

Thursday 17th. February 2022

Dear Parents,

Bonjour !

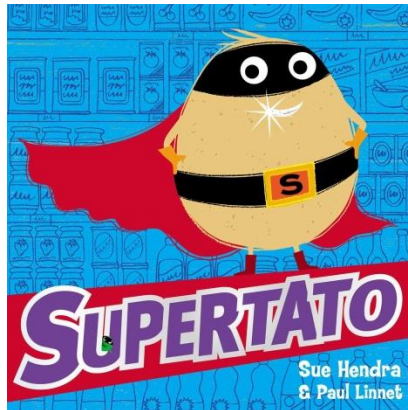
Spring Half Term Newsletter

CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES:

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

Reception: What another busy half term it's been for Reception!

The topic for this half term has been 'Superheroes'. The children started the topic by looking at some of the traditional 'comic book' superheroes. They also loved reading the story of 'Supertato' (by Sue Hendra and Paul Linnet) - and used this story as a basis for making their own fruit and



vegetable superheroes afterwards!

More recently the class have been learning about 'real-life' superheroes and particularly enjoyed their visits from a police officer, a midwife and a fire-fighter. Having these opportunities to meet real superheroes really did give so much more meaning to their learning and the children asked each of the visitors some very interesting questions!

As well as learning about superheroes the children have also learned about the festival of the Chinese/lunar New Year. They fully embraced this topic by making their own dancing dragons, designing beautiful Chinese fans, trying out some traditional dragon dancing and their favourite part... tasting some delicious Chinese foods!



The children are progressing really well with their phonics skills. They are now learning the stage 3 phonemes and are blending and segmenting simple words brilliantly. They have been practising the correct letter formation to go with each of the phonemes that they learn and are also practising the correct formation of the letters in their own names every single morning when they arrive in school.

In Maths, the children have been comparing numbers within 10, using the terms 'more than', 'less than' and 'equal to'. They have also been using lots of different resources to create their own repeating patterns, which they have really enjoyed doing.

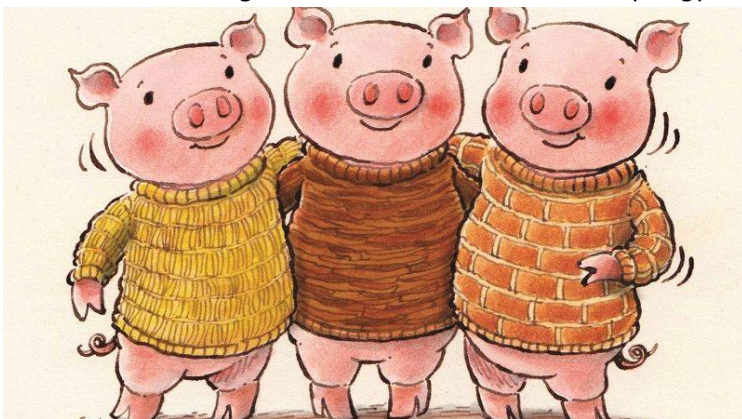
During the last few weeks the children have welcomed Mrs. Allen to the Reception team. Mrs. Allen is an experienced forest school leader and the children have all been enjoying their forest sessions with her on Friday afternoons.

To finish the Superheroes topic, the children finished with a special superhero-themed day, where they enjoyed coming to school in fancy dress and spending the day doing all things 'superhero'! They were particularly happy to be joined by their year 6 buddies as part of the special day too.

What a SUPER way to finish a SUPER half term!

Year 1: Year 1 have had another busy half term! In phonics the children have now moved onto Level 5 and they continue to make good use of their phonics skills for both reading and writing. It is lovely to see their independence grow as they gain confidence in their phonics skills.

In their other English lessons, they continue to work on their SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar) skills, focusing in particular on using capital letters, full stops, exclamation marks and question marks correctly. They have been learning how to write letters. They started off by looking at Traditional Tales (in particular The Three Little Pigs) and wrote some wonderful apology letters



from the wolf to the 3 little pigs.

The children have also really enjoyed their 'Great Fire of London' history topic. They have been keen to find out what happened back in 1666 and have done a wonderful job writing their letters to

King Charles II as well as their own eyewitness accounts, written as though they were the children



of Samuel Pepys.

