

**Pioneers’ Spring Newsletter**

Welcome back after your Christmas break! Mrs Dixon and I would like to wish you all a happy new year.

This half-term, the children will be studying a topic that is much closer to home! We will base most of our learning on a local area study of Felton in our ‘Felton: A Village Through Time…’ topic. The children will develop map-reading skills and use field studies to further their understanding about the human and physical geography of their local area. They will then delve into the past, discovering how Felton has changed and developed over time. They will need to examine and critically study historical sources in order to find out about the past and to offer reasons as to why changes have happened in the village over time.

If you have any additional historical sources relating to the history of the village, I would be extremely thankful if the children could see/use them as part of their learning. I can arrange to take copies/ photographs of items/documents, they do not need to stay in school for the duration of the topic. Thank you in advance!

As part of this mini-adventure, we will be undertaking field study and data collection trips throughout the village. These excursions will happen throughout the topic and dates will be flexible in order to allow for weather and to respond to the children’s learning and interests. There is a trip risk assessment covering these outings.

**Reading and Spelling**

The children will have brought home new reading books this week and will have the opportunity to change their reading books during guided reading throughout the week. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, I will run guided reading sessions in small groups. The children will be encouraged to articulate and record their responses to texts, in particular focussing on interpreting their ideas from the clues in texts (inference skills). We are also studying the novel ‘Tom’s Midnight Garden’ by Phillipa Pearce in English. Please encourage your children to read independently every day. Your child does not need to read aloud to you as their reading independence grows, but it would be valuable to discuss your child’s reading with them. We will continue to follow a daily spelling session, focused on developing reading and spelling word families, pre-fixes and suffixes. Spellings sent home each week are tailored lists designed to address any spelling weaknesses identified from the curriculum word lists the children were tested on at the end of last year. We will be encouraging the children to rehearse their ten spellings every morning as they arrive at school, during handwriting sessions. Therefore, the children will have an additional opportunity to write and remember their spellings every day.

**Homework**

Homework will be sent home in homework books every Friday, to be returned to us by Thursday. As the children are being given time every morning to rehearse their spellings, homework will have a greater focus on a wider range of SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) skills. Spellings will be tested on **Thursdays**. The children will also bring home a Big Maths Beat That (BMBT) and CLIC homework sheet. The BMBT is a timed challenge, where the children solve the calculations facts as fast as they can. The CLIC sheet challenges the children to complete the calculations by applying the core calculation facts that they know. The children will also complete the BMBT and CLIC challenges in class every Thursday. If your child consistently completes the BMBT challenges in the allotted time, they will progress to the next step. If your child gets 10 out of 10 twice on their CLIC, they will move up to the next step.

**PE and The Felton Mile**

Mrs Burroughs will be leading PE sessions for the children on Thursday afternoons. Please make sure your child has clothing suitable for both indoor and outdoor sessions. We eagerly await the arrival of spring weather and we will be in touch with you when the Felton Mile will recommence.

**Friday Forest Skills**

Please can we ask that your child comes to school in Friday ready for Outdoor Learning. The children can wear/bring:

* Warm trousers, in line with school uniform colours (ones that can get dirty)
* Warm socks/ welly socks
* A change of footwear (walking boots or wellies)
* Layered tops – t-shirts/long sleeved tops/jumpers (we do ask children still wear their school jumper or cardigan as their top layer)
* The school will provide waterproof coats and trousers

I look forward to continuing the year as we have begun. The Pioneers should be so proud of their achievements so far this academic year. They have been wonderful eco-warriors during our ‘Plastic Fantastic’ topic and I am sure they will prove to be equally fantastic local historians!

Nikki Gamston