

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to another school year! I hope you've all had a great summer. Our new Year 5s have settled in really quickly and returned full of enthusiasm for the year ahead.

Throughout the week, the children have been sharing their summer projects with the class. The quality of their presentations showed how much time has gone into them, and the range of different ideas, information and stories has been really impressive; we've had everything from 'how to care for leopard-tailed geckos' to a homemade sushi tasting session, detailed family histories to water-based lifesaving courses. We've really enjoyed learning from each other, and the children showed brilliant public speaking skills - the idea of standing in front of a room of your peers is intimidating even to adults, so to watch every child present so confidently and clearly was a fantastic start to the year.

We've had a couple of 'taster' sessions this week so that the children know what to expect in maths and English lessons in the coming year.

In maths, we've been revisiting the importance of a growth mindset through some groupwork and problem-solving, and the importance of both challenging yourself and believing in yourself. We began with a simple dot card activity that emphasised the many different ways that we see and approach maths, and the fact that it isn't just a black-and-white, right-or-wrong subject, but is also creative and fun. The children took part in their first 'problem-solving session' of the year. This is a session in which the children work in groups - 4s or 3s - to tackle a range of different problems. They choose the problems and the order in which they take them on. These can be number, shape or logic-based, and this week included some algebra (the children realised that this isn't half as scary as it sounds!), 'arithmagon' number puzzles and some visual and spatial problems. Their teamwork and perseverance were great - I'm really looking forward to our maths lessons this year.

In English, we have started with a writing activity linked to our topic this term - 'we're all wonders'. The children watched and discussed a music video that featured a man living alone and a brave journey he embarks upon. Using their comprehension and deduction skills, they picked apart the clues in the video to discover that the main character is blind, and thought about how he uses his other senses in amazing ways. The children have recorded their initial ideas relating to the video, and next week we'll be getting 'hands on' to write some sensory description to accompany the video.

A quick reminder that the children's 'Times Table Rockstars' accounts should continue to work with the same login details as they did last term. The class carried out their first 'times table challenge' this week, which we will repeat every week this half term, with a focus on celebrating progress - house points will be on offer for the 'improvers of the week'. As well as multiplication facts being fundamental to the maths we'll carry out this year, this is a great opportunity for them to see how, with a little practice at home and the right mindset, they can hone their skills and make improvements.

PE this year will continue to be on Thursdays and Fridays, so the children will need their kit for these days. Our focus this half term will be tag rugby, so the children can wear studs if they would prefer (although trainers are also fine).

If you have any questions or need to get in touch with me at any point, please feel free to email me directly at timeaston@alne.n-yorks.sch.uk or catch me before or after school in the playground or our classroom.

Have a great weekend,

Tim Easton