

Castledawson Primary School

Room 4 Information

2nd September 2019

Dear Parent

Welcome to Room 4! I hope you have had a great summer break and are excited to be back! To keep you well informed about what is going on in Room 4 this term, please find below some information I hope you will find useful. Please also note there will be an Information Session for parents on **Thursday 19th September at 6.30pm** which will outline further curriculum information, homework changes, imminent changes to SEN and Anti-Bullying as well as advising you on our school’s priorities for the year and areas we will be focusing on.

**General Information**

For the time being, on Tuesday and possibly Wednesday, Mrs Campbell (formerly Miss McAllsiter) will teach the class and I will teach the remainder of the week. She may teaching additional days as I attend courses, carry out principal duties, etc. I intend to keep this to a minimum to ensure a settled learning environment and continuity for all concerned and in my absence it will always be Mrs Campbell taking the class.

**Morning and Afternoon Routines**

In P4/5 children are encouraged to be independent. If children are arriving before 9.00am they will go directly to the Nurture Room for Early Bird Club (8.00 – 8.40am) or straight outside to play after leaving their schoolbag on their peg. All monies, correspondence, homework will be collected at 9.00am when class starts. Please ensure all money is in clearly labelled envelopes noting what it is for, your child’s name and amount. As with last year, using the monthly menu published on seesaw, please also write on the envelope what your child is having at lunchtime if having a dinner.

In P4/5 some children are attending after school clubs. At 3.00pm any children going home will be walked to school door at front entrance while remaining children will make their way to their chosen club. Sometimes it is a coach taking a club so children need to be aware of their pick up arrangements in general but especially after clubs and knowing who is picking them up. Staff will also be vigilant on this matter. It will be emphasised that children remain in school should there be no one there to pick them up rather than making other arrangements themselves. In P4/5 we don’t recommend children walking home themselves and if this is your preferred method, please speak to me so I am aware.

**Swimming / PE**

The whole class will go swimming every Wednesday starting 18th September. The cost is £1.70 and children will need a towel, swimwear and goggles. Girls are also required to wear a swimming cap. No other money is required as children do not have the opportunity to buy from vending machines. Please let me know if you have any concerns about your child swimming e.g. if it is their first time or if they expe3rience any fear of water etc. Swimming is a part of your child’s P.E. curriculum and we encourage all children to swim. Should your child not be able to participate for a prolonged period of time (more than 3 consecutive weeks) please provide a doctor’s note to cover the absence. If your child is missing one day, a note from parents is appreciated.

PE is on Tuesday and children can wear tracksuit bottoms and trainers to school with their usual uniform, polo shirt and sweatshirt. Any changes to our PE day will be advised in advance. This same PE uniform is also advisable on swimming day with usual school uniform on the remaining days. Please speak to me if there are any exceptions / concerns regarding uniform.

**Daily Mile**

PE uniform can be worn on PE and swimming days but to complete our ‘daily mile’ whole school fitness initiative on the remaining three days, outdoor trainers will be required and should be brought to school. Children will have the opportunity to change footwear. Please also ensure your child brings a coat daily as outdoor learning will be part of our curriculum as well as the daily mile and our weather is often unpredictable! While we encourage everyone to run if they can, children can walk the daily mile or opt out if they aren’t feeling well.

**Break / Water**

To promote healthy breaks children should bring fruit or bread-based products for snack time. The canteen also provides healthy breaks which the children can purchase daily along with milk. Milk and water are the only two drinks encouraged at break time as per our healthy breaks in school policy. Juice may be consumed at lunchtime. Additional water should be sent to school in a water bottle which your child can access throughout the day for hydration. Break and lunch can be ordered and paid for daily or weekly, whatever suits you best. Prices remain the same £2.60 for dinner and the menu is published monthly on seesaw. Break choices are as follows;

**Monday: Fruit 25p, Toast 25p**

**Tuesday: Crackers 25p, ½ Baguette 35p**

**Wednesday: Toast 25p, Scones 30p**

**Thursday: Fruit 25p, ½ Bagel 30p**

**Friday: Crackers 25p, ½ Baguette 35p**

**A beaker of milk can also be purchased daily for 10p.**

**Homework**

Children will have homework every night except Friday. They will have spelling, maths facts and reading nightly. In light of the homework survey carried out among parents in Term 3 of last year, we have revised our Homework Policy and reduced homework as a result. There will be no written homework for P4 pupils, written homework will only be for P5 pupils and once per week. P5 literacy and numeracy written homework will be given out alternate weeks and set at the start of the week for completion by Friday.

