

Year Four: Spring 2019



Dear Parents and Carers,

This email will provide you with information about the coming term. It is different from last term so please do read it!

The term our overarching topic will be 'Geographical Exploration'. In the first half term we will be looking at Earthquakes and Volcanoes. We will be using Jules Verne's 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' as our stimulus: we will be using extracts from the Usborne book and from the 2008 film with the same title (which is a PG)— if you have any concerns about your child watching extracts of the film please contact us immediately.

In the second half term, our topic will be the changing face of the docklands. We will use Oliver Twist to explore this exciting and relevant topic. Again, we will be using film (the 2007 BBC adaption and the 1969 film rated U) as well as book extracts. We will take great care when dealing with the final part of the narrative (Nancy's death to ensure that children are not traumatised).

Both topics allow us to use high-quality texts to explore historical, geographical and social concepts in an engaging manner.

Being a Belhamite

We take great pride in knowing that we are educating young Belhamites who we know will go on to be the future leaders of the world. Part of being a Belhamite is showing respect and knowing how to communicate politely. We have noticed that there has been a small increase in 'lazy' manners—this will be something we are looking at this term. As part of this we will be clamping down on a phrase that seems to have crept in 'what the...' we ask that if you hear your child using that phrase outside of school you echo our message that it is part of a swear word phrase and as such is not polite language to be used in formal situations.

Literacy

We will continue to focus on word classes and sentence structure with a focus on application for effect. Whilst we will continue to use high quality scaffolded modelled writes there will be more opportunities for children to work independently in this term. Over this term we will be trying to 'fix' any lazy or bad habits children have picked up specifically around: capital letters, inconsistent spellings, punctuation and tense.

Children will have regular handwriting and spelling practice during the week. In addition to that time will be allocated for free writing—to encourage a love and enjoyment of writing (this is unstructured and un-marked writing that allows the child to see writing as something that they can be done outside of school).

Watch out in the Belham Buzz for login details for our whole school handwriting scheme.

Supporting your child's learning

We ask that you help by modelling good practice at home (even if that means explicitly spotting and correcting your own mistakes on something as trivial as a shopping list), and by unpicking writing that you see in day to day life (encouraging discussions such as ‘why is the P in iPad capitalised and not the I?’

If your child is finding handwriting tricky, we suggest investing in some pens and notepads to see if that will ignite a spark—you’d be amazed how much a new pen and secret diary motivates a child to write neatly. Thank-you letters (after Christmas) using a calligraphy pen are another great way to get children practising their consistent letter formation.

Reading and Homework

We will continue to be promoting a love of reading and still expect children to be reading at home for approximately **20 minutes per night**, this should be recorded in their reading records (they can record, or you can). This term we will also be focusing more specifically on some of the reading comprehension skills: inferring meaning, literal retrieval and discussing authorial choices. We will also be introducing across the school a bank of books that we recommend children read during the year—these books have been chosen to ensure children are not only exposed to a range of authors and genres but also to a range of plot constructs and also varying levels of language complexity. More information about this will be released during the term.

Supporting your child’s learning

Please ensure that your child has their reading book and record with them in school **every day**. Children may choose a book from our collection or one from home.

Please use these ideas to support your child when reading their books with you at home.

- Encourage your child to discuss what they have read and seen in books.
- Ask questions about what has happened / how the character may feel.
- Discuss with your child the author’s choice of words and description.

Maths

We will continue to use concrete, pictorial and then abstract (CPA) methods to ensure that your child has a deep understanding of the place value system. We will be consolidating the work we have already done around place value, addition, subtraction and extending the learning on multiplication and division in addition to area, fractions and decimals.

Ahead of the non-statutory times table assessments in the summer term (these assessments will have no formal recording and the results will not be passed on to your secondary schools—it is just part of a pilot project), we will be having a renewed focus on times tables.

I know that we have been inconsistent in setting Mathletics tasks to complete at home (as they have not always related to the units we are covering), but we aim to get back on

track. However, if no Mathletics task has been set by Friday, we expect students to spend the equivalent 30 minutes using one of the mental maths activities available on the site.

Supporting your child's mathematical learning at home:

- Look for and discuss patterns and similarities in times tables – children should know the majority of their times tables to ten by this point. Songs are a great way to practise.
- Seek opportunities to use applied mathematics: converting recipe ingredients, calculating change in shops or calculating journey times.
- Download the Mathletics App and let your child use the site to practice skills that they have learnt and to practise their mental maths.

Physical Development & Outside Learning

It is vital that children have their school PE kit (including trainers) in school (in a draw-string bag) with them each week—we suggest that they bring it in on Monday and take it home on Friday as often PE lessons may be moved to accommodate other activities.

Wednesday – Gymnastics

Thursday– Football & Yoga (Calico first half term and Denim second half term)

We will also be visiting the school garden on Tuesday, so please ensure that your child has suitable footwear (different to their school shoes). Calico should arrive at school in their wellington boots as they will go straight to the garden from the playground.

Trips and Visits

As always, we have some exciting trips planned for this term. In order to run these trips, we do rely on parent helpers (from both classes!) – if we do not have volunteers for trips this year, we will have to cancel them! Please contact the office to let them know which trips you can help with.

- Thursday 17th January – Trip to Streatham Synagogue
- Friday 15th February – Trip to Natural History Museum
- Wednesday 6th March- The Museum of London- Docklands 'Life in the Victorian Docks' workshop

We will be taking part in an exciting project looking at the changing face of the Docklands—as this project unfolds, we may need to add in some extra visits (in the second half of the term).

Reminders

- Ensure that you are checking class dojo for updates and reminders.
- Please ensure that your child brings their book bag to school every day.

- Please ensure that all items of clothing, including PE Kits, are **clearly labelled** with your child's name.
- Please ensure your child has their hair tied back and that they are not wearing jewellery (beyond simple stud earrings-- if required).
- Your child **must** have a waterproof jacket in school: we will be going out to play rain or shine!
- Please ensure that your child has a labelled water bottle in school.

Kind regards,

The Year 4 Team

Tom Turnham (Calico Class teacher)

Katie Mander (Denim Class teacher)

Sarah Hutchison, Laverne Miller, Monika Kubiak (Support Staff)