

Wednesday 7th. February 2018

Dear Parents,

Bonjour !

Spring Half Term Newsletter

CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES:

This half term the children all the classes have been involved in a variety of enrichment activities.

Reception: The children in Reception have been finding out about day and night / light and dark. They have investigated some sources of light. They have discovered how day and night are different and what activities are done at these times.

They have also been finding out about nocturnal animals. They have learnt some songs about nocturnal animals. They have made nocturnal animal pictures and clay models.

They have been finding out all about Chinese New Year. They have learnt new songs, made lanterns, paper dragons and tasted Chinese food.



Year 1: Year 1 have had another busy half term! In English they have been learning all about 'Information Texts'; they are now space experts and have enjoyed learning all about the planets. They have produced some wonderful writing about Earth, as well as some of the other planets. Linking in with this they have also learned all about Neil Armstrong and the Apollo 11 mission of 1969, something which they really enjoyed. They even got to write their own newspaper reports to commemorate this important event!



In Maths they have been continuing to develop their calculation skills; they have also been working hard on doubling and halving, as well as learning by heart their numbers bonds to 10. Some of them have even progressed onto learning their number bonds to 20, which is great for this stage in the year.

Their problem-solving and reasoning skills are improving all the time and they continue to do well with their counting in 2s, 5s and 10s. The children have also enjoyed their recent practical maths sessions, involving measuring lengths and heights, as well as weighing.

The children are especially enjoying 'having a go' at their Hit the Button number challenge games on the iPad. They continue to learn new maths songs to help them with their counting skills and recall of facts. At the moment we are especially enjoying singing along to their new Months of the Year songs. A list of useful maths websites, games, songs, apps etc. will soon be coming home.

Their Science topic for this term is 'materials'. The children have enjoyed exploring the properties of a range of different materials and have been grouping objects by which material they are made from. In particular they have been focussing on the materials wood, metal, plastic, glass and fabric and had great fun completing a search of the school for these materials. After the half term break they will be using the traditional tale of 'The Three Little Pigs' as a focus for their materials work. The children will be working in small groups to build their own house for one of the little pigs, with the extra challenge of making sure it is able to survive the big bad wolf (hairdryer!) trying to blow it down!



In their Geography work they have continued their learning on 'The United Kingdom'; they have been learning about the points of a compass and have even made their own compasses in Art. Much of our other Art / Technology work has been space-related and we have made some lovely space sliders and chalk planets, as well as some super space junk models.

Many thanks to those of you who have helped support your child by not only reading with him / her at home, but also practising his / her spellings and playing his / her number games. We are really starting to see a difference with those children who have the extra input at home.

After a very hectic and busy half-term we are all looking forward to our half-term break!

Year 2: Our Science topic this half term has been 'Materials and their uses.' They have discussed the properties of materials, thought about their different uses and learned about some famous inventors including Charles Mackintosh, John Dunlop and John Macadam. Their topic resulted in an experiment to see 'Which material is the most waterproof?' and they were fascinated by their results.

In Geography they have been learning about the Scottish Island of Coll. This is the island that Mairi Hedderwick has based her Katie Morag stories on. They had great fun trying to locate Coll on a map and they have enjoyed looking at photographs of this beautiful remote place. Future work will involve looking at the human and physical features of Coll and how life on the island is very different to their own. The books of Mairi Hedderwick have been made into a series for CBeebies and past episodes can be viewed on the CBeebies iPlayer. Of course they are looking forward to dressing up as characters from the stories of Katie Morag on their own Katie Morag Day after half term.



In English lessons, they have read an array of dragon stories, including *The Paper Bag Princess* and *George and the Dragon*, as well as the more traditional tale of *St. George*. The children were very keen to write their own dragon descriptions and adventure stories which were full of action and excitement! The children have been working hard to practise their weekly spellings and they are looking forward to our 'Grand Spelling Test' on the last day of term, to see how many they have remembered.



In Maths, one of their topics has been 3D shape. The children tried really hard to learn the names of some new shapes and describe their properties. They had a fun time making 3D models of shapes using straws (very tricky!!), geoshapes and polydron. The children also learned how to make a 3D

shape from a net. The children amazed us with their perseverance and creativity in all of these practical activities.

