



Hatfield Heath Primary School

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Head teacher: Mrs E Gelston

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Dear Parents,

Welcome, once again to the Early Years Foundation Stage class and to Hatfield Heath Primary School. I am delighted with the way the children are settling into school at this early stage and looking forward to working with you all. It has been wonderful to see the children taking part in the morning school routines; independently placing their belongings in their drawers and registering for lunch. Thank you for your encouragement and support with this.

We have an exciting year ahead of us, Mrs Tracy Sykes is our class LSA this year and Mrs Gemma Jackman will be teaching the class on my release days. Miss Emma Reynolds, Ms Ria Newnham and Miss Holly Lovatt are also working within our class this year.

Each half term I shall send home a newsletter informing you of some of the topics we will be covering in class. Your children will benefit more from each learning experience if you are able to follow up this work at home by discussing topics or looking at library books. You may also have relevant items at home which the children could bring into school to show everyone.

The focus of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is very much about learning through play. This half-term the topic we shall be basing much of our learning around is 'Autumn'. Within this topic we shall be thinking about seasonal changes. We will be investigating leaf sizes, colours and shapes as well as finding out about spiders and hedgehogs and discovering that non-fiction books and the internet have so much information to help us to learn.

During the first few weeks, initial assessments across all areas of the curriculum are taking place, generally through discrete observations and directed games. You will have an opportunity to discuss these and how your child is settling into school on one of the parent consultation evenings, which will be held after half term. A letter about this will follow later.

English

We will be learning about rhyme and developing our awareness of sounds and syllables. Looking at library books together, singing nursery rhymes and clapping the syllables (or beats) within a word will help your child to develop an awareness of these. We shall also be looking at writing our names with use of the correct lowercase formations.

Please help your child at home by encouraging or supporting them to write their name using the correct lowercase letter formations and pencil grip. This could be done with pencil, paint or lying on the floor with a piece of chalk.

The children have been excited to take books home to share with their families. These books will be changed on Mondays and Thursdays. To aid learning, it is vital that children share their books at home as often as possible, a minimum of four times a week, for just a few minutes each time. Please write a comment in your child's home school diary each time you share a book together. Every Monday we will be awarding certificates to each child that has shared their book at home on four separate days in the previous week. Therefore please ensure each individual entry is dated.

Above all, I would like the children to develop a love for reading. For this they will need to develop an understanding of books they are reading, or those which are read to them. To support this please discuss the books with your child. When doing so please encourage your child to speak in full sentences. You could help your child to develop their ideas and understanding further by asking questions such as "Why do you think that?" "How do you know?" "Which was your favourite part?" "Why?" etc

Mathematics

Our maths activities this half term will focus on recognising and ordering numbers to 10 and then 20, counting objects and creating and describing patterns. We will practise these skills through games as well as teacher-led learning activities.

You can help your child by encouraging them to look for numbers around them, count groups of objects and looking at and creating patterns using toy cars, buttons etc. Please also practise counting forwards and backwards from 0-10, then from 0-20.

PE lessons

PE lessons will take place on Wednesdays and Fridays each week. Earrings must not be worn during PE lessons. Therefore, please send your child in without their earrings on these days as we are not permitted to remove them. I am aware of current issues with School Trends orders not having arrived for the start of term; our first PE session which we will be getting changed for is planned for 26th September. If you have not received your child's PE kit by this date then please send them with a t-shirt and pair of shorts for their lessons.

Please help your child by encouraging them to get changed into their school uniform each morning, as independently as possible. It would also be helpful if your child could turn their clothes in the right way as this makes changing after PE much easier when their clothes are often inside-out.

School uniform

Please ensure:

- all items of clothing are labelled, including any coats, scarves etc
- long hair is completely tied back for safety reasons
- children are not wearing nail varnish in school

Each child needs to have a pair of wellington boots in school please, this ensures we can use the garden and school grounds in all weathers. If you have not already done so, please send these in as soon as possible.

Afternoon snack

We offer a snack and drink in the afternoon, which the children will often be involved in preparing or serving. We ask for a voluntary contribution of 15p per day. However, it would be very helpful if you could pay for the half-term which is £3.60. Please place the money in an envelope with your child's name on and give it to Mrs Sykes. Thank you.

The children have been enjoying eating their morning snack whilst listening to a story. If you send your child in with grapes, please ensure that they are cut and not whole. The advice is that they should be smaller than the child's thumb (as this is the same size as their windpipe), therefore please cut them into quarters.

Water bottles

Please ensure your child has a named bottle drinks bottle containing water in school each day, they have access to this throughout the school day.

Dates for your diaries.

As you are aware, on Wednesday 10th October I will be holding an EYFS parent meeting in the hall from 9.05am for approximately an hour. The focus will be on the process of learning to read and how we can best support the children in this. I hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Our first Activity Afternoon will take place on Tuesday 6th November, 2.15pm – 3.15pm. This will be an opportunity for you to enjoy school activities with your child. Each child will need to have one adult to work with during this afternoon. If at all possible, it would be helpful if younger children did not attend; this is primarily to ensure their safety, but also to give your school child a chance to have your undivided attention!

Please do not hesitate to speak to me if you have any queries or concerns. I am nearly always available for a brief chat in the morning before 9.00am or after school; alternatively you may wish to make an appointment for a meeting at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Atherton
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