

The Unit Spring Newsletter 2024

Happy New Year! We are excited for the coming Spring term 2024. We welcome Joshua Page to Maple School. He will be completing a split placement this term at Maple school and Heathlands School for the Deaf. His working days will be Thursday and Friday. We are very happy that Josh is joining us this term and know that the children, staff and parents will make him feel welcome.

Whilst this is a short term, it is a busy one with lots of exciting learning opportunities. We are looking forward to special events week and whilst we cannot reveal the theme just yet, we can share that there will be exciting workshops and assemblies the children will enjoy. We will also be looking at poetry across the school for our Take One Poet week and the children in the Unit will be introduced to Deaf Poet Dorothy Miles.

Sign language week is not far away and takes place the week commencing 18th March. This is separate to Deaf Awareness week taking place in the Summer Term. Last year, some of you may remember the BSL timed challenge. I know some came close to breaking the record. The theme for 2024 is promoting BSL. It was recently shared in the news that a GCSE in BSL will be launched in September 2025. We are thrilled at the news. If you'd like to know more about this, please do access information at the following link -

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/12/21/british-sign-language-gcse-everything-you-need-to-know/>



I was also lucky enough to attend the British Sign Language primary curriculum launch at Frank Barnes School last term. It was a wonderful afternoon full of speakers from varying educational settings and many who had been involved in the BSL curriculum working group. More information on the BSL curriculum can be found here - <https://www.fbarnes.camden.sch.uk/bsl-curriculum-2/>. Whilst we continue to follow an auditory aural philosophy at Maple School, we understand the importance of British Sign Language as this is, for some of our deaf children, their first language. It is also important to understand BSL as a part of deaf history and culture and as our young deaf children grow older, it is important for their understanding of deafness, deaf identity and deaf community. We hope to deliver some of the BSL curriculum here at Maple school not only to our young deaf children but also to their mainstream peers.

We know that the year brings with it many themed weeks and days – some wonderful and some bizarre. The theme for this year's Science week is Time. We know that time is an important concept and has led to important scientific and mathematical discoveries. We know sometimes there is not enough time or time can drag. We know that time and the vocabulary surrounding time as well as telling the time can be challenging for our deaf children. We know that this is a

skill that is linked to maths ability, memory and language skills. Time perception and estimating time can also be tricky for our young deaf children.

The National Deaf Children's Society have the following to say about time:

Time: *This is an abstract concept, which means it can't be seen or shown easily and to describe and understand abstract concepts children need to use language. Use lots of words to describe time in everyday routines such as 'now', 'then', 'later', 'soon', 'tomorrow', 'yesterday', 'before', 'after', 'next week', 'last week', 'in a month' or 'last year'. Calendars and other visual planners are a great way to show the passing of time and talk about it. They can also help your child learn the days of the week, the seasons and the months of year in the right order.*



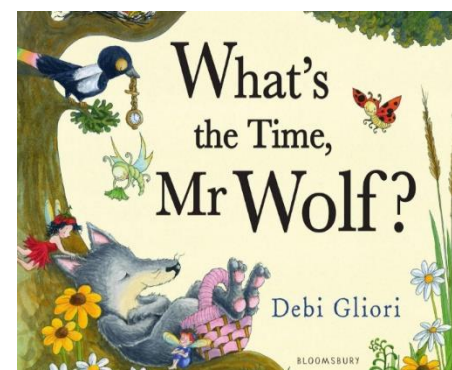
In order to tell the time children need to understand how we divide time up into hours, minutes and seconds. They also need to be able to work with numbers up to 60, understand a clock face, how time can be recorded digitally and understand the many ways we describe the time. Talk about the time and give your child opportunities to play with and explore clock faces, stop watches, timers and see all the different ways time is recorded.

There are many opportunities to learn about time in school, but it is recommended that more opportunities to explore time and to be exposed to time vocabulary is provided. Here are a few articles including advice on how to do this at home.

