

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>. December 2020

Dear Parents,

Bonjour ! Joyeux Noël



### Christmas Newsletter

#### **CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES:**

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

**Reception:** Reception have had another extremely busy half term!

The topic for this half term has been 'Let's Celebrate!' The children have learnt about a range of different celebrations including bonfire night, Remembrance Day, Diwali, birthdays, weddings and of course, Christmas.

The children are progressing really well with their phonics skills. They have learned all of the 'phase 2' sounds and are now learning to blend these sounds together to read simple words. In addition, the children are doing really well with learning their key words at home, which will help to develop their reading skills even further.

In English lessons the children have been using their phonics skills to begin to write simple words and labels through our topic of celebrations. They have written birthday cards, Christmas lists and even their own wedding breakfast menus!

In Maths the children have been reading, writing, counting and ordering to 10, really focussing on number formation and orientation. They have also been working very hard on ordering objects by size and also looking at patterns in our environment.

The children have particularly impressed us in recent weeks with their hard work and enthusiasm for the wonderful nativity performance. In 'normal' circumstances the Buckstones nativity would be shared and performed between all of the infant classes, but this year it has been the sole responsibility of the Reception children and they have risen to the challenge brilliantly!



What a super half term Reception! ☺

**Year 1:** Year 1 have had another very busy half term!



In **English** they have enjoyed exploring stories with repeating patterns, focusing in particular on 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. They then read the story of 'Harvey Slumfenburger's Christmas Present' and wrote letters to Santa - first writing to Santa to ask for some presents for Harvey Slumfenburger, then writing their own Christmas wish lists for Santa.

As well as their place value and calculation work in **Maths**, the children have also been using their reasoning and investigation skills to help them to solve a variety of maths problems. They have really impressed us with their thinking skills! ☺ We have also been working on sequencing the days of the week and months of the year, as well as the concepts of yesterday, today and tomorrow. For the last two weeks we will be recognising and sorting 2d and 3d shapes in the environment and looking at their properties. After Christmas we will be sending home a little maths pack - please look out for it coming home.

In **Science** this half term we have been looking at animals. In particular, we have been looking at the features of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds and fish and comparing them. We have also been looking at what animals are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores and we were surprised that human beings are not only mammals but also omnivores!

Year 1's first **History** topic of the year was 'Toys'; they have had fun investigating old toys and making comparisons between old and new toys. Our **Design-Technology** topic 'A Home for Teddy' fitted in nicely with this. Many thanks to those of you who have taken the time to complete this topic at home - we've seen some fabulous photos and the children have told us how much they have enjoyed making their homes. ☺

Our **RE** work has involved us learning about Christianity - looking at parables and learning about Christmas and the links between the Christmas story and Christian practice.

Our **Computing** work this half term has involved looking at basic computer skills when we are working on computers, I pads and laptops and understanding in more depth what technology actually is both in school and the world that we live in.

Finally, we would like to say a big well done to all those children who have been reading regularly at home, completing their homework tasks and reading challenges, and learning their weekly spellings - great job, keep it up! 😊

The children really have worked their socks off this half-term and have taken great pride in their work when making their Christmas cards and calendars - we are sure that you will love them when the children bring them home. We are all now looking forward to Christmas and a well-deserved rest! 😊

**Year 2:** Year 2 have had a hardworking and enjoyable half-term!

As part of our topic on 'Famous Events' we studied the significance of Remembrance Day. The children made some poppies and wrote messages of thanks on them, then planted them in our garden. The children looked at photographs of the war memorial in Shaw and compared it to those around the country. They were very proud to show their Remembrance Day homework to the rest of the class and talk about relatives who have served our country in the armed forces. Thank you so



much for your support with this.

In English the class have been looking at writing letters. Our work has been based on a book called 'Dear Teacher' by Amy Husband in which a little boy writes to his teacher explaining why he will be late for school. The children had great fun writing letters with their own wonderful and funny reasons why they could not come to school!!!

In Maths, the children have been practising measuring in cm and solving problems involving length. They are just beginning to telling the time. The aim is to read to the quarter hour by Christmas! The children are also trying to understand durations of time from seconds and minutes to months and years. We will be moving on to telling the time to the nearest five minutes in the late Spring term, but any preparation you can do at home would be really useful and very much appreciated!!

Again this half term, the children have been working well to practise their weekly spellings and the children tried so hard in the 'Grand Spelling Test' last week. It is important that these spellings are continually revised and practised after the 'Grand Spelling Test', so that the children can use them confidently and accurately in their everyday writing.

Our Art topic has been based on the work of Helen Bradley, a local artist from Lees, who includes many mill scenes of Oldham in the early 1900's. The children have looked closely at the paintings of Helen Bradley and tried to create their own version of her work. They did an absolutely amazing job!! Well done Year 2.

In History, the children have learned what it was like to be a child in the Victorian Times. They have learned about childhood labour in the cotton mills and about what life in the Victorian home was like. They have used pictures and videos to find out about features including the range, the mangle, the gas lamp, the tin bathtub and the chamber pot!

