

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>. December 2023

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 learnt all of the 'Level 2' sounds and are now practising blending these phonemes together to read simple words. In addition, the children are making good progress with 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 labels and lists 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 and ordering numbers to 10, really focussing on number formation and orientation. They have also been working very hard on ordering objects by their size as well as learning about 2D shapes and coins.



The children have had a really busy last few weeks in the run up to Christmas. They performed brilliantly in 'Our First Nativity', which was an amazing and invaluable experience for all of the children; one which covered so many key skills and developed their confidence and team-work enormously. They also had a great time on their first school trip to the pantomime and at the Christmas fair.

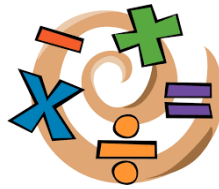


What a super half term Reception, well done! ☺

**Year 1:** Year 1 have had another very busy half term ☺ This last couple of weeks in particular have been very hectic, to say the least! The children have been working hard to learn their lines and songs for their Christmas show; we hope you enjoyed it ☺ The trip to the pantomime has also been a highlight; it was just what was needed at the end of a long, hard term.



In **English** the children have enjoyed exploring stories with repeating patterns, focusing in particular on 'The Gruffalo' and 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. They have also read the story of 'Harvey Slumfenburger's Christmas Present', a story all about a little boy whose present gets left behind in Santa's sack. The children have written some thoughtful Christmas lists suggesting what they might get Harvey for Christmas.



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! 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, they have been looking at the features of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds and fish and comparing them. They 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 has been 'Toys'; they have had fun investigating old toys and making comparisons between old and new toys. This has linked nicely with their first **Design-Technology** topic of the year - 'A Home for Teddy'. The children got to show off their designing, making and teamwork skills when working together to build homes for some of their class teddies.



Their **Computing** work this half term has involved looking at key skills when working on computers, iPads and laptops and understanding in more depth what technology actually is both in school and the world that we live in. They have also produced some gorgeous Gruffalos and teddy bears on the iPad too using Purple Mash.



Year 1's **RE** work has involved them learning about Christianity - looking at parables and learning about Christmas and the links between the Christmas story and Christian practice.



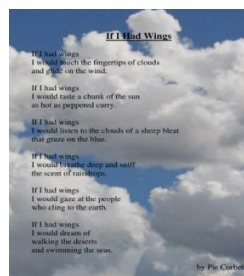
Finally, we would like to say a big well done to all those children who have been reading regularly at home, completing their homework tasks and reading challenges, and learning their weekly spellings - what a great job, keep it up! 😊

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:** In Maths the children have been focusing on adding and subtracting 2-digit numbers using a range of approaches. They felt very grown up when column addition and subtraction was introduced. The children have also been counting in multiples of 2p, 5p and 10p, finding totals of coins and ways to make different amounts.

In English, the children have been learning how to write an excuse letter explaining why they were late for school. The book we have based our letter writing on, is 'Dear Teacher' by Amy Husband, in which a little boy writes letters to his teachers with excuses as to why he will be late for school. The children found this hilarious and came up with some super excuses in their own letters as to why they were going to be late for school!

Year 2 have also been reading lots of repetitive poems, and following the structure of this style of poetry to write their own poems. The children adored writing their own poem based on Kit Wright's 'Magic Box'. They also wrote their own version of 'If I had Wings' by Pie Corbett.



The History topic for this term has been all about the significance of 'Remembrance Day'. Year 2 made poppies and wrote messages of thanks on them, and we placed them in the war memorial gardens in Shaw. I was so proud of the children and the respect they showed whilst we were there.

Our Art topic this term has been based on the work of Helen Bradley, a local artist from Lees, who includes many mill scenes from the 1900's. The children have been looking closely at the paintings and imagining what it would be like to be inside the painting. They have created their own version of her work using paints and pastels for their final piece 'an industrial landscape'.



Well done Year 2 for all of your hard work this half term and for being such superstars in our Christmas Show! Have a lovely Christmas break!

**Year 3:** Year 3's **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 a range of information sources 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 daily life, comparing 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!

The **English** work this term has centred on using dialogue. The children worked extremely hard to use the conventions of speech punctuation to write their own entertaining versions of Beware of Boys by Tony Blundell. In addition, the children have read and performed a range of playscripts, and enjoyed writing their own playscript based on a familiar nursery rhyme.

In **Maths**, the children have worked extremely hard to learn the 3 and 4 times tables. They have applied their skills to a range of multiplication and division tasks and have learnt strategies for doubling and halving 2-digit numbers. They have learnt how to use efficient strategies to add and subtract mentally. They have identified unit and non-unit fractions of shapes and have compared and ordered different fractions, using a fraction wall. In addition, they have measured lines and objects, using centimetres and millimetres and estimated and measured capacity using litres and millilitres.

