

Spring Term 2016

Africa

This term, our topic is “Africa” and we will be looking at as many different aspects of the continent as possible in order to try to appreciate at least some of the diversity found in this amazing continent!

English

We will begin the term reading, learning and telling stories in the oral tradition, beginning with the “Anansi” stories. We will look at some of the most famous tales about this funny trickster and compare different tales. We will then progress to writing our own tales about the spider-man! Later in the term, the children will delve once more into the historical world – this time to learn about the Ancient Kingdom of Benin. The children will write explanations to explain how and why the famous bronze masks were made. On a different slant, the children will then turn their hands to instruction writing, when they explain how to make a variety of African dishes. The pupils will return to traditional tales with the story of “Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters” to round off the term with a storytelling festival.

The children will continue to read a wide range of texts, and we will encourage the children to make the most of the new school library when it opens this term by exploring some of the exciting texts available to borrow. We will have been looking at how to summarise what an author has written and to make predictions. The children will continue to practise their spelling both in class and at home, with a focus on prefixes and suffixes.

We have been very pleased with the way in which the children’s writing has developed this term – the children’s responses are increasingly exciting and entertaining! This term, we will focus on writing at greater length and in more detail. We will focus on improving children’s punctuation skills, with a focus on speech, apostrophes and commas. We will look at authors’ use of language when they are telling traditional tales and will compare this to the technical vocabulary required to write instructions and explanations.

Maths

The children will continue to develop their maths skills in the following areas:

In both year 3 and 4, we will be developing the Year 4 maths key skills:

- **Number** – Counting back through zero using negative numbers and solving problems using fractions and rounding
- **Calculation** – Addition and subtraction (mental and written methods), Know multiplication and division facts up to 12×1 , Multiplication and division (mental and written)
- **Fractions, decimals and percentages** – Calculate fractions of an amount, writing tenths and hundredths as decimals and $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ as decimals, dividing a one or two digit number by 10 or 100.
- **Geometry** – Identifying 2D shapes, including quadrilaterals and triangles and plotting coordinates on a grid
- **Measures** – converting between units and comparing, reading and writing time in the 12 and 24hr clock, calculating the perimeters of shapes.

Science and Computing

We are excited to be following new schemes of work in both Science and Computing this term – we know that the children are going to enjoy the practical work that we will be doing in these subjects.

Our science this term will focus on light and sound.

In the first half of term, we will learn: To observe and name a variety of sources of sound. To notice that we hear with our ears. To identify how sounds are made, associating some of them with something vibrating. To

find patterns between the volume of a sound and the strength of the vibrations that produce it. To identify similarities and differences between sounds made in different ways.

In the second half of term, we will learn: To describe the reflections when light is reflected from surfaces. To record observations and make sense of them. To describe how shadows are formed. To design and carry out a fair test. To research and gather some key facts about how mirrors have been made over the centuries. The pupils will make a simple mirror and reflect on where it could be used.

We will begin this term's computing with a reminder of our e-safety rules, encouraging children to use technology and, in particular, the internet, safely. We will then progress to our first topic "We are presenters." The children will be encouraged to plan and film short videos which they will then edit using the "iMovie" software programme. Children will gain the skills required to shoot live video, add features such as a soundtrack and narration, and how to tell a story through video. In the second half of term, we will be following the topic "We are network engineers" where we will investigate how the internet works, including how computer networks function and how individual computers communicate across a network.

Geography

The pupils will focus on the physical geography of Africa, learning to use words such as "equator", "northern" and "southern hemisphere" and to identify the different time zones across the continent. The children will identify the main rivers and mountains of the continent and will identify some of the languages spoken across the continent. The children will also look at land use and types of settlement in Africa and will use maps to identify the areas studied on world maps and in atlases.

We would greatly appreciate any contributions that you feel able to make to our Africa topic. Perhaps your family are originally from the continent or you have visited one of the countries yourself. We welcome any photos, items of clothing, stories or artefacts that you would be willing to allow your child to share with the class – perhaps you might even like to pay us a visit yourself! Please let us know!

Design Technology

This term, we will be threading our needles and tackling textiles in Design and Technology. The children will be investigating, designing, making and evaluating their own "Storytellers' hats"! The pupils will have the chance to examine hats and to consider how they are made, as well as investigating different African fabrics. The children will practise their sewing skills, use patterns and then design their own hats.