In maths they have been continuing to develop their calculation skills; they have also been working hard on recognising and comparing numbers within 50, as well as learning by heart their numbers bonds to 10. They continue to learn new maths songs to help them with their counting skills and recall of key number facts.

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 position and direction linked to algorithms.

Their latest 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. We even conducted an experiment to see what material was the best for keeping Ted dry in the rain. That was good fun!

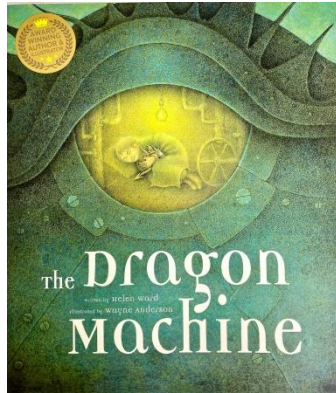
In art the children have been developing their printing skills and have impressed us with their imagination and ideas! Recently, they had the most wonderful morning at Gallery Oldham, taking part in a Pattern and Print workshop. They had great fun exploring the galleries, investigating patterns and then making their own printed masterpieces. They had such a lovely time and we were so proud of their manners and behaviour.

Many thanks again to those of you who work with your child on homework tasks - supporting your child by reading with him / her at home, but also practising spellings, playing number games and completing general homework tasks. The additional input is much appreciated and we are really starting to see a difference with those children who have the regular extra input at home.

After a very hectic half-term the children are now looking forward to our half-term break!

Year 2: In English lessons, Year 2 have read a wide selection of dragon stories, including The Paper Bag Princess and The Dragon Machine, as well as the more traditional legend of St. George and the Dragon. A big thank you to all the children who let us borrow dragon stories from home. The

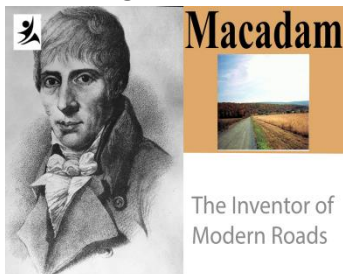
children were very keen to write their own dragon descriptions and adventure stories which were



full of action and excitement!

A lot of our maths work this half term has been based on multiplication. The 2, 5 and 10 times tables have now been introduced and the children are busy learning the facts by heart. Please continue to practise with them at home as it is so important that they are secure with them by the end of the year. The children have also been learning to tell the time to the quarter of the hour, as well as looking at intervals of time including hours, minutes and seconds.

Our Science topic this half term has been 'Materials and their uses.' The children have discussed the properties of materials, learned about their different uses and found out about some famous inventors including John Macadam who is famous for his modernisation of the road system in



Britain.

Many wonderful pieces of upcycling were brought in for science homework. The children were so proud of their own wonderful inventions and really enjoyed looking at the ideas of their friends. Many of the upcycled products have been played with during Golden Time. There were some fabulous ideas ranging from jewellery boxes to piggy banks, stationery holders to bird feeders as well as an array of games, toys and ornaments!!! Thank you so much for your support here.

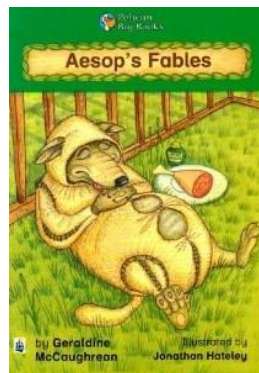
In Geography the children have been learning about the Scottish Island of Coll. This is the island that Mairi Hedderwick has based her Katie Morag stories on. Year 2 had great fun trying to locate Coll on a map and have enjoyed looking at photographs of this beautiful, remote place. Future work will continue looking at the human and physical features of Coll and how life on the island is very different to our own. Of course we are looking forward to dressing up as characters from the stories of Katie Morag on our own Katie Morag Day after half term!! (Letters given out this week)

Some of our 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. Also we love seeing your photographs of the children taking part in the Spring Reading Challenge.

