

*Reaching for the Stars!*  
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7/9/2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a pleasure to welcome children back to school, to see their happy, smiling faces and to start to return to some kind of normality. As many of our pupils have not been in school since March, we realise that for some children (and parents) this will be an anxious and worrying time. Therefore, we would like to share with you our approach during this half term.

Our main priority during the next few weeks in particular must be the social and emotional needs of our pupils and about how we can best deliver a curriculum to suit their needs. We cannot expect to simply pick up where pupils left off at the start of Lockdown as so much has changed. Therefore, our staff will be spending lots of time focusing on pupils' well-being and settling the children back into a routine where they feel safe, happy and secure. We will be spending lots of time providing opportunities for the children to talk and listen to each other during class Circle Times and we will be also focusing on our values in order to re-establish relationships through collaborative art projects. Our pupils will still follow the National Curriculum, but it will be catered more specifically for our pupils' needs in order to reflect where they are at in their learning journey. There will be no pressure placed upon our pupils to 'catch up' and plug attainment gaps as this will not benefit our pupils' well-being and happiness. Learning will take place in an environment where children feel safe, secure and happy.

Given the above, we have reviewed our homework policy and have agreed that formal homework will not be set for this half term whilst we settle our pupils back into the school environment. We feel that the added pressure of completing homework tasks will not benefit our children at this time. This will be reviewed at the end of this half term when we may start introducing some homework tasks once again when we feel that the time is right. For the time being, we would like

our children to focus very much on their **reading**. As we all know, reading is the foundation for all learning and must always be a priority for our pupils. Unfortunately, due to the current situation, we are unable to send home reading books. This will be reviewed at the end of September. We would therefore like our pupils to read ebooks online on <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/>. Your child's teacher will let you know the log in details for this site via Seesaw in the next few days. Pupils will continue on the reading level/book band which they were on prior to Lockdown and these will be adjusted by teachers/teaching assistants in the coming weeks as we listen to the children read. Ideally, we would like children to read at least 3 times per week with an adult. This can include their ebook and also a book of their choice which they are reading for pleasure. As we are not sending pupil planners home at the moment, we would like parents and pupils to keep a record of their home reading on Seesaw. Your child's class teacher will send you more information about how to this via Seesaw. We would also encourage children to record themselves reading an extract from their reading book and post on Seesaw for their teacher/teaching assistant. This was something that we started to do during Lockdown and it proved to be very successful.

Finally, I would like to share with you information about a whole school project which all pupils will be participating in during English based on the wonderful picture book by Oliver Jeffers, 'Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth'. The aim is to encourage a sense of community across the entire school, to reflect on the last few months, and also to help our whole school look forward to the future in a positive way. At the end of the unit we have planned an activity where pupils, staff and even parents can share their own notes for living on Planet Earth, supporting everyone to move forward positively. Parents/carers may wish to take a look at this book so that you can talk about this project with your family at home.

We are all very much looking forward to coming the few weeks and to settling our children back into a safe, secure and happy school setting.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

K Brookes - Deputy Head teacher.