

Year 4 Autumn Newsletter

Dear all,

I trust you all had a wonderful summer break and feel refreshed and ready for the exciting year ahead! To those of you who haven't yet met me, let me introduce myself. I'm Bethany Jackson, and I am going into my fourth year as a qualified teacher. Prior to Maple, I taught Year 3 at another one form entry school in Kentish Town in London. Having taught the Year 4 class already for one week, I feel very excited about the year ahead with them! I'll be joined in Year 4 by our teaching assistant (TA) Mr Tyler who you all know very well. We will also be joined by Miss Dowsell, who is undertaking teacher training at the University of Hertfordshire. She will be based primarily with us in Year 4 during the Autumn and Summer Terms, and will spend the Spring Term doing placements in a different key stage and at a different school. I will outline some key points in this newsletter but please do not hesitate to come and see me at any point should you have any queries.

In Literacy, all KS2 classes are continuing to work from the Literacy and Language scheme (written by the authors of the Read, Write Inc. scheme used by the Infants). It has been a big success for pupils and teaching staff in previous years. SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) and Comprehension will be taught both in isolated lessons and in context to heighten the children's skills in these areas.

I've had a chance to hear all the children read individually this week so they can be put into Guided Reading groups at the start of next week. In these sessions, we will be working our way through reading books which will need to be in school on the day of their sessions. They will also have time in the library each week, so it would be hugely appreciated if you could keep an eye on books being brought home and make sure they are returned to school in good condition. The children have been given new Reading Records which tend to be a space where we can inform you of what has been focused on in Guided Reading sessions, and there are also some pages in the middle for children to write reviews on. Should you feel the need to write a comment about your child's reading, please put it in their diary or on a post it so I can look at it. I'd also encourage you to be reading to your children as they learn so much through hearing how others read. For ideas on what books are suitable for children their age, there is a recommended reading list for Year 4 on the Maple website.

In maths we will be working regularly on mental arithmetic, developing strategies for faster and more accurate work (I like to use the phrase, "Calculating, not counting") and regularly practising times tables. By the end of Year 4 children are required to know all their tables up to 12x12, so any practise with them at home will reinforce what they're doing in class. We will have weekly Times Tables and quick fire adding/subtracting quizzes every Thursday where the children will be encouraged to beat their P.Bs (Personal Bests).

Approximately half an hour of both Maths and English Homestudy will be sent home each week on a Friday, starting on the 22nd September and must be completed and handed in by the following Wednesday. As you will see, they will have a slightly more practical task to do with our history topic for the next two weeks. Each pupil will be given a task from their homestudy book for English and a maths task online through MyMaths. They should all have the same log-ins that they had in Year 3. I'll go through homework further at next week's Parents' Meeting. Please do also send in any comments on the homework on a note or post-it in their folders should you want to raise anything. I'd encourage them to look at their homestudy tasks sooner rather than later so if they need help or do not understand anything, they can ask for help from a member of staff. Spellings will be sent home each Thursday for a test the following Thursday.

Here's a few notes about other areas of the curriculum:

- Our Science work this term will be around electricity and sound. We will be having a double lesson every other week to allow more time for getting stuck into lots of lovely experiments and investigations.
- In Art and DT, we will be using a range of materials to make both 2D and 3D pictures and models of Egyptian objects.

- Our History topic this term will be the Ancient Egyptians. These lessons will be taught by Miss Dowsell whilst I am taking the recorder lessons for Yrs 3 and 4. Later in the year, the focus will switch to the Romans.
- We will focus more on Geography in the Spring Term.
- In R.E, we will be focussing on the key elements of Christianity this term before moving into Hinduism and Sikhism in the following two terms.
- In Computing, which will be taught by Mr Tyler during my PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) time, the children will create their own toys using online programmes this term.
- Circle Time will be held weekly to discuss PHSE issues and to hear feedback from Eco and School Council.
- French will be taught every other week by Miss Woodhouse on Thursday afternoons. She will be in class covering me every other Thursday afternoon when I will be looking after ICT issues, which I am now in charge of.

Finally, I will go through some parts of our weekly routine this term.

P.E will be on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday - please make sure that your child's clean Maple P.E kit is in school on these days and is labelled. Please do ensure they have suitable layers and footwear, particularly over the coming Winter months. P.E kits should go home regularly for washing. Carrying on from previous years, the children will continue to run laps of the playing field on a daily basis. We will be working our way up to running 4 laps so outdoor running shoes will be required every day.

Recorder lessons will be continuing for Year 4 with a slight change from last year. As some of you know, I studied the oboe at the Royal College of Music so it makes sense to use these skills to teach the children rather than bringing an outside teacher in. The lessons will take place on a Monday, starting on the 18th September. Please make sure the children have their recorder in school and practise anything I need them to before the next lesson.

Please do feel free to discuss any important pupil issues with me before they become major. The best time to see me is immediately after school, though on Tuesdays and Thursdays I may need to rush off to Staff meetings. If for any reason we can't meet immediately then I will find time and arrange to meet as soon as possible.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this and I hope that it helps to keep you in touch with your child's education at Maple. My presentation to parents on Friday 15th September at 2.30pm will provide an opportunity for us all to meet, though please do not hesitate to contact me prior to that should you have any concerns about your child.

Both myself, Mr Tyler and Miss Dowsell are very excited about the year ahead. Thank you in anticipation of your support with your child's learning. To see on a more regular basis what's going on inside the Year 4 classroom, please follow us on Twitter with MapleSchoolYr4.

Mrs Bethany Jackson