Year 3: Year 3's Geography topic this half term has been The Countries of the United Kingdom. The children have been developing their map reading skills and using atlases to name and locate towns, cities, counties, rivers, mountains and islands around the UK. They have used an eight point compass to describe the direction of travel between cities. They have considered the changing effects of immigration to this country throughout its history and have compared their own life to life here in the past.



In English, following a study of some of Aesop's fables, the children have planned and written some excellent fables based on ones they have read. In addition, they have worked extremely hard to analyse the structure of particular poems and collect lots of ideas, in order to write some wonderful poems of their own about the months of the year.



In Maths, Year 3 have been interpreting and constructing bar charts and pictograms. They have collected a range of real-life data, using tally charts and frequency tables to help analyse their statistics. The children have learnt the standard methods of addition and subtraction, using 3-digit numbers and they have applied these to a range of problem solving and reasoning activities,

including money. I have been pleased with the children's ability to work co-operatively to solve problems and to explain their reasoning both orally and in writing. The children have also thoroughly enjoyed working in pairs to solve the Buckstones Big Maths reasoning challenges. They have shown themselves to be co-operative, resilient learners, trying different approaches and methods to find solutions. Well done, Year 3!

In Computing, the children have been introduced to computer databases and have used these to sort information in different ways in order to answer a variety of questions. They have used the database to analyse children's preferences for food and drink and draw bar charts to help them plan for a party.

The children have enjoyed learning about Pentatonic Scales in Music. They have listened to and played some pentatonic melodies on chime bars, and composed simple melodies of their own which they have taught to their classmates.

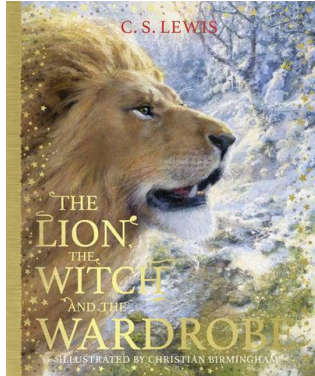


In the RE topic 'Why do people pray?' I have been impressed by the thoughtful discussions, and the imaginative and caring written work and drawings produced by the children. Well done!

Finally, in PE, the children have enjoyed learning Tennis skills this half term with Mr. Thompson from Oldham Sports Development. He has been very impressed with the progress they have made in such a short time. Well done, Year 3!

Year 4: This half term, Year 4 have been really busy! They have been learning about division and multiplication and have made excellent progress with learning their times tables. The children have done lots of work using place value counters to help them to visualise what is happening when we use the standard methods for division and multiplication. They have also been solving problems with multiplication and division and representing calculations in different ways such as bar models and arrays.

In English, Year 4 have been writing stories which take place in a fantasy world. We read part of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and watched a short film called *Something Fishy*. The children are now working on their own play scripts which tell a story where the main character goes through an ordinary object and ends up in a fantasy world. They have had some brilliant ideas!



We have also been practising adding *tion/sion* or *cian* as suffixes as well as recapping our knowledge of homophones. This has proved really tricky but all the children have been giving it their best shot and are feeling

Our Science topic this half term has been *States of Matter*. The children got to make cornflake cakes and see the chocolate change state from solid to liquid and then back to solid. They are all agreed that this was one of the tastiest science experiments ever.

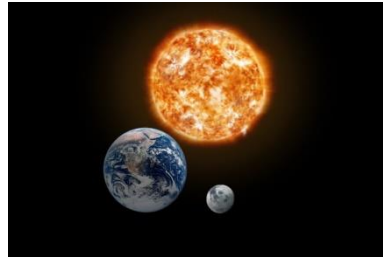
We have also started our History topic which is 'How did transport change in Manchester during the Industrial Revolution?' The children have produced some lovely homework including their research about the Manchester Ship Canal. We have also been placing the Industrial Revolution on a timeline to see where it fits with the other History topics the children have studied.



Year 5: Year 5 have been creating 3D models in computing. They have designed houses and cars, both with lots of intricate detail. These have been printed and constructed into 3D models and they look great!

In PE, Year 5 have been working hard to create a volcano dance routine with different pairs and groupings within the class. They imagined that they were magma deep down under the Earth's crust, which eventually erupted and flowed down the volcano. After curling and flowing around the volcano, they slowed down and eventually cooled to form a solid structure. The final routine looked fantastic! They have also been learning more gymnastics with Mr Rawlinson. Mr Rawlinson is very impressed with how much they have improved, especially their balance.

