

Asfordby Hill Primary School

'Achieving High Standards in all that we do'

Asfordby Hill, Melton Mowbray,

Leicestershire LE14 3RB

01664 812244

admin@asfordbyhill.leics.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs P Millward

Chair of Governors: Mrs Jenifer Smith



Parents and Carers,

I hope you all had a wonderful summer and that you and the children took time to relax, refresh and recuperate. Hopefully the children are recharged and ready for the challenging, yet exciting, year ahead. I am looking forward to welcoming them into Sycamore and, alongside Mrs Goodsell, will strive to not only keep them safe, but to nurture their enthusiasm for learning and intellectual curiosity!

Below, you will find important information and general housekeeping for the year ahead.

Routines

8:45am: School begins promptly

Children should ensure they are lined up outside the cabin, as they did last year, and wait for an adult to take them into the classroom.

3:15pm: School finishes

Children will be released directly from the classroom door.

Please note that should you wish for your child to walk home if you live close to school, you must inform the office of this via a signed letter before children will be able to do so.

At 3:20pm, children will be taken to the office and should be collected from there.

Belongings

All stationery is provided for the children, so children will not need to bring their own into school. Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day - it would be helpful (and far more environmentally friendly than disposable cups) if children continue to bring in a water bottle daily. School reading books are sent home daily and are expected to be brought into the school daily.

Physical Education

PE will be taught on a **Tuesday** and a **Thursday**. Children should continue to arrive at school in their PE kit on these days. PE kit should consist of a red jumper, navy-blue t-shirt, dark, plain bottoms and suitable trainers ('Converse'-style trainers are not suitable for PE). On PE days, earrings should be removed or, if unable to be removed, taped. We will be going across to the field for PE this term, so appropriate footwear is essential. Kit is available to purchase through Parent Pay if you wish to – please contact the office for further information.

Homework

Homework will be assigned (via Seesaw) on Mondays and should be submitted before the following Monday. As the children are now entering upper KS2, it is their responsibility to ensure

that homework is submitted on time and to a high standard. If children have any questions, encourage them to ask before the end of the week so they have plenty of time to make sure it can be completed and submitted. Each week, homework will consist of reading, spelling and mathematics (an example can be found on Seesaw). This is to ensure children continue to keep their skills fresh and revisit/consolidate learning.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Rainbow Skills and British Values

This term, children will be focusing on taking responsibility. Individual liberty and the rule of law will be focused upon as we discuss our class rules and the underlying importance of them in building a safe and stimulating classroom where all learners thrive. As they continue to mature (mentally, emotionally and physically), it is increasingly important that they learn how to take responsibility for their physical and mental wellbeing. They will learn about 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.

Messages/Communication

As always, should you have any messages, questions or concerns, my Seesaw messages are always open or you may prefer to speak to me before/after school on the playground. Seesaw messages will be responded to at my earliest convenience – usually at the beginning or end of the school day. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that messages will be seen/responded to during the school day between 8:45am-3:15pm; any messages regarding changes to pick-up arrangements or other urgent messages should be directed to the school office of which the email address and telephone number can be found at the head of this letter.

The Importance of Mindset: Taking Risks, Persevering and Trying Hard

From day one, my expectations will be set high for the children; I have no doubt in my mind that they can and will achieve incredible things. Year 5 carries an abundance of challenges, but all I ask is that the children take risks, persevere and try their absolute hardest. Throughout university, there was an academic whose work resonated with me: Jo Boaler is a Professor of Mathematics at Stanford University and is a leading researcher in the field of mathematics. In her book, *Mathematical Mindsets*, she expresses that “... *the difference between those who succeed and those who don't is not the brains they were born with, but their approach to life, the messages they receive about their potential, and the opportunities they have to learn*”. This quote speaks volumes of the value and importance of a mindset built on risk-taking, perseverance and work ethic towards success.