Some of the children have already been awarded with a book prize and certificate for sustained effort with their reading at home. Well done! Please continue to read every night with your child and sign the reading journal. Every five reads earns a sticker on the reward bookmark.

Year 3: On Friday, 19th January, the Year 3 class from Whitegate End Primary School visited Buckstones for the morning, as part of their linking project. The children spent a fun morning getting to know each other better, through a range of activities, including a combined Art project to produce a display, which can be seen in the school hall. The rain held off just long enough for the children to be able to spend time together in the playground before members of staff from Sports Development led a session of team-building games, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. Their next meeting will be a visit to Whitegate End later in the year.

Their Geography topic this half term has been The Countries of the United Kingdom. The children have worked hard in groups, using books, i-pads, computers and information sheets to research one country of the UK in detail, in order to produce informative and eye-catching posters.



In English, the children have worked extremely hard to write some wonderful poems about weather and the months of the year, and some excellent fables based on ones they have read.

Maths work has focused on telling the time on an analogue clock, investigating 2D and 3D shapes and their properties, adding and subtracting amounts of money and reasoning about numbers. I have been pleased with the children's ability to work co-operatively to solve problems and to explain their reasoning.

This half term, Mr. Nield from Sports Development has been teaching Cricket to Year 3 on Wednesdays. The children have thoroughly enjoyed these sessions and are making very good progress with their skills.

In our RE topic on Creation this term, I have been impressed by the thoughtful discussions, and the imaginative and caring written work and drawings produced by the children. Well done, Year 3!

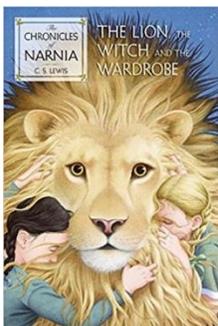


Year 4: Year 4 have been very busy since Christmas learning about States of Matter in their Science lessons. They have learnt all about how particles behave in solids, liquids and gases as well as what happens when they change from one state to the next. They have also had lots of fun conducting practical investigations during this topic, including one about the melting and freezing point of milk chocolate.



They have also been learning all about decimal numbers in Maths. In particular, the children have been working on converting measures from one unit to another. For example, working out that 2.50 metres is 250 centimetres. They have been doing this by multiplying and dividing the numbers by 10 and 100. This is quite a tricky skill and the Year 4s have all risen to the challenge!

In English, Year 4 have been learning about stories with fantasy settings. They began by reading part of the Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe. They then rewrote part of the story where Mr Tumnus and Lucy meet for the first time. The children managed to make their dialogue more descriptive and detailed than the original! After this, they watched a video called Something Fishy where a lady finds herself inside a washing machine with fish made from items of clothing. The children rewrote this story too and then went on to create their own fantasy setting inside of an everyday object.



In Computing, the children have begun to learn about simple formulae to use in order to calculate in spreadsheets. They have been using cell references and all four mathematical operations.

In PE, Year 4 have been building up their gymnastic skills, particularly focussing on making a smooth transition from a balance into a roll and then into a balance again at the end. Some of their routines have been very impressive and imaginative.

Year 5: Year 5 have been learning about Andy Warhol's Pop Art. They have been studying the famous work such as Marilyn Diptych (1962) and created their own versions. All of their artwork



looks fantastic!

In English, the children have learned and recited "The Visitor" poem by heart. Their choral speaking and performance has improved considerably. They have used ICT to create a PowerPoint slideshow of the poem with voice recordings and images. The children really enjoyed choosing animations to accompany their slideshow and they learnt many new skills.

In PE, the whole class have learned a full dance routine and they managed to perform it in excellent timing. They recorded their routine and watched it back in order to see how they could make it better next time. They looked brilliant!

Year 5 have been studying the Earth and Space. They have learnt lots of interesting facts about our solar system, particularly the Earth, Sun and Moon. They were impressed to discover a super blue blood moon occurred during our topic.



Year 6: Year 6 children have produced some beautiful images of landscapes using either chalk pastels or paints.

They have started our London topic: how Greater London is made up of many different boroughs.



They have looked at the importance of the Tower of London, its many different roles over the centuries from its construction to the present day and its many famous/infamous inhabitants.