- <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/maths/learning-to-tell-the-time/>
- <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/time-flies-helping-your-child-learn-to-tell-the-time/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/help-your-child-with-maths>
- https://www.fiestacrafts.co.uk/blog/article.php?DOC_INST=11

Here are some story books about time you may find in your local library or online:

- The World of Eric Carle: What's the Time?
- Lift the flap telling the time by Rosie Hore
- What time is it, Mr Crocodile? by Judy Sierra
- Winnie the Pooh Tells Time by A.A Milne
- Bats around the Clock by Kathi Appelt
- A stopwatch from Grandma by Loretta Garbutt
- The Noisy Clockshop by Jean Berg
- Telling Time by Dave Adler
- Spot Tells the Time by Eric Hill
- Maisy's First Clock by Lucy Cousins
- Game Time by Stuart Murphy
- IQ it's time by Mary Ann Fraser
- Cluck o'Clock by Kes Gray
- The Grouchy Ladybug by Eric Carle
- Hickory Dickory Dock by Russell Punter
- What's the Time Mr Wolf by Debi Gliori



There are a number of time orientated toys such as clock puzzles and activity books that can be found in local shops, or online (second hand or on reuse websites).

Here is a list of Usborne books suitable for ages 4-8+

<https://usborne.com/gb/books/browse-by-category/maths-books/telling-the-time>

and telling the time activity books and flashcards for 5-9 year olds:

https://www.cgpbooks.co.uk/search-results?searchtext=telling%2Bthe%2Btime&searchmode=allwords&active_tab=product

Exhibitions:

<https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/see-and-do/clockmakers-museum>

<https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/see-and-do/zimingzhong>

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/visit-home-time>

<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/visit/parks/greenwich-park/royal-observatory>

<https://www.parliament.uk/visiting/visiting-and-tours/big-ben-tour/>

Please do take the time to talk about time with your children or to include it more explicitly in your daily life whether including it in general conversation, pointing it out explicitly, reading stories with time in it, planning and organising with your children, timing activities, setting timers for cooking / teeth brushing, looking at the time on analogue and digital watches/clocks etc.

Talking of time – we have the Chinese New Year coming up which is a time to welcome the Spring and to wish good fortune and health. We are fortunate to have Mrs Leung in the Unit who will share more about Chinese New year – what it means and the culture and traditions she and her community honour at this time. Mrs Leung has been busy organising some wonderful activities relating to the Chinese New Year. We will be celebrating and taking part in activities in the week leading up to the Chinese New Year which is on 10th February 2024.

Important term date information will have been sent out by the main office. I have included some key dates from the information sent out below which apply for our young deaf children in the Unit.

Dates for your diary:

Date and Time	Event	Unit Children
Tuesday 13 th February	Parent/teacher consultations	All Unit children
Thursday 15 February	Parent/teacher consultations	All Unit children
Half term holiday – Monday 19 th February – Friday 23 rd February		
Friday 8 th March	Reception Health Screening	Reception - ID and IB
Monday 11 th March	Y1 Geography trip Hudnall	Y1 SG and FO

	Park	
Thursday 28 th March	Term ends 1.30pm	All Unit children

Events and Extracurricular Clubs

Please make sure to register with the Phoenix group if you have not already. Keep an eye out for their February half-term events as they are very popular and do book up very quickly.

<https://www.phoenixgroup.org.uk>

There is a Beauty and the Beast Pantomime on 27th January – please see this link for details

<https://www.phoenixgroup.org.uk/events-phoenix-early-birds>

<https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/home> - Wonderlab: Equinor Gallery is worth a visit and appeals to all ages young and old. There is also an IMAX cinema inside the museum which is showing short 3D films.

<https://www.citylit.ac.uk/deaf-day> - City Lit's Annual Deaf Day is being held on 13th April this year. Please see the link for details.

<https://piedpipertheatre.co.uk/show.php?id=19> – Can Bears Ski is on tour until 25th February. Please see the link for details. There are performances being held in London, Hemel Hempstead and Luton in January and February.

National Deaf Children's Society - please do become a member if you are not one already. They publish up to date research and information and host a number of events nationwide for young deaf people and their families. <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/>

<https://buzz.org.uk/> - The Buzz is the sister website to the NDCS. It is for young deaf children. There is a section for under 12s and includes lots of friendly information, videos, articles and games.

<https://spaceherts.org.uk/> - this is a charity for children with neurodiversity. They hold a number of events online and in person that are brilliant. They offer sensory sessions, cookery lessons, lego clubs, art therapy, aerial skills to list a few. Many of the events are free.

<https://spaceherts.org.uk/events/>

<https://www.sense.org.uk/> - Sense offer art, sports and well-being activities which are often free and can also be accessed online.

<https://www.primarytimes.co.uk/hertfordshire/listings/>

Wishing you all a wonderful New Year again,

From the Unit