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Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to Oaks Class of 2017/18!

Creative Curriculum

Our new topic for this term, Ancient Maya Civilisation, will be an exciting exploration into this fascinating, often forgotten, period in history. Home learning opportunities linked to this are detailed on the back of this letter. As they are now in Year 5 or Year 6 and the children begin their preparations for secondary school, they will find some subjects being taught separately. Please look on the school website for the curriculum map for this term.

Homework and Curriculum Showcase

During the school week we will be focussing on group and guided reading, but it is difficult to hear each child read individually. To support their progress in this essential life skill, I hope you will be able to hear your children read regularly and frequently at home, no matter how fluent they are. Please record this in the homework diary. The children will also be given weekly spellings to learn and to continue to practise their tables, including division facts.

On Thursdays I will be sending home maths and English homework, often linked to the children's learning in other subjects, due for return on the following Tuesday. Please support this work at home, as it is designed to enhance the children's understanding and provide valuable practice of skills learnt in school. If your child struggles to complete their homework, I will be holding a 'homework surgery' on Tuesday lunchtimes to make sure they don't miss out.

PE kits, general uniform and presentation matters

The children need to have their full PE kits in school every day, as I hope we will be able to do games more frequently than the usual timetabled Tuesday and Thursday slots. Please make sure all kit, as well as their normal uniform, is clearly named. Children with longer hair must have it tied back throughout the school day to avoid the spread of 'unwelcome visitors', and for the children's safety during PE sessions. Hopefully, children with pierced ears will be able to remove earrings for PE sessions, or ideally not bring them to school on PE days. Please remember that smooth, round, plain studs only are permitted in school. I am sure the children will continue to take a pride in their presentation and be pleased to be seen as role models for the younger children.

Later in the year...

Unfortunately there were no suitable dates for us to continue the residential visit to Pencelli this academic year. I am currently gathering details about a new proposed residential trip to Bristol City Centre to give the children a very different experience. To support our learning later in the year about a different UK locality, and Bristol's important part in trade both historically and currently, I am hoping to take Oaks Class to visit the SS Great Britain (in time for the 175 anniversary of its launch), the Bristol Port Authority at Avonmouth, the cathedral and museum in the city centre, and the Hippodrome in time for its centenary while staying at the harbourside Youth Hostel. I will let you know as soon as I have had confirmation of the potential dates and cost; in the meantime, if you have any comments about the proposal, I would be pleased to hear them.

Following a positive start this week, I am sure we will have a very successful and rewarding year. Please do not hesitate to contact me, via the homework diary or school office, or catch me at the end of the day if you would like any more information about any of the above information. I look forward to meeting with you all soon.

With best wishes

James Stanford