

Dear Parents,

We are very excited to be sending your child's exercise book home! As part of our SMART learning and following the Parents' Open Meeting, it was decided that we would send the books home every fortnight so you can have a really good look through!

As I am sure you will appreciate A LOT of work, care, time and love go into these books and they represent your child's progress throughout the year. The children are very proud of their work and these books show their learning journey. By sending their work home I hope you will gain a much clearer understanding of areas you can support and practise at home. The teachers all have new SMART stamps that look like this - so if you see this stamp, it would be great if you could do a bit of practise on this area at home as a way of encouraging your child to take initiative for their learning and practising areas they find tricky. At school we call this the 'Growth Mindset' which teaches children the importance of working a bit harder when we find things difficult because with practise we can all improve.

#### **What should you see in the books:**

***Marking codes:*** I have enclosed a copy of the school's marking codes to help you decipher the symbols used by teachers and children! The Reception and Key Stage One children also have a pictorial code which is a useful visual reminder for them.

***Children's comments and messages!*** The children are encouraged to write comments (WINKS) to evaluate their learning as well as give feedback to their peers on occasions. They will be able to explain this to you but it is a vital part of the feedback process and gives an insight into how they feel about their learning which is invaluable when marking and planning the next lessons.

***Teacher's comments*** These will be focused upon the learning intention for that lesson, or sequence of lessons. There should be a balance of praise and 'next steps' which lets your child know what they have been successful at and what could be improved next time. There won't always be a focus on spellings - so please don't expect to see every spelling corrected. This can really de-motivate children and stop them from making exciting word choices in their writing - we would much rather they

were adventurous and used 'wow' words even if the spelling isn't quite right. What you will see is corrections of spelling sthe children *should* know. The children do a 'book look' and are given time to re-do corrections in all of their subjects. So in maths this may be re-doing a calculation and in English this may involve re-writing a sentence, correcting a spelling or adding in missing punctuation. This allows your child time to embed their learning and go back to improve and make it even better!

***Neat handwriting*** we have worked hard to ensure children are writing their letters correctly and that they are the right size and sit correctly on the line (ascenders are tall letters that go up - such as l, k, t and descenders are long letters that sit below the line such as g and y. In maths we expect children to write neatly and use the squares in their books. If drawing shapes they are expected to use a ruler. I hope you will be impressed. If your child finds presenting their work neatly a bit of a challenge, please support us by praising their neat efforts.

As I said at the start, this is really exciting and not something that I have heard any other schools doing. By sending books home we hope that you will feel really involved and get a much clearer picture of the day to day learning that takes place. If you would like to write a positive comment in their books, either next to a particular piece of work or at the end of the latest piece then please do. If you have any concerns please come and talk to the teachers or myself.

We have purposefully sent the books home this week to enable you to share any questions at Parents' consultations next week.

Can I also remind you that the teachers are happy to have an 'open classroom' each afternoon after school, so if you would like to pop in and look through their work, see a piece of art work or have a look around the classroom then please do! You are always welcome.

As you will appreciate the exercise books are needed every day so please make sure that they come back in the following day. We will be sending books home every other Tuesday and will alternate between Maths and English.

Phew...there is a lot of information here so please pop in and ask questions if I have missed anything! Please enjoy having a look through their books!