

William Barnes Class Newsletter Autumn 2020

It has been so lovely to welcome your children back to school this week. Everyone has returned enthusiastic, cheerful, ready to learn and re-connect with their friends. The children are quickly adapting to the changes designed to make us as safe as possible and we are looking forward to a half term that promises to be busy and fun.

In **English** we have begun by sharing a book called 'Here we are' by Oliver Jeffers which aims to help the children settle back into school life after a long break and explore what it is like to live here on planet Earth from a child's perspective. We will use the book to explore places which are important to us, people who can help us and our place in the universe. This week the children have listened to a wonderful poem called 'A love letter to the stars' and they have described their own favourite places in poems and pictures. We plan to explore how the Solar System works, what's inside the human body, what's under the sea and what's up in the sky. We will also think about how we would like to help the world in the future and hope to create a class project to help the children realize some of their hopes.

We will go on to share stories and information books about **Blue Whales**, which are amazing creatures. We will share two books by Simon James about whales called 'My Friend Whale' and 'Dear Greenpeace'. Using these books as inspiration, the children will write their own information reports about whales, plus stories and letters. We will have a chance to explore some big numbers in this English topic too as blue whales are so huge. In the story 'Dear Greenpeace' the little girl in the story believes there is a blue whale in her pond. We are hoping to create a mini pond in the raised beds outside our classroom to see who moves in!

In **maths**, we will begin the year by investigating place value and helping the children recognize the value of each digit in a number. The children will learn to count up in 25s, 50s, 100s and 1000s and of course we will be working on addition and subtraction facts and times tables too. Mr Smith will have a mini maths topic every Friday, which this half term will be measurement.

Our science topic will be 'Living things and their habitats'. The children will learn how to group living things in different ways and explore classification keys to help identify different creatures in their local and wider environment. We will also explore how humans can impact on different environments. As part of this topic we will look at how environments change seasonally and since autumn is such a lovely time to get out and enjoy the trees we are planning to take the children on a local nature walk. Plus we are looking into options for a possible trip (more details will follow on this).

RE – This half term the children will explore **Buddhism**. They learn about the life of Siddhartha Gautama, what he taught about how to live according the Eight Fold Path and Buddhist codes for living.

PE – PE will continue to be every **Tuesday and Friday**. Please can they come to school on these mornings wearing trainers and joggers with a t-shirt and school jumper on top. They did this brilliantly this week.

Reading – The children can choose two books, one to be read at home and one to stay at school. They can choose a library book, which will tend to be non-fiction or if they wish an AR Reader book which will allow them to do a quiz. Our aim is to encourage a positive reading habit whilst limiting the amount of things that go to and from school. When the children have finished either book they can return it to a special basket in the library and choose a new one.

Volunteer Stitchers : We had some lovely bean bags and cushions in our reading corner created by Mrs Pole but alas non wipe-able surfaces are not ideal at the moment. I am planning to buy some wipe-clean fabric to re-cover the bean bags and cushions so that we can still use them. I would be so grateful if anyone would be willing to help with the sewing. Let me know if you can.

Class Plants: Last year we added lots of green plants to the classroom with the aim of improving the environment. The children really enjoyed naming their plants and taking care of them. If anyone has a little pot plant (best not to be spiky) they would be happy to donate to class then that would be lovely. I have lots of baby spider plants we are going to plant up which I hope the children enjoy.

Times tables: We will always be practising our times tables in class and I will send little games home from time to time. Plus I will set challenges on SUMDOG to help keep our skills up.

Homework: I would like to continue to send my homework books home each week. I will set one topic based task each week. Homework will be set every **Thursday** and needs to be handed into the homework box every **Monday**. My aim is to set simple, open ended tasks which allow the children to show their interest in a theme. I am always amazed at the variety of ways children access a task and the children's ideas often inspire further lessons in class for everyone to enjoy, which is lovely. Homework can play an important part in supporting your child's learning at school but please never let it ruin your weekend. I am always happy to help with ideas or resources and I know the children always have lots of fantastic ideas of their own. We will be trialling uploading the weekly homework task alongside sending the books home so that you have alternative ways to access the work. More details on this will follow. In case you would like more...here are a few extra ideas for supporting your child's learning at home this half term:

- Read as often as you can. Talk about books and investigate tricky new words – what do they mean?
- Visit the library to find books on different kinds of whales. Which ones can be seen on the British coast? Or look for books on space, find amazing facts.
- Can you think of a rhyme to help you remember the names of the planets in the Solar System?
- Can you make a model of the Solar System or your favourite planet?
- Take time to look up at the stars and find a favourite constellation.
- Think about what is inside your body. How many bones and organs can you name? Where are they? What are they for?
- Practise your times tables. Make up songs, play dice and snap games and look for patterns.
- Play on Sumdog
- Look out for snails in the garden. Where do they like to be? Notice their shells.
- Think about creating a mini wildlife area in your garden at home. Bug hotel? Log pile?
- Talk about what you would like to do when you grow up.
- Write you own love letter poem to a place. Which place would you choose?

In the short time we have been together the children have already shown themselves to be calm, collaborative, motivated and cheerful. It has been lovely to see some of you in the mornings and please do not hesitate to talk to us if you have a query or problem, we are always happy to help and feel free to email the class email also williambarnes@broadwindsor.dorset.sch.uk

Take care and very best wishes

Mrs Taylor, Mr Smith and the William Barnes Team