

A big thank you to the parents who came along last night. For those who couldn't make it, here is a summary of some of the discussions we had. Please come and see me if you have any questions!

Welcome to Oystercatchers!

Hello! My name is Mrs Longdon and I am your child's new class teacher.

I have enjoyed teaching at St. Peter's for 30 years! Where did all that time go?! I get an enormous amount of pleasure from teaching young children. No day is ever boring and no two children are the same! I still wake up excited about going to work!

I live in Heysham and can often be spotted walking, cycling, swimming and with my family around the village. I have three grown up children – Frank, Ned and Connie, who all attended St. Peter's – and three gorgeous granddaughters.

The team!

I am joined in the Oystercatchers class by Mrs Jeffreys who is the Oystercatchers' wonderful Teaching Assistant. In the afternoons, Mrs Russell will also be joining us to support the Year 1 pupils' needs. Mr Carter will be teaching the class every Friday. I will be working very closely with Mr Carter, and Mrs Rigby, to ensure that all the children have full access to the KS1 curriculum and that all of their individual needs are met.

Our timetable

We tend to teach Phonics, Maths and Literacy every morning. In the afternoons we focus on our St. Peter's Curriculum subjects [Geography, History, Science, Art and Design and Technology] and P.E. and P.S.H.E lessons. On Fridays Mr Carter will be teaching Computing, Music and P.E and R.E. to the class. I originally studied, and love, the visual arts so I will be factoring in lots of creative activities. We are also very keen gardeners in the Oystercatchers class and there will be lots of opportunities to plant seeds, tend to out garden area and harvest any produce.

Whilst the classroom is a more formal teaching setting, and much of the learning is teacher-led, we plan in a huge range of exciting, practical, investigative, and fun learning opportunities. I want to develop a life-long love of learning and build on their foundation year at school. We also love using our locality and the Oystercatchers get out and about as much as possible for lots of Geography, Science and Literacy on the beach, in the Glebe gardens, in the woods, to the library and around the village.

Each morning there is some form of collective worship – either class based or whole school.

Every Thursday morning, we have Book Club which is often a highlight of the week.

Our Curriculum and topics

There is information about the Oystercatcher's curriculum on the school website. It will tell you what each half term's topic is and what subjects will be taught.

For example, we are about to embark on our Science topic about the five senses. The children will be investigating drawing skills and exploring some crazy, colourful spirals! The children will also be undertaking lessons from our Sparkyard Music curriculum and learning about 'Technology all around' in our Computing lessons. In the first half term they will be looking at the Creation story and Harvest time in our R.E work.

P.E.

The children will have me for their P.E. lesson on Monday afternoons, and Mr Carter will teach them every Friday. We may be undertaking some of our P.E. lessons outside so it would be wise to send into school some black jogging bottoms/leggings for more autumnal weather.

Please make sure all of your child's kit is labelled. [Thank you!]

Reading books

We would really like the children to read at home at least three times a week. I understand that often, after a busy day at school, your child may not always be up to the task but little and often will really build their confidence and help them progress. It probably goes without saying, that the children who make the most progress are those that read on a regular basis at home. Please, if you can, take the time to share stories at bedtime with your child too. Seeing adults enjoying reading, and sharing books with adults, is often a vital ingredient towards a successful, enthusiastic, and fluent reader. Reading to, and with children, broadens their vocabulary and general knowledge. It encourages a curiosity about the world they live in and builds clever children.

If you have any concerns linked to this, please don't be afraid to contact me. All children are different and we work with a wide range of abilities.

We will change their reading books each week, on a Monday. Their reading books will be carefully aligned to the Phonics Phase that they are working on. The children know that they need to have their reading books and comment book with them on a daily basis so that we can also squeeze in some individual reading time with them when possible. Please can you sign/write a comment in their comment book so that we know that they have read the book at home. Expect to be nagged by me if reading isn't happening at home – I really believe it is a shared responsibility between home and school.

The children will be able to choose a library book to take home. Please make sure that they return it each Friday. Thank you.

Homework

There is no weekly homework set for Year 1 children, apart from regular reading. Sometimes I may ask the children to do some research linked to a project at school. If this involves 'googling' we teach, and frequently reinforce, the rules for how to use the internet and to always do this with an adult. [Our E-safety policy can be viewed on the school website.

Phonics

In Year 1, we teach a 'Red Rose Phonics' lesson every day. I have been assessing each child to find out which phonemes and tricky words they recognise and will then be grouping the children according to their needs. One group of Year 1 pupils will work with me in Phonics, whilst some children may benefit from working in a smaller Year 1 group with Mrs Jeffreys. We will assess the children on a regular basis and try to address any gaps in knowledge with additional interventions with Mrs Russell. In September, we will be spending some time consolidating their understanding of the Phase 3 sounds, previously taught in the Reception class.

In their Reading Comment booklets, I've stuck in a guide to how we form our letters. I hope this is useful.

The current Year 1 children [and some Year 2 pupils] will have their Phonics Screening Test in June 2027 – but let's not worry about that yet!

Rewards/credits

Across all the year groups in school we award 'credits' for excellent behaviour and work. The children know that they need to aim for six, or more, each week. I will also be giving out certificates to celebrate any children who I think have done especially well each week. Linked to that, I will also be rewarding the children who I feel have been demonstrating excellent behaviour throughout the week. Each week, one child from each class is chosen to be the class V.I.P and they are rewarded with a V.I.P seat on Friday's lunch tables with a friend of their choice.

Screen time

Here goes.....It's quite simple actually – There really are very few benefits to be gained for a five/six-year-old from screen-time. As educators, we have real concerns about the amount of time children are spending using screens. It can affect sleep routines, make them too sedentary, limit language acquisition, inhibit self-regulation and it can also mean that a child may really struggle to concentrate for extended periods of time. Enough said!

Medical/Health information

Please let me know about any medical or health issues, however small.

Please make sure that your child has a named water bottle every day. Only water I'm afraid!

Also, please can I remind you that we are a nut free school so no packed lunches should include nutty snacks, including Nutella.

Concerns

Please let me know about anything, however small, that may be affecting your child's happiness or ability to learn, and I will do my best to put measures in place to help them. It is vital that we work in partnership for your child's well-being. Mrs Rigby is also able to offer a range of ways to support your child, or family, when times are difficult.

Thanks for reading all of this! I am really looking forward to getting to know and teaching your lovely children this year.

Regards, Mrs Longdon