

Dear Sycamore Parents,

We hope that you all had a wonderful summer and were able to take some time with your children to relax, re-charge and enjoy the sunny weather ready for the new school year.

It is wonderful to be back and I am impressed with the enthusiasm the children have shown already. I am looking forward to building relationships and helping them shine. Sycamore classroom has had a makeover so it is welcoming and organised. The smartboard has been moved to improve sight lines and increase engagement. A dedicated reading area with sofa has been added and 'brain break' puzzles are accessible.

I have planned a range of stimulating lessons for the term ahead and have plans for enrichment opportunities both inside and outside of school. Indeed, next Wednesday (9th September) we will be enjoying a day in nature at 'Woodlands Alive'. A ping has been sent with the details as this was rescheduled due to the summer heatwave.

In Literacy, pupils will be exposed to rich, short texts such as *The Mousehole Cat* and *The Wolves in the Walls* to inspire their writing. Emphasis will be placed on writing dialogue, drafting compound sentences and using expanded noun phrases with commas. During our guided reading lessons, we will be sharing 'Song of the Dolphin Boy' by award winning author Elizabeth Laird. We will be using our skills to retrieve, predict, explain and summarise as well as enjoying the story and vocabulary. Sycamore children have welcomed the system of 'Reading Journals' to celebrate and track regular engagement with books. Your support to encourage and monitor their reading would be much appreciated and play a part in their progress.

In Maths, our focus will be on understanding place value with larger numbers and developing the skills and strategies to solve calculations and word problems for each of the four operations: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. We will invest time in school to build pupil's confidence of times tables and the Times Tables Rockstars online activities (to access at home) will soon be up and running. We will also be doing investigational style activities to encourage broader thinking, trial and error and search for and explain patterns.

In Science this term, we will study animals including humans, with emphasis on movement and nutrition. We will learn about creatures with skeletons and those without. We will explore what animals need to provide their bodies with energy and ensure growth/renewal. They will be applying their knowledge and scientific skills when investigating - measuring, recording and analysing data.

In Geography, up until half term, we will be learning about settlements. We will be exploring the similarities and differences of a variety of settlements in terms of location, size and services. This will be linked with mapwork and some local fieldwork. To round off 2026 we will be learning about the Anglo-Saxons. We will study the chronology of key events and link back to other periods in History. We will use primary and secondary evidence to understand daily

life and the challenges they faced. We may even have a day in local woods trying fire lighting, wood chopping, cloth dyeing and butter making - fingers crossed for reasonable weather. We will write to you nearer the time with all the information and details you will need regarding this.

In Art we will be developing drawing skills with a focus on tone, texture and proportion. In Design Technology we will evaluate product packaging and create our own. In RE, children will explore the question 'What is it like for someone to follow God?'. In PSHE, lessons will cover 'Me and My Relationships', 'Valuing Difference' and 'Keeping Safe'.

The children will continue to develop their musical talents at school with Mrs Askew our specialist teacher. I have also arranged for Sycamore to be part of a large concert for local schools 'Voices Inspire' at Salisbury Cathedral. There is also a live lesson to join online from the Royal Ballet and Opera House 'Thae Magic Flute'.

We will have PE on a Tuesday so please can you ensure that your child has kit suitable for indoor and outdoor activities. We would still like the children to come to school in their PE kits but they may need to bring an extra layer, a waterproof coat and possibly a sun hat to ensure all conditions are covered.

We do appreciate your support with home learning to build good habits, resilience and extend learning opportunities. Homework will continue to be linked to prior learning and give the children the opportunity to apply the skills or knowledge they have learnt in school more independently (parent supervision and prompts welcome). Tasks will be set on Wednesdays and shared/reviewed the following Wednesday. Should a task prove to be problematic, or meet with significant resistance, please do get in touch.

Important dates:

Wednesday 9th September Woodlands Alive Trip

Thursday 12th November - Inspire Voices Concert

We will up-date this as we work our way through the term.

We look forward to working in partnership with you again this term.

Mrs Johnstone

Mrs Crowe