Our Christmas Production was very different this year, but just as enjoyable. The children's enthusiasm and commitment was absolutely fantastic and we all had such fun recording it!!! We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!

Merry Christmas from all of Year 2.

**Year 3:** This half term, the children in Year 3 have enjoyed having some of their lessons taught by our trainee teacher, Miss Butterworth. She will be spending the next term in a different school, but I am delighted to say she will return to Year 3 at Buckstones for the Summer term. She has become a much valued member of the teaching team and we will all miss her next term.

The English work in Year 3 this term has centred on using dialogue. The children have learned the conventions of speech punctuation, writing their own entertaining versions of *Beware of Boys* by Tony Blundell. In addition, the children have read and performed a range of playscripts, and written playscripts based on the nursery rhymes *Jack and Jill* and *Mary Had A Little Lamb*.

Maths work has involved multiplication, division and fractions, leading to practical activities, reasoning and investigations. Miss Butterworth and I have been very impressed with the children's hard work and their growing ability to explain and demonstrate their mathematical thinking.

The History topic this half term has been *Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age*. The children have shown a great deal of interest in this topic. They have ordered a series of events on a timeline and used artefacts to make deductions about life in the past. They have used information sources, including ICT, to investigate life in the Neolithic village of Skara Brae, and they have created a fact-file about Stonehenge. They have looked at how inventions in the Bronze Age and the Iron Age changed life, comparing and contrasting homes, tools, weapons, pottery, jewellery and art.



In Art, the children have developed their painting skills, mixing and using a range of colours, implements and techniques to produce some excellent Stone Age cave paintings. Well done, Year 3!

**Year 4:** Year 4 have had another fantastic half term and have been very busy with their learning.

### **Maths**

In maths this half term, we have been learning about measurement and perimeter. We have been working with different units of measurement and finding the perimeter of squares, rectangles, and rectilinear shapes. Recently, we moved onto multiplication and division.

Well done to all the children who have been working hard at home on their multiplication booklets and accessing their TTRockStars account online. I have been very impressed with the quick recall that Year 4 have developed.

### **English**

This half term, we have been reading a book called Hetty Feather. As part of our writing cycle, we began by writing a recount of the first chapter, and then we wrote our setting description of the terrible foundling hospital. After that, Year 4 wrote their own stories, pretending to be children living in the foundling hospital. For this writing piece, we have been recapping and using different conjunctions and similes to up-level our work. Everyone has produced a super story and has worked very hard.



### **History**

In Year 4, we have been learning about the Industrial Revolution, especially looking at transportation and what it was like to be a child during this time. On Victorian Day, we all dressed up in period clothing and took part in activities that would have happened in a Victorian school. We began by using chalkboards to complete our handwriting, spelling, and arithmetic. Overall, we had a brilliant day, and only some were sent to the tent!

### Science

For this half term, we have been learning about the digestive system and the functions of teeth. Our main focus was on identifying and explaining how different digestive organs work and what they do for our bodies. For our science experience, we took some time looking at the effect that sugar can have on our teeth by putting eggs into different sugary drinks. When we opened them, Year 4 was shocked to see that the shells had been eroded and that they had also been stained by the drinks.



### Art and DT

This term we have been looking at the work of L.S Lowry and we have been studying his paintings closely. As a class, we discovered that Lowry only used certain colours in his paintings and that he created people called 'matchstalk' people'. Everyone in Year 4 then went on to create their own Lowry style drawing of mills and factories which linked in with our history topic. Everyone has created a wonderful drawing and Year 4 should be proud of what they have created. As part of our D&T project, Year 4 have created felt ornaments for Christmas, choosing a shape, sewing the pieces together, and stuffing them with fluff. Everyone persevered with their ornament and they have worked very hard on their Christmas ornaments.

Once again, well done, it has been fantastic working with you all for another half term. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!

**Year 5:** Year 5 have been very busy this half term creating Christmas biscuits for DT. They looked fabulous! In PE, they have been learning how to improve their hockey and handball skills. The children have really improved their attacking and defending strategies. I have been really impressed with them.

In their geography topic, they have been learning all about volcanoes and earthquakes. They have discovered what volcanoes are, what causes them and what the consequences are.



They have made accurate labelled diagrams and have completed accurate map work too. An exciting lesson was when they erupted their own volcano outside! This linked in nicely with our science topic as it was an irreversible change. The children have learned many interesting facts about volcanoes and earthquakes throughout this topic and have really enjoyed it.

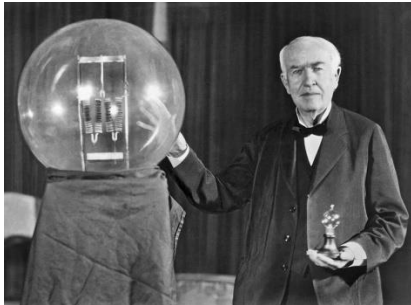
In RE, they have been learning about how Christians celebrate Christmas around the world. They have been learning about Advent, Christingles and other ways in which Christians celebrate. Some of the traditions are quite different to the way in which Christmas is celebrated in Britain.