Maths facts and spelling will be written. On occasion the maths facts may be learning or mental maths. Spelling activities may include some non-written methods but mostly they will be written. The reading homework will be set daily and also on occasion may include an activity e.g. a comprehension game, reading log activity. Homework in P4 should last no longer than 15 – 25 mins while and P5 will should take no longer than half an hour and this includes reading. Twice per term (between September – Christmas) there will be practical homework. The nature of these homeworks will be to develop their thinking skills, working alongside parents, perhaps getting outdoors and also helping children make connections between their learning and real-life situations. Homework is purposeful but it’s not if it causes distress to your child or you so please let me know if you have any concerns.

**Spelling:** Spelling is differentiated meaning your child is in a spelling group. Our spelling programme is one that places emphasis on the teaching of spelling and phonics throughout the school rather than all rote learning. In the past, phonic work ended in the foundation stage but this programme allows the development of phonics, word investigations and seeing how words are built, patterns within spelling etc. The whole class will focus on a sound each week e.g. ‘oa’ with differentiated spelling stemming from it. The first few weeks will be revision.

Like all areas, spelling is monitored with your child being supported / challenged accordingly. They will not remain on the same spelling just for the sake of it. They will have a number of spellings to learn nightly as well as some activities which will develop knowledge and application of spelling., you can ask your child their spelling orally or they can be called out to be written down. In school we use both methods as well as the activities you will see coming home for homework e.g. word sorts, meaning, making sentences with the words in it, etc. We will also be promoting various strategies to recall spelling, one of which is the ‘Look, Visualise, Say, Cover, Write and Check’ method. You should mix the spelling up on a Thursday evening when they are revising all the week’s spelling for the Friday assessment. If you want to try different approaches to spelling you can use magnetic letters to build the words or look for them in books, magazines, newspapers, etc.

**Maths Facts:** Maths Facts are also differentiated. Your child will be working at a level appropriate to them. Maths facts cover number bonds, tables, addition, subtraction and all number concepts covered throughout the year. While mostly they are written down in their maths facts books, on occasion they will have assigned tasks in Mathletics for maths facts or perhaps I will share a link via SeeSaw of good websites which cover areas of learning in class.

**Reading:** your child will have reading every night. Guided reading takes place for children still in reading groups and their reading is completed in class daily with either the teacher or classroom assistant. For children who are independent readers they will take part in Accelerated Reading. This programme allows children to choose their own books within a certain level after being tested to determine their reading level. This level is not determined by the teacher but by the programme when the children are tested. Children are very welcome to read books at home or from the local library and carry out a quiz afterwards regardless of their assigned level but in school, they choose books within the given range. AR is not carried out with the teacher daily so children have to be independent and organised to carry out reading themselves and meet their targets, etc. Information will be given to parents of children moving onto AR.

**Mathletics:** We have various Mathletics weeks throughout the school year where children have the opportunity to complete Mathletics during class time and also for homework. Mathletics is a great way to consolidate what we are leaning in class and developing mental skills. Children will usually have assigned tasks that relate to areas being covered in class. Mathletics can be completed every Thursday evening or any evening when there is not written homework. If you can’t access Mathletics at home, don’t worry as children have opportunity to complete it in school too.

**Classwork**

Our World Around Us Topic in Term 1 is ‘Space’ so we will be exploring science through our learning on the solar system and planets, the relationship between earth moon and the sun as well historical aspects such as astronauts and the moon landing etc. Educational trips will be planned accordingly to enhance and consolidate learning e.g. this term we hope to visit the Planetarium in Armagh. More details will follow in due course. If you have any items, books, etc. relating to our WAU topic this term and would like to send them in, we would greatly appreciate it.

