



Cedar and Beech Classes – Years 3 & 4

Newsletter Autumn 2026

English

This term, the children will explore the English curriculum through engaging, book-based learning, with links made to other areas of the curriculum wherever appropriate. Grammar, punctuation and spelling (SPaG) skills will be taught in context, enabling the children to apply this purposefully within their own writing. Reading and comprehension skills will be developed through whole-class guided reading sessions alongside regular independent reading.

Children are encouraged to read aloud to an adult at home for at least 10 minutes each day. Even when children have become fluent readers, it is important that they continue to read aloud and discuss what they have read, as this helps to develop expression, vocabulary and a deeper understanding of texts.

Our writing this term will link closely to our History topic, The Vikings, using *Viking Voyagers* and *How to Train Your Dragon* as key texts. Before half term, the children will write a diary entry and a descriptive narrative. After half term, they will use their knowledge and imagination to create a non-chronological report about a dragon. For each writing outcome, the children will explore high-quality examples, develop relevant vocabulary and SPaG skills, and then plan, draft, edit and improve their own writing.

Mathematics

Each day starts with Early Bird Maths which is revision practice. It is an independent activity that is completed between 8.30 and 8.50am, so it is important for the children to be in school promptly. 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. The emphasis will be principally on number skills, but the children will also practise using and applying their mathematical knowledge. In both Year 3 and 4, children will cover place value, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division this term. Year 4 will also spend a week learning about area in measurement.

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 skills regularly. The Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS) online learning platform replicates much of the external test set up, so it is for the children to use this resource regularly.

Science

Our science topic for this term is: Animals Including Humans. The children will learn about the role of skeletons and muscles in supporting, protecting and helping the body to move. They will explore nutrition, the digestive system and the different types and functions of human teeth, including how to keep teeth healthy. The children will also construct food chains, identifying producers, predators and prey. Through practical investigations, they will develop their scientific enquiry skills by making observations, using equipment, recording results and presenting findings using scientific vocabulary, diagrams and charts. They will use evidence to draw conclusions, make predictions and explain their findings.

Geography and History

During the first half of the term, the focus will be on history and 'The Vikings.' Children will explore the key question 'What did the Vikings want and how did Alfred stop them getting it?' They will explore this by looking at key dates such as the first Viking raid at Lindisfarne, learning about why the Vikings raided, the importance of the longboat design and exploration of artifacts such as Viking helmets.

After half term, we will be switching to geography, and looking at earthquakes. Children will explore the key question 'Why do some earthquakes cause more damage than others.' We will look at the movement of tectonic plates, significant earthquakes across the world map, the impact that earthquakes have and the relationship between earthquakes and volcanoes.

French

This term, we are exploring the rich and vibrant world of French music through the 'Language Angels' program, learning the names of instruments in French. The program will provide an engaging way to not only find out about French culture but also to expand their vocabulary and language skills.

After half term, we will be exploring seasons. We will be learning how to describe the unique characteristics of each season—*le printemps* (spring), *l'été* (summer), *l'automne* (autumn), and *l'hiver* (winter)—all while expanding their vocabulary and improving their pronunciation.

Computing

At Downlands Community School, we use the 'Teach Computing Curriculum'. In the first half term's unit of work, the children will apply their knowledge and understanding of networks, to appreciate the internet as a network of networks which need to be kept secure. They will learn that the World Wide Web is part of the internet, having opportunities to explore the World Wide Web for themselves in order to learn about who owns content and what they can access, add, and create. Finally, they will evaluate online content to decide how honest, accurate, or reliable it is, and understand the consequences of false information.

In the second half of the term the children will develop their understanding of how digital images can be changed and edited, and how they can then be resaved and reused. They will consider the impact that editing images can have and evaluate the effectiveness of their choices.

Design Technology (DT)

This term, the children's Design and Technology learning will be inspired by their history topic on the Vikings. They will explore the types of food eaten by Vikings before focusing on bread making. The children will evaluate existing products, establish clear design criteria and develop their own bread designs. They will then follow their designs to make their bread before evaluating the finished product.

The second part of design and technology will link with our geography learning and the children will research and design earthquake-resistant structures and their features. They will then design and create their own building that would withstand damage caused by earthquakes.

PE

This term, PE lessons will take place on Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons. The children will begin by developing their skills in netball and rugby, learning the rules and techniques needed to play these invasion games effectively. They will continue to develop their balance, coordination, hand-eye coordination and footwork. After half term, the focus will move to gymnastics and football. In gymnastics, the children will develop balance, body control, core stability and a range of movements. In football, they will build on their understanding of invasion games while developing the key skills and rules needed to play successfully.

Year 4 children will also attend swimming sessions at Blandford Leisure Centre on Wednesday mornings throughout the term. The children will be divided into groups, with sessions taking place at different points during the term. Further information about swimming arrangements will be provided in a separate letter.

As the weather gets colder, please ensure your child has the appropriate outdoor PE kit. Please clearly label all items of PE kit and school uniform, so if anything goes astray it can be quickly returned to its owner. We suggest that children bring their PE kits in at the beginning of the week and take them home on a Friday to be washed. If your child is unable to remove and replace their earrings independently, please remove children's earrings prior to coming to school or surgical tape will need to be provided from home.

PSHE

This half term, our JIGSAW focus will be 'Being Me in My World'. The children will reflect on their identities, roles and responsibilities within our school community. They will develop their self-awareness, explore their emotions and consider how their choices and actions can make a positive contribution to the world around them.

After half term, our focus will move to 'Celebrating Difference'. The children will explore diversity and learn about the importance of respecting and valuing differences. They will recognise how our individual qualities make our community stronger while continuing to develop empathy, understanding and kindness towards others.

Religious Education

During this term, we will continue to follow the 'Discovery' element of the RE curriculum and focus on Buddhism and the key question 'Is it possible for everyone to be happy?' Children will explore the teachings of Buddhism and the eightfold path of enlightenment as they explore this question.

After half term, they will be focusing on Christianity, deepening their understanding of The Nativity Story and exploring the question, 'What is the most significant part of the nativity story for Christians today?'

Music

Music will be taught through the Sing Up scheme. This half term, the children will explore the unit 'I've Been to Harlem'. They will learn to compose a pentatonic ostinato, sing a call-and-response song confidently and play melodic and rhythmic accompaniments. They will also develop their listening skills by identifying how the pitch of a melody moves up and down.

After half term, the children will study 'Sound Symmetry'. They will explore how symmetry can be used to develop melody, structure and rhythmic accompaniment when composing a simple song. The children will also improvise simple melodies and rhythms and identify how pitch and melody can be developed using musical symmetry.

Homework

Homework will be set each Friday and should be returned by the following Friday. Each child will receive a homework book in which to complete their work. Weekly homework will include spellings, a reading comprehension and English and maths activities. English and maths tasks will consolidate and revise learning that has already taken place in class.

Children should spend no more than 30 minutes on each piece of homework, and many activities will take less time than this. Spellings should be practised little and often throughout the week and will be tested each Friday. If a piece of homework is not completed after 30 minutes, please allow your child to stop. If they need additional support, they are encouraged to bring their homework book into school and ask their class teacher for help.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, in person or via the school office, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child. We look forward to an exciting year of learning!

Miss Hoare and Miss Longworth - Lower Key Stage Two Team