

Dear Beech Class Parents and Carers,



Welcome back after the summer holidays and welcome (back) to Beech Class. We hope that you have enjoyed the summer break.

Many thanks to the current year four parents for our lovely gifts at the end of last term! We are always bowled over by generosity and they are very much appreciated – thank you from the whole team!

For all of us, it has been such a long time since anything was ‘normal’ that I’m sure that there are still many mixed feelings and emotions buzzing around. Well, we are here to reassure you that we are so excited and pleased to have you all in Brilliant Beech Class and can’t wait to get going with lots of fantastic learning experiences, whilst keeping everyone safe and happy!

Adults in Beech

We are very pleased to welcome Mrs Plackett to the Beech Class teaching team. She will teach all day on Mondays and will be supported by Mrs Tonks, who joins our West Dean Team.

I, (Mrs Johnson) will work in Beech Class from Tuesday to Friday supported by Mrs Wakefield.



Learning

Our main topic for the first half term is ‘Pirates and Explorers.’

We have lots of exciting learning ahead of us and I am in the process of organising a school trip – but there will be more information to follow about this! So watch this space ...



We will be reading two books over the course of the term – The Explorer by Katherine Rundell and Pugs of the Frozen North by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre. There is **no** expectation for you to buy either of the books, but if you would like to, then your child can bring the book(s) into school and will be able to follow along with their book in class.



Home Learning Books

There are 2 books which will come home every day with your child.

1. **A purple home learning/target book for reading and spellings** - this is divided into 2 sections:

Front – spelling lists, activities and spelling assessments

Back – to record personal reading done at home

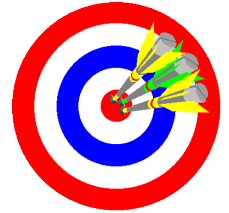
2. **A green Maths Matters Challenge Book** – this is also divided into 2 sections:

Front – Maths Matters Challenges (details below)

Back – Times Table Challenges

Please ensure that these books are in school **every day**, and that you support your child to

- Practise and learn their spellings
- Read as often as possible (minimum – 3 times per week please!)
- Work on their times tables and Maths Matters Challenges.



Spellings

In the National Curriculum, spelling is split into two main areas.

1. Common exception words that don't always follow usual patterns or rules – there are approximately one hundred of these that the children are expected to learn by the time they leave Beech Class.
2. Spelling patterns and rules.

In Beech Class we will teach and investigate a new rule/pattern/groups of common exception words every week, in small groups. There will be regular opportunities for the children to practise these rules and words within the week.

Spellings will be assessed weekly in school – which day your child is assessed will depend on which group they are in. This information will be sent home and will be on a sticker in the front of their purple home learning book.

For the weekly assessment the children will be read 3 or 4 sentences out loud that contain their learnt words. This may seem daunting at first, but the children soon get to grips with it we promise!



Maths

In Beech class we put a lot of emphasis onto mental maths and useful associated strategies. In addition to this, we will all work through the progression we call “Maths Matters.” The results and these challenges will be sent home so you can support your child in their next steps. These skills are vital to progress in all areas of maths.



Times Tables

We will all use a variety of strategies to learn our times tables to 12x12.

These will be assessed each week on a Thursday.

Your child's scores and work will be sent home so that you can support them. We start with x2, x5, x10, moving onto x9, x11, x4, and then we tackle x3, x6, x7, and then we focus on quickly applying this knowledge (including x8 and x12) to division etc.

For Year 4 pupils, the statutory times tables assessment in June also relies heavily on keyboard skills, so we will be using computers and tablets, so that the children can work out the answer to a question AND type it quickly! You can support at home by practising all the mental methods and by doing activities which use the number keys along the top of the computer keyboard. There are lots of apps out there to support the learning of times tables: 'Hit the Button' is free and very useful for practising fluency of number facts.

Reading

As mentioned above, please help your child to read **at least three times a week**: the more they read the better they become!



I do understand that many children now will be reading independently, maybe at night before they go to sleep, so there is not an expectation to *listen* to them read every time, but we would like your support in keeping us informed that they are reading and that they understand their books. So please chat to them about their reading, and *a quick adult signature and a date in their home learning/spelling books is enough to let us know.*

We are trialling a new approach with regards to recording the children's reads **at school**. On display in our book corner each child will have a "My Shelfie." This will be for the children to write down when they **finish** a book. We are encouraging the children to be reading for longer, heading towards chapter books in Beech Class, with a focus on reading stamina and comprehension being a priority, so we are hoping their 'shelfie' will motivate them to do this.



None of these activities need to take long at all, but there is a lot of evidence to suggest that parental support is key to your child's learning. Parents play a crucial role in supporting children's learning, and levels of parental engagement are consistently associated with a child's academic outcomes.

Below I have created a tick list that may help you:

This week have I supported my child in their:	
TIMES TABLES	
MATHS MATTERS CHALLENGE	
SPELLING	
READING	



A grown-up will check your child's purple book once a week. If you have any more pressing concerns, that you would like us to be aware of, then please catch one of us on the playground in the morning/afternoon or email the office.

There is also going to be a Beech Class Parents' Information session on Friday 17th September at 8:35am (hopefully outside on the benches under the white tents.) This will be an opportunity for us to meet face-to-face and for you to ask any questions.

Please ensure PE kits, trainers and wellies are in school **all the time**. (PE will be on a Monday and Thursday.) If your child would like to play football at play-times they will need a pair of tracksuit trousers to wear when the ground becomes muddier.

We are encouraging the children to bring in and take home (every day ideally!) their own water bottle. They will be able to fill this up from the tap in the classroom when needed.

We are all very excited to be part of Beech Class and we are very much looking forward to working together to ensure we are all brilliant!!

Best wishes

Mrs Johnson, Mrs Plackett, Mrs Wakefield and Mrs Tonks