The autumn term is a busy one; it is packed full of learning. So, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to an exciting year with the children,

Mr D Forde



Sycamore Curriculum - Autumn Term



English – Reading, Writing and Spelling

In English, during the first half of this term, I will be focusing on revisiting key concepts and prior knowledge from their time at AHS so far: what a sentence is; how to modify and expand noun phrases; how to use a range of adverbials to modify verbs; and how to craft different sentence structures. By securing these pre-requisites, by developing children's creativity and flair, and by promoting ambitious vocabulary, it will lay the necessary foundations for children to soar in their writing during the remainder of the year. We will begin by writing our own narratives, inspired by many high-quality models, great authors and texts, such as Ross Mackenzie's "The Nowhere Emporium", before moving onto writing biographies about the inspirational and amazing "Hidden Figures" behind the Space Race.

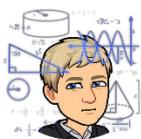


Reading will underpin the curriculum in Sycamore; reading is something I am incredibly passionate about and I have some brilliant literature that I cannot wait to share with the children! I have a blank scrapbook that is just waiting to be filled by the children with pages that celebrate their favourite books. Reading and writing are symbiotic – they rely heavily upon each other. Reading is fundamental in developing children's creative flair and immersing them in delicious language; I really cannot stress how much of a huge impact that devoting just ten minutes at home each day to reading can have on their writing.

Regarding spelling, it will be taught with a focus on the orthography of the English language: the phoneme-grapheme correspondences (the relationship between the letters and the sounds which are spoken in words); the morphology (quite literally the 'shape' of words - the root words, prefixes and suffixes that form them); and the etymology (the study of the origins of words). This approach will allow me to make sure children are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to spot patterns in the English language, make 'best bets' at unknown spellings, and to correct incorrect spellings. We will build upon the year 3/4 spelling list, whilst incorporating longer, more challenging spellings from the year 5/6 spelling list. New lists will be assigned on Spelling Shed on Mondays.

I will not be 'testing' spellings weekly - the high-stakes nature of this encourages cramming (a learning strategy that is not effective in committing learning to long-term memory). Essentially, children may perform highly in a weekly test, but this may not be revisited again or utilised within writing. Instead, there will be low-stakes, dictation activities and ample opportunity in writing lessons where I will give children feedback on how to use their knowledge to correct spellings. You will also see spellings repeated throughout lists – this is intentional. Consolidation, retrieval and 'overlearning' is proven to have a huge impact on learning and retention.

Mathematics – Arithmetic, Fluency and Number

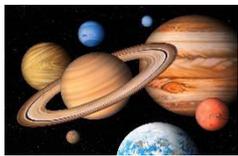


In maths, I will start by ensuring the children have a secure understanding of the place value of four-digit numbers before moving on to numbers to one million. Unitising – a process which allows us to recognise and count larger quantities by breaking them into smaller quantities termed 'units' - will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

When I am sure 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 calculation strategies with these larger numbers. We will be taking our time with this initial topic as the rest of mathematics relies heavily upon a firm grasp of this.

Each week, we will have a dedicated arithmetic/mental fluency lesson which focuses on children knowing, understanding and applying key mathematical facts (number bonds and multiplication facts) as well as being 'flexible' with and manipulating number. The knowledge learnt in this lesson will carry through into children's morning work and further mathematics lessons. Research indicates that our short-term, working memory – which we use to hold information currently being used- is incredibly limited. Therefore it is important that these number facts are secure, committed to long-term memory and are easily accessible whenever children need them. In short, children who are fluent in arithmetic/mental calculation, are able to free up space in their working (short-term) memory, thus can engage in more complex processes like mathematical reasoning, problem solving and will be more successful mathematicians.

Wider Curriculum



Autumn 1: Earth and Space

Admittedly a favourite of mine, this topic is full of awe and wonder! We will explore many questions: 'How and why have theories of the solar system changed?' and 'Why do we have day and night?'. This will thread into our reading lessons where we will be exploring a variety of high-quality texts and at how the work of Katherine Johnson and Dorothy Vaughan made space travel possible.



Autumn 2: Ancient Civilisations

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. Then, we will be conducting a historical enquiry into why the Ancient Egyptian civilisation was so successful.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2
Geography	Our local area and fieldwork	
History		Ancient civilisations and Ancient Egypt
RE	What kind of king was Jesus? Was Jesus the Messiah?	
Science	Earth and space Forces	
Computing	The Mars rover	
PE	Football and gymnastics	TBC
PSHE	Wellbeing: taking responsibility	
Art/DT	Hidden figures portraits	Light-up constellation maps
Music	Ukulele	
French	Encore!	