REED FIRST SCHOOL

"Learning Together, Learning for Life"

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Jackson Class Termly Letter

Spring term 2026

Class Teachers:
Mrs Cottenden (Mondays, Tuesday, Fridays) & Mrs Arnott (Wednesdays and Thursdays)

Mrs Wittich teaches Jackson Class for P.E. on a Tuesday and Miss Wilson for Forest School on a Friday.

Dear Parents/Carers,

Happy New Year and welcome back to another exciting term of learning in Jackson Class! We are delighted to welcome three new children to our class this term and we hope that everybody settles in quickly.
You are welcome to speak to either of us with any questions or concerns, either in person or using the email addresses at the end of this letter.

Please find below some practical information and reminders, and some information about what your child will be learning this term.

School Values

This term we will be learning to demonstrate our school values of:

Independence by being increasingly responsible for our own belongings and selecting our own resources and making choices in our learning activities.
You can support your child with independence through packing their own school bag and carrying it themselves, getting their own clothes ready and getting dressed for school as independently as possible, including fastening their own shoes and coat. Please also model looking after belongings, e.g. putting gloves into coat pockets so that they don't get lost.

Respect by learning to follow the daily routines of the class and school, being kind, polite and helpful to one another, building positive relationships with each other through our learning and play, looking after our classroom and all the resources we have in school.
Encourage your child to show respect outside of school as well, with family and friends. Ensure that they take responsibility for looking after things and putting things away at home.

Aspiration by encouraging each other to take risks and challenge ourselves, trying out new activities and things we don't feel so confident about.
You can support your child by encouraging them to try new things and 'have a go' even if something is a bit tricky.
Resilience by persevering with our learning, trying new things and reflecting on our learning and choices.
Encourage your child to talk about things if they found something tricky or something

happened that made them feel sad or disappointed. At school we encourage the children to talk about how they are feeling as this really supports them to understand their own feelings, develop resilience and move forwards.

School uniform and Equipment

- Please ensure your child brings a **coat** to school every day as we will continue to use our outdoor area in almost any weather! We are, however, delighted to have our new shelter which will help us to make use of the outdoor area whatever the weather!
- Please name **EVERYTHING** (including footwear, hats, scarfs and gloves). This is especially important at this time of year when the children need to bring more things to school and lost gloves etc can cause a lot of upset! If we can quickly identify belongings, it makes the day run much more smoothly and things won't get lost.
- Any earrings should be small plain studs.
- Please make sure shoes, socks and tights and hair accessories are in line with our expected uniform. Long hair must be tied back.
- Please provide your child with a clear, **named water bottle** with a sports lid top every day. Bottles must only contain water. The children are able to access their water bottles in the classroom during the day and they can be refilled if needed. Jugs of water and cups are used in the hall at lunchtime.
- Please provide a pair of **named wellington boots** to be kept at school. These live in our welly shed and are used for playing in our outdoor area in wet weather and are also used for Forest School.
- **P.E.** lessons will be on a **Tuesday** with Mrs Wittich. Please ensure that your child's P.E. kit is in school for them to change into. They will bring it home again at the end of the day.
- **Forest School** is on a **Friday** with Miss Wilson. Your child should come to school wearing their school P.E. kit all day. They will change into their wellies for Forest School. Please ensure your child has a suitable coat for the weather.
- **School Bags:** Please ensure School Bags are in school **every day** and please check your child's bag and take out any letters or pictures every night.
    - **All children** need to bring their **home-school communication book** each day.
    - **Reception children** also need to bring their Little Wandle **reading book** each day.
    - If your child may have an occasional toilet accident, please ensure there is also a spare set of clothes in their bag.

Home Learning

Please check Google Classroom and the home-school communication book regularly for messages, updates on our learning in school, and home learning activities. We also love to see the learning that your child has been doing at home – you are very welcome to upload learning activities and achievements from home to Google Classroom.

Reading

- Children in Reception should be reading their Little Wandle reading book every day – please record this in the home-school communication book. There are prompt questions inside the cover of the book to support you with how to read with your child, including comprehension questions.
- Nursery and Reception children: please record when you have shared your child's library book with them, and any other books they have enjoyed at home. Reading to your child promotes a love of reading, teaches them how books are used and helps develop their vocabulary.

- Our normal class visit to the school library will be on **Wednesdays.** Please make sure library books are in school bags to return each Wednesday.

How and what do we learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Our planning is flexible and responsive to the children's interests and the direction they choose to take their own learning. We do not, therefore, follow set topics as such, but do have some focus themes which will guide us through the term. Learning in the EYFS takes place through a mixture of child-initiated learning, adult-led whole class teaching and adult-led small groups activities.

