

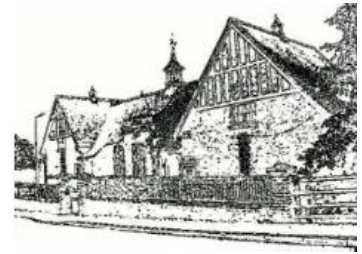
Asfordby Hill Primary School

Asfordby Hill, Melton Mowbray,
Leicestershire LE14 3RB

☎ 01664 812244

Email: admin@asfordbyhill.leics.sch.uk

www.asfordbyhill.leics.sch.uk



Headteacher: Mrs. P. Millward

Chair of Governors: Rev Dr Nick Ashton

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you all had a wonderful summer and that you and the children took time to relax, refresh and recuperate (I know I did!). Hopefully the children are recharged and ready for the exciting year ahead. Alongside myself, Miss Warner and Mrs Purkis will be available to support the children throughout the week. I also ask that you refer to Mrs Millward's letter, which details the structure of the school day, health and safety measures and COVID-19 procedures.

I wanted to briefly outline three key themes/concepts that will thread through the year ahead:



1.) Wellbeing: Taking Responsibility - Now the children are entering upper key stage 2, and they begin to mature (both physically and mentally), it is increasingly important that they learn how to take responsibility for their physical and mental wellbeing. We will explore how different responses to situations lead to different outcomes, including how our actions impact our own feelings and the feelings of others; what positive relationships look like; goal setting; resilience; and embracing failure. This will link to our whole-school rainbow skills.



2.) Self-regulation, Metacognition & Independence – From day one, I will be encouraging children to be independent learners. This will take time to develop but will benefit the children greatly in the long-term. Metacognition can be defined as a process where we *'think about our thinking'* and leaves us better equipped to regulate our own learning. For example, after identifying that something is proving quite difficult, they may eventually be able to go one step further and use metacognitive strategies to identify why they may be finding it difficult, perhaps by asking questions like: *Am I overwhelmed with other information? Is there an approach that may help me overcome this challenge? Are there any unfamiliar words that are preventing me from understanding this?*



3.) Working Memory & Fluency – Our working memory holds information that is currently being used. Research tells us that the capacity of this store is incredibly limited; it seems that a maximum of around four 'slots' are available to store information before we experience cognitive overload and cannot store or process any new information. I will be building the children's understanding of this in order to help them utilise metacognitive strategies and self-regulate their learning.

Specifically, I will be placing great emphasis on fluency in reading and mental calculation in maths throughout this first term; I will post more information about this via Seesaw in the first week. In short, research suggests that fluent readers and children who are fluent in mental calculation, are able to free up space in their working memory to engage in more complex processes, like comprehension, mathematical reasoning and problem solving.

Our Topics

1.) Earth and Space

We will explore a lot in this exciting topic, like: *'What does the solar system look like?'*, *'Why do we have day and night?'* and *'What do we know about the moon?'*. This will thread into our reading lessons where we will be looking at how the work of scientists and engineers such as Katherine Johnson and Dorothy Vaughan made space travel possible.

2.) Changes in our Local Area

The children will continue to build on their knowledge of their local area by thinking like geographers. We will engage in geographical enquiry to answer the questions *'How has the human and physical geography of Asfordby Hill changed?'* before conducting fieldwork to investigate *'How do the streets of Asfordby Hill change over the course of the day?'*

3.) Ancient Civilisations/Ancient Egyptians

We will begin by exploring what historians have been able to deduce about where and when the earliest civilisations appeared by interpreting various sources. These civilisations include Ancient Sumer, The Indus Valley, Ancient Egypt and The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China. Once we have gained a foundational knowledge of the earliest civilisations, we will look at the civilisation of Ancient Egypt in more depth, asking *'How much did the Ancient Egyptians achieve?'*

Our Curriculum

In English, we will begin by writing our own mystery narratives inspired by various great texts, like: Ross Mackenzie's *'The Nowhere Emporium'* and Thomas Taylor's *'Malamander'*. We will explore these model texts and construct a success criteria together, before the children engage in their writing process. Importantly, the writing process involves various stages of planning, drafting, revising and editing; strategies for each stage will be explicitly taught. Later in the term, we will be exploring *'The Highwayman'*, writing our own narrative poetry and writing biographies.