We will help the children to make their ideas a reality (keep an eye out as we may need some volunteers to help with this!) and then you will be able to appreciate their efforts at our storytelling festival!

Music

The children will participate in weekly singing assemblies, which will focus on choral and rhythmic, as well as unison singing. This term, the children will once again have recorder lessons, with a focus on playing more complex melodies and reading simple notation.

French

In Year 3 children will be working on a French painting called "Les baigneurs d'Asnières" by George Seurat as a mean to introduce themselves to others, talk about their age, name, where they live. They will also spend this autumn term learning some very useful classroom vocabulary and revisit the weather.

In Year 4 children will be working on the story "Le loup qui ne voulait plus marcher", (the wolf who did not want to walk anymore), revisiting the weather and learning about travel and directions. They will also learn how to express their opinion, talking about likes and dislikes.

PE

In PE, children will continue to have swimming lessons at Guy's Hospital. The children will aim to meet the minimum goal of swimming across the pool. Once children have achieved this, they will be challenged to swim further and with improved technique. Our beginner swimmers will practise floating, kicking and using a range of strokes to move across the pool. As they become more confident, pupils will progress to improving their front crawl, breaststroke and backstroke skills.

This term, we are very excited to be having dance lessons with Delene, our dance teacher who we met through our work with the Rambert Dance company. Delene has family in Senegal and so she is excited to use our African theme as a basis for our dance this term. We will be able to try out a wide variety of dance styles and techniques, including solo and duet work, dancing in canon and following routines. The children love Delene's energetic teaching style and soon overcome any fears that they may have about dance which is a real physical workout!

PSHE/Citizenship

In Personal, Social and Health Education we will continue to discuss the rights of children and each week focus on an Article from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Health and Wellbeing is our topic in PSHE this term as we consider what is meant by a healthy lifestyle and emotional wellbeing. Key issues such as these will prompt discussion around how to manage risks, keep physically and emotionally safe and make informed choices about health and wellbeing, particularly understanding where to go to ask for help and support. We will also look at different types of families and how we grow and change.

This leads into the second half of term where we will be delivering a series of Sex and Relationship Education lessons. We found these lessons to be very successful last year. These important lessons will look at the physical similarities and differences between boys and girls, linking to the Science Curriculum. Equally importantly SRE lessons will explore ways to manage emotions within a range of positive and negative relationships. You will be sent more information about these lessons nearer the time so that you are aware of how we are introducing this topic to your children.

R.E

In R.E, children will be learning about the church as a place of worship. They will learn about the different areas of the church and the names for different parts of the place of worship. The children will have the exciting opportunity to visit a church. Please note, the children will not be asked to engage in an act of worship, they will simply be visiting the church to learn about another aspect of world religions.

Special events/ enrichment opportunities.

This term will see the return of our annual "Eisteddfod". This is a cultural celebration which has its origins in Wales, although we use it as an opportunity to celebrate our pupils' diverse heritage. As in previous years, children will be encouraged to come to school in cultural dress or wearing the colours of their country of origin's flag. During the day, we will celebrate children's talents in performing through singing, musical instrument, recitation and dancing competitions. The children will also be invited to participate in homework competitions in handwriting, story writing, art and science. We would encourage all parents to support their pupils so that they can take part in this exciting competition so that we can showcase all of the talent in Charles Dickens Primary!

Unfortunately, we won't be able to make a trip to Africa this term! However, we are looking forward to celebrating our learning in a story-telling festival at the end of term. You will be invited to share the children's learning from across the term and maybe even share some stories of your own.

All pupils in Years Three and Four will be invited to see live performances this term. Chuzzlewit class are going to see the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, while Copperfield class will be meeting a famous author at the National Portrait Gallery as part of our World Book Day event. The Year Four pupils are off to the pantomime which is performed by the Price Waterhouse Cooper staff every year and is always a lot of fun!

How parents can be involved in home learning

As ever, we encourage you to support your child's learning by helping your child to complete his or her home learning every week. It is essential that you continue to listen to him or her read every night and to engage with your child about the books that he or she brings home. As mentioned above, please keep an eye on your e mail and on letters home which will keep you up to date with dates for special events and trips that will take place during the term. We look forward to another successful term in Years Three and Four!