The children have used their Computing skills to produce a leaflet about 'Healthy Living'. They have used information and explanation techniques to alert the reader to the importance of a balanced diet and exercise. They have organised their work into relevant sections and included diagrams and images to enhance their work.

As part of our ICT, the children have been learning how to code programs and set up a series of instructions. The children have also set up spreadsheets to find totals and averages of a set of results and shopping prices. They have used spreadsheets to calculate the perimeter and area of rectangles as well.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Handball: There was a Handball competition at Crompton House on 30th. January. Eight children competed against five other schools in the tournament and finished 1st. They played with an excellent team spirit and their behaviour was exemplary. The children who took part were Zach, Jenna, Ruby, Lara, Euan, Cameron, Ben and Freddie. Well done!



Football: We are well into the season; the team have been playing well on a Friday evening against other Oldham schools.

Dance: Mrs Kulczycki and her Junior Dance Group put on 2 lively and energetic performances for the children in school and for parents. The Infant dance group has now started.

Football: Mr John Platt runs football training for the children on a Tuesday night.

Football: Mr Nield runs football training for the children on a Wednesday night.

Gymnastic: Miss Martland runs a gymnastic club on a Monday.

Choir: The choir had a fantastic experience at the MEN, being part of the Young Voices concert. Well done to Mrs. Pearson and all the children for their great participation and performance.

Health and Fitness: Year 1 children are enjoying getting fit with Mrs. Joyce.

French: Year 2 and Miss Platt are enjoying learning French words and singing French songs.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Mrs. Leigh and the School Councillors went to visit the Mayor in his chambers this term.



GOVERNORS: On Wednesday 7th. February the Governing Body met. During this meeting the Governors:

- Received a report from myself outlining what we have been doing in school
- Reviewed the School Development Plan
- A number of HR policies were updated and accepted
- Mr. Beckley (chair of Governors) made a presentation about the changes in data protection and how that will affect us at Buckstones
- Shared the Government guidance on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Reported on the fire drill and lock in drill

Curriculum Committee met and reviewed the Analysing School Performance report. The committee discussed the attainment and progress in KS2, 1, Foundation Stage and the phonics tests. They also looked at the progress and attainment of different groups at the end of KS1 and 2. The groups discussed were boys, disadvantaged and SEN.

The committee reviewed and agreed to update the following policies:

- Educational Visits
- Foundation Stage
- Medicines

Pay and Finance Committee met and reviewed the bursars report and noted any differences within the cost centres.

The committee reviewed and agreed to update the following policies:

- Finance Policy,
- Scheme of Delegation
- Charging Policy
- Best Value Statement
- Purchasing Procedures
- Statement of Internal Control
- Financial Risk assessment.

The committee also reviewed their SFVS.

ATTENDANCE

For most children their attendance and punctuality are excellent and these children are getting the best opportunity to access an outstanding education. Research has shown that poor attendance can negatively affect children's academic progress.

In line with our policy, children whose attendance falls below 90% or whose persistent absence is giving their teacher a cause for concern their parents will be notified. If the situation does not improve then the matter would be referred to the School Attendance Officer. If after a letter has

been sent home their attendance hasn't improved then parents will be asked to provide medical evidence to support subsequent absences.

All absences should be reported to the school office before 9 o'clock either via the telephone or parentmail messages.

Any child who arrives after 9 o'clock should enter via the main entrance with their parent/carer. The parent/carer will be asked to sign the lateness register and provide an acceptable explanation; otherwise it will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

PARENTS EVENINGS

Parents Evenings this year are on Wednesday 21st. February and Thursday 22nd. February. Please make an appointment via parentmail.

SATs

Thank you to all the parents who attended the SATs meeting this half term. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the changes to the SATS and how to support the children in Year 2 and Year 6 so they are fully prepared for the tests in the Summer.

NON-UNIFORM DAY

The School Council have organised the non-uniform day on Friday 9th. February. The themes are Pancake Day and Valentines Day. Children may come into school on that day and wear their own clothes for a voluntary contribution of £1.

School reopens on Monday 19th. February.

Thank you for your continued support,

S.E.Healey