



Friday 6th September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers of Children in Reception

We hope you and your child have settled well into school life and the Reception class. We are certainly enjoying teaching them and getting to know them all! If you have any queries or if there is something you need to share with us please feel free to talk to us in the mornings or after school. Miss Ashcroft and I are both available before school starts.

Thank you for making the mouse transition project such a success. The children have loved introducing their mouse to the class and sharing their mouse adventures with each other. The mouse diaries are amazing and so beautiful. I am really enjoying looking at them with the children. They are also lovely keepsakes for you to remember starting school. I will send them home once we have looked at them all.

The mouse theme continues into the new term as you will see! 🐭 😊

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is a great way for us to communicate, I will post messages, dates and photographs as often as possible. If you need to communicate anything with me you can privately message me.

Our Topic this Term

In Reception this half term, our topic is '**Town and Country**' with a focus firmly embedded in the Aesop's fable '**The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse**'. Our inside home role play area is now the Town Mouse's House and the shed is Country Mouse's Cottage. We are also learning about Autumn and the seasonal changes taking place. The children have already come up with their own ideas about what they would like to learn too and we will do our best to incorporate this into what we have planned. So far, it is promising to be a very exciting topic and is really appealing to the children's interests. Children may bring topic related items to show and share at school and Autumn goodies they find or collect. Please don't send in non-topic related items however, as we just do not have the time to 'show and tell'.

Larry and Suzy Lamb

You may well have heard that Larry and Suzy live in our classroom. They love getting pictures and letters and so if your child would like to, please encourage them to write to him at home and bring their letters into school. They also go home with the children at weekends and has a diary they like the children to keep up to date and their first visits is planned for this weekend.

Larry and Suzy also love to visit places further afield so if you are planning a visit away and can take either of them with you, please let me know.

Mornings – ‘Stay and Read’

Can I remind you that school officially starts at 8.50am. We open the doors before this time so that you can help your child put their book bag away and put their name card in the number line. You and your child can then **sit down and share a book together until 8.50** when we then gather to do register. I hope you understand if I say please do not just hover or chat to other parents however, as this is a ‘Stay and Read’ time for you and your child to do together.

Behaviour and Rewards in Reception

Good behaviour and a ‘Rights Respecting’ attitude is expected in Reception as in all classes at Dean Valley. We like to celebrate it whenever we can and we have several ways of doing this. We have ‘marbles in the jar’ which is a class reward system and children can earn marbles by being kind and caring, helpful or well behaved **as a class**, for example by **all** being good in assembly or **all** lining up well. The aim of the marble jar is to encourage team work and cooperation. Once the marble jar is full the children receive a class reward of their choosing eg a teddy bears’ picnic, a dressing up day etc. We also have stamps and stickers etc for good work. School rewards such as weekly certificates, are given out in Friday’s assembly alongside the yellow jumper for Child of the Week and Rights Respecting badge for Pupil of the Week.

We also have the class behaviour ladder. This is colour coded with all children starting on green every day. Children can go up the ladder for good behaviour (to bronze, silver and gold) or down the ladder for inappropriate behaviour (to amber and red). If children go up to gold they choose a prize from Mrs McPherson’s special prize tin but if they go down to red they miss five minutes playtime. The expectation of the behaviour ladder is that all children stay on green or above but if they do go down to amber or red they still have the opportunity to move back up before the end of the day as long as their behaviour improves and they do the right thing.

Reading and Library Books in Reception

Reading Books - All children should now have a red ‘book bag’ which they bring to and from school every day. Thank you if you have purchased and labelled one already. This is used to carry letters and their ‘reading folder’ to and from school. Next week your child will bring home their new reading folder with two reading books in it and a reading diary. These should be returned to school in the red book bag every day. The initial reading books do not have words in them but tell the story through pictures. It is really important that you spend time looking at the pictures, pointing out details and making up the story. Some of the books have a script accompanying them to help you do this and know what sort of things to discuss. The main characters in the stories will be introduced to the children and are Mum, Dad, Biff, Chip, Kipper and Floppy the dog. After you have looked at the book together ask your child to retell the story in their own words and discuss what they like about it.