In science, they been studying Earth and Space. They have learnt lots of interesting facts about our solar system, particularly the Earth, Sun and Moon. They have really enjoyed memorising and sharing interesting facts about the planets with one another, and especially enjoyed recalling the



order of the planets with silly rhymes.

In PSHE they have been learning about Money Matters and how to look after their money. They enjoyed finding out about financial risk and learnt a few handy lessons regarding investment by playing a game.

In History, they have started learning about an Early Islamic Civilisation: Baghdad. They have enjoyed finding out about how the location of Baghdad helped it to develop into the Round City and



why it was so successful in the Golden Age.

Year 6: In Science, Year 6 children have revised the main groupings of vertebrates and invertebrates giving their key features and have given examples of each. They have also used identification keys to identify different insects and plants. They have tried to develop their own questions and identification keys of their own.

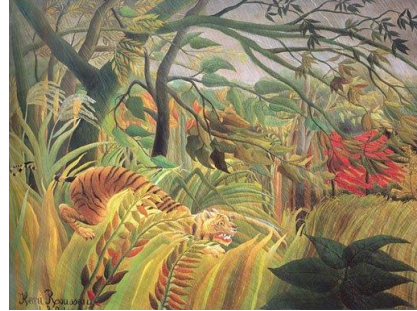
Year 6 children have been developing their understanding of block coding in computing. They have been using numbers to set or change an object's properties for example, the object's co-ordinate position on the screen, the direction that it faces and/or the speed at which it moves.

The children have been studying the Amazon rainforest in geography. They have found out about what rainforests are, where they are found, their importance and how the rainforests are being



destroyed.

Our Art is linked to our Geography topic based on the rainforests and focuses on the work of Henri Rousseau. They have researched the artist and looked at several of his paintings. This will feed



into creating a collage on the theme of the jungle/rainforest.

In R.E. we have been looking at inspirational people and what makes someone an inspiration to others.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Football: Mr Thompson runs football training for the children on a Thursday night for Years 3 and 4.

Multi-skills: Mr Rawlinson runs a multi-skills club for Years 5 and 6 on a Monday night.

Art Club: Year 1 children are enjoying creating wonderful pieces of art with Mrs. Joyce and Miss Platt.

GOVERNORS: On Wednesday 2nd. 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
- Reviewed our safeguarding procedures and training
- Reported on the fire drill
- Reviewed the Pupil premium strategy statement 2020-2023

Curriculum Committee looked at and discussed standards and reviewed the Sports Premium strategy.

The committee also reviewed and agreed to update the following policies:

- Writing Policy
- Maths. Policy
- Display Policy

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:

- Financial Skills Matrix
- Finance Policy
- Charging Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Financial Risk Assessment
- Best Value Statement

The committee also reviewed their SFVS and their Benchmarking Report Card.

FRIENDS OF BUCKSTONES

The money raised so far this year has been put towards the new Reading books we have bought for school.



PARENTS EVENINGS

Parents Evenings this year are on Tuesday 1st. March and Thursday 3rd. March. Please make an appointment via parentmail.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Due to the rising popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, social media websites are being used increasingly to air grievances and complaints about schools, staff members and individuals - adults and children alike.

Sadly, Buckstones Primary School is no different and I have been made aware of postings about school matters that are taking place on these social media sites. Quite often this is the first time school are made aware of a concern, issue or complaint, as it has not been raised with any staff members or me in school.

From a school's perspective the use of social media websites being used in this way is totally inappropriate, unhelpful and definitely not in the best interests of the children or whole school community and issues most certainly cannot, nor will not be resolved through this approach.

With the above in mind we politely request that any concerns you may have regarding school matters are made through the appropriate channels, by speaking to the Class Teacher and/or the Head teacher.

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 18th. February. The theme is Rainbow colours. Children may come into school on that day wearing their own clothes for a voluntary contribution of £1.

School reopens on Monday 28th. February.

Thank you for your continued support,

S.E.Healey