The **Science** topic has been Forces and Magnets. The children carried out a series of experiments to investigate the effects of friction on objects moving across different surfaces; which materials are attracted to magnets and which are not; how magnets attract and repel; and how to compare the strength of different magnets. They worked co-operatively and sensibly in pairs throughout these lessons and worked hard to learn and use new scientific vocabulary.

The children have continued to work enthusiastically in **French** lessons, learning how to hold a short conversation in French. They have learnt some colours and numbers to 12 and enjoyed listening to and joining in with some French songs.

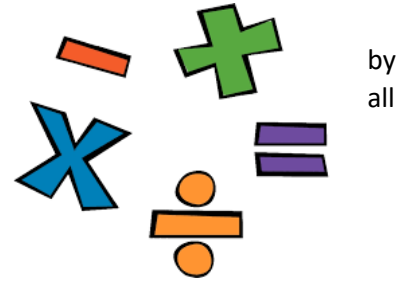
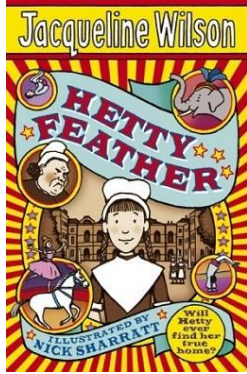
As part of their **RE** topic, Jewish Festivals and Family Life, the children had a very enjoyable afternoon visiting the Manchester Jewish Museum for their workshop: Festivals and Feasts. In addition to visiting the synagogue and the museum itself, the children had lots of fun kneading and plaiting their own Challah bread, playing traditional games and learning all about the foods associated with Jewish festivals.



**Year 4:** We have had another great term in Year 4 – well done!

In Maths, we have been developing our understanding of written methods for addition, subtraction and multiplication, and have begun to explore short division. We have also been looking at fractions and decimals, weights and measure and our rapid recall of times table facts through the use of TT Rockstars and times table challenges.

In English, we have been exploring stories based in historical settings, and have written diary entries based on Hetty Feather Jacqueline Wilson. We have also been writing information texts about our own imaginary creatures, looking at how we can use subheadings to structure our non-fiction writing and use technical language.

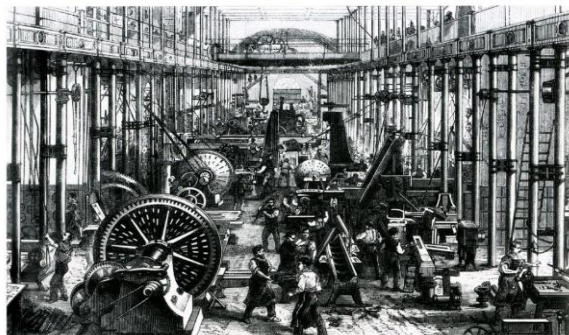


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Our Science topic this half term has been Animals, including humans. As part of this, we have studied the human digestive system, human and animal teeth and food chains. The children enjoyed taking part in several demonstrations and experiments, including observing the effect of sugary drinks on teeth (using an eggshell substitute!) They have learnt the role of each part of the digestive system, the function of different types of teeth and how different animal diets determine the type of teeth they have.



In history, we have been studying the Industrial Revolution and how transport changed over this period. The pupils have explored the use of ships, canals and railways to transport goods from across the world to Manchester to be used in factories. They have also looked at the darker side of the Industrial Revolution by considering how the slave trade was linked to the cotton industry.



We began our first Design and Technology topic this term – the pupils have been designing and creating their own stuffed hanging Christmas decorations. They have made patterns, selected appropriate materials and explored different stitches in order to create some incredible final pieces! We are sure they will look amazing on Christmas trees at home.

Outdoor P.E has been taken by Oldham Sports Development, who have been teaching the children how to play a range of invasion games with an emphasis on sending and receiving using equipment. The children have enjoyed exploring new games such as hockey.



We also took part in an amazing visit to a Hindu Mandir. The children were incredibly engaged and respectful and enjoyed being able to experience how other faiths celebrate their religion.

In the run up to Christmas, the children had a fantastic time attending the pantomime of Jack and the Beanstalk at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. They have enjoyed time at the Christmas Fair, and we were also treated to a performance of the Reception Nativity and Year 1 and 2's 'Christmas Extravaganza!'

Merry Christmas everyone, and Happy New Year!





## Year 5:



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. The children have learnt many interesting facts about volcanoes and earthquakes throughout this topic and have really enjoyed it. We obviously loved building our own volcanoes the most, and witnessed some exciting eruptions using

bicarbonate of soda and white vinegar to cause a chemical reaction.

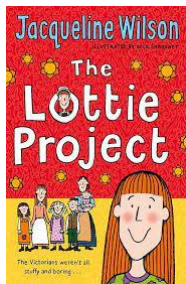
In DT, they have learnt about seasonality, and where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed. They learnt how to prepare and cook potato cakes in their food sessions and most enjoyed their finished products. All children took part in their cooking session sensibly to create their potato cake design.



In PSHE, they have been learning about how money is used in the wider world. They have discussed financial risk, the value of products, ethical spending and budgeting.

