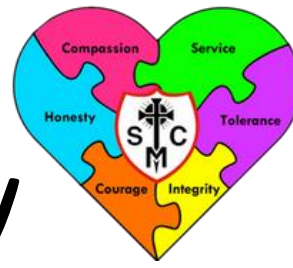


Year 3

Newsletter



Welcome Back!

A very warm welcome to you and your children into a new school year, a new class and into Key Stage 2!

I hope you all had a restful and joyful summer break, managing some time to enjoy the beautiful sunshine with your families. I'm very excited to meet you and your children and get to know them over the coming days and weeks!

Mr. Goldsworth Etchells

Timetable

MONDAYS – Spelling Test

TUESDAYS – PE Day. Children to come to school in full PE Kits. Whole School Celebrations of the Word – parents/carers/guardians invited when it is our class.

WEDNESDAYS – Wednesday Worship Whole School Celebration Assembly

THURSDAYS – NumBots/Tables Rockstars checked and celebrated.

FRIDAYS – Fitness. Children to come to school in full PE Kit.

Reading at home

Reading at home is one of the best ways to help your child grow their vocabulary and improve their overall reading skills. Just 15 minutes of reading each night can make a big difference. When children read regularly, they learn new words in context, which helps them remember and use those words in their own writing. It also improves their understanding of what they read, making schoolwork easier.

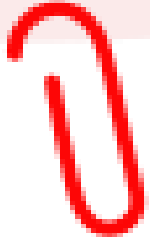
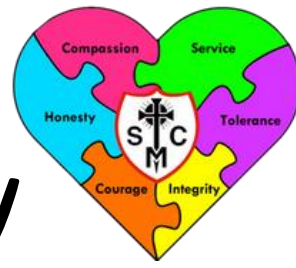
Unfortunately, more screen time and less reading have had a negative impact on children's reading habits. Many children are now reading more slowly and with less understanding. By setting aside time to read each night, you can help your child build strong reading habits that support their success in school and beyond.

Please see the next page for my expectations and reflections on Reading – something that I am very passionate about!



Year 3

Newsletter



Reading at home

Over the holidays, I've been reflecting on how to make learning as enjoyable and meaningful as possible for the children. I've been thinking and reading a lot about Reading. This term, I want to focus on fostering a love of reading at home and at school. If time is tight, I believe the most valuable thing you can do is listening to your children read and sharing stories with them. I know many of you do this already, but I am going to start making time to share my love of reading and stories with the children in class, too - to create a culture of Reading for Pleasure. As a school, we are also trying to do a big push on Reading this year and I am hoping to promote a Reading Raffle that we did in our class last year across the whole school. Additionally, I think the Reading Challenges will soon be started again the school and if pupils complete these challenges, certificates will be given out in celebrations and/or assemblies.

Listening to your child read the text 3 times (Repeated Reading), asking them questions about the book (most school reading books have pre-written questions at the end) and asking them to summarise the book in under a minute with a timer would be a simple, but effective way to use this precious time reading together.

These three things support the way we are teaching reading at school.

- Repeated Reading for decoding (learning to read the words) and building fluency and expression.
- Questions to check understanding.
- Summarising to further build children's comprehension skills and reinforce the most important point about reading - Reading for Meaning!

If you're ever unsure about how best to support your child with reading—whether it's developing fluency, helping them to decode words, comprehension, or anything else—please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm more than happy to offer guidance. Whilst at university, I completed some research about this topic, so it is something that I am very passionate about!



Homework

School is in the process of writing an updated Homework Policy, but this year our main priorities are Reading and Writing. The minimum expectation and main focus will always be on listening to your children read at least 5 times per week.



Spellings

Our Spelling Homework to start will focus on High Frequency Words, which are the most commonly used words in the English language. Here is a [link to a pdf](#) of the top 100 words for your reference.

The weekly, low-stakes Spellings Quiz will generally have 8 Spellings from this list to learn. We will work through this list first, then the next 100, as well as returning to words that I notice pupils still struggling to spell in their writing from my marking.

Other common Spellings I will include will be **Days of the Week, Months, Numbers** written as words. Handwriting can also be practiced by children writing sentences containing their spellings to practice the words in context.

Here are some tips for effective spelling practice:

Look, Cover, Write, Check: Encourage children to use this method to learn new words.

Practice regularly: Short, frequent practice sessions are more effective than one long session.

Focus on patterns: Help children identify spelling patterns and rules (we will do this in our Spelling Lessons).

Incorporate into writing: Encourage children to use the new spellings in their own writing.

Celebrate progress: Acknowledge and praise effort and improvement.

Maths

In the first term up until Christmas, our Maths learning will focus on Number and Place Value, then Addition and Subtraction. To support your child/children's Maths learning at home, pupils should already have access to [NumBots](#) so they can practice their Addition and Subtraction. This is a free app and it is recommended that pupils spend just 5-10 minutes on NumBots 5 times a week to build fluency of their number facts, as well as their mental arithmetic.

