benefit of hearing all the children read, over the year, and to be able to see what can be achieved when supported well to do so. Miss Harding and I will hear your child read as often as we can and will sign their planner when we do so. It is certainly equally valuable for you to read to them as well, as it will improve their knowledge of stories and help instil a love of reading.

Some of the children started on Accelerated Reader (AR) at the start of the year and we were able to start a few others through the course of last term. We would love to have everyone on it, and endeavour to do so, but we need to ensure that the child's sight vocabulary (their ability to read with greater fluency, without the need to decode too many words as they read) is up to speed and that by going on AR, rather than staying on the scheme it will ultimately benefit their reading capability, at this stage, the most and not be detrimental to their confidence in their reading ability. It is a tough call sometimes, as it may well boost confidence and spur on their reading, but please do bear with us and trust that decisions we make are in the interests of your child.

## **Keeping in Touch**

I hope that everyone found Class Dojo a useful tool for keeping in touch and asking questions / clarifications. I will continue to use it this term and hope to be able to post more pictures of your child's successes / academic achievements. If you have lost your log in details or have a new phone / device following Christmas, please contact me and I will re-issue log-ins. I can do this also for TT Rockstars. Please encourage the use of this. It is a paid-for site provided by us to help the children know their tables, which are imperative for many areas of Maths as they go through school, and life. The children will now be tested on their tables knowledge nationally in Year 4 from next year.

## **Trips**

We are exploring some interesting and exciting areas of the curriculum this term. As part of our focus on A Squash and a Squeeze, we will be visiting the Wild Place near Severn Beach. Offers of help from those with DBS Clearance will be gratefully received.

Finally, some key days to remember –

**Mondays – PE Kit required**

I hope this has given you some useful information. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or put a note in your child's learning journal or through dojo.

Thank you for your support,

Mr Tony Wheat