

Halstow Primary School

Welcome to Year Three and Four



Information Booklet for Parents

2015/16

Welcome to Year 3 and 4

The children have shown real maturity and enthusiasm since returning to school after the summer holiday. We are looking forward to what we hope will be a very exciting year for them.

We hope this booklet will give you an insight into their life at school and will answer many questions you may have about the school routine. Please feel free to speak to teachers if you have any other questions.

The Daily Routine



School opens at 8.50 a.m. each day. The children make their own way to the middle hall, put away their coats and bags in a box with their name on, and then go straight into class. We expect them to enter the classroom in a calm manner, showing us that they are ready to begin learning from the moment they arrive.

The register is taken at 9.00am. Any child arriving after 9.00am will be marked as late.

We would appreciate your support in ensuring that your child arrives on time as it is essential that your child begins their day with everyone else and is not worrying about having missed out on any learning or important messages/events of the day/reminders that are often given during registration.

The children have a 15-minute break in the morning and afternoon and have 1 hour for lunch. Children are encouraged to bring a bottle of water into class to drink throughout the day. These should be plastic bottles and clearly labelled with their name. We ask that each child take their bottle home at the end of each day to clean and fill with fresh water. Bottles can be topped up from the water fountains in the playground during their break times.

The school day ends at 3.30 p.m. The class teacher will bring the children out to be collected from the entrance nearest to Bell House and the blue gate. Please ensure that your child knows who is collecting them or phone the office if this changes during the day. Many children attend after school clubs and it is important that they remember when these are and inform their teacher.



Cross Curricular Teaching

At Halstow, we firmly believe that children learn best when they are able to make connections in their learning. Each term we will be looking at a theme which will

encompass many curriculum areas. We have chosen themes for this year which we feel will captivate the children's interest and their enthusiasm for learning.

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Term 1 Heroes and Villains	Term 3 Predators and Prey	Term 5 Victorian inventions
Term 2 Super Cities	Term 4 Paws and Claws	Term 6 Incredible inventions

Each term different subjects will lead the learning and determine the theme. Relevant links are made with other curriculum areas related to the theme being covered.

All planning is written carefully using the new National Curriculum to ensure that there is breadth and balance in the children's learning and that all objectives are being covered.

Some subjects, such as Physical Education, Religious Education, Computing and Music may not always link in with the theme being taught and may be taught as separate units of work during those times, to ensure that children are receiving their entitlement in those subjects.

Literacy



Literacy lessons are planned taking guidance from the new National Curriculum. We use a variety of pictures, internet film clips and texts to stimulate children's interest in language and promote a deep understanding of how we can use language to convey feelings, **emotions and information**. We will use literacy as a basis to support all the topics we are learning this year. The children will have the opportunity to practise a range of writing based on what they study and learn about these different topics.

At Halstow, we aim to develop a real enjoyment of language. Written work will be reworked and redrafted to enable children to develop and refine their use of language. Children are taught how to structure their writing by concentrating on vocabulary, connectives, openers and grammar. We aim to provide a rich and stimulating environment to encourage their creativity to flourish and inspire their writing.

Literacy will be taught, where possible, in the morning. Each lesson is an hour long and involves whole class teaching and independent work. Children will have the opportunity to work in a range of situations throughout the year. This involves working in groups, pairs and individually.

All children will have opportunities to present work for display, producing pieces that are attractive and eye catching. There will be an emphasis on drama and visual representations of their story telling.

Reading

40 minutes each day is allocated for the children to read; your child will be given a set reading day each week. During this time the teacher works with a group of children on a guided reading task, where all children focus on either developing their stamina as independent readers or working on reading related tasks such as spelling practice, comprehension, reading for pleasure or responding to the feedback marking the class teacher has made in their books. We would ask all parents to make sure that their child always has a book that they enjoy in their bag or school box which they can pull out at any time to read. We also ask that you continue to read regularly with your child at home. This needs to involve listening to them read and discussing the characters, settings and themes introduced in the book.

Handwriting

At Halstow, we follow the continuous cursive style of handwriting. This means that all lower case letters start from the line with a leading in stroke and end with a leading out stroke. Once the children are forming all letters correctly, they progress to joining.

Children are expected to present their work to their highest standard at all times.

Numeracy



We use the Primary Framework and latest National Curriculum objectives to plan mathematics. These lessons last for 1 hour. During this time children cover all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. 10-15 minutes of each lesson is devoted to mental mathematics skills where children explore and develop key facts and strategies that aid quick calculation. The key to mathematics understanding is the ability to make

connections between and within areas.

Our approach to teaching aims to develop these skills in the children at Halstow, encouraging them to identify patterns and relationships. Problem solving is the ideal way to explore a range of skills as well as seeing how mathematics is not only relevant to our everyday lives but great fun and interesting too. We will give children the opportunity to investigate and present maths work for display, developing an appreciation of the creativity of the subject.

