



Cedar and Beech – Year 3 & 4 Newsletter Spring 2024

Welcome back and a Happy New Year to you all. We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and you are excited for the term ahead. We welcome Miss Fountain to Cedar class while Mrs Robinson is on maternity leave and we hope she enjoys settling into life at Downlands.

English

This term we will be linking our English to our forthcoming geography topics. In the second half of the term, we will be following the Collins Connected Geography to support our topic work following the question-based enquiries and supplementing the children's learning with ideas of their own interest. Our question for this term is "Why are jungles so wet and deserts so dry?"

In English, we will cover a range of genres including writing to persuade, balanced arguments, non-chronological reports and narrative stories with different plots and grammatical features. The children will have the opportunity to research different aspects of our topic including deforestation for their persuasive writing and balanced arguments.

To support their learning in English, we will be focusing on the book *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell. If you wish your child to have their own copy of this book to continue reading or use in class then used copies are available

on [Amazon](#). We will start by using the novel in our guided reading, completing whole class guided reading sessions looking at vocabulary, retrieval, explanation and inference skills. We will then continue to read the book for pleasure at the end of each day.

Mathematics

Each day will start with Early Bird Maths: this is an independent activity that is completed between 8.40 and 8.50 am so it is important for the children to be in school promptly. Early Bird Maths includes some pre-teach activities that allow the children to become familiar with maths topics and language before these are taught discreetly. Maths will be taught daily, primarily following the White Rose Maths programme and will include a blend of practical activities and regular practice of basic skills. This combination of activities is designed to refine skills, support individual needs and build up a wealth of understanding, confidence, independence and competence through a stepped approach using concrete, pictorial and abstract processes.

Regular assessments will inform further learning and, where necessary, small groups or 1:1 support will be available. The emphasis will, as usual, be principally on number skills, but the children will also practise using and applying their mathematical knowledge.

Later this year, the Year 4 children will take an external test to assess their knowledge of times table and related division facts, so we will be practising these regularly. The Times Tables Rock Stars online learning platform replicates much of the external test set up so it is important for the children to use this platform regularly.

History & Geography

This term we are looking at the History topic of the Bronze Age and answering the key question, 'What is the secret of the Standing stones?' This investigation allows pupils to understand some of the key changes that occurred in Britain towards the end of the Neolithic period of the Stone Age and the progress these brought about in society.

In the second half of the spring term, we will then move on to Geography and look at national parks, rainforest and deserts. Answering the key question, 'Why are jungles so wet and deserts so dry?' Throughout the enquiry, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon how climate has such an important influence upon landscapes, plants, animals and human activity on Earth – they investigate this relationship at a number of scales.

Science

Science will be taught weekly and we will first be covering the topic of electricity. Children will look at the use of electricity and which components require electricity to work as well as exploring electric circuits and investigations into materials that are insulators and conductors.

In the second half of the term, children will explore living things. The children will be taught to recognise classification keys, how living things can be grouped in different ways and how environments can change over time.

Opportunities to utilise English reading, writing and research skills when introducing report and factual writing will be exploited.

French

The children will be building on their skills in French through weekly lessons. For the first half of term, our French unit is 'Je peux...' or 'I am able...'. During these lessons, the children will learn how to use action verbs to describe what they can do.

After half term, our topic will be 'Fruits'. In this unit, children will learn how to name different fruits and begin to say whether they like or dislike them.

ICT

This term in ICT, we are developing our computational skills using a child-friendly programming website called Scratch. By using Scratch, the children will be encouraged to think creatively with coding, including drawing shapes using their own code, changing their character (sprite) and producing a simple maze game. If you wish to encourage your child's coding knowledge, Scratch is free website based software with age-appropriate tutorials. After the half term, the children will be thinking about how data can be stored digitally.

Art and Design Technology (DT)

Our DT project this term is to explore and develop pneumatic systems. We have been learning and watching demonstrations on how compressed air can be used to create moving machinery and even toys! The children will be busy designing, making and evaluating their own pneumatic toys this term without using any electrical components.

As we move towards Spring, our art topic after the half term will be to observe natural environments using sketching and painting as a medium. The children will explore how they add depth to drawings with the use of shape, tone and texture.

PE and Games

For indoor PE this term, we will be studying football, gymnastics, dance and OAA (outdoor adventurous activities). Please be reminded that PE and Games will be on Tuesday and Thursday and children will need to have a PE kit in school and this will be sent home each half term to be washed. It is important during the colder weather that children have a suitable outdoor PE kit. If your child has their ear pierced, their earrings will need to be removed on PE days. If they cannot do this independently, please remove them before school. If in exceptional circumstances they are unable to be removed, you must provide surgical tape for your child to cover them.

PSHE

At the start of this term, we will be focusing on "Dreams and Goals" and after half term, we will explore the theme of "Healthy Me" through weekly Jigsaw lessons.

Religious Education

During this term, we will continue to follow the 'Discovery' element of the RE curriculum and focus on Christianity and answering the key question, 'Could Jesus heal people? Were these miracles or is there some other explanation?' Children will discuss some of the things in the world that people think of as miracles and explore what miracles they think are needed in today's society. Children will be able to explain one Christian viewpoint about one of Jesus' healing miracles and start to say whether they believe Jesus actually healed people or not.

Then as we approach Easter, continuing with Christianity and exploring 'What is 'good' about good friday?', Children will think about how a person may rescue/help others who are in difficult situations. Children

will also start to tell you why Christians believe Jesus' death is important and begin to reflect on whether they agree with Christian beliefs about Jesus' death.

Music

Using the Singup scheme, we will be learning a song called the doot doot song. We will be using a variety of instruments including scrapers, drums and glockenspiels to play alongside the song. We will learn the notes A, C and F and perform the song.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via Seesaw or the school office.

Yours faithfully

Miss Fountain and Miss Alston