Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School
2024

Learning Heroes

BEAR

Bears – are helpful and encouraging. They show respect, share ideas listen and speak clearly.

MONKEY

Monkeys – always join in. They are curious and can't stop asking questions. They can explain their thinking to others.

DOG

Dogs – think carefully about what they need to learn and do to be successful. Dogs take responsibility for their own learning and ignore distractions.

DUCK

Ducks – like to be challenged and have the skills to keep trying. Ducks never give up.

GIRAFFE

Giraffes – Are proud of who they are. Giraffes are unique.

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Dear Parents and Carers,

A warm welcome to Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School; a school where communication with families is a strength and we fully recognise you as your child's first educator. From the beginning of your child's school journey we work in partnership with you to ensure we learn as much as we can about your child and provide an environment where they can settle quickly and grow into a happy, confident and successful learner.

Our experienced staff are experts in how young children learn. They plan a motivating and engaging curriculum and quickly get to know the children and their interests. All children are treated as individuals and we are committed to ensuring they make significant progress whatever their starting point.

As you will read in this document we promote a 'Growth Mindset' and believe that intelligence is not fixed, we know that brains are like muscles and the more you work them the stronger they get.

The emphasis in the first weeks of the autumn term is supporting children to learn routines, get to know key staff and become confident to explore their learning environment. Our outdoor areas promote opportunities for team work, resilience and problem solving; all important skills for lifelong learning.

If you have any questions or concerns, even little ones, talk to us. Small things can grow and our view is that if we know about your questions and concerns we have an opportunity to work with you to resolve them.

Our behaviour policy outlines clear expectations for behaviour and we expect everyone to do their best, talking about the learning process using our Learning Heroes to exemplify the characteristics of good learners.

I am extremely proud of this school and enjoy my work with governors, staff, families and children. Together we have built a learning environment where every child is valued and our ethos and philosophy for learning means that children are actively involved in their learning and enjoy their time at school.

I look forward to working with you and your child during your time at Bernards Heath.

Hannah Rimmer

Hannah Rimmer
Head Teacher

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Happy, Confident, Successful, Independent Learners!

We provide children with high quality learning experiences that challenge them and give them the opportunity to grow their brains. In addition to learning to read, write, create and imagine, we actively teach the skills and characteristics children need to become positive members of our community. Our Learning Heroes underpin the skills children need to become good learners; to have resilience, to be collaborative, to be inquisitive and to develop concentration.

The way we plan, teach and assess lessons is built on a thorough understanding of child development and is heavily influenced by the work of Carol Dweck and Shirley Clarke. We follow the guidance from the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We use this guidance to ensure we cover all objectives and demonstrate progression of knowledge and skills. We teach a creative curriculum influenced strongly by the particular interests and ideas of each class of children with a focus on how they want to learn. We believe that children learn best when they are engaged and motivated and therefore plan learning that is enjoyable and based on first hand experiences.

Motivation

We need to engage children so that they want to learn. We focus on giving specific praise such as 'excellent **listening**', 'really good **team work'**, 'well done, that was a **kind** choice to make', naming the positive behaviour instead of using unclear phrase such as 'good girl' or 'clever boy'. We don't reward children with extrinsic items such as stickers. Instead, we do all we can to develop a growth mindset where effort and perseverance are valued and children learn to be intrinsically motivated and understand the power of 'yet' (I can't do it **yet**, instead of I can't do it). The Learning Heroes play a huge part in teaching our children about the process of learning and the characteristics of effective learning.

To learn more please visit:

https://www.ted.com/speakers/carol_dweck
http://www.shirleyclarke-education.org/about

Personal and Social Development

Developing Responsibility

'You can't be what you can't see'

Role models are so important across the school and it is vital that adults act as good positive role models for our children. We have also found that children acting as role models for each other is very powerful. We see so much kind behaviour at school; if someone takes a tumble in the playground there is always another child on hand to take them to the medical room and find some help from an adult. Building on this kindness we have worked hard to develop a sense of responsibility in children. From changing their own reading books and keeping track of their own possessions, to being a good Learning Partner and making good choices about their behaviour, children are praised and encouraged for doing the right thing.

Zones of Regulation are a visual tool to help children identify how they are feeling using the four different zones; yellow, red, blue and green. Each zone represents a different set of feelings. Children are given opportunities throughout the day to communicate which zone they feel they are in, and are given strategies to help manage these feelings.

