



Maids Moreton C of E School

Small enough to care, large enough to inspire



Newsletter No 1. 1st September 2023.

Dear Parents and Carers,

On behalf of all the staff and governors, I welcome you back to the start of the new school year. I hope you have all had an enjoyable and relaxing holiday with your families and feel refreshed and ready for the Autumn Term. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new teacher, Mrs Griffiths, as well as welcoming back Mrs Reece from her maternity leave. Mrs Ahlstrom will also be joining the team as a midday meals supervisor. We sadly say goodbye to Mr Jones who is going onto pastures new after working as our caretaker for the past 8 years, as well as Hannah Dunkley who is also exploring new working opportunities. We also say goodbye to Mrs McKee, who has provided music lessons at our school for the last few years, as she has secured a full time permanent position in the private sector. We will now be returning to teaching our own music in house. We are also delighted to meet our new Reception children and families, as well as having our first Year 5 class.

Visits to Village and Church

Sparrows, Magpies and Kestrels parents will shortly receive a Parentmail requesting your permission to allow your child to walk to the church and the village, accompanied by school staff. We would be grateful if you could complete this as soon as possible. Reception parents [Robins] have already completed this as part of the "Starting School" pack. Many thanks.

Fruit for snack time

Children in Robins and Sparrows will receive a piece of fruit provided by the school at snack time each morning, as part of the government free fruit initiative for children in year groups R, 1 and 2. Children in Magpies and Kestrels should bring their own fruit. [fruit only please]

Dates for Your Diary

Diary dates for the whole school year are now published on our school website under "News and Events-Diary Dates 2023-2024". You will be notified of any changes to the diary dates with as much notice as possible, should they occur.

New Sports Competitions/Extra curricular opportunities

We are delighted to announce that as part of our commitment to expand competitive sporting opportunities for all year groups, and to provide our children with the social benefits of mixing with larger numbers of pupils from other schools, we have joined the S4A Group Festival Sports' Programme for 2023-2024. There will be 20 after school events, over the full year, for various age groups. All events will take place at the Royal Latin School and Buckingham Primary School. Please see the separate letter sent to parents for further details.

S4A offer after school clubs five days a week. Please remember that these are open to all children, not just those needing wrap around care. These are booked directly through S4A. We will send the timetable to you in a separate parentmail. Miss Sharon will also be running her Street Dancing and Cheerleading clubs on a Monday and Friday morning from September.

Our school choir will begin rehearsing in October. Details will follow soon.

House Launch

We are also excited to launch our new House System from September 2023 and the new opportunities this will bring. Our House system will promote a sense of friendly competition that enhances children's understanding of how to win and lose in the right way. Being part of a house also encourages a sense of belonging and provides our older pupils with the opportunity to support the younger ones, thereby learning the responsibility of becoming a good role model.

The children have all been allocated to one of 4 houses, with siblings placed in the same house. [see attached list in separate letter]. Children will be able to gain house points for many different academic and wider social achievements, as well as taking part in various inter house competitions throughout the year.

Just before we broke up for the Summer, we asked the children to suggest names for our new houses. We were very impressed with their ingenuity and creativity! A number of children suggested names of flowers, and one very good suggestion came from Emilia in Year 3, who proposed the names of the national flowers of the 4 countries on the UK. The houses will therefore be called Thistle, Rose, Daffodil and Shamrock.

To launch the house system, we are inviting the children to design a logo/emblem for their house, as well as a motto.

The logo/emblem should be completed in colour, and should be a drawing of the flower of the house. [Either just the flower head or the whole flower. No words please]. I have sent out the entry form electronically, but the children will also receive a hard copy in their first week's homework. Please do not stick it in your child's homework book and make sure it is returned carefully to school. The logo will go in the middle of a large shield on the house display board, so please make sure it is big enough and fills the whole circle. The deadline for entries is Thursday 14th September.

The children should also come up with a short 3-7 word motto for their house. An example would be "Together Everyone Achieves More" or "Courage, Determination, Teamwork." Children in our Year 5 class, are invited to stand for election as house captains. Each house will have 2 captains. Children wishing to take on this role, should prepare a short speech as to why they would make a good house captain. They should be ready to present their short speech at the elections on Thursday 14th September during KS2 assembly time.

OFSTED report

As you will know, we had a full OFSTED inspection just before the Summer break. Due to the holidays, we are yet to receive our report, but will share it with you as soon as we receive it.

