



DOWNTON CHURCH of ENGLAND VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gravel Close, Downton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3LZ
Telephone: 01725 510556 Fax: 01725 512335

Email: admin@downton-pri.wilts.sch.uk Website: www.downton-pri.wilts.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Paula Carlton BA (Hons) QTS NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr Luke Ford MTeach MA NPQSL



Tuesday 3rd September 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to another great year of learning. The start of the school year is always a moment of great anticipation and excitement at the gate and today was no exception, as all the children met up and looked so much taller than they did before the summer break!

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our families old and new. I hope that you have all had a lovely summer. Whether your child is new to school, or they are simply returning to us after the summer, rest assured that they have an exciting year of learning ahead of them. Today it was most apparent that our children have all arrived excited and enthused for the adventures and learning we have in store. Thank you for preparing them for the new school term, so wonderfully.

School Changes



Over the summer, several improvements have been made to the school environment. In the main building the toilets have undergone significant renovation and are now extremely smart and gender neutral – I am sure you will hear all about them from your children this evening.

Six classrooms have been decorated and are looking extremely smart. We have also been busy setting an additional Year 1 classroom. We are also delighted that that we now have a more secure fence outside the reception area. We are grateful to the Diocese who have partially funded these improvements, ensuring that our School environment is safe and comfortable for the children of Downton.

Clubs

As always clubs will not run during the first week of school. The office will be sending out more information regarding clubs shortly. This term we are now also able to offer drumming, violin and ukulele lessons in school – contact the office for further information or to sign up.

Start of School day

Arriving to School on time gives children the best, most settled start to their session and ensures a prompt start to their learning. A reminder that the arrival times for School are between 8:40 and 8:55 in the morning. After this time the main gate will be closed and secured. If you arrive after this time you will need to come into Reception where you will be asked to sign your child in as the School register will have already been taken. Thank you for your co-operation in helping ensure that School can start promptly.

Lunch Menu

This term we have a new jacket potato menu, further details are on the school website.

Playtime Snacks

As a healthy school - we try to promote healthy eating and so we ask children to bring in fruit or vegetables as a snack at playtime. This is a gentle reminder that crisps, sweets and biscuits are not permitted.



Uniform

It has been lovely to see our children looking so smart as they have arrived at School today. It is very important that children are dressed smartly and in the correct uniform, as this positively influences learning behaviour. As always we will continue working hard to ensure that uniform standards across the school remain high and that children have the appropriate clothing for PE sessions. We would like to thank you all for your co-operation in this matter.

Exciting News

I know you will all join me in congratulating Mrs Ford, who is expecting her first baby. This is a very exciting time for Mrs Ford who will be leaving to go on maternity leave in December. We are currently in the process of appointing a new teacher, for her maternity leave and will update you with more details shortly.

Homework - Knowledge Organisers

This term your child will be sent home with a 'Knowledge Organiser' for their topic before the unit of work is taught with the aim that everyone knows exactly what is being taught, and what the children need to learn. These are the 'go-to' documents outlining the essential knowledge that the teachers will be covering across a unit of work; including dates, key personnel, vocabulary, definitions and other information. Please use these as a reference guide for what your child is learning and also as an opportunity to discuss the facts about the topic with your child and find out as much as you can about each subject. Any knowledge that your child acquires before a topic is taught in class will help them to deepen their understanding in lessons.

Some topics can be complicated, so having the essential knowledge on one document can be really helpful. This is particularly important as research shows that our brains remember things more efficiently when we know the 'bigger picture' and can see the way that nuggets of knowledge within that subject area link together. Making links, essentially, helps information move into our long-term memory. As Ofsted's Sean Harford recently remarked, knowledge becomes 'sticky' – the more you know, the more you learn – which helps children gain deeper understanding over time.

Over the last few months, we have been in the process of focusing on the content of our whole curriculum to ensure that there is a much greater emphasis on the knowledge that children need in order to truly understand concepts. We have identified the essential knowledge that we feel your child needs to see the bigger picture of a topic or subject area. We ask that parents read through these Knowledge Organisers at home with their children and revisit them regularly with your child throughout the term to review the details on the sheet.

Communication

We recognise that communication is an area which we need to improve – we have already looked at making significant improvements which hopefully will address your concerns. As a result we are currently in the process of preparing communication protocols which will be approved by a parent panel as well as setting up a Downton Primary School Facebook page. Further details to follow very soon.

TD Days

Schools have five Teacher Development days every year. We have already had Monday 2nd September. The next four dates are: Wednesday 23rd October, Friday 26th June and Monday 29th June and Wednesday 22nd July.

And finally... thank you, on behalf of all the staff, for all the cards and gifts we received at the end of last term, we really do appreciate them. We are all looking forward to another great year!

Kind regards

Paula Carter