The school numeracy 'Methods of Calculation' document outlines all the different methods taught throughout the school. Copies are provided at information evening, but you may also speak to your teacher to request a copy.

Science



We are following the Curriculum Framework, which we use to aid our planning. Up to six different units of work are taught each year, lasting for approximately half a term each.

Over the two-year cycle in year 3 and 4, the children study the major areas of science, categorised into four sections.

- Life processes and living things
- Materials and their properties
- Physical process
- Scientific enquiry

During the autumn terms we are focussing on forces - magnetism and friction. In the spring terms we will learn about temperature, food chains, life cycles and classification of living things. In the summer terms we will learn electricity and circuits, and light and shadows. Across all of the terms, the children are taught the important skills of scientific enquiry. This will include carrying out a fair test, observing closely and asking relevant questions. This is done with an increasing emphasis on independent investigations. We aim to ground Science work in the children's everyday experiences that will enable a much deeper and practical understanding of the concepts we cover.

Computing

Computing is planned using the school's framework. Children have sessions where they are taught specific computer skills, e.g. coding. This will range from children learning about different software, hardware and how to use the Internet effectively and safely.

We feel it is very important that children feel confident and have the skills to embrace new technology, supporting and enhancing their work in a range of curriculum areas. Computing lessons will be taught in class using laptop computers and .

Children will also use computing to support their learning in other subjects. For example, the children will have opportunities to use the internet, tablets, kindles, laptops, digital photography and data loggers around the school.

NON-CORE SUBJECTS

Music



Your child will have a 30 minute music lesson each week, along with a 30 minute singing session and an opportunity to join the Halstow choir. These lessons will be taught by Mr Eastwood, Halstow's specialist music teacher. If you have any queries regarding individual brass/violin/guitar/piano/drumming lessons, please speak to Mr Eastwood.

Art/Design & Technology

We work in modules lasting a term or half term. Children are given the opportunity to experience a range of styles and create pieces of their own. In the summer term we have our Arts week and will be sharing the focus of this later in the school year.



In Design Technology we work through the design process to analyse and evaluate products, design or own and carry out focussed practical tasks that teach the children useful skills to develop and realise their ideas. During Arts Week the children will be using a wide range of techniques and materials to create independent and collaborative pieces of art.

Humanities

We work in modules lasting a term or half term. Much of the history and geography curriculum is covered through empathetic writing. The children will have the opportunity to explore historical artefacts and geographical evidence. They will use a range of sources such as photographs, maps, buildings, museums, stories, written evidence and people.

Religious Education

We strive to make Religious Education as broad as possible and have found that teaching about all religions within one topic has really worked well for us, along with a philosophical approach. This term our first topic is looking at how religions view the creation of the world.

Physical Education



Your child will participate in two PE lessons each week. It is important to wear an appropriate PE kit during their PE lessons because it allows your child to participate safely with a full range of movement, meaning they can perform to the best of their ability. It also allows your child to change into clean clothes once they have completed their PE lesson.

PE kit should include:

- T shirt
- Shorts
- A pair of trainers for outdoor P.E.
- A tracksuit is also acceptable during cold weather

As a result of unforeseen timetabling changes or unsuitable weather conditions, it may be necessary to change your child's normal PE days. We therefore suggest that children bring in their PE kits to keep in their boxes at the start of the week and take them home on a Friday to be cleaned. This will allow them to have access to their kits should their PE day need to be rescheduled for another day.

The children will also have swimming lessons for three terms during the academic year. Each lesson is 45 minutes long.

The timetable for Swimming is as follows:

Autumn term 1	Mrs Rowe/Mrs Thorn's class Mrs Dearness' class
Autumn term 2	Mrs Rowe/Mrs Thorn's class Mrs Dearness' class
Spring term 3	Mrs Rowe/Mrs Thorn's class Mrs Dearness' class
Spring term 4	Ms Baugh's class Ms Hawtin's class
Summer term 5	Ms Baugh's class Ms Hawtin's class
Summer term 6	Ms Baugh's class Ms Hawtin's class

Please note that the swimming instructors do not allow the children to wear goggles for their swimming lessons, unless it is for a medical reason. In these instances, it will need to be certified by a doctor and agreed before their swimming lessons start. Boys' shorts must be more than an inch above the knee.

All children must wear a swimming hat. The school will provide a hat but children are permitted to bring their own.

Spanish

At Halstow we have a desire for our children to build an interest in and a love of language. We teach Spanish as our Modern Foreign Language and we're following the structured scheme 'Tu y Yo' ('You and I'). This is an oral scheme and the key aspects of our teaching will be:

- The desire to communicate.
- Listening and hearing.
- Repetition.
- Reinforcement and encouragement.

Class teachers follow the structured scheme from Reception to Year Six, teaching at least 30 minutes per week. Teaching is fun and interactive.