Arrival/Collection Arrangements

Could I please remind all parents who drop their children off by car, not to park on the yellow zig-zag lines outside the school or on the bend at the top of Avenue Road. As part of our School Travel Plan we operate a "park and walk" facility. Parents who do not live within walking distance of the school are encouraged to park outside the church or at Maids Moreton Playing Fields car park so your child/ren can participate in the school's "Go for Gold" scheme. Both facilities are less than 5 minutes walking distance from school. Children are encouraged to walk to school and participate in the "Go for Gold" scheme, which rewards them for opting to walk, cycle or scoot to school.

PTA

Here at Maids Moreton, we are fortunate to have a small but very active PTA who work with such energy and commitment to support the children's education in so many ways and provide vital fundraising for the school. Last year, the PTA hosted a highly successful Summer Fayre, enabling us to purchase some new very popular fixed play exercise equipment to be used at lunchtimes and playtimes. They also helped us to provide specialist dance and music tuition throughout the year for all our pupils, as well as funding the cost of Year 3 and 4 swimming lessons.

Even in these challenging times, the PTA has still been working hard and thinking outside the box to provide new fundraising opportunities and events. New parents are automatically "members", so please do come along to the first meeting. [Date, time and format to be confirmed]. I would like to take this opportunity to thank last year's committee, for their considerable contribution to the school.

Meet the Teacher sessions

In September we will be hosting "meet the teacher" sessions for parents from each class in their respective classrooms. The dates are as follows: Sparrows: Monday 11th, Magpies: Friday 15th, Robins: Monday 18th and Kestrels: Friday 22nd. All meetings will take place in the classrooms between 2.50pm-3.15pm. We will also send out a termly curriculum forecast for each class, which outline details of the curriculum to be covered this term and other important information. These, alongside our detailed Knowledge Organisers will also be available to view on the school website.

We also hold a phonics meeting for Reception [Robins] parents at the start of term. This will take place on Thursday 28th September at 2.50pm in the Reception classroom.

School Nut Policy

Just a quick reminder regarding our school Nut Policy. We request that parents do not send food to school that contain nuts. This includes all types of nuts, peanut butter/paste, nutella and food containing nuts. Our hot meal providers also operate a no nut policy to the food they provide to our school. We have a child in school with a severe nut allergy so I would like to take this opportunity to remind the whole school community of the need to avoid nut products.

Reading with DERIC

As a school, we believe that creating a culture of reading is a vital tool in ensuring our children are given the best possible life chances. At Maids Moreton, we aim to develop children's word reading and reading comprehension skills in tandem through the explicit teaching of reading skills. To support us in this aim, last year we introduced "reading with DERIC." The information below will be useful for our new parents and also provide a refresher for our existing parents, especially those who have moved up a Key Stage.

Children need to be aware of the reading skills they are using in order to give them a greater understanding of what makes a well-rounded reader. These skills are called reading with DERIC.

DERIC stands for:

Decode (word reading)

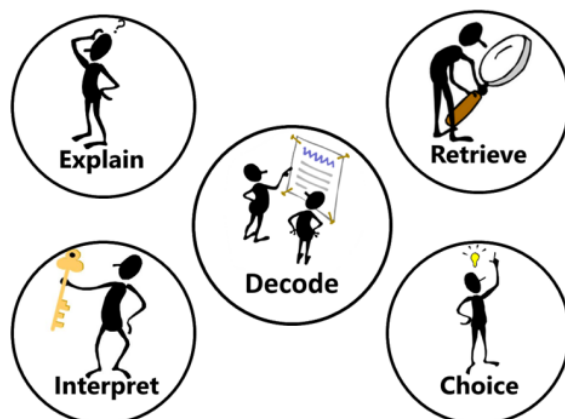
Explain (explaining unfamiliar words and developing vocabulary)

Retrieve (finding information in the text)

Interpret (inference skills/reading "between the lines")

Choice (the choices made by the author, e.g. use of language)

To help the children learn which reading skill they need to draw upon to answer text specific questions, DERIC uses 5 child friendly symbols:



At the early stages of reading, in EYFS and early Key Stage 1, the main priority is on decoding—using phonic knowledge to read words. It is vital that children first develop the phonic knowledge to access texts. As children move up the school and develop reading fluency, the focus shifts away from decoding to reading comprehension. The children are required to become more analytical readers who can demonstrate a thorough understanding of what they read. As we move into Key Stage 2, we therefore lose the "D" and just have ERIC.



How can I support to develop my child's DERIC skills at home?

A child who is a good decoder, with a large sight vocabulary is not necessarily a good well rounded reader. It is really important to engage in discussion with your child to ensure they have a true understanding of the text. This is best done after reading smaller passages from the book rather than the whole text or chapter. In the inside cover of your child's reading record, you will find a prompt sheet with the types of questions to ask.

