Celebrating Chinese New Year with Nova

Learning objective: To understand the traditions and significance of Chinese New Year and its cultural importance.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below in full sentences.

Nova the barn owl loves observing the night sky, and she is fascinated by how the Chinese calendar follows the phases of the moon. Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, marks the beginning of a new year based on this lunar cycle. It is a time for families to gather, clean their homes to sweep away bad luck, and welcome a fresh, prosperous start.

During the celebrations, the colour red is everywhere. People decorate their homes with red lanterns and give gifts of money in red envelopes, which are thought to bring good fortune. A highlight of the festival is the spectacular dragon dance. The long, colourful dragon, operated by many performers, weaves through the streets to the sound of drums and cymbals. This dance is believed to bring good luck and drive away negative energy. Each year is represented by one of twelve animals from the Chinese zodiac, such as the tiger, the rabbit, or the dragon. For many, it is a joyful period of reflection, delicious food, and spending precious time with loved ones.

Word bank: lunar · zodiac · tradition · prosperous · festivities · symbolise

1. According to the text, why do people clean their homes before the New Year begins? (2 marks) (2 marks)

2. What two items are mentioned as being red, and why is this colour significant? (2 marks) (2 marks)

3. Why might the dragon dance be described as a 'spectacular' event? (2 marks) (2 marks)

4. What does the text suggest about the importance of family during this festival? (2 marks) (2 marks)

5. If you were celebrating the Spring Festival, which tradition would you most enjoy and why? (3 marks) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a colourful scene of a dragon dance taking place in a busy street, including red lanterns hanging from buildings.

Extension challenge: Research the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. Find out which animal represents the year you were born and write a short paragraph explaining the personality traits associated with that animal.