Class Monitors are selected each half term and take responsibility for a variety of tasks in the classroom; delivering the registers, tidying the books at the end of the lesson, collecting fruit and milk or turning the lights off to save electricity when the class leave the room.

Play Leaders are well established at school and each autumn Year 2 children write a letter outlining the reasons why they would make a good Play Leader. Each term children have the choices as to whether they would like to continue being a Play Leader or, sign up if they would like a turn. They have training with a key member of staff and work closely with our sports coach to teach games and support play out on the playground at lunchtimes.

Play Leaders also work closely with MSAs (Midday Supervisory Assistants) in the hall. They hand out cutlery, take cups of water to their friends, sweep the hall and help Mr Desborough to stack the chairs at the end of lunchtime. We have found that children like to help, they like to help other children and they like to help adults. They are praised for showing kindness and being responsible.

Reflection Time and Assembly - Sharing and Celebrating

In Key Stage 1 (KS1) we meet every day for Reflection Time (also known as Collective Worship and an opportunity to promote stillness, awe and wonder), mostly in the school hall but sometimes in the classrooms. Children reflect on the values and beliefs of others and meet faith leaders within the community. As a Community School our ethos is to teach broadly Christian values, and as the Hertfordshire R.E curriculum directs, we also focus on two other religions; Islam and Judaism. As part of a thematic unit children may learn about other major festivals like Diwali. Our aim is to develop a sense of community – respect for others, caring attitudes and the moral values which underpin the Christian faith and those of other major world religions.

Proud Assembly

On a Friday morning the whole school gather in the hall and each class takes a turn to present their learning to their parents. These assemblies are not heavily rehearsed and the children play a big part in deciding what they would like to talk about and share. We are always impressed by the wide range of learning children choose to talk about and how confidently the large majority of children are standing up in front of an audience and talking into the microphone. Each class has two opportunities to share their learning over the school year; due to space and fire regulations we can admit **one parent for each child** to these celebrations of learning.

Sex and Relationship Education (Growing up at Bernards Heath)

Our aim in Sex and Relationships Education is to help children to cope with emotional and physical changes as they grow up. This is most often achieved as it arises naturally in conversation and class discussion but planned opportunities will also be taught for example, through learning about the growth and change in our bodies during science lessons or through discussing our feelings and emotions in PSHE. Click here to read the Relationships and Health Education (Growing up at Bernards Heath) Policy on our website.

Religious Education

In accordance with the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act, Religious Education is taught to all children in accordance with the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The syllabus explores children's beliefs, ideas and attitudes and promotes respect for the rights of other people to hold beliefs different to their own. We teach skills for studying R.E. including exploration, questioning and explanation. The school's intention is not to encourage belief that a particular religion is true or false or to take on a role of indoctrination or missionary activity.

Parents can request that their child is withdrawn from the R.E. curriculum and Collective Worship – if you feel that on religious grounds you would prefer your child to be withdrawn, please talk to the Head Teacher.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum

The EYFS is based on **three prime areas** of learning:

Communication and Language
Physical Development
Personal, Social and Emotional Development

And **four specific areas** of learning:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design

Characteristics of effective learning include engagement, motivation and critical thinking

During child initiated play, children are encouraged to develop ideas from adult led sessions and incorporate them into their play. To learn lots more about the Foundation Stage including the importance of learning through play, please visit the Learning Together page on our website and take time to understand the curriculum and how you can support your child by reading What to expect, when? And the Parents' Guide to the EYFS.

The Key Stage 1 (KS1) Curriculum

Key Stage 1 builds on the strengths of the Foundation Stage.

The KS1 curriculum is made of **three core subjects**:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Science

And **nine foundation subjects**:

- History
- Geography
- RE (Religious Education)
- Music
- PE (Physical Education)
- DT (Design Technology)
- Art and Design
- PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education)
- Computing

Since the Autumn term 2019 we have incorporated whole school themes which focus on one particular subject area such as Geography. This approach allows for learning to be built upon over time and progress and differentiation made transparent between the year groups. Children's ideas are incorporated in planning and teachers find out what children already know and what their ideas are for future exploration. 'Hands on' learning is valued and lessons are planned to ensure children are stretching their brains, learning skills and knowledge in a meaningful way and with a clear purpose.

