

Spring 2026 -

Sapphires

I'm so pleased to report that all the children in Sapphires have settled back into school very well after the Christmas break and half term, and have been working so hard. We (and they) are really proud of the progress they are making, and the children are very excited about their new topics this term. In this letter you will find important and useful information about the topics and skills we will be learning this term. We hope to continue to form strong links between home and school and are always happy to discuss any concerns with you - please feel free to email us or make an appointment in school.

DAILY ROUTINE

The children may come into school from 8.35am, and our school day starts **promptly** at 8.45am. Reading books that need changing should be placed in the Red Box on Tuesdays and Fridays. On Monday, Thursday and Friday the children will start the day with Maths, followed by Spellings/Phonics work in their year groups. This is followed by Whole Class guided group reading until playtime, and then by Literacy after break. On Tuesday/Wednesday the order of lessons changes to Phonics/Spellings, followed by Maths and then either Group Guided Reading (Tuesday) or Mental Maths (Wednesday). Please note that all children have a Times Tables test every Monday and Friday after Assembly, and Number Bonds test every Thursday. Spelling Test is on Friday. In the afternoon we teach the foundation subjects which include Science, Geography, History, RE, PSHE, PE and DT/art. School finishes at 3.15pm when we will lead the children into the playground. Please try to make sure that your child knows how they are going home and if you are going to be late collecting your child, please contact the school as soon as possible. Due to the age of the children in our class, we would prefer them to be collected from the playground if possible, rather than on the road.

THE CURRICULUM

TOPICS

Our topic this term is 'Bountiful Biomes and Beautiful Beasts'. This topic is predominantly literacy, and geography, but other curriculum areas will be linked to this particular theme. We are planning an educational trip to Marwell Zoo later this half term, but a letter outlining the details will be sent out nearer the time - we will participate in a workshop linked to the biomes we are studying. Last half term we started by focusing on Peru, studying the different biomes of desert, Altaplana, pampas and rainforest and learning how the geography of Peru affects the biomes, and how different creatures and plants have adapted to live there. This half term we will move on to learning about a contrasting biome - the Taiga forest in the northern hemisphere. Again, we will be questioning and researching how climate and geography dictate the adaptations of animals and plants.

LITERACY

Literacy will be linked to our topic. Last half term we started by learning about fact-files and non-chronological reports, honing our skills through lots of research and report-writing about the animals of our different biomes. This half term the children will be learning about Traditional Stories and how they have been adapted - in particular the role of wolves in fairy tales. We will learn how to adapt characters and rewrite stories ourselves. We will then complete a fantasy unit by inventing a creature that can inhabit three different biomes, to encourage children to use

their imaginations, and writing explanations to explain how to observe it and its characteristics. We also enjoyed a very successful Book Week, focussing on the book 'Leaf'.

Reading

We teach the skills of reading during literacy, in group guided reading, whilst reading with individuals and in other curriculum areas. Daily practice is needed to improve these skills and we cannot over-emphasise the importance of reading with your child at home. **As part of their homework**, this should take place at least four times a week for about 10-20 minutes and independent readers also benefit from shared reading at home as they can discuss characters, themes and language in depth. Year 3 children are encouraged to be independent readers, but they still need to read regularly to an adult at home to improve their fluency and comprehension. We endeavour to listen to Year 2 children read their reading book once a fortnight but please don't panic if this doesn't always happen: all children are heard at least once a week during guided group reading.

Reading records are checked on Tuesday and Friday. Please note that it is imperative to record your child's reading in the Reading Diary, as each book read (or each 30 pages of Free-Readers' longer books) count towards your child receiving a Book Prize and Certificate from Mrs Brown for every 15 books. We note that several children in our class have not yet received their first Book Prize for 15 books read this year, which means they have not read one book a week.

Writing

The children will spend time developing their handwriting whilst learning their weekly spellings. We will be aiming to develop the children's formation of letters, pace of writing and overall presentation. Literacy lessons will encourage the children to write creatively and practise skills taught in previous lessons. On Tuesday and Wednesday we study SPaG (Spellings, Punctuation and Grammar).

Spelling/Phonics

Spelling/Phonics lessons will take place daily. The Year 3 sessions focus on practising weekly spellings and focusing on different spelling rules. Year 2 are currently continuing the Phonics scheme, and their work includes weekly spellings, spelling rules and grammar and sentence writing. Every week your child will bring home spellings to learn - 5 for Year 2 and 3 for Year 3, and they must also be aware of the meaning of the words as well as putting them in an oral sentence. Daily practise of these spellings is **part of the children's homework**, and they will be tested every Friday.

NUMERACY

In numeracy this term we will be revisiting, consolidating and extending concepts previously learnt and specifically covering: multiplication and division, money, shape, measurement and statistics. We will also have problem solving/investigation sessions.

Mental Maths, Times Tables and Number Bonds

Every week your child will be tested on times tables and number bonds. Your child will be given 3 minutes to complete as many questions as possible correctly, striving to increase their knowledge of times tables facts and to improve their speed. We are also practising 'chanting' times tables and number bonds facts every day, and would encourage this rote learning at home too.

Times Tables Rockstars

Every child in the school has been issued with their TT Rockstars password (please contact us if you have mislaid the password), and it is **part of their homework** to practise their tables at least

four times a week - we monitor the children's progress online. The tables are in the following order: 10, 5, 2, 3, 4, 8, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, and include both multiplication and division facts. The program is set up to automatically move children to the next level once they have achieved sufficient fluency and speed at the level they are on. Another way to practise is a free program called 'Hit the Button' (find it easily through google search - it is part of the TopMarks website).

Number Bonds

We also encourage practise of addition and subtraction number facts (number bonds) in the following order: 10, 20, 30, 50, 100, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25. Again, 'Hit the Button' is a good place to practise number bonds. It is **part of their homework** to practise these number bonds at least four times a week. The children will be given a number bonds test once a week (see above - daily routines).

SCIENCE

Science will link to our topic wherever possible, however where some units are more difficult to relate, these will be taught discretely. The first topic this term was 'Magnets and Magnetism', where the children explored magnetic materials, whether magnetic forces can pass through air, and investigating how to scientifically measure the strength of magnetics by setting up scientific enquiries. This half term our focus will be 'Skeletons and Movement'.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

P.E. is taught for an hour every Tuesday afternoon, and alternate Friday afternoons with JC Sports coaches. Please ensure that your child comes into school on those days wearing their P.E. kits. P.E. lessons are usually taught in the village hall or outside so please make sure that your child has appropriate clothing for cold days. On the days when P.E. is taught, please tie long hair back and remove earrings. If your child is unable to participate in a P.E. lesson, please let us know in writing.

COMPUTING

The children will be taught computing by Mr Brown on Tuesday afternoons. This term, for 'Data and Information' they will be learning about Branching Databases, and for 'Creating media' they will be studying Animation.

HOMEWORK

The general purpose of homework is to develop effective partnerships between home and school, consolidate skills - particularly in literacy and numeracy, extend school learning, and to encourage children as they get older to develop the confidence, self-discipline and independence needed to study on their own, which will prepare them for the requirements of secondary school. In Sapphires the children are expected to complete 1½ hours of homework each week, comprising of reading, times-tables practise on TT Rockstars (we monitor their weekly progress through the website) and Spellings.

If you wish to speak to us about any concerns or queries that you may have, please make an appointment to see us. We look forward to a new term with your child and making their time at Buriton Primary School as enjoyable as possible.

Thank you,

Miss Burrough and Mrs Rose