Sparrowhawk start of the year message – 2026-2027

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to a brand, new year! We hope you've had a lovely summer holiday! There is lots of information in this message– apologies!

Our class

This year there are 15 Y2s and 13 Y1s. Arrival time is from 8.40 and the gate will be closed promptly at 8.50 am. Year 1 parents – at the end of the day, the children all come out together and they have to wait on the line until we see an adult who is collecting them.

Staffing in the Ark

Kestrel – Mrs Blackmore Mon – Fri
Mrs Langdon - Mon – Weds ams, Mrs Offer – Thurs/Fri ams
Sparrowhawks – Mrs Abbott – Mon – Thurs, Miss Burford Fridays
Mrs Treble Mon –Thurs ams, Tues and Weds pms – Speech and Language support
Mrs Ruston and Mrs Offer – part of Friday mornings
Mrs Ruston – PSHE – Monday afternoons before PE
Mollie – PE on a Monday afternoon

Curriculum

As far as possible, we like to teach the children through different topics and questions, giving meaning and purpose to their learning. This all helps to give a real context to our curriculum.
Most weeks we send updates on what we have been learning on a Friday.

Our Topic questions over the year will be:
Term 1: What can you tell me about the Chew Valley? Hist/Geog lead
Term 2: What is the world celebrating now? Geography/RE/Art lead
Term 3: How will inventions change the world? History/Science/DT lead
Term 4: Where will our imaginations take us? Geography/Art lead
Term 5: How do we look after ourselves? History/DT lead
Term 6: How can our community help and inspire us? DT/Art lead

This term, we are exploring the question 'What can you tell me about the Chew Valley?'
At the beginning of the term we be establishing positive learning routines and finding out about each other.
During the term we will be learning:
Science – Animals including humans – including our senses, body parts, classification of animals
Geography – Fieldwork and local study learning physical and human features of our locality
Art – Artist study – Andy Goldsworthy - Sculpture
Computing – Internet safety
PSHE – Me and my relationships
RE - Belonging
Music – Timbre, Dynamics and tempo
PE – Spatial awareness, throwing and catching and Dance. One session is taught by Mollie and one by me. PE is on Mondays and Thursdays. The children can wear PE kits on these days

Maths

We are teaching Year 1 and Year 2 as separate year groups for Maths.
Year 1s are taught by Miss Blackmore. They will have their Maths lessons in Sparrowhawk.

The Year 2s are taught Mon -Thurs by Mrs Abbott and on Miss Burford on a Friday. These lessons take place in the discovery room.
We follow the Whiterose scheme with plenty of retrieval practice on previous learned knowledge. We use as many practical resources as possible. The first half term is going to be ensuring we have remembered the knowledge from the previous year group.

Phonics
We will spilt the children into 2 groups for phonics. This will be planned by Mrs Abbott and taught by both myself and Mrs Treble, we will swap groups throughout the week.
Your child may come home with lists of words based on sounds that we are learning, please practise these too.
While learning all of our phonics digraphs and trigraphs, the books your child receives will match their phonic knowledge, we will assess Year 1s in the first week back.

Spelling shed
Miss Burford and Mrs Ruston teach spelling on a Friday morning. Every child has their own Spelling Shed log in.
The children can do their spelling shed homework on line or on a piece of paper that Miss Burford gives out every Friday. This needs to be in the following Friday or you may choose to do the activities on-line.

Reading
Your child will be heard to read within a group once a week most weeks unless it is an assessment week.
Book change will usually be on a Tuesday morning
Please make sure the children have read their books in their book bag. If they haven't read them then they will be given time to read them at home and we will change them the following week.
Our reading scheme is called Phonics shed. It's really important that the children read the words at the beginning of the book first as these words come up in the book and it will help with their confidence and fluency.
It's really important that the children read their books at least 3 times.
1 – for decoding
2 – to improve speed and fluency
3 – to develop reading aloud in a story teller's voice – enjoying/ performing their reading.

Common exception words – These are the tricky words that we have to learn from memory as we can not use our phonics to sound them out. Often, there is one bit of the word that we have to try and remember. This then helps with spelling them too. Please could you help your child to read them. Every time you sit down to do reading, please could you practice these too.
These will be on the chapter bookmarks. Please tick the word, but only when they can read the word automatically.

I will do a reading workshop soon!