In Literacy this term we are focusing on writing recounts which includes diaries and letters, non-chronological reports, narrative writing and writing instructions linked to our Space topic. We will also be developing basic grammar - verbs, nouns, adjectives, pronouns as well as basic punctuation - capital letters, full stops, question marks etc and encouraging accurate use of both in daily writing. We will be working at up-levelling story writing so children can extend sentences by using connectives as well as starting their sentences in a variety of ways. We will also be developing use of interesting words in writing e.g. different variations of the word ‘said,’ ‘nice’ etc.

Children will participate in Guided Reading / AR daily. Reading is differentiated depending on each child’s level of independence in reading. Comprehension work (our literacy focus this year) and shared reading will also take place in class to develop reading skills as well as reading logs being completed for homework. Talking and Listening skills will be developed intrinsically through all areas of the curriculum as well as through Reading and Writing.

In Numeracy we will cover:

* Numbers up to 1000 – comparing, ordering, rounding
* Place Value to 100 / 1000
* Addition and Subtraction within 100 / 1000
* Time – minute intervals, ¼ hour, to, past times, am and pm
* Measure – ½ and ¼ metres, cms and perimeter
* Shape – 2D shapes, tessellations, right angles, ¼ and ½ turns, acute and obtuse angles, compass points
* Data – Venn and Carroll diagrams / bar charts

Activities will be a mixture of practical, written and mental skills and ICT will form an integral part of all areas of the curriculum. We are also developing open – ended challenges and investigative problem solving this year.

**Classroom Support**

Support and challenge will be provided as appropriate from the class teacher and classroom assistants particularly in Literacy and Numeracy. Differentiated class work and homework will be set. Targeted support sessions may also be available to children in the form of nurture sessions, booster groups, Reading Partners, Lexia, etc. You will be informed beforehand if this is deemed as potentially beneficial to your child.

**Bucket Filling**

As a school we will be continuing to promote “Bucket Filling” encouraging each other to think about our actions and how these may make us and others feel.

**Rewards**

We use fuzzies for table points in Room 4. Children have really enjoyed using these in the past. Children can earn up to 250 points per week for positive behaviour, effort, hard work, great displaying of class rules, being a good friend, great manners, etc. Friday is trading day when children get to trade their points for a prize of their own choosing. These prizes range from being a helper in another classroom, having lunch with the teacher, something out of the prize box, etc. We have high standards of behaviour for learning in Room 4 so every child has the opportunity to be happy, feel safe and have the most favourable environment possible for learning. We have a class contract we draw up together and this is shared with parents. Anyone who does not follow our class contract may lose fuzzies but has the opportunity to earn them back. Warnings are also issued before removal of fuzzies. There are also individual reward charts for children with more personalised targets. Certificates are given out weekly in assembly with a different focus each week… e.g. reading, being a good friend, being an eco-warrior, healthy eating, use of ICT, etc.

We have star of the day and star of the week. We also distribute badges monthly for displaying the school value of the month as well as certificates weekly for bucket filling. A detailed list of rewards is found in our school behaviour policy.

**Money**

We appreciate all money in labelled envelopes for ease of administration which can be very lengthy and take up valuable learning time. Anyone wishing to pay weekly can.

**Parent Links**

I know I’m really going to enjoy working with your child and am looking forward to getting to know them more. I expect the highest standard possible of all children and will give my best to ensure that your child produces the results he / she is capable of. Above all, I want each member of the class to feel happy and valued and will aim to make sure this is the case.

Parent teacher meetings take place in October but feel free at any time to call in, phone or write on seesaw if you are concerned about any aspect of your child’s progress or well-being. No aspect of school life should be distressing for you or your child. It is my aim to make school as happy a place as possible while also challenging your child to meet their full potential.

Kind Regards

Marina McCusker