Transition

We know that if children have an effective transition between home and school, or from one year group to the next, they are better prepared to develop effective relationships with the adults they work with and become confident learners in their classroom environment. We place great value on establishing routines and clearly explaining rules and consequences for a happy classroom.

On entry to Foundation Stage 1 and 2 we operate a phased transition to ensure children get to know key members of staff and for those staff to get to know the children. They explore the learning environment, find out where things are, experiment with new equipment and talk about what they enjoy. This gives staff quality opportunities to observe, question and interact with children in a smaller group. If parents feel their child is still not ready for full days after the initial transition then this can be discussed, in person, with Mrs Rimmer.

When moving from FS2 to Y1, children move to a new curriculum; the National Curriculum clearly sets out what we will teach children and we enjoy the freedom to decide how best to do that. In the summer term teachers work together on a detailed handover, discussing strengths and key areas to focus on for the class and individual children. This informs the starting point for September and learning experiences are built around what children know and what they need to learn next. The timetable throughout Year 1 builds on the outstanding start children have had in Foundation Stage, taking the best principles of the balance of adult and child initiated play, maximising the use of outdoor space and planning to ensure children's interests underpin the learning themes.

The move from Year 1 to Year 2 is very smooth for most children; by this time so much about school life is established and they are happy, confident members of our school. For this move we still value the same high quality transition and invest just as much time as in previous years ensuring that children feel confident and ready to be the oldest children at school.

We work very closely with the Junior School; Year 2 and Year 3 teachers meet throughout the year to share examples of work, make assessments and towards the end of the term to handover in just as much detail as we discuss between year groups at the Infants. Year 5 children visit our Year 2s in the summer term so the children can get to know one another's faces and Year 3 write to the Year 2s answering any questions they might have about the move or what Year 3 is really like. Year 2 are often invited to the dress rehearsals for plays at the Junior school and we always look forward to welcoming Year 3 back to watch the Christmas performance.

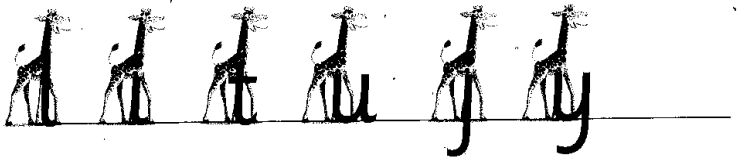
High quality transition is the entitlement for all children at school; however like all areas of learning there are some children who benefit from some additional support to manage changes. Our SENCo, prepares transition timetables for any children who would benefit from increased support at this time of year.

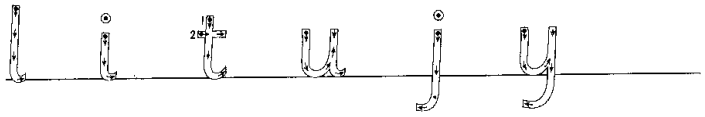
Teaching and Learning

Handwriting Style

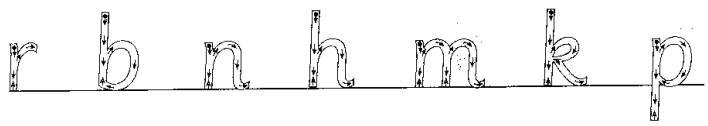
Lower-case letters are introduced in the following order in four family types:

