 DOWNTON CHURCH of ENGLAND VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gravel Close, Downton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3LZ

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Headteacher: Mrs Paula Carlton BA (Hons) QTS NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr Luke Ford MTeach MA NPQSL

 9th September 2019

Dear Parents / Carers,

We would like to begin by welcoming you to Downton Primary, it is our absolute privilege and delight to be your child’s first teachers, it is such a special role. Some of you are old hands, but for some of you this is your first taste of school life, so we will try to cover everything you might need to know about the first school term in this letter, therefore it will be much longer than usual!

During the first week of each term you will receive a letter like this which will give you information about what we are going to be learning, any trips / events which may be taking place and any information which is specific to that term. You will also be given a “topic web”. This details the areas of the curriculum and learning objectives for the term. As you will appreciate all children progress at different rates. On the topic web we detail the objectives which the majority of the children may be working towards. Do not be alarmed if they seem too hard / too easy for your child as we differentiate every lesson and they will be covering objectives to match their individual needs, the web is simply a guide for you. A copy of the letter and topic web will be put on the class page of the school website each term. We would be delighted to answer any questions which you may have – please feel free to approach us.

Term 1 What we are learning…

Our first topic is “Super me!” Please see the topic web for details of our learning. We will be learning the school and class rules and routines and joining in with playtimes, worships and lunch for the first time. We will even learn how to line up in our classes in alphabetical order! We will also learn our first few letters and sounds and do lots of counting and number recognition.

Fridays

We are very excited to tell you that from week 2 on Fridays Rabbits class will be taught by Mrs Wells our science specialist (the children will meet her during the week before). Both Rabbits and Squirrels will take part in our Friday activities on a rotational basis – these activities will include Happy Bats tennis, Forest School, science activities and ICT. The children will also undertake phonics and maths activities in small groups. Please ensure that outdoor clothing and willies are in school for these activities.

PE

PE will be on Monday and a Thursday. On Mondays’s this term we will be developing the children’s ball handling skills. Thursday is Happy Bats (beginning in a few weeks time) which is taught by a specialist tennis teacher. The kits really do not get very dirty at this age so it is best to leave them on your child’s peg for the term and we will send them home during the last week to be washed. To begin with we will focus on putting on our shoes and socks only, and then build up to the whole kit!

RE and Worship

Our whole school focus this term is Love.

Reception will be beginning to attend some worships this term, by term 2 we hope to be attending all worships.

Routines:

All children will come in through the door next to the office whilst they are part time, the door will be open from 8:40am – 9:00am in the morning. At home time Rabbits will go home from the blue door on Gravel Close, and Squirrels from the door next to the office, these will be open at 12pm the first week, 1:15pm the second full week and 3:05pm when the children are in in the afternoons.

The safety of your children is of utmost importance to us, so please help us to keep them safe by waiting patiently for us to see you and send your child over. If they come to you and you think they have come without us telling them to, please send them back to us so they learn that they have to go through a teacher before coming. As you will appreciate initially the going home process will take a while for us as we get used to all the new faces – we appreciate your patience with us.

Buddies

Each child will be assigned a “buddy” from Year 5 or 6. During the year they will have lots of opportunities to work and play with their buddies. We will add to the class webpage when they have met their buddies.

Mud kitchen / Outdoor learning

We are very proud of our mud kitchen and outdoor learning, however it does mean that although we will try to get aprons and wellies etc on, sometimes the moment may grab us and your child may return home muddy – apologies in advance for this but we can assure you they will have had lots of fun and done some fantastic learning! If you have any large old shirts we can add to our muddy collection please send them in.

Please also remember to send in wellies – they can also stay in school every day. We will also plan in some termly welly walks – We will let you know when these will be.

Tag words and Reading

We would like to invite you to a meeting on Wednesday 18th September at 12:15pm to discuss how we teach phonics and reading at Downton Primary School. The children will be staying for lunch that day so you will not need to worry about them. Please do not bring any younger siblings if you can avoid it. Children will bring home reading books after this meeting has taken place.

Learning journeys

We will be using an online learning journey for each child called Tapestry. As we are an Eco-school these will be paperless and you can access them from home at any time. You will most likely have signed our paperwork at your parent appointments.

Snack / milk

If you wish your child to have school milk please sign them up online. A piece of fruit is provided each day, these include bananas, apples, tomatoes, pears, peas … you are welcome to provide a piece of fruit from home if you wish.

Class news

We try to update the class Facebook page “Downton Rabbits and Squirrels” regularly, please take a look to see what we have been learning. We also update the class page on the websire regularly with photos.

Emails

If you wish to contact us face to face is always the best way, however if this is impossible you can phone the school office or email admin@downton-pri.wilts.sch.uk and Mrs Ware will forward your message on.

Please remember that all emails go via the school office, they should be used for admin purposes only e.g. child pick up / drop off arrangements. We cannot receive or reply to them when we are not in the school building. If you would like to discuss anything else please come and see us in person, Mrs Job is available Mon – Thursday in the playground after school, or if necessary at 8:40 am on the door Mon - Thurs. On Fridays Mrs Wells will be your point of contact before / after school. Mrs Rhoades will be available Monday – Friday after and before school. Thank you.

Teaching Assistants / PPA

Rabbit class will be supported by Mrs Hannah Humpreys who is a full time TA she will cover Mrs Job’s PPA time on a Wednesday afternoon.

Squirrel class will be supported by Mrs Jackie Dunlop (Mon – Weds) Miss Maddy Purser (Thurs – Fri) Mrs Dunlop will cover Mrs Rhoades PPA on a Wednesday afternoon.

Both Mrs Job and Mrs Rhoades will have PPA time together on a Wednesday afternoon to plan lessons and activities for both classes to ensure that all children have the same opportunities and experiences.

Volunteers

We really welcome volunteers in school. With 45 children this year and the demands of the curriculum we will all be busy teaching the children, time is so precious and we believe that the children learn best in small focused groups. Therefore any support you can give us even ½ hour is invaluable. Thank you to those who have already volunteered. If you are able to help out with reading, playing a game, cooking, helping outside, painting, etc please let us know. Or perhaps you could make some playdough, or do some filing/sticking for us? All help is most welcome!

Dates for the diary:

Friday 6th September - Friday 13th September collection at 12pm

Monday 16th – Friday 20th September children stay for lunch getting collected at 1:15pm.

Reading / Phonics meeting for parents in both classes to be held in Squirrel class (as it is bigger!) : Wednesday 18th September 12:15pm – 1pm

Children stay all day: Monday 23rd September

Harvest festival – you will receive an email about this from the school office.

Many thanks, and we are really looking forward to getting to know you and your children,

Kind regards,

Emma Job and Tess Rhoades