Talking about the story with you is just as important as retelling the story and helps develop understanding and comprehension. After you have finished please write an encouraging comment in

the reading diary and sign and date it. It is important to find the time to get into a regular routine of doing this **every night**. It is a fantastic way to help your child develop a love of reading and learn to read.

The key to successful reading is making it a fun and rewarding experience for both you and your child. Some people do it before tea, some before bedtime and some in the morning. Find the right time for you and enjoy this special time together with your child.

At school, we aim to change your child's reading books two or three times a week and I often get asked if it is ok to keep a book to read it again and the answer is always yes. Your child will be read with at least once a week. We have put the children into five groups based on the days of the week.

The group they are in is the same day they will read. This will be alongside doing class reading, phonics teaching and Guided Reading (see below). If you can come into school to do extra reading with the children, it would be really beneficial and I know the children would love it too! Grandparents are most welcome and we have several who do a brilliant job and are adored by the children!

Library Books –Each Monday your child will bring home a school library book that they have chosen themselves. This book is for you to read and enjoy together and should be returned on the following Monday each week. Our library is very kindly run every Monday afternoon by Sue Asbury, mum of Robin in Year 4.

I hope that's all clear and makes sense. Please do try and find time to read with your child for at least ten minutes every day. It really does help with their reading. It is clear from my time at Dean Valley that the children who read at home make the most progress. I look forward to reading your comments in their reading diaries.

Phonics

Phonics will start very soon, once our initial assessments are completed. Lessons are each day. We are using Jolly Phonics as our skeletal scheme and children are expected to colour in the worksheets and practise writing the letters correctly at home with you. Please ensure that your child holds their pencil correctly. We teach them to do this using their 'froggy legs'. If you're not sure what the correct pencil grip is please just ask. For more information about Phonics, please see the Phonics will be given at an upcoming parent meeting.

Help in Class

We would love any parents or grandparents who have the time to come in and help us. Parents and grandparents have helped with sewing, baking, writing, art and maths in the past as well as reading. This can be a regular commitment or whenever you have a spare half hour. Every little bit helps! Please let me know if you are interested and what you would like to help with.

Meeting for Parents

I am more than happy to answer any questions you might have about school or life in Reception and therefore, propose to hold meetings on **Monday 16th September at 3:30 pm and 6 pm (please attend**

which ever time best suits you.) I will also make suggestions about how you can help your child at home with their reading and their learning and give examples of activities you can do as a family. I will also explain how Tapestry, the school's chosen assessment system, works and give details how you can log on at home and add comments yourself.

School Uniform, Coats, Gloves etc

Please check that **all items of your child's clothing are clearly named even vests!** It saves everyone so much time and helps prevent it from going astray. You would not believe what I find after PE lessons and what is left around the classroom every day. It can easily be returned if it is named.

Wellies

If possible please can you send in a pair of wellies for your child to keep at school so that they can play out in wet weather. Thank you.

Guinea pigs

We are very lucky to have three guinea pigs in school named Primrose, Thelma and Louise. You are welcome to have the guinea pigs come to visit your home for the weekend. They come in a travel cage with bedding and food, you can also choose to take the outdoor run home if you have grass they can nibble. I will set up a calendar and put it in the cloakroom so you can put your name down for a weekend if you wish.

Finally

Please remember you can pop in and see us whenever we are available if you have a query or anything at all to discuss. We look forward to developing a good partnership with you to ensure your child gets the most from our exciting year ahead.

With very best wishes

Mrs Katherine Dumbleton and the Reception Team

Mrs Katherine Dumbleton, Reception Teacher, Miss Kathryn Ashcroft, Reception Teaching Assistant, Mrs Claire Prout and Mrs Fiona Fryer, Additional Support Teaching Assistants