Home learning
Reading
We feel at this stage the most beneficial thing parents can do is to hear their child read on a daily basis and practise their sounds and tricky/common exception words – they will have personalised lists in their book bags which we will update regularly.
Maths

Maths homework will be set and checked on Fridays on Doodle Maths in the form of an assignment. The homework will be used to consolidate maths objectives from the week and a chance for the children to show you what they have been learning.
They will get a Dojo point for completing the assignment.
If the children are in the Green Zone on Doodle Maths they will stand up in assembly and will get other awards too such as extra play or special, surprise bonus point weeks.

CHANGES FOR THIS YEAR… we have listened to parents about how complicated it can get to message different staff for different homework so we have simplified it!
In the children's book bags will be a piece of paper for the term. It will live in the plastic folder so that when you have heard your child read you can tick off the day that you heard them read rather than send messages on Dojo.
The whole school is going to follow the same system.
Mrs Treble will give out the reading Dojo points on a Tuesday as that is when we check and change the reading books.
Spelling – the children just need to do the assignment on line or return the piece of paper to Miss Burford on a Friday

Dojo points
We reward the children for effort, good behaviour and impressive work on a daily basis. When your child has reached a specific points milestone, you will be invited into a celebration assembly to see this recognised. Your child can earn a Dojo Point for the following:

- Reading 4x week
- Spelling shed assignment
- Doodle Maths assignment
- Showing our learning behaviours: being ambitious, resilient, compassionate, curious, independent, communicative
- Following the Golden Rules
- Following our motto – Communicating, Motivated, Personable, Successful – Chew Magna Primary School

Play project
Once we have been back for a few weeks and Reception are settled, we will start 'Play project' on Tuesday afternoons. Your child used to do this last school year for one afternoon a week. Through this we have taught lots of our Geographical and Historical knowledge. We also teach Art, Music and Design Technology during these afternoons. The children have a chance to plan, do and review their work whilst working collaboratively. Depending on the age of the child, we steer them in the right direction to a play based or more investigative approach.

Friday forest school
Please ensure that your child still has wellies, waterproof coats (and trousers or puddle suits if you wish), warm gloves and hats each week. Please ensure your child is WARM as well as WATERPROOF (a cagoule will not be enough!).
PLEASE NAME EVERYTHING!

Snacks
Every day we have a variety of fruit or veg that the children can choose from. They don't need to bring anything in from home.

Drinks bottles

Bottles no bigger that a Chilli bottle please as there is simply not enough space. The children need to put their water bottle in the crate when they enter the classroom in the morning and they will take it home every evening.

Book bags

No Rucsacs thank you – there is no space in our cloakroom. Just the school blue book bags please. These are kept in the classroom in big crates.

Parent helpers

We continue to be grateful of offers of help to hear children read and support Forest School, or if you have some time you would like to come and support the work we are doing in class, e.g. sewing/cooking etc (All adults who work with children on a regular basis, are required to have a DBS check, this can be arranged, free of charge, through the school.)

Y2 residential

We are hoping to take Y2 on a one night residential visit. We very much take pride in the way we give the children at our school life experiences. Taking the Y2s away for one night to a local, lovely place, makes the Y3/4 experience easier, which in turn feeds into the children's experiences in Y5/6 making these more fulfilling. We are looking for this to happen in May. More details to follow.

Uniform

Cloakroom space is tight. Please help us by **naming any items of clothes your child takes off!** If it is named, it will invariably get back to the correct child. If you inherit clothes from other families, please do re-name them (your child might know it says 'Bobbie' inside their sweatshirt – but it won't mean anything to the rest of us!)

Please ensure your child is wearing full school uniform on non-PE days. This includes school shoes rather than trainers. Long hair needs to be tied back and the only jewellery permitted are stud earrings and a watch.

On PE days, children should wear navy, black or grey jogging bottoms/short/leggings/skorts with a school top and jumper, cardigan or fleece. We ask that children don't wear name labelled sports clothing such as Nike, Adidas etc.

KS1 football club

If your child is doing football club, as Thursday is already a PE day, your child will already be wearing their PE kit. The children are given time to change into their football boots and have a snack before the end of the day. Please, please, please make sure that laces are untied and that the boots have no mud on them as we get changed in the classroom.

PE

Throughout the year we get the opportunity to go to Chew Valley Secondary School to take part in Sports festivals alongside other local Primary schools. We will let you know when these are happening and we usually ask for parent helpers for these to either walk up or occasionally drive and lift share if possible to keep costs down!

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to voice them in person or via a Dojo message This class of children are a delightful, thoughtful group…and great fun to teach. We hope your child will be happy to be back at school!

Thank you for your support, from the Sparrowhawk team