The family of long-legged giraffe letters

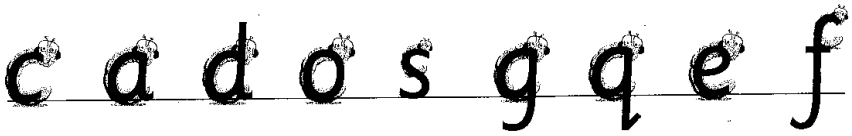




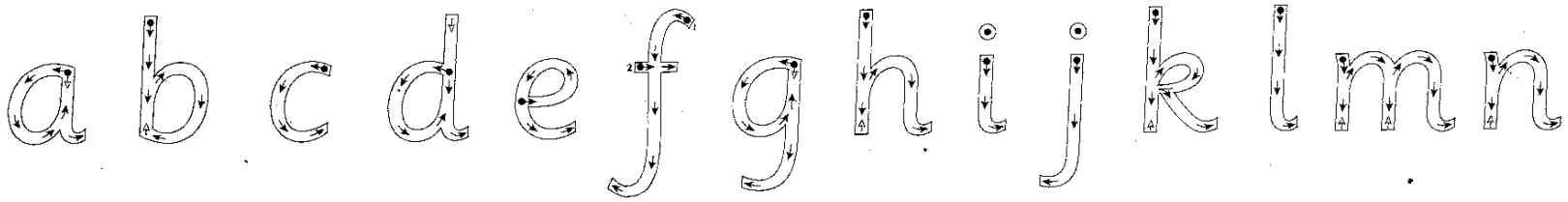
The family of one-armed robot letters

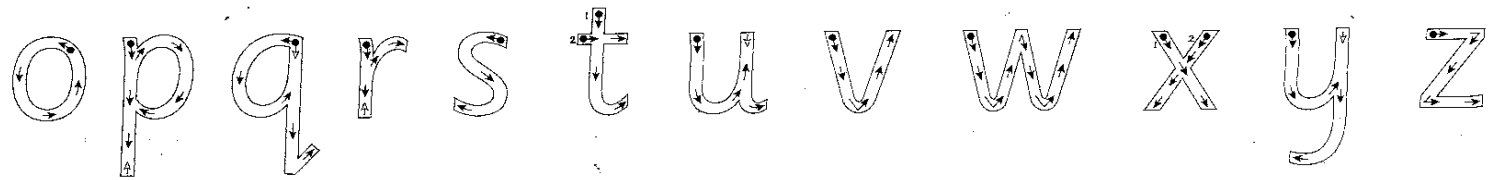


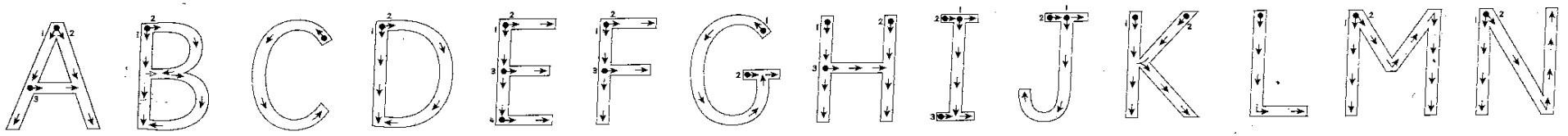
The family of curly caterpillar letters

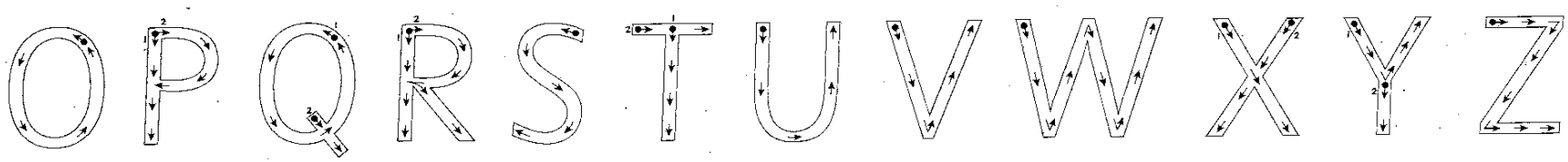


The family of zig-zag monster letters









Computing and E-Safety

Developing confidence to use technology safely is the aim of all computing lessons. Links to skills and understanding are made across the curriculum and children use a range of technology to enhance their learning through tasks with a purposeful outcome, for example, making a poster to advertise an event in school or using programming to design a game for another class to play. Each class displays an agreed set of Online Safety rules which have been agreed by the children. The internet is a wonderful teaching tool and the school takes all reasonable precautions to ensure that we only access appropriate materials. If you would like to find out more about how to help your child use technology please see our Online Safety Policy on our website.

Home Learning

Home learning opportunities are everywhere. Counting, reading, blending and segmenting can all be done when walking down the street, sitting at the kitchen table or driving in the car.

In Year 2 children have a book to record their Home Learning. The activities set might be pre-learning tasks given before a theme or series of lessons or activities that follow up and consolidate learning in class. Staff at school are always happy to further explain the learning tasks and we ask that you come and talk to us if you have any questions or are unsure of anything.

Please visit the Learning Together section on our website to see a huge range of valuable tools and ideas to support learning across the curriculum.