This year we will also be incorporating the Rachel Hawkes scheme of work, which encompasses some writing and also includes teaching the phonics sounds of Spanish to help with pronunciation.

HOME LEARNING

Reading Journals



Your child will be given a reading journal. This is to be used to support the reading that your child does at home and in reading groups.

Your child will be given a reading or topic task to complete each week, which is outlined in the home learning timetable. This will be given to your child at the start of each term. The task will usually be based on the book they are reading at home and is designed to help them gain a deeper

understanding of the text. For example, they might be asked to imagine they are one of the characters in the book and write a diary for the day. Some home learning will be linked to the term's topic, with the aim of immersing them in our topics. Children will have a week to complete their task and it should be handed in on the day of their reading group. This work will be shared with the group and the teacher will acknowledge it and indicate to parents that it has been discussed and seen. Depending on the task, children are also welcome to use other media, such as computers, videos, 3D models or posters, should they wish.

Children should be encouraged to read every night (10-15min) independently or to an adult dependant on their stage.

Times Tables and Mathletics

During year 3 and 4 we aim for the children to learn and use all the times tables up to 12 x 12 so that when they reach year 5 they are fully equipped to tackle more complex calculations. Once again children will have access to Mathletics (www.mathletics.co.uk) and teachers will set tasks every couple of weeks to be carried out on a regular basis. If for any reason children are unable to access the internet at home, then please speak to your teacher and alternative arrangements can be made.

Spellings

At the start of the year your child has been given a differentiated yearly timetable of focus spellings to practice at home. These spellings are taken from the National Curriculum. These, and other words and spelling strategies, are explored and assessed on an ongoing basis during our Literacy lessons. Children should be encouraged to practice the spellings at home. In school they will also be practising spellings from their writing that they have spelt incorrectly and ambitious words that are specific to current learning. If you require any information on strategies that we use in school then please refer to the hand-out provided on information evening or speak with your class teacher.

Assessment for learning

Assessment is a continuous process that takes place throughout all of our lessons, for example through the use of open questioning, observations of the children and listening to explanations. These assessments are used to inform our next lessons and targets for the children.

It is important that assessment procedures promote learning. At Halstow we aim to use assessment that enables children to take responsibility for their learning and provide them with information about how well they are doing and to guide subsequent efforts. Formative assessment is powerful and we believe that an ongoing dialogue with children supports their learning and promotes high standards.

The characteristics of assessment that promote learning are:

- It is embedded in a view of teaching and learning of which it is an essential part
- It involves sharing learning goals with pupils
- It aims to help pupils to know and to recognise the standards they are aiming for
- It involves pupils in self-assessment
- It provides feedback which leads to pupils recognising their next steps and how to take them
- It is underpinned by confidence that every student can improve
- It involves both teachers and pupils reviewing and reflecting using assessment data.

Through careful planning and assessment, teachers will ensure that all children have equal access to the whole curriculum. Teachers will plan activities that value the experiences that the children bring to the school and build on their interests. Teachers will ensure resources reflect our rich and varied community, celebrating the diversity of the world in which we live and the important contributions made by all sections of our community.

In each lesson, teachers will communicate the learning question to the children and this will be written up and discussed. Teachers will also ask children how they and the teacher will know that the learning question has been answered. This will support children's involvement in the assessment of their learning.



In the summer there is a whole school assessment week to assess your child's progress in relation to national expectations. The tests consist of a reading comprehension, a writing task and a maths test.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Personal Equipment

The school provides children with all the equipment necessary for the work they do. Therefore, children will not need pencil cases. We recommend that any personal property, such as skipping ropes, tennis balls, bags, books etc are labelled with the name of your child. All children's clothing must be named (a black biro will be sufficient).

Health and Safety

In the interest of health and safety, we ask that children do not wear any jewellery to school except for stud earrings. Children are allowed to bring a bottle of water to school for drinking during lesson times.

Newsletter

A whole school newsletter is sent home and emailed every Friday. Should you not receive a copy please speak to the office to ensure they have the correct contact details. Spares can be obtained from the noticeboard outside the office.

School Journey



Later in the year all Year 4 children are invited to attend a residential trip to the Margaret Macmillan Activities Centre in Wrotham, Kent. There will be additional advice given about this trip closer to the time.

School Contact

If you have any queries regarding your child's education, please ensure that you contact your child's class teacher.

This can be done by speaking to staff at the end of the day when they bring the children to the playground. Alternatively, you can write a note and give it to your child. The class teacher will then discuss the issue with you. If you have further questions, the class teacher can arrange a meeting with Mrs Rowe (Year 3/4 Team Leader) Mr Gray or Miss Williams for you.

We hope this information booklet answers many of your queries and look forward to a busy, fun-packed and productive year.

Sam Rowe, Liz Thorn, Kathryn Hawtin, Jacquie Dearness and Cherisa Baugh

The Year 3/4 Team