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Dear Parents,

Happy New Year to you all! I hope you all had a good Christmas break although I'm sure this seems a distant memory now! Your children certainly deserved a well-earned rest after their incredible hard work and effort during the autumn term.

We have a very exciting term ahead of us with our new topic about *Brazil* plus we will be focussing on *Properties and Changes to Materials* in Science, *Structures in Design* Technology and studying the work of Brazilian modern artist Beatriz Milhazes. Action packed to say the least! We are also hoping to have a Brazilian drumming workshop this half term too to support the music curriculum as well as trip to the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir.

I have been impressed by the class's commitment to reading at home and how they are full of excitement and enthusiasm when they have read books they enjoy. They were all so keen to tell me about the books they received for Christmas so my own book list has grown considerably! There is a lovely culture of sharing books between each other and we have a class library where children can borrow books from each other that come highly recommended (with permission of course). Although I know many of the children like to read independently, please continue to listen to your children read as often as possible and chat to them about what they are reading. This has a huge impact and benefit on their reading attainment. I would like them to read **every day** if possible, with a minimum of 3 reads to an adult over a week. With this in mind, we are taking on a whole class challenge of collectively reading for 1000 minutes a week. If every child in the class reads for 10 minutes a day (320 minutes altogether), we can easily achieve this target. The children will have several whole class rewards to choose from and we also will be celebrating the efforts of individual children too.

Our class text this term is *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell set in The Amazon and supports the work we are doing about Brazil. We will be focussing on a range of topics in English this term so your children will be tackling a range of writing and styles, with a particular focus on developing our nonfiction writing. A key focus will be developing our understanding of how sentences are structured as well as ensuring accuracy in spelling and use of punctuation. We will continue to learn new spelling rules in class and tests will be sent out when these have been fully taught to the children. We will also have a 'word of the week' to help us learn to spell challenging words from the Year 5 National Curriculum spelling list such as queue, environment, convenience and bruise.

I have been pleased by the children's growing security and accuracy with times tables and mental strategies although these will continue to be of focus over the coming term. The

introduction Times Table Rockstars has been extremely beneficial and I ask that you continue to encourage your children to practice as often as possible. We will be extending our calculation methods to include short and long methods for multiplication and division as appropriate. In addition, the National Curriculum for year 5 includes a significant amount of fractions objectives which we will begin to work on too. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate in asking. Also, we will be focussing on problem solving skills such as how to take a systematic approach and use proof to explain our mathematical thinking. This too is a key element of the National Curriculum and intrinsic to children's mathematical understanding.

In science, we will be learning about changes to materials, which will definitely involve lots of exciting investigations and experiments. A crucial element of science learning is how to plan for experiments, refine them and interpret data. The children will learn about irreversible changes and will take part in activities such as trying to stop an ice cube melting.

Our PE days are now on a Monday and Friday. Please make sure your child has a full PE kit at school. Including outdoor kit as we will be outside at least once a week. During the first half term we will be focussing on dance and hockey followed by badminton in the second half of the term.

Effort with Home Learning last term was fantastic so thank you all so much for supporting your children with this. I loved all the models and posters the children created as well as their engagement with the online maths programmes. Activities this term will be a mixture of these maths tasks, topic based learning and spellings. As always, if they have any difficulties at all, please do not hesitate in letting me know so I can give them any support they need. I am really looking forward to the exciting term ahead with your brilliant children!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs M Collier