Our focus for the first couple of weeks will be around our Pantomime "Beaty and the Beast", supported by other stories with similar themes. We will then spend some time focussing on the world around us and the season of Winter, along with learning about some cultural festivals such as Shrove Tuesday, Chinese New Year, and later in the term, Easter. We will plan other focus areas as the term goes on, based on the children's interests, bringing in experiences and celebrations that are relevant to them. We use books and songs to support our learning each week.

Areas of Learning

Our learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is divided into seven areas, and all of our learning and activities cover at least one of these areas, but usually many areas all at once!

Personal, Social and Emotional Development: This underpins all of our learning in the EYFS. The children are encouraged to form positive relationships with each other, understand and manage different social situations and gain a greater understanding of feelings through play and stories. As we move through the year, there is a big emphasis on encouraging the children to grow in independence, at whatever stage they are at, learning new skills and being able to achieve more things for themselves.

In addition, the children take part in a weekly 'Jigsaw' lesson in line with our whole school teaching of PSHE. This term's Jigsaw pieces are: 'Dreams and Goals' and 'Healthy Me'. You will receive more detailed overviews of the content which will be taught prior to the units of work beginning.

Physical Development: Every Tuesday the children have a P.E. lesson with Mrs Wittich, which will focus this term on Gymnastics and Ball Skills.
Getting changed for P.E. and managing their own clothing is an important part of Physical Development in the Early Years.
In addition to this, the children have continual access to activities that develop their gross motor skills such as digging, climbing, building with our large loose parts (crates, planks etc) and riding trikes and scooters. Mark-making takes place inside and out, using pencils, pens, chalk and paintbrushes. Fine motor activities such as threading, rolling playdough and learning cutting skills are a regular part of our activities. Reception children will also be focussing on correct letter formation and Nursery children will be encouraged to learn to write their own name, and once secure, the names of family members and friends.

Communication and Language: This also underpins everything we do in Early Years. Whilst the children are engaging in child-initiated learning they are encouraged to talk with each other, and as adults we play alongside them and develop their language skills. We read stories and sing songs or rhymes every day.

Our “Star Stories” for the first half term are: “The Gruffalo” by Julia Donaldson, “Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see?” by Eric Carle, “Pink is for Boys” by Robb Pearlman. These are carefully selected high quality texts, and the children develop deep familiarity with these texts through frequent reading, using story props to retell the story, acting it out, and talking about the stories.

Literacy: Reception children will be moving onto Phase 3 of our Little Wandle Phonics programme, which introduces digraphs and trigraphs for sounds such as “ai” (rain, tail).

Nursery children continue a daily Phonics session, preparing them for learning to read and write. This includes listening games, identifying different sounds, listening to stories, learning nursery rhymes and songs. They have plenty of opportunities for mark-making.

Maths: We have an adult-led Maths activity each day, as well as embedding mathematical understanding in child-initiated learning throughout the day.

Reception children will be focussing on the following skills:

- Subitising numbers up to 6
- Composition of numbers, including number bonds to 5
- Composition of numbers bigger than 5 (understanding that 8 is 5 and 3 more)
- Identifying equal sets and beginning to understand doubles
- Comparison and ordering of numbers within 10

Nursery children will focus on:

- Subitising numbers to 3
- Accurate counting of up to 3 objects
- Recognising and matching numerals 1-3
- Sorting and comparing objects
- Exploring repeating patterns

Understanding the World: We will focus on observing the world around us, through the season of Winter, along with understanding customs and festivals that people celebrate, such as Shrove Tuesday, Chinese New Year and Easter.

Expressive Arts and Design: The children will learn songs and rhymes and have continual opportunities to express their own ideas and skills through construction play, small world play, role play in our home corner and mud kitchen. They have access to varied painting, drawing and craft/modelling resources, and musical instruments.

In February you will be invited to a Parent Consultation meeting to discuss your child’s learning and development with us. If you would like to talk to us at any other time or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us using the home-school communication book, speak to us at the end of the day, or email us.
Mrs Cottenden: j.cottenden@reed.herts.sch.uk
Mrs Arnott: s.arnott@reed.herts.sch.uk
(We will respond as quickly as possible, but please be aware that during the school day we are with your children, and emails will not ordinarily be responded to in the evening or at weekends.)
We look forward to another exciting term of learning with your children!

Mrs Cottenden and Mrs Arnott
(Jackson Class teachers)