



Oaklands Junior School

Learning to think - Thinking to learn

Autumn 2 NEWSLETTER 2017

With Christmas Day just a week away, the final countdown for the festive season has begun. With many schools in the area having to close due to the Norovirus we have been very fortunate that, we have managed to avoid this in school. This has meant that we have completed this half term's curriculum activities. Do take time to read each Year group's account to see just how much happens in one half term at Oaklands Junior School.

Year 3 Christmas Play, "Squeak"

Thank you to all who came to see our wonderful Y3 play and a special thank you to those who gave generously to our chosen charity. We collected a magnificent £133.36 for UNICEF in just one evening! Congratulations to all the Y3 children and the staff team for putting together such a professional performance, which clearly showed how much they enjoyed the play.

St Johns Christmas Service

As part of our Christmas tradition, we walked the whole school down to the church – no mean feat, with 250 children, plus staff! This event is only made possible with the support of all the extra volunteers we have in the form of parents, grandparents and governors – we could not do this without you.

Next year, we plan to reserve a bench or two to accommodate our helpers, as it seems a little unfair that the people who have helped are then left to view from the back of the church. Your help is very much appreciated and next year we will do our utmost to ensure that we have some reserved seating for you.

It is always wonderful to hear children singing in such a lovely setting, with brilliant acoustics. This is very much the start of our festive season. Our choir sang beautifully, musicians played woodwind, strings or belleplates, with such expertise and confidence.

This year we not only covered some old favourites but we were also treated to the whole school singing the first verse of Silent Night in French. There was no hesitation or any reduced quality in sound as the whole school confidently sang:

Douce nuit, sainte nuit!

Dans les cieux ! L'astre luit.
Le mystère annoncé
s'accomplit
Cet enfant sur la paille
endormi,
C'est l'amour infini !

Thinking Schools Latest News

Our latest Thinking Families Day took place on Monday 18th December, with the theme of 'Around the World'. Families visited a variety of 'countries' to help them think about different cultures.

Work is ongoing on the Thinking section of both the current and the new school websites, individually an online version of the Myself As a Learner Survey (MALS); these aspects will help us towards our aim of Thinking School accreditation.

Important Dates

December

Tuesday 19th
School Ends 2.15pm

January

Wednesday 3rd INSET
Thursday 4th Pupils return to school

February

Half term 12th to 16th
INSET Monday 19th
Tuesday 20th Pupils return to school

March

12th – 16th Year 4
Residential trip to Ufton Court
Term ends Thursday 29th
at 2.15pm

What has been happening in Years 3 & 4?

Year 3

In Year 3, we have had an extremely busy half term.

In English and History, we have been completely absorbed with learning all about Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. We have used drama techniques and thinking maps to get into character, before writing a series of diary entries. The children have thoroughly enjoyed this topic and we have been amazed at the quality of their writing.

On 23rd November we held our Ancient Egyptian Day where the children learnt that the Pharaoh had died. They spent the day celebrating his life and preparing for his burial. The activities included: making Tutankhamun masks, modelling Canopic Jars out of clay, making papyrus paper and sarcophaguses out of paper. Thank you to all the parents who joined us for the day.

Of course the highlight for us this half term has been the Year 3 nativity play. I'm sure you will all agree that the children were amazing and really did themselves proud. The effort that they put in to learn their lines and song words really paid off in the performances. Thank you to all the parents for helping with costumes, props and helping the children learn their scripts. We are so proud of the children and definitely have some stars in the making.

Our RE topic leading up to Christmas has been 'light'. We have learnt that Christians believe that Jesus is the light of the world and we spent time studying the famous painting by Holman Hunt. The highlight of this topic was making our own Christingles using oranges and candles. We sang Silent Night by candle light which created a spectacular atmosphere.

We would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you all in 2018.

The Year 3 team

Year 4

The second half of the Autumn term is always a really busy term in school as we all prepare for the festivities, whilst carrying on with the full curriculum we teach.

In Year 4, our first group of children spent a day cooking a three course meal. One child was heard saying that this was their 'best' day ever! Thank you Mrs Westmore and Mrs Wong for making this possible. The next group will be on the 8th February.

