

Dear Parents

These past two weeks have flown by and I am happy to say that all of my 'Year 1s' are happy and settled and are dealing with their new routines and tasks confidently and co-operatively. As 'Team Leaders', they have been caring and a huge support to the new Reception children.

Our topic this term is 'Turrets and Tiaras'. We have a lovely beanstalk rising up into some 'clouds' in the corner of the room and the children have started the topic by imagining what might be at the top. Fortunately for me and my planned seamless link, a Reception child suggested a castle.

We will talk about what a castle is and who lives in one. We will look at castles through the ages, finding out where they were built and why. We will find out about the different features of a castle and the roles people had who lived and worked in them. Key Stage 2 will use this topic to learn about the Tudors. Your children will do this when they are in KS2, so I am going to take them a little further back into the Medieval times. We will find out about the life of a child in this period and make comparisons between life then and their lives and homes now, in the 21st Century.

I hope to take Reception and all the Year 1s on a visit to Warwick Castle as our 'marvellous middle' and our 'fabulous finish' will be a Medieval feast on Thursday 1st December. We would love the children to come dressed in costume on this day, so if you want to plan ahead, feel free.

Art will be linked to the castle theme as much as possible; watercolour paintings of castles, charcoal observational drawings of artefacts and collage work. The children will look at the work of the Swiss/German artist, Paul Klee and create their own image of a castle based on his style. They will also make a 3D castle, design heraldic patterns and use fabric paints and pens to create a tabard. It wouldn't be 'The Nest' without a wonderful collaborative piece of work and this term, we (I say 'we', when of course, I mean Mrs Nichols) are aiming to produce a flying dragon!! Instead of going on a bear hunt, we will write our own version of the story and call it; 'We're going on a dragon hunt.'

Phonics for Year 1 will still be taught through Read, Write, Inc. Year 1 will also have separate literacy skills sessions, where we look at spelling patterns, letter names, capital letters, syllables, compound words, adjectives and adverbs. The children will practise handwriting, letter

formation and learning which letters sit on the line (giraffe letters) and which drop below (monkey letters). They will still bring home their word houses and when I feel they are ready, they will have a 'spelling elephant' to practise writing those tricky high frequency words.

We will read as many castle based stories as I can find, so if you have any at home, please send them in for us to read. The children will eventually make up their own characters and 'write' their own traditional tale at the end of the topic.

Numeracy this term will continue to be taught both as a whole class and in small, differentiated work groups. Each morning, we will start the day with 'Big Maths', which is a systematic approach to develop and improve children's mental maths and recall of number - the numeracy equivalent of a phonics session. We will also use the laptops for Maths Base activities, to reinforce learning through maths games. We will begin work this term on place value, where the children will learn to recognise a teen number as a number, which can be partitioned into 10 and some more. They will begin to add 2 numbers by holding the larger number in their head and counting on the smaller. The children will begin to record simple addition and subtraction, reading the signs + and -. They will learn to read multiples of 10 and multiples of 5 and we will work on number bonds to 10. I will send a sheet home for you to practise, as we would like the children to eventually know the number bonds to 10 off by heart.

As always, with both Numeracy and Literacy, the children will be taught all these concepts in small steps, at their own level and pace.

PE will continue to be taught weekly on a Tuesday morning and also after break on a Friday by Mr Canning. Please would you continue to keep your child's PE kit in school and check that everything is labelled. Thank you.

Year 1 children in the Nest, will still have access to the snack table. Mrs Nichols has volunteered to keep us supplied with a lovely selection of breads and other healthy and tasty food to try. Please could I ask you for £6 for this term (thank you, if you have already given us your contribution). Fruit will be available throughout the day and please would you provide your child with a water bottle, so that they can have a drink whenever they need one.

Could I also ask you to keep a coat at school, as the weather is about to become more temperamental and the children, as you know, will always go outside to play, unless it's pouring! The children will continue to go outside on a Friday afternoon for 'Friday Adventure, so please would you provide them with warm outdoor, waterproof clothes and wellies each week.

If there is anything more you want to know about Year 1, please come and see me any time after school or ring me if you are not able to get in.

Welcome back and here's to another happy and successful year together.

Sally Wharton