

## Happy New Year!

Dear Middle School Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the spring term! It was great to see the children back in school last week and we have got off to a great start to the term!

Children have settled back in well after the Christmas break and have shown they are really ready to learn. Last term, Middle School was hit with several cases of CV-19, including teaching staff, with many children off for extended periods of time, doing their best to learn from home and catching up when they returned. Everyday seemed to bring new challenges and during the last week of term we struggled to get enough staff to keep Middle School open. However, we pulled together and here we are, hopefully out of the other side (at least for a while!) We would like to thank you for all your patience and efforts with learning from home, and particularly with PCR testing the children when asked. It really did make a difference to the spread of the virus within Middle School when the asymptomatic children were identified and isolated.

Last term, saw us tackle the Romans and how they changed Britain as our curriculum driver. We managed a trip to Reading Museum in October (dodging CV-19 for once!), which children thoroughly enjoyed. We had an adventurous, exciting trip on the bus into town (well done Reading Buses and the general public for accommodating 30 children on a bus in one go!), getting the chance to dress up as Romans and see real mosaics and artefacts. This really put all of our learning into context and children really came over as expert historians in our workshops throughout the day. In science, we learnt about light and sound, making telephones and investigating how sound travelled along solids.

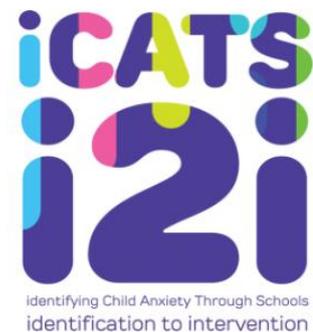


This term, our curriculum driver is 'From Field to Fork', where we will be learning about how the environment affects farming in the UK and the rest of the world, and how we make farming practices fair. Staff have also spent a lot of time

during the summer holidays and in the autumn term, updating our reading system with the introduction of Accelerated Reader Scheme. We hope you are getting to grips with the new scheme at home and encourage you to read with your children as much as you can. Those children that regularly read with their parents really do progress quickly and we have seen some really good progress in reading since the introduction of the scheme. It has also given us a chance to replace and restock our reading libraries with some good quality, interesting texts for children to choose from. This has resulted in an increase in motivation to read, especially as children enjoy doing the quizzes and collecting the points!

We have lots of extra-curricular clubs and events this term too. Miss Goodchild (our Foundation Stage Teacher and artist in residence!) will be running an animation club for Middle School later on this term. This is a new, exciting venture and we'll be in touch later with more details. We are also hoping to continue with the Cross-Country Club, Choir and Chess Club this term too. With World Book Day, NSPCC Number Day, Children's Mental Health Week, the Poetry Recital, Spelling-Bee and Red Nose Day, it's shaping up to be a busy term! Fingers crossed CV-19 restrictions will allow us to carry out our plans.

This term, Middle School are also very excited to be taking part in a research program with the University of Oxford, which is developing a new way of identifying and supporting children with anxiety problems through primary schools. Thank you to all those parents who have signed up to allow their children and families to be involved. The mental health of our young children is extremely important to us and the recent pandemic has highlighted a greater need for schools to get involved with this. Middle School is also hoping to get involved with a research project with the University of Cambridge, combining science and maths by bringing in the natural environment to maths lessons. We look forward to seeing how this develops and will be in touch about this later with news.



Once again, thank you for your continued support with your child's readiness to learn and with the support you give at home. Let's hope we can all get through this term with the least amount of CV-19 interference as possible and we look forward to sharing news and successes throughout the term.

Best wishes,

The Middle School Team