We have had a few special days this half term. Roman day was my particular favourite where the children got to dress up as Roman citizens, make shields, practise their Roman numerals, play Roman games, as well as experience being under attack by some angry Celts (thank you to the willing parents) whilst in the tortoise formation. I think the highlight of the day was the Roman Banquet. It was fabulous seeing many parents coming in to see what the children have been learning and sharing the feast with the children at the end of the day.

We have also been reading the Iron Man this term which the children have thoroughly enjoyed. They have done lots of writing based on the story from wanted posters to Iron Man menus. The children have also incorporated their science work on electricity when making their own Iron person. They look fantastic and I am sure will brighten any home.

Have a fantastic Christmas!

The Year 4 team

What has been happening in Years 5 & 6?

Year 5

Year 5 have worked hard on an impressive range of learning this term; some of the activities were ably demonstrated in 5D's assembly.

In November, the children thought about Remembrance and made some beautiful paper poppies for a whole school commemoration.

During sausage week, children tasted a variety of sausages and even got to make their own.

An exciting topic has been Space. We had a visit from an astronomer and his Planetarium. This sparked much enthusiasm and it has really enriched our science. In DT, they designed their own biscuit boxes – and baked space cookies to put into them. Thirty children visited Sky studios and created their own impressive TV news report.

In PE we have worked on a range of invasion and net games. Children have improved their tag rugby and volley ball skills and recently have been learning how to play Lacrosse. Some children had the fantastic opportunity to learn how to play real tennis at Wellington. They were described as “a real credit to the school and so much fun to coach.”

Recently we have enjoyed reading 'Street Child' and have been finding out about the Victorians. Last week, we visited Reading Museum where children dressed and acted as Victorians in school. We also discovered how Victorians celebrated Christmas.

The Year 5 team hope you have a joyful and restful break and thank you for all your support.

Year 6

In Year 6 we have had another great half term. The children have been working hard in English and have written their own Greek inspired myths.

We have also been studying the Greeks in History and even held our own Greek-inspired day. The children immersed themselves in Greek culture and performed plays, made clay masks and even tasted some authentic Greek cuisine!

In History we have learnt all about the differences between Athens and Sparta. The children compared the role of women using thinking maps and compared the lifestyles that children would lead depending on what state they were from. We also discussed battle tactics at the Battle of Marathon and were very pleased that the Athenians came out worthy winners.

In RE we have had some fantastic lessons focusing on Christmas traditions and what they mean to Christians. We used a Circle Map to gather our ideas based around the word celebration. We then discussed Christmas traditions and what these traditions meant to Christians.

Last but by no means least, we completed our first Big Write this year centred upon the WWI Christmas Truce. The children wrote some heart felt letters home and managed to retell the details of the truce as it happened.

We have been pleased with Year 6 this term and are looking forward to welcoming them back after Christmas. Enjoy the break Year 6.

Further News

Big Red Bus Update

We had a very positive response to our request for help with this project. Thanks to a governor, a local business and a parent, we now have someone to manage the project and the means to get the bus on to the school site. It looks as if we have everything we need to put the bus into position, so thank you for all the offers of help we have received.

Heating and lights will need to be added and we are still looking for a certified commercial electrician. We may possibly have one but if you are able to help with this please contact the school.

When it comes to fitting out the interior, we may well be asking for items or funds. Donations can be paid online where a Big Red Bus file has been set up. We intend to share the bus with the Infant School and have asked them for their ideas as to how they would like to see it fitted out. We will endeavour to keep you informed of progress.

Security and Safeguarding

Please help us to keep your children safe by not hooking the gates open, unless specifically asked to do so by a member of staff.

Home School Diary

This is a very useful way of communicating between school and home, so do please write messages in there to your child's teacher or check to see if they have written one to you. Please also use this as a way of reminding your child, if they are attending a club on a certain day, or if arrangements for the end of the day are different. They can then check this at the end of the day to remind them what to do. Thank you.

Foreign Change

May we ask if you have any loose foreign change lurking about in the backs of drawers or cupboards? If you do come across any unwanted foreign coins, please do think of us, as we can exchange them at the bank if we get enough and then we can put the money to good use in the many projects we have planned for next year, to benefit all our children. Every little helps, so please do send in any loose change to the office, via your child – all donations will be very gratefully received after Christmas or at any time during the year. Thank you.



Very best wishes to you and your families for a relaxing Christmas break.

Happy New Year to you all.