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Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Dear Parents,

Welcome back! We wish you a happy New Year. We are excited about the upcoming weeks.

Our learning journey this term is 'North America'. We will be focusing on practising our map skills to expand our knowledge of both the physical and human geographical features of the continent and the countries within it. This learning journey has been designed to maximise the opportunities for high quality cross curricular links with maths and English. The children will be analysing and interpreting climate and population data, further developing their skimming and scanning reading skills to retrieve information and also producing a variety of writing to document their learning and understanding. They will be continuing to build their note-taking skills, as well as considering different ways to present their findings once research has been completed.

In English, we will be continuing to develop our 'writer voices' through drafting and producing a variety of texts including narratives, explanation texts and newspaper reports. We will also be continuing to develop our knowledge and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) and reading using inference and deduction. Our work in English will be inspired by our class Text, *Holes* by Louis Sachar. This high quality, engaging text has been a big hit with the children this week. I have purchased enough copies of the book to ensure that every child has shared access to the book (one between two). If you have a copy of this book at home, or would like to purchase one for your child's own personal use in class, this will further enhance our shared reading sessions. Please ensure any books sent to school are named.

On the subject of reading, I am delighted to share that the class has been awarded some money to spend on books for our reading corner. The children are very excited about this, and all contributed enthusiastically when we drew up our wish list earlier this week. We consulted this list of '100 books to read before leaving Year 6': <https://theteachingbooth.wordpress.com/2017/06/24/100-book-lists-for-primary-classroom/> (incidentally this is an excellent blog that inspires lots of ideas for teaching reading and writing in primary school). I will be taking our wish list to Bag of Books in the next week. Several children said they had copies of popular books on the list, and would like to share them with their classmates. We have decided to have a lending box in our classroom, where clearly labelled books can be placed for other children to sign out and borrow. If you are happy for your child to participate in this initiative, please remind them to name their books, so we can ensure they are not lost.

In Maths, we will continue to focus on number, with emphasis upon arithmetic skills and application to solve word problems. We will be working hard to ensure that the children are confident with effective written methods to solve problems involving the four operations. We will also be spending a significant amount of time on studying fractions, decimals and percentages this term. In science and humanities, there will continue to be strong cross curricular links with maths, so that children can gain confidence in applying their skills, and also build an appreciation for the relevance of maths in real-life contexts. Children will

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continue to receive regular My Maths homework and we also want them to ensure that they are regularly accessing their TT Rockstars account and completing challenges to improve their fluency with times tables. It is very important that they are secure with all times tables to ensure they can access the more abstract concepts that are going to be covered in maths over the coming weeks. We encourage all children to make time to learn and practise their tables, and are grateful for support and encouragement at home with this.

In Science, we will continue to focus on Evolution and Inheritance as our main topic. This is an engaging area for the children, and will give them numerous opportunities to use equipment such as microscopes and to study fossils and learn about adaptation and the building blocks of life. We will also continue to provide opportunities for practical investigations that enable children to record observations, look at how things change over time and consider how to ensure variables are controlled so that tests are accurate and fair.

Our art lessons this term will be inspired by our work with the class text, *Holes*, and also by our studies of microscopic images in science. We will be focusing on patterns and textures. We will be working with clay to make models and also exploring printing techniques. I find it most effective to block art so that ideas can be developed more fully. If you are interested in helping with any of these sessions, which will be on designated afternoons, please do come and see me for more information about timings.

We will continue to have PE sessions on Mondays and Thursdays. On Mondays, it will be swimming. Please ensure you have consulted the swimming letter that was sent out last term about timings. I can confirm that Mrs Bennett and Mrs Winsor will be walking to the swimming pool at 8.30am in order to register children at 8.45am. Children can go straight to the pool to meet their teachers, but please do stay with them to supervise prior to 8.45am. It will also be possible for children to walk to the pool with Mrs Bennett and Mrs Winsor at **8.30am promptly**. On Thursdays, it will still be yoga. Please ensure your child has their full, named PE kits in school on those days, we will send them home for washing at the end of term. If your child has pierced ears, please can they either not wear their earrings to school on these days, or be able to take them out as we are unable to allow the children to wear earrings or any jewellery for PE. I understand that a number of children have recently had their ears pierced, and we are allowing children with recently pierced ears to participate if their earrings are taped over. If your child is unable to do PE for any reason, please inform us in writing or tell us personally. If your child forgets their PE kit we will ask them to borrow spare PE kit from the office as PE is a mandatory part of the curriculum. We encourage everyone to support their children in ensuring they have their full PE kit in school.

Homework will still be set on Friday to be returned the following Wednesday. It will consist of an English or Learning Journey task (commonly writing or research) and a Maths or My Maths task. Spellings will also be set on Fridays for testing / revision on the Wednesday of the following week. All homework will be set using the Homework books. If you do not have access to My Maths, we can provide a paper copy of the task – please let us know. Please also ensure that your child is regularly accessing the TT Rockstars challenges. They should all have login stickers for this in the front cover of their homework books. Please can all homework books be handed in regularly so that we can ensure everyone has their login details.

Please note there will be a quick meeting regarding logistics and information about SATs soon – date tbc. I would like to use this meeting to provide practical information about arrangements, share sample questions and also to give details of some early morning booster sessions that I would like to start running soon.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Rea Hamilton and Mrs Suzy Bennett  
Deputy Headteacher & Year Six Class Teachers

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