Log-ins should have been sent home previously. However, if you need the log-in and passwords, please let me know and I can send these details home with your children and direct message you them on Class Dojo.

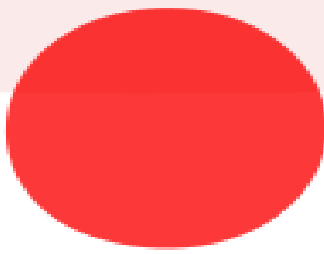
Around Christmas time, the Maths topic will move from Addition and Subtraction to Multiplication and Division. To support this learning, all pupils will be set up to access [Times Tables Rockstars](#). This programme is the Multiplication and Division equivalent of [NumBots](#) and log-in details and passwords should be the same. However, if you and your children want to, they can get ahead and practice the Times Tables that they learned in Year 2 – the 1s, 2s, 5s and 10s.

Times Table knowledge is critical as your children move through school and, looking to the future, the government has a mandatory test towards the end of Year 4 to check whether pupils know all of their Times Tables up to their 12 Times Tables.

Pupils Maths homework on these platforms will be checked and celebrated every week – maybe with certificates, maybe with prizes! So, please encourage and support your child/children to use this amazing technology to help their learning. As I said to my pupils last year, you can practice more Maths questions with this technology in minutes than you can in a whole school day. Towards the end of last year, we had some pupils who were doing hundreds and even thousands of practice questions per day in just 10-20 minute sessions, and it showed in their learning in the school Maths lessons!



My Expectations



I have high expectations of pupils trying their best to complete their work in class. If their attitude and effort is not up to the SMC standards, pupils will be expected to stay in the following day to complete their work. Please know this is **completely** different to pupils not understanding and needing more time or help to practice their learning. It is my job as the teacher to help and support them with this and they will never be asked to stay behind for this. As I say in class, Mistakes are Magic that help us learn (even Mr. Goldsworth-Etchells makes them!) and I only ask that they ask for help. Please, please, please, if you or your child need help with classwork or homework (explanations, methods, if it's too easy/difficult), let me know and we can find a time to go through it!

In terms of equipment (pencil cases, colours, sharpeners, etc.), I strongly believe that school should provide all of this for all pupils and we have ensured that we can provide all pupils with the equipment that they need for their learning. Unfortunately, last year there were a number of occasions when precious learning time was lost trying to sort out problems of missing/broken equipment with pupils accusing each other. To avoid this and so we can spend the maximum amount of time focusing on your children's learning, I **strongly discourage** pupils from bringing in their own pencil cases and equipment. In my class, we do a daily equipment check and I will ensure all pupils have in their school pencil cases or access to – pencils, a 30cm ruler, a drywipe board, pen and an eraser, a rubber eraser, a purple pen for marking, a glue stick, a sharpener, coloured pencil crayons, felt tips and any other art/craft equipment when required.

I appreciate this may be disappointing for those creative pupils who love art and drawing, and those who look after their property. But in school, we are trying to also teach our pupils to look after school equipment for the future pupils who come after them – it is, in fact, our fourth SMC Respects School Rule and links well with the Catholic Social Teaching Principles of the Common Good (of our whole class and school) and Stewardship (of school's resources).



Important Reminders

Our class has started the year looking very smart (SMC School Rule No. 1: 'Dress to Impress'), but teachers have been asked to remind pupils about PE kits. Here is an extract from a school policy:

"On P.E Days or Key Stage 2 Fitness Days, children should come to school in full SMC P.E Kits. SMC P.E Kits include:

- Red P.E top with school logo
- Black shorts or jogging bottoms
- Black hooded top
- Plain trainers

It is important children come to school in their SMC P.E kit on a Tuesday and Friday - not a gym kit.

Please ensure that your child's name is in all items of clothing."

Important Reminders

Please pack a healthy snack and a water bottle for your child each day. This helps keep them energized and hydrated throughout their busy day. Pupils can also sign up to have a biscuit every day at breaktime. Letters detailing this and payment information will be sent out in due course.

On hot, sunny days, please ensure that your children come to school with sunscreen applied and a sunhat, in addition to their water bottle.





Classroom Highlights

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Upcoming Events

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To finish...

Finally, a little bit about me:

Before starting my teacher training, I studied Modern Languages (Spanish, German and Catalan) with Translation and Interpreting at Newcastle University, so I am also very passionate about learning languages! Last year, the children who spoke different languages at home taught me a few things in their languages, such as how to make the sign of the cross, common prayers, greetings for the morning/afternoon, and the colours (red, green, blue, yellow) for our school dinner choices – as well as dessert and sandwiches/packed lunch! We learned some German, Igbo, Irish Gaelic, Italian, Jamaican Patois, Malayalam, Polish, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese Swahili, Shona and Twi to name a few! So, I look forward to your children teaching me some more this year and learning about their cultures and heritage.

Please keep me and our class in your prayers. I look forward to seeing and meeting you soon.

God bless,

Mr. Goldsworth-Etchells

