Settling in – Exploring Autumn

September 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

A very warm welcome to families new and old. We are so excited to have a new class of Cherries here at Chidham. The children have done so well completing their first week at school and had a fantastic, gentle start allowing them to explore our indoor and outdoor classrooms and become familiar with the adults in their classroom. Thank you to the grown-ups for smiling and being positive when saying goodbye to your children.

Topic and Early Years curriculum

This half term supports children with settling into the new rules and routines of school and encourages them to make new friends and feel confident in their class. It teaches children about being helpful, kind and thoughtful at home and at school. This half term we will also be teaching the children how they are unique and special, the importance of friendship and how people in their family, school and local community are important and can help them.

As the season changes we will look closely at the natural changes that happen during Autumn, including how the weather changes, British wildlife and why trees lose their leaves, as well as looking at how wild animals prepare for winter.

Phonics and reading

Here at Chidham we follow the 'Little Wandle – Letters and Sounds Revised'. It is a systematic, synthetic phonics programme to teach early reading and spelling. We will begin by exploring sounds, rhyme and rhythm then move onto individual letter sounds. We appreciate that supporting your child with reading may seem daunting so will send out more specific information in the coming weeks to help you support your child at home. Once the children are settled we will begin sending home a library book plus a Little Wandle book that will further supporting our phonics programme.

Dates for your diary:

Monday 28th September 2.40pm Phonics and Reading workshop

Wednesday 16th December pm - class trip to Hey! Christmas Tree at The Minerva Theatre

We will send more information on all the above.

Communication

We use 'Seesaw' to share the children's learning with you. This might be photos, little videos or informal messages from the Cherry staff. The 'Friday Flyer' is the first place to look for important information, messages from Mr Olway and dates of importance to note. Please chat to us or pass on quick messages before or after school. We are here to help whenever we can. Emails to use are jgardner@chidham.w-sussex.sch.uk and ejewitt@chidham.w-sussex.sch.uk but please be aware we often miss these during the school day as we are busy with the children. Anything urgent or regarding changes in pick-up etc should go to the office.

What can you do at home?

Always talk to your children about their time at school. They may not be able to tell you much, but this is normal! Use any pictures on Seesaw to help prompt a discussion. (please speak to us if you are having any difficulty setting up a Seesaw account) We will be focusing on our families and what makes us special. Look at photos of your family, go on a walk around your local area and talk about who might live near and what happens to the natural environment during autumn. ***A little request*…Please can your child bring in (or email) any photos you may have of them with family members so we can build an 'All about me' display in the classroom. Thank you.**

Check list for school

NAMED uniform, shoes and belongings

NAMED book bag – this helps to keep our library and reading books looking smart and allows your children to bring their work home. A little key ring or recognisable sticker really helps the children find their own

A spare set of underwear and socks to live in the bottom of bookbags

NAMED water bottle – please could we encourage water as we end up with a sticky mess and ants!

NAMED waterproof coat and wellies - these can stay at school if this is an easier option for you

Children need to come dressed in their PE kits on Tuesdays. Our first session for this will be on Tuesday 22nd September.

The Cherry Team