

A detailed Maya calendar, likely a Dresden Codex page, featuring intricate green and gold designs with various symbols and numbers.

P.P.S. Willow Class

January 2019
Spring Term

Magical Maya / What Makes Britain Great?

Dear Parents,

We are delighted to welcome the children back to school for the first term of 2019. As always, it is going to be a very busy time with plenty of exciting learning opportunities on offer to the children.

Our first topic of this term will be 'Magical Maya' - an in depth look into some of the culture, traditions and achievements of Maya civilisation in Mesoamerica. In the latter half of the term we will be discussing, discovering and debating the question: 'What Makes Britain Great?'

As part of this topic, we have organised a trip to the Houses of Parliament on April 2nd.

Both of our topics this term lend themselves to learning historical skills. As such, the children will be developing their chronological understanding, making comparisons and finding out about turning points in the past. Children will be encouraged to devise their own historical questions and develop enquiries based on their own interests.

In addition to our historical work, children will continue to develop their geographical skills by understanding what information we can discover from studying maps. They will consider the impact of mountainous terrain, rivers and coasts on trade links and settlements as well as comparing how borders and countries change over time.

As part of the topic, 'What Makes Britain Great?' children will become better acquainted with British geography, including locating counties, cities and regions within the British Isles.


This is just an outline of what the children will be exploring during this topic. We are using these newsletters to give you information about your child's education as this will replace the foundation subjects comments on the annual report.

In Science lessons, children will continue to develop their understanding of light. They will begin to study the idea of natural selection and consider how adaptation has affected the evolution of different species over time. The children will continue to work scientifically as they plan scientific enquiries, gather data and using comparative and fair tests to answer their enquiries.

R.E. lessons will be based on two key questions: What kind of King is Jesus? What difference does the resurrection make to Christians? By basing our learning around questions, we hope to engage the children in some theological and philosophical discussions which will really make them challenge themselves and gain a deeper understanding.

French lessons will develop children's ability to order/ask for drinks, snacks and ice creams. They extend their knowledge of the perfect tense by saying what others have eaten or drunk. They revisit use of the Euro with simple prices. They follow a recipe for a milkshake and justify their choice of recipe. They discuss learning strategies and use dictionaries to support their understanding of texts.

During the second part of the term, the children learn to describe places in a town and compare modern-day settlements with those in the late 1940s. They will revise and learn adjectives for describing new places. Children use a letter as a model to produce tourist guides for their own town.



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In Computing lessons, children will continue to work on the apps they designed last term. Following the letters the children wrote to various technology companies, they will modify and improve their ideas based on their feedback. Children will also be developing their programming skills by creating a multiple choice quiz using Scratch. E-safety will be covered as an integral part of all computing lessons.

P.E. lessons will allow children to explore strategy and positioning in games. There will be a particular emphasis on children evaluating and reflecting on their own and others' performance. Dance lessons will be co-taught with Mrs Meaney, a PE specialist. Children will be developing controlled movement in response to rhythms. As always, children will need their P.E. kits in school and enough suitable clothing to be able to take part in outdoor physical activity. Also the children will be continuing to run regularly as we aim to try and run a mile three times a week.

In Art, children will be taking inspiration from Mayan masks and using clay to sculpt their own versions of these (somewhat scary looking) creative masterpieces. Later in the term they will be looking at famous British designers, architects and artists whilst learning techniques to improve their mastery of drawing and painting.

Music lessons will continue to build on skills such as composition, performance and reading staff notation. As part of our topic on Britain's achievements, the children will create their own compositions and learn about ways of expressing emotions and feelings through music.

Design and Technology lessons will give the children the opportunity to prepare and make a range of

delicacies including Traditional Maya Hot Chocolate, as well as more savoury items such as tortilla bread. As part of this experience, children will learn about food hygiene and safety.

Of course, English and Maths will be taught on a daily basis and will often be linked to the topic areas listed above.

Maths this term will consolidate children's ability to calculate with all four operations and apply these skills to decimals, fractions, ratios and percentages. Children will develop their ability to measure accurately and read a variety of measuring scales.

English lessons will encourage pupils to develop their writing skills and hone their SPAG (Spelling Punctuation and Grammar). In Reading lessons we are helping the children provide more in-depth answers to higher level questions, particularly those involving inference skills.

Spellings will continue to follow the National Curriculum patterns along with two words from the statutory list. Times tables will be tested through our five minute challenge on Wednesday and Friday.

We are really looking forward to another exciting term ahead with year 6. As SATS approach in the not too distant future, we are eager to get the children to achieve their very best whilst maintaining their enjoyment of school. If you have any concerns or feel that you need to talk about your child's learning, please feel free to catch me at the school gate or make an appointment at the office.

Rob Neary (Teacher)
Jo Gill (Teaching Assistant)