

Dear Parents and Children,

Welcome back. We hope you have had a lovely summer holiday and are looking forward to the year ahead. We are very excited to welcome Mrs Polak to the Class 4 team and we are both so pleased with the great start the children have made this term. This year, we have Mrs Polak teaching Monday and Tuesday and Mrs Cohen. Mrs Williamson will be in class from Monday to Wednesday which is excellent for continuity through the transition and we also have Mrs Lethaby and Mrs Cove in class supporting the children on Thursday and Friday respectively.

Hopefully, the children will have been enthusiastic to tell you about their learning since we have been back. We have kicked off the term with a journey back in time with Ernest Shackleton, on which we learn about the geography of Antarctica, the history of the period and of course lots of rich opportunities in English including recounts and diary entries.

We are starting our term of Science with a closer look at the human body: the blood, heart, circulation and gas exchange. This is complimented beautifully by our SEAL curriculum and our visit to the Life Caravan (25-26 Sept), where we will do a workshop on healthy lifestyles, to include discussions about diet, exercise and drugs. Our Science learning will also give us the opportunity to explore human development from conception to old age. It is always fun during this topic if the children could bring in their 'red books' which you would have tracked their early development in from birth. Any photos that the children are happy to share would also be much appreciated. We will look at development from newborn and this really helps us visualise the changes and track the milestones.

The Science will then take a logical leap towards other life cycles including plants and Mrs Polack has already started some lovely art with the children looking at botanical drawings. We can't wait to start displaying the children's artwork around the classroom.

We continue to follow the National Curriculum for Maths and Literacy. In Class 4, we encourage children to use an on-line maths programme called Prodigy, by logging in securely, we are able to monitor their usage and progress. The children now have their logins and we have managed to transfer the Year 6 logins across from last year to the new account, so they have their old passwords too. The programme has been a huge hit previously and highly successful. Please continue to support the children in practising and consolidating the times tables and their corresponding division facts as these will make fractions, ratios and percentages much easier to handle in year 5 & 6.

The book we have chosen as our first class-reader is *Holes* by Louis Sachar. Could we ask that you refrain from reading this book with your children as one of the important elements of our teaching of reading is using the text to make predictions, which is obviously difficult if the child has already read the book! Our next text is *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll if you don't mind avoiding that too! The new year 5s have made a great start at tackling a whole class text for the first time and have been keen to read out loud and share their ideas with the rest of the class. We firmly believe that the children get a great amount from reading and sharing a text in this way. The children are welcome to take books home from school but they must of course return them when they have finished with them. Following our exciting visit from author, Steve Cole last year, we will be pleased to welcome, as part of the Appledore book festival, the poet, Joshua Seigal. If you would like to purchase one of his books ahead of the visit, Joshua will gladly sign them at the end of his visit. Last year, as the result of some follow-up work, we submitted a number of competition entries and Marwood children were proud to receive commendations from famous authors and Boglarka won book vouchers for herself and the school. Please support your children if they are keen to enter this year's competition: details will be sent out in the newsletter.

Our MFL provision from Pilton Academy has sadly come to an end due to funding, but Mrs Cohen is keen to share her Italian and Spanish and Mrs Polak is keen to teach some German too. To start the term in a familiar language though, we will consolidate our French skills in daily snippets and a weekly session. Class 4 teachers have been busy perfecting our penny whistle skills to share with you in music and we hope to be able to perform some festive tunes as a class later in the term! If we have time, we will also take a look in to Opera, as we already have some children who have had a taste of the opera 'Carmen' through the choir and Mrs Mannell and Mrs Cohen have some exciting collaboration and perhaps guest appearance in the pipework.

The new year, brought new technology to Marwood Primary and we now have a set of Notebooks so our computing has started with some familiarisation tasks and we are going to make the most of opportunities to use a keyboard. We will be using them in a cross-curricular way, to research our topics but will also use Google Sheets to learn about and create spreadsheets linked to the enterprise scheme. Please take any opportunity to work on a PC with your children at home: using a keyboard to word process; save and retrieve files from appropriate files and drives and if possible. Saving documents, closing down programmes and safely turning off the computer.

Children are welcome to bring a pencil case to school in class 4 but please limit it to one because of space. We would ask that they do not bring Sharpies in to school and do not need Whiteboard pens as we provide these and they need to be non-toxic.

Parent consultations are coming up and appointment sheets are now available in the school office so please pop in and sign up or contact the office. If you are not able to make any of the times offered, please speak to one of us and we will find you a mutually convenient alternative.

Following a brilliantly positive response to The Daily Mile last year, we will endeavour to continue this year. The Year 6 children will tell you how they felt the benefits to fitness and concentration when we were doing it regularly and also how hard some of them found it, getting back into it this week. I'm sure they will soon be feeling the benefits! Please ensure they have trainers as well as their PE kits in school every day as we will also try to fit PE in whenever we can. This half term we will be doing netball and football and would ask that children are in the official PE kit as published on the website. We are also awaiting confirmation of our Bikeability scheme for the Autumn term - details to follow.

As always in Class 4, we have a number of inter-school tournaments and events coming up and will keep you posted on dates and arrangements. We thank you in advance for your support with lifts and cheer-leading on the day of these events. We really appreciate your help with logistics!

As in previous years, the children will work collaboratively in the second half of the Autumn term, to devise and run a stall at the school fair. We will give you plenty of warning and information later in the term and ask the children to contain their excitement, enthusiasm and planning until we launch the project as they will need to work to the brief we give them at the appropriate time.

The children have had their first couple of weeks of homework; consisting of a reading activity and log, a piece of maths, SPAG and spellings. We are keen to know what the children can do so please do indicate if you have had to assist with homework and let us know if your child is struggling.

We are always happy to arrange a time to chat to you if you have any concerns or issues, so please do email us, contact reception or pop in to arrange a good time.

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Best wishes, Rosie Polack, Vicki Cohen, Pauline Williamson, Corinne Lethaby and Chloe Cove.