Reading

At Bernards Heath our main aim for reading is that children develop a love of books and learn to view it as an enjoyable activity that can help them find information or take them to new, creative worlds. We value the importance of adults reading to children and ask that you find time to share stories with your child every day. It is important to establish a good routine for reading with your child. Some children enjoy doing this at the end of the school day and some prefer to read before breakfast. It doesn't matter when but it does matter where; ensure the environment is calm and quiet and that you follow our helpful advice on the Learning Together section of the website. Through dedicated meetings we teach you how we teach children to read so that you have the opportunity to learn from us, each other and ask any questions you may have.

We have a home school reading record which you are asked to complete each time you read with your child. It is important that your child brings their school book bag to school every day. If a reading book is damaged whilst it is in your care we make a £5 charge to enable us to buy a replacement.

Readit2

Readit2 is an early literacy programme that aims to improve the reading of all infant-aged children. It has been implemented in our school for the past two years and has had an excellent impact. Readit2 helps children develop an emotional bond with reading and nurtures a love of books, as well as building vocabulary. This programme consists of the child reading familiar texts with the same adult every day. We have enjoyed seeing the many benefits of this programme, such as increased confidence.

Readit2

Outdoor Learning

'Outdoor Learning, Outdoor Learning
Looking all around us, looking all around us
Working together, working together
Listening and exploring, listening and exploring
What… can… you see?'

This is the chant that every Outdoor Learning session begins with, adults sing and children echo as they walk to the field. All children take part in Outdoor Learning on a rota basis, 15 children and their teacher put on their wellingtons every week. There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing and Outdoor Learning happens whatever the weather.

Children learn and develop lots of skills to equip them for lifelong learning. With their friends they build dens from tarpaulin, learn to use tools safely, take care of our gardens and solve problems. All these activities help to build creativity and resilience in a contrasting environment to the classroom.

Balance and Ride

In the summer term children will have the opportunity to learn how to ride a bike with an experienced teacher. Herts Balance and Ride delivers playground-based sessions at schools to help children learn to balance and ride. Principally aimed at children in Reception, Years 1 and 2 these sessions are normally an hour to an hour and a quarter in length. One Instructor works with a maximum of five children per session and each child is provided with a balance bike and quality pedal bike. It is a great opportunity for our children to learn a new skill and feel a huge sense of pride and achievement.

HERTS BALANCE & RIDE

Offsite Visits

We know that learning happens everywhere, not just within the walls of the classroom. Sometimes the right visit can hook a child's imagination, bring learning to life and reinforce knowledge and skills learnt in the classroom. We plan visits based on our ever changing learning themes and acknowledge that children's learning on visits extends beyond the purely academic. The occasions where children are learning offsite provide enormous opportunities for personal and social development. To make our visits a success we rely on the support of parent volunteers and are extremely fortunate to have a large number of parents who are keen to accompany us. All volunteers have a health and safety briefing and the opportunity to ask questions before they go.

Assessment and Progress

We meet with you throughout the year to discuss the progress your child is making and how you can support them. Every Parent Consultation you are given a document to take away that outlines where your child is working at in terms of reading, writing, maths and science. In addition to this, targets for your child are explained by the teacher so you know how they are supported at school and how might choose to mirror this at home. We value children as individuals and look at progress from each child's individual starting point. If we feel a child has become 'stuck' in their learning and is not making sufficient progress we will arrange to talk to you about what we are doing to meet their needs and how you can support your child.

Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment)

At Bernards Heath we believe the most effective assessments are the ones that inform planning and help children move on in their learning. All day every day staff make assessments about what children can do and take prompt action to move their learning on. Through questioning and providing a wide range of challenges all children have the opportunity to 'grow their brains'.

We have learnt a huge amount from educational experts including Shirley Clarke, Carol Dweck and Guy Claxton. They all promote the theory of a 'growth mindset.' The idea that intelligence is not fixed and through the power of practice, along with a good teacher, one can learn anything. This removes all lids on learning and challenges some of the things we hear adults saying. We do not accept it when children (or adults) say things 'I can't do it'. We believe the right phrase is 'I can't do it yet.'

Our Learning Heroes exemplify what we are trying to achieve and give us the words for sharing this philosophy with children.

- Duck - never ever gives up (even when challenges seem too tricky)
- Bear - shares ideas and listens to others, a good team player
- Monkey - asks lots of questions, keen to learn something new
- Dog - manages distractions, sticks to tasks and gets the job done
- Giraffe – our latest addition since January 2020 is proud of who he is and loves being unique

Learning Recall in Foundation Stage classes gives children the opportunity to explain what they have been learning during child initiated play. They talk about learning in two ways; what is really good about it, what they are proud of and what could be improved. This is done in a supportive way and is led by an adult. It doesn't take long before children are reflecting on their own learning and talking about how they might make improvements outside of Learning Recall.