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.

In PE, they have mainly worked on developing their hockey skills. They have focused on passing, dribbling and shooting, and have all taken part competitive games to showcase their skills.



We have read *The Lottie Project* as our class text this half term and have completed different activities about the characters and plot. The children enjoyed reading aloud to the class and have developed their confidence and fluency as a result.

Finally, they been very crafty creating their Christmas cards and calendars for 2023. They have enjoyed making them and really hope you like them.

**Year 6:** Our geography topic this term centred around map reading. The children were able to work with a range of different maps and practised reading latitude/longitude and 4 & 6-figure grid coordinates. PE was linked to geography as the children practised their orienteering skills around the school grounds.

In Computing, children have been learning how to enter data and formulae into spreadsheets and seeing the effect changing data would have on the end results.

In Science, Year 6 children have investigated how we see in our light topic. They have constructed a light tunnel to rank different materials according to how well they reflect light.

Our RE topic has focused on Christmas in the *Gospels*. They have looked at extracts from Matthew and Luke making comparisons about the different aspects covered in each. They have also looked at sacred and secular traditions at this time.



The children have completed beautiful calendars in D&T (textiles) and Christmas cards linked to their RE topic - the theme of which was 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'.



### **GOVERNORS:**

I am pleased to welcome Helen Singleton back onto our *Governing Body*. Mrs Singleton has been appointed by the Local Authority as a co-opted *Governor*. Mr John Starkey has also joined our *Governing Body*. Mr Starkey has also been appointed as a parent *Governor*.

During the meeting the *Governors*:

- Received a report outlining what we have been doing in school which included a review of recent standards and achievements
- Reviewed the School Development Plan
- Received a report from our School Improvement Partner
- Pupil Premium report
- Sports Premium report
- Update on KCSiE

- Received reports from committees
- Received reports from Governors who reviewed Maths, Art and RE
- School dates 2024-2025
- Reported on the fire drill

**CHRISTMAS:** The children all enjoyed wearing their Christmas jumper last Tuesday and enjoyed their Christmas dinner.

The Reception Nativity and the Year 1 and 2 Christmas Sing Along were both a great success, thank you to everyone who came to watch it was lovely to have an audience.

Yesterday the whole school went to watch Jack and the Beanstalk at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Thank you to the Friends of Buckstones who paid for the tickets.

### **FRIENDS OF BUCKSTONES:**

The Friends of Buckstones have done an amazing job this half term arranging the Christmas card designs, guess the weight of a cake, the elf raffle, the Christmas raffle with so many amazing prizes and the Christmas Fair.

The raffle was drawn in assembly on Wednesday and there were lots of very happy prize winners.

The elf has been won and has been named Rudolph.

The first three prizes were:

1. An Apple watch



2. A voucher for the Park Inn
3. Perfume

The giant cracker has also been won.



We don't yet have the final total for the fund raising this half term but it will be around £2,000. The money raised by the Friends of Buckstones is being used to repair the outdoor play equipment and it pays for the tickets to watch the panto. We are also hoping it may buy some new computing equipment in the new year.

Thank you to everyone who has supported these fund-raising activities.

## **SCHOOL STREET**

We are continuing with our School Street pilot in the new year. It has been a success thanks to you as parents cooperating and parking your cars further away or walking to school. The children in school have commented how much safer they feel walking into school, which is wonderful to hear. Please continue to support us and leave Delamere Avenue car free.

## **HAND HYGIENE**

As we go into winter, common illnesses can keep children and teenagers away from their classmates and studies. One of the best things we can all do to avoid illness is to practice good hand hygiene. Good hand hygiene helps stop infections from spreading, which means less disrupted learning time. Teach your child to wash hands properly for 20 seconds and stay away from others when sick. The e-bug resources for all ages can help you to explain and discuss hygiene habits - and why they are important - to your child or teenager. To avoid catching bugs or passing it on to others wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water. This is most important following an episode of diarrhoea or vomiting, after using the toilet, before eating or preparing food, after changing nappies, as well as cleaning up vomit or diarrhoea. Alcohol-based hand sanitisers are not effective against some infections. Anyone who has diarrhoea and/or vomiting should stay at home. Do not return to work or send children to school until 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped and do not visit your GP or hospital while symptomatic. If you are concerned about your symptoms,

talk to your GP by phone, contact NHS 111 or visit the NHS web pages. For useful handwashing tips please have a look at the following NHS video.

### **Holiday Activities & Food Winter Programme**

Please use the link to find out more about holiday activities. <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/haf>

The FANTASTIC activities will start as soon as school finishes for the Christmas holiday and is free for children and young people aged 5+ who are eligible for the free school meal benefit. Those who are not eligible for the FSM benefit can still participate at a small cost. We advise parents to talk to the organisations and book their children on the activities.

### **CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS:**

**We break up on Friday 22nd. December and return on Monday 8<sup>th</sup>. January 2024.**

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sarah Healey