

## Robins Newsletter Spring 2018



### Our Topic

Loosely, our topic for this term is "Elephants". We will be looking at hot places and the animals that live here. There will be a big emphasis on elephants and their rescue. We will be using the documentary "Elephant Diaries" as a basis for our information and a catalyst for further exploration. The children will lead our learning through their enquiry but they will learn that to learn more they can look in books and on the internet with adults. The length of time spent on the topic will be entirely up to the children. Who knows, it may take us somewhere else unexpectedly. Running alongside this, children will be investigating how their world works through the use of literature. Much of this will take place outside so weather-proof clothing is an absolute must.

### Mathematics

As always is very practical and based on problem solving. We are working with numbers up to and beyond 20. The children learn the strategies that help them when they are stuck. Increasingly, children will begin to record their ideas by mark-making or taking photographs. If you are happy to help your children here are some things you can do:

- count everything: backwards, forwards, in twos, in tens, in fives
- use the language of addition and subtraction in everyday language but avoid "sums" as I cover this systematically when the time is right
- use "posh" words; we do!
- talk about the time and measuring every chance you get
- let them use coins in a shop

### Language

We place a great amount of value in language with hope this will under-pin their ability to create stories. Increasingly we see their desire to write captions which will turn into written stories when they choose to express themselves in such a form. Teaching the children to question, explore and play will be the main foci. If you are happy to help in this area here are some things you can do:

- model active listening
- use posh words (again!)
- talk about everything, ask questions especially ones that begin with "I wonder...", "What if..."
- limit screen time as much as possible



**Writing:** As mentioned above it is slowly coming along! The children are just beginning to write labels in their play and in more teacher-led activities. It has paid off spending the whole of the first term getting the sequence of motions right in letters before asking them to commit to paper. You can help by making sure your child's name, at least, is written with the correct formation.

**Phonics:** We're just about ready to embark on Phase 3 although will thoroughly consolidate Phase 2 first. A useful web site which we use is called Phonics Play. There are some free games which the children love and is great practice at home. The slower we go with phonics the faster they learn. Having given the time to secure the proper formation of letters Robins write with increasing confidence and fluency. They don't seem to feel rushed or pressurised – happy writers!

**Reading:** This is really coming along thanks to your support at home. We listen to your children read regularly. They are beginning to apply their phonic knowledge to reading text on a page. Remember to let your children use picture clues not just phonic ones in their books and that reading the same book is actually a helpful strategy for young readers. I sometimes read some pages for the children, modelling pointing at text when needed and other strategies. This is also advisable at home.

### **P.E.**

Thank you for sending in labelled kit. At the moment much of our P.E. is indoors but it will move outdoors for games. Please ensure you have a set of extras in your child's P.E. bag. This will be used for outdoor P.E. session and if they get wet. A spare pair of pants and socks is useful.

Dress for the weather:

Mittens, gloves, hats, warm coats, warm socks for wellies or warm snow boots – they all mean we can keep your children outdoors for longer spells.

### **Website**

I try to update this once a week or at the very least once every two weeks. I will try to keep you up-to date on day to day issues.

Many, many thanks for allowing your children to come in independently. They "own" their classroom now. They need very little help during the day.

Your continued support is highly valued by us. Equally if you have any concerns we would love to help; just let us know either at the door or phone the school to make an appointment.

*Mrs Marlene Taylor*