In Year 1 and Year 2 teachers give verbal feedback throughout the lesson. They talk about what children have done well, giving very specific praise. For example, 'I like the way you have remembered a full stop at the end of every sentence.' Suggestions for improvement are just as specific 'Now look at this sentence, can you think of a more interesting word to use than big?' Giving feedback like this rather than 'Good girl/boy' means that children know what they have done well so they can repeat it in the future and can make an immediate improvement having a positive impact on their learning.

Teachers will provide children with very clear success criteria and model what their learning should look like. If children know what success looks like then they are more likely to achieve it and be able to talk knowledgably about why they have been successful. You will also see highlighting in Year 1 and 2 books; 'Yippee Yellow' celebrates something a child has done well and 'Green for Growth' highlights a specific area for development. This highlighting is done while children are receiving specific verbal feedback.

Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment)

End of term assessments are a snapshot of 'where a child is' in relation to the age related expectation. This is reported to you using the following language:

* Working significantly below the age related expectation
* Working below the age related expectation
* Working at age related expectation
* Working above the age related expectation
* Working significantly above the age related expectation

To arrive at these summative judgements teachers use a range of evidence from day to day learning. This will include: observations, learning in books, discussions with children, children's own views about their understanding of a concept or area of learning and statutory assessments.

Statutory Assessments

At the end of Foundation Stage teachers assess children using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This is a set of 17 Early Learning Goals and for every goal teachers report whether a child is emerging, expected or exceeding the criteria of that goal. In addition to the Early Learning Goals teachers report to you on your child's Characteristics of Effective Learning which includes information about the levels of motivation, perseverance and engagement your child demonstrates at school.

In June of Year 1 all children work with their teacher to complete a Phonics Screening. This checks children's ability to blend and segment 40 real and 'alien' words.

In Year 2 all children complete two maths papers (arithmetic and calculation) and two reading papers, one more challenging than the other, and a Spelling Grammar and Punctuation Paper. These are all completed by the end of May. In June of Year 2 teachers make final end of year assessments using a wide range of evidence gathered from the statutory assessments and children's everyday work in books along with notes, discussions and observations. The final teacher assessment is the one that is reported to the Local Authority and the DfE.

Sharing our Learning

Class Blogs

Throughout the year, you will receive email notifications as teachers update their class blogs. The class blogs are a great place for you to see current photos, examples of children's and learning useful links. These are updated every week so that you are kept informed and the learning can continue at home.

Our 'New to ……' Meetings

Each year, in the summer term, we invite parents to 'New to…..' meetings. There is a separate meeting for each year group and these are held in the evenings. This is one of the first opportunities for parents to learn more about our learning philosophy as well as learn the daily routines ready for the new school year. This is also an opportunity to meet the new staff who will be working with your child, ask questions and to meet other parents in your child's class.

Special Assemblies /Open Classrooms / Events for Families to Enjoy

Our doors are always open as we regularly invite you to take part in our learning and celebrations at school.

On a Friday morning our classes take turns to share their learning in a special 'Proud Assembly.' This is followed by Open Classroom where you can discover what your child has been learning.

Each class presents two of these assemblies/open classrooms over the course of a year and every child can invite one adult to each assembly. This is an opportunity for parents to hear about their child's learning first hand and in their own words.

Due to large numbers of children at school we are not able to invite every parent to every celebration/performance. Photos may be taken at the end of performances and on other occasions, however these must only be for personal use and never shared on the internet and social networking sites e.g. Facebook / Twitter to safeguard our children.

How can you help?

We hold volunteer meetings where we explain all the ways you can get involved in school life. Some of the jobs we need help with include: washing fruit, office admin, tidying the library, accompanying visits, listening to readers, cooking with a group of children or helping out at events to fundraise for the school alongside the PTA.

If you are interested in regular volunteering we ask you to come to the meeting so you can find out about all the ways you can get involved as well as important aspects of voluntary work in a school including safeguarding, health and safety and confidentiality.

Our volunteers have given us some excellent feedback about how welcome they are made to feel and how much they enjoy having a positive impact on learning.