



Autumn Term 2020

Dear Star Room Parents,

After an eventful and unusual academic year, I would like to welcome you to the Star Room, where our focus is very much on the wellbeing of the children, as well as preparing them for the all-important interviews and entrance exams. As mentioned in Caroline's email at the end of the summer term, we are trying to keep to 'business as usual' where possible, and I have included a copy of the timetable to show the variety of subjects we will be studying this term. I will again be the Star Room teacher alongside Luke, who will once again be the Star Room TA. We are both delighted to teach your children this year.

This is the final term before the children sit for exams. Consequently, the work is focused, and expectations are high. For the whole of the autumn term, the children will be sitting a weekly exam paper, alternating between maths and English. This will allow them to hone their exam techniques and become increasingly familiar with how to tackle some of the extremely challenging questions. We will go through the maths papers together as a class on Tuesdays and I will go through the English papers, along with providing written feedback, on Thursdays. We will also continue handwriting lessons and focused interview sessions to further support the children with the examination process.

In terms of communication with us, the Star Room have their first Parents' Day before the October half term to give you enough time to implement suggestions in preparation for the exam period. The form of this is yet to be finalised but will probably be undertaken via Teams. This replaces morning meetings throughout the term and the summer Parents' Day. Rachel will email parents with an allocated time slot and a confirmed date.

If we have any particular concerns regarding your child's progress, we will of course inform you immediately. Similarly, please feel free to write messages in your child's Reading Record if you have any questions or comments you wish to share about any area whatsoever. Please note that completed exam papers will be sent home each week and we will encourage the Star children to fill in a reflection form after each paper to highlight strengths and areas of improvement.

Please see below the topics we will be covering in the autumn term.

Science – Evolution and Inheritance

The children will be exploring genetics, adaptation, and inheritance in a variety of organisms. This will involve practical experiments with microscopes as well as theoretical knowledge.

History - Mesoamerica

We will be exploring several of the world's most fascinating civilisations, looking at their customs, culture and untimely demises.

Literacy – 6 Traits and Daily 5

We will be focusing on the “6 Traits of Writing” this term, in order to perfect each child’s story writing, using a variety of mentor texts as examples of excellent writing. In order to hone our reading skills for the exams, we will also be doing “Daily 5” literacy, which helps the children to engage critically with books they are reading. The second half of term will also focus on persuasive writing.

Spanish

An exciting addition to the Star Room timetable this year is Spanish with María José, which will take place on Wednesday mornings. As a Spanish speaker myself, I will reinforce their learning after each lesson.

Sports and PE

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we will endeavour to give the Star Room three sports sessions per week. We have booked Monday mornings for sports (so children should wear suitable clothing and footwear on Mondays) and, as you are already aware, Coram’s Fields will continue on Wednesday afternoons. When we can we also have a Friday session earmarked.

Your support is much appreciated and please do let us know if you have any questions.

Best wishes,
Michael and Luke