Alongside this newsletter, I have attached the following guides for parents:

- A guide for parents in EYFS and Key Stage 1 [Reception to Year 2]
- A guide for parents in Key Stage 2 [Year 3 and above]
- A question prompt sheet for parents in Key Stage 1
- A question prompt sheet for parents in Key Stage 2. [Year 3 and above]
- How to develop higher order reading skills presentation for Year 2 and 3 children.

These guides contain a wealth of information as to our approach to reading at Maids Moreton and how you can support at home. The guide for Key Stage 2 parents is particularly important as it explains our way of working for our Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils.

Dos:

- Encourage your child to read a wide range of literature from a variety of authors, appropriate to their maturity, age and level of understanding. Encourage them to read a range of genres, including fiction, non fiction and poetry.
- Encourage your child to read real books as well as scheme books.
- Read with your child and question their comprehension at regular intervals whilst reading, e.g. eliciting the meaning of new vocabulary in the context, summarising what has happened so far, retrieving information, inferring. *[See reading prompt information sheet for parents for ideas of the type of questions to ask]*
- Read to your child as well as listening to them read so you can discuss and appreciate stories together.
- Foster and widen their interests so they develop a love of reading.

Don't:

- Read a book once in one sitting without taking time to discuss it. Take time to enjoy it and read for meaning. Reading is not a race through the scheme!
- Compare your child to others and become unduly anxious. Children can pick up on this and become disheartened.
- Rely on reading scheme books alone to practise your child's reading skills
- Read books at home that are too complicated for your child's maturity, age and level of understanding. They may be able to read the words, but their enjoyment will be hampered by a lack of understanding of the meaning.

Further information about the school approach to reading can be found on the school website.



Uniform



Thank you for your continuing support regarding school uniform. Visitors often comment that our children look very smart indeed! Until October half term, children can choose to wear their Summer or Winter uniform depending on the weather. Please could we request that all items, including PE kit, are clearly named, so that any lost items can be quickly returned to the rightful owners. We have a lost property box located in the lobby between the Kestrels and Magpies classrooms. All children also require wellies and waterproofs from the start of the year to access the Forest School's area and to go on the field at playtimes and lunchtimes. Children should come in PE kit on the days they have PE. [Friday for Robins, Thursday and Friday for Sparrows, Monday and Thursday for Kestrels and Tuesday and Friday for Magpies]. Sun hats are also required during hot weather.

Attendance Policy



At the beginning of a new school year may I take the opportunity to refresh parents about the school's attendance policy. We are not in a position to authorise absences for family holidays taken during the school term time. This means that any holiday taken during term time will be shown as an unauthorised absence on your child's records and could incur fines. We appreciate that the holiday industry increase costs significantly outside term times. As staff who work in a school, we are well aware of the financial implications! However, I would ask parents to consider carefully their holiday arrangements mindful of the negative impact it has on your child's education. It is especially important to avoid May and June, as these are the times when the internal and external end of year assessments take place. Where children miss these, they tend to perform less well when doing the tests on their own after a period of absence from school, when their learning is less fresh.

If your child is poorly, we request you let the school know as early as possible, by parentmail or by telephone, using the answering service if no-one is available to take your call. If your child is not present for morning registration, Mrs Power will telephone you if we have not received an explanatory message.

An attendance guide for parents can be found on our school website.

School visits

We plan visits which take place over the school year. The timing of these visits coincides with what the children are learning at that particular moment, and are used to enhance and enrich the children's experiences within the curriculum. There are 2 visits planned for the first half of the Autumn term. Parents in Magpies and Kestrels have received separate letters about these visits prior to the Summer break. Over the Summer, we received notification that Heyfordian, our coach company of choice [due to cost and reliability], has unfortunately ceased trading. Mrs Power has contacted other companies and has secured 2 bookings to ensure the planned visits can still go ahead. There was a small additional cost, but in this instance, the school will pay the difference rather than passing this on to parents.



Whole class reading texts for KS2

Please can I remind all parents to ensure your child brings their copy of the whole class reading text to school on Monday. Details of the texts required were sent out before the holidays.

The school day

Just a reminder that our new start and finish times are now in operation. All children should be lined up on the playground ready to come in at **8.50am** and we will be ready to be picked up at **3.20pm**.

Other news

I have found out over the holidays that I require surgery which has been scheduled for 4th September as a priority case. I will be sad to miss the beginning of term, but hope to be back as soon as possible. I have prepared everything required for a smooth start to the term but should anything unexpected arise in my absence please speak to Mrs Power in the school office.

Best wishes Keira Ainsworth Head Teacher, Sept 2023