Finally, they been very crafty creating their Christmas cards and calendars for 2020. They have enjoyed making them and really hope you like them!

**Year 6:** In Year 6 Literacy, we have worked on vivid imagery in poetry, biographical writing and a longer story based on a fantasy theme. In Numeracy, we have completed work on equivalent fractions and ordering fractions, multiplying and dividing by 10/100/1000, multiplication and division by U/O including decimals and properties of 2D and 3D shapes.

On the 23rd of October, Year 6 children went to Castleshaw to learn about different types of maps, keys and how to orientate a map. Using these skills the children were able to successfully navigate short courses and a longer course around the countryside and reservoir near the centre. We have built on these skills in the classroom by learning how to locate places by various means: latitude and longitude; compass directions; 4-figure and 6-figure coordinates.

In Science, Year 6 children have investigated a how different circuits work. They have constructed circuits from rectilinear diagrams, drawn rectilinear diagrams and have been able to trouble-shoot potential problems explaining why some circuits may not work. We have written a biography of Thomas Edison as he was influential in the subject areas of light and electricity.



Year 6 children have learned about how some religions and belief systems help people to build resilience when faced with difficulties in their lives.

In Art, we have looked at how to create different textures and impressions with paint in the context of landscapes.

Our Christmas art projects have included painting Christmas cards on the theme of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and using textiles to create calendars in the style of Bridget Riley.



**IMPORTANT:**  
**REPORTING POSITIVE CASES DURING THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD FROM**  
**SATURDAY 19th DECEMBER UNTIL THURSDAY 24th DECEMBER**

Please note, should your child or a member of your household test positive during the first week of the Christmas Holiday, between the dates of Sat 19th - Thurs 24th December please inform school IMMEDIATELY via e-mail on [info@buckstones.oldham.sch.uk](mailto:info@buckstones.oldham.sch.uk).

This is so I can assist Public Health with the necessary test and trace procedures.

In the email please state who has tested positive, their name, date of birth and postcode. The date on which the test was taken and the onset date of their illness if there are symptoms. Please also provide a contact telephone number.

I will check the office e-mail daily on these dates between 10am- 12pm.

**GOVERNORS:** I am pleased to announce Miss Liz Rudd has joined the Governing body as a parent Governor.

During the meeting the full Governors meeting:

- Received a report from head teacher outlining what we have been doing in school and an overview and analysis of end of year results.
- Summary of the School Development Plan
- Received a report on Pupil Premium spending
- Received a report on Sports premium spending
- School Fund Account - Annual Audited Summary
- Agreed the Remote learning
- Reported on the fire drill

During the Curriculum committee meeting the Governors agreed:

- School Development Plan
- Behaviour Policy - COVID-19 Addendum
- Prospectus

During the Pay and Finance committee meeting the Governors:



- Agreed the new budget

During the Premises/Health and Safety/Wellbeing/Health and Safety/Safeguarding committee meeting the Governors reviewed:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Working at Height Risk Assessment
- Lone Working Risk Assessment and Policy
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Update

**CHRISTMAS:** The children all enjoyed wearing their Christmas jumpers on Tuesday and they are looking forward to their Christmas parties this week.

### **FRIENDS OF BUCKSTONES:**

The Friends of Buckstones have done an amazing job this half term in these very difficult times arranging the Christmas card designs, the design a cake, the Elf raffle, the Christmas raffle with so many amazing prizes and the Christmas draw.

The Christmas cake design competition was very popular and the actual cake was amazing and just



like the design itself.

The raffles were drawn in assembly on Tuesday and there were lots of very happy prize winners.



The Elf has been won and has been named Twinkle Toes.

The first three prizes were the:

1. Apple Air Pods
2. Fitbit Inspire



3. Microscope and Telescope set

We don't yet have the final total for the fund raising this half term but it will be well over £1,500. Thank you to everyone who has supported these fund raising activities.

## **LEAVING**

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that Mr Patrick Brown will be leaving us at Christmas. Mr. Brown has worked at Buckstones for thirteen years as our Site Manager. Mr Brown will be retiring on Friday and we will all miss him but I am sure you will join me and the rest of the staff and Governors at Buckstones in wishing him well as he begins his retirement.

Mr Craig Wilkes has been appointed as the new Site Manager and he will be starting on Monday 14<sup>th</sup>. December.

Also sadly Miss Cromwell has left her role as Midday supervisor; I know the children in Reception will miss her kindness and patience. Miss. Ewbank has been appointed as the new Midday supervisor for Reception.

## **CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS:**

School will be closing on Friday 18<sup>th</sup>. December for 2 weeks, re-opening on Monday 4<sup>th</sup>. January.

Thank you for your continued support in these very difficult and unusual times. As we break up for Christmas I would just like to say how proud I am of all the children, it is not easy for anyone at the moment but they have shown great resilience and accepted the changes that have had to be made. They all deserve a lovely Christmas.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sarah Healey