Reading will underpin the curriculum in Sycamore; I was incredibly delighted to see on our transition days how much of a positive attitude the children have towards reading and I am excited to continue to nurture this. Reading for pleasure is something I am incredibly passionate about and I have some fantastic books that I cannot wait to share with the children!

Spelling will be taught with strong phonemic foundations, whilst also giving children the opportunity to identify links with root words, prefixes and suffixes. This approach will allow me to make sure children are confident with spellings from the year 3/4 spelling list, whilst incorporating longer, more challenging spellings from the year 5/6 spelling list. Spelling lists will be posted on Seesaw/Spelling Shed on Mondays. Spellings will be tested on a Friday. I am confident that this approach will have a positive impact on the children's spelling.

In maths, we will start by ensuring the children have a secure understanding of the place value of four-digit numbers before moving on to numbers to one million. Unitising – a process which allows us to recognise and count larger quantities by breaking them into smaller quantities termed 'units' - will allow them to apply their understanding of hundreds, tens and ones to understand hundred thousands, ten thousands and one thousands. When I am satisfied that children have a secure

understanding of place value - being able to order, compare and round numbers to varying degrees - we will build fluency in mental calculation strategies with these larger numbers.

Please see below for details on the wider curriculum that the children will be engaging with.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2
Geography	Changes in our local area	
History		Ancient civilisations Ancient Egypt
RE	Why do some people believe God exists?	Why do some people believe God exists?
Science	Earth and space	Forces
Computing	Mars rover	Mars rover
PE	Tag Rugby & Dodgeball	Football Team building
PSHE	Wellbeing: taking responsibility	Wellbeing: taking responsibility
Art/DT	Light-up constellation maps	Egyptian portraits
Music	Sustained learning of a musical instrument	Livin' on a Prayer
French	Encore!	Encore!

Home Learning

During the Autumn term, I will not be setting weekly homework to be completed, as such. Instead, you could use this time to focus on key activities that will have a positive impact on progress and ensure the children make a running start in year 5! Now and then however, there may be tasks I will set on Seesaw to supplement and enrich our learning in school.

Activity	Frequency
Maths: Mental fluency practice. <i>TTrockstars and Mathletics are great resources!</i>	Weekly
Spelling: Practise weekly spellings. <i>Spelling Shed is a great resource!</i>	Weekly
Reading: Reading aloud to an adult/independent reading.	Daily, 10 minutes per day.
Reading: Class reading scrapbook	As/when children bring it home.

General Information

A few reminders:

- 1.) PE will be taught on a Tuesday and a Wednesday. Children need to arrive at school in their PE kit on these days.
- 2.) Spellings will be set on a Monday and tested on a Friday.
- 3.) If you have any questions, grab me on the playground or send them in a Seesaw message. I will reply to Seesaw messages at my earliest convenience, within my working hours.

Can you help out?

- We will be exploring how and why the geography of Asfordby Hill has changed throughout history. If you have any old photographs (eg Holwell Works) that you would be willing to share or know someone that may be able to offer insight in this area, please let me know.
- If you or someone you know has a keen interest in and can offer enrichment in any of the topics above, please let me know, we would be extremely grateful. This could also be listening to readers or supporting children during their art lessons perhaps.

Look out for:

- More information on mental fluency via Seesaw.
- More information on reading fluency and how you can support at home via Seesaw.
- More information on our approach to spelling via Seesaw.
- More information on our reading scrapbook via Seesaw.

The beginning of a new school year can be extremely exciting, but also challenging. So, I want to reiterate that if you need to chat to me about anything (be it queries, worries, concerns, or even to share successes) please do not hesitate to come and see me or send a message on Seesaw at the earliest opportunity.

I look forward to an exciting year ahead.

Mr Forde 😊

