



NEWSLETTER No. 5

November 2024

Dear Saint John's families,

Since returning after half term, it has been a busy couple of weeks, with various visits and visitors. Added to the "normal" fun of swimming and Forest School, the Year 5s visited the Racecourse to find out about horses, meet jockeys and find out about the world of horse racing! The Year 6 class went to the Wilson Museum, where we are regular visitors. As a result of engagement with this museum, we have become involved with designing and discussing changes and plans; it has been a privilege for Mrs Roper (our History Lead) and a group of our children to work with the staff there.

Visitors into school have included our Health Activators, who provide activities for our younger children, encouraging confidence with movement and physical learning. In addition, Max Wilkinson, Member of Parliament for Cheltenham, spent some time in school last Friday. He chatted with Mr Lambert (our Chair of Governors) and me and he was shown around the school, with a particular focus on the needs of the premises. Of course, this included some lengthy discussions about our flood and the toilet area! By Monday, a letter had been sent by his office to County and we hope that this will help our cause. Mrs Mayhew (School Business Manager) and I have been working with our new caretaker, Mr Tennant, to do all that we can to make the environment pleasant, whilst we wait for GCC to organise the refurbishment.

It may be of interest to families to know about training that our staff have completed recently: teachers visited local schools to look at reading and writing, coming back with lots of ideas, but also a sense of achievement when we see what we do that others don't! Individual staff have been to courses on literacy, children's SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health), staff well-being, GDPR and safeguarding and we also have access to training through a company called National College. This gives the chance for any staff to log on and access an enormous range of educational webinars and information.

On Monday, we took some time to focus on

Remembrance Day

All of the children had a time of silence in the hall, with the opportunity to remember those who have been to war and those who are impacted by war, particularly children. I asked children from every year group to join me in the front garden to place crosses near our wild flower area. Mr Allison had kindly acquired these and we had written the names of the soldiers who had attended Saint John's school and then gone to war in World War I. We were able to remember them specifically and reflect on their lives and deaths, being thankful that Britain is not at war at the moment.

Parents of children starting school next September have been visiting during these last two weeks and there have been some lovely comments made by both the adults and the children themselves! Always, people are surprised at our outside space, not realising that we have a big playground, the front garden and a newly renovated Reception/Year 1 area.

Today, we have been celebrating Children in Need. Thank you for the donations given and well done for remembering to wear something "different". Whether it is odd socks or a funny hat, it all reminds us that each of us is unique, precious and we celebrate the diversity we have at Saint John's. I hope that many of us will watch on the television the many ways that Children in Need has provided funding for the support of children across Britain. It is a heart-warming to see the work that so many people do when caring for others.

Sadly, we say goodbye to Mrs Vomir-Stoica today; she leaves working as a teaching assistant to become a deputy manager of a nursery. Having volunteered with us last year, she has become a familiar face to our children. We will miss her.

Enjoy your weekend! Mrs Beevers



Written by Sharon Morrow TA



What an amazing start to the term! **Reception** have been learning about the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. The children have sequenced the story, used puppets to retell the story and even decorated mini gingerbread men! They learnt about Remembrance Day, made a poppy wreath and learnt the poem, 'I have a little poppy, as red, as red can be. To show that I remember, those who fought to set me free.' Also, the children have had lots of fun on the bikes and scooters and have loved playing in the garden!



As part of their DT unit of work on 'Moving Pictures', **Year 1** made sliders. The children chose one part of their picture they wanted to move and used a handle to attach to the picture. By cutting a slit in the picture, they were able to move the object in different directions. The children started their Persuasive unit of work in Writing by listening to Mrs Roper and Miss Walsh trying to persuade them to try their biscuits! They couldn't see the biscuits, so they had to listen very carefully to the persuasive words they were using. Words like 'chocolatey' 'creamy' and 'delicious' were used!



The **Year 2** children had another fantastic morning at forest school. The children enjoyed making dens, digging holes and playing in the leaves. They have also made a great start to their ball skills unit in PE. The children had fun practising their rolling skills.



Year 3 have made a good start to their netball lessons. Everyone has made great progress with the chest pass and had fun playing a game of 'raid the nest'! They have also spent time reflecting on those who sacrificed their lives so we could enjoy the freedom that we have today. They explored the poem 'In Flanders Fields' and used watercolour paint to create their own art to commemorate those who lost their lives.



This term, **Year 4** are designing and making sling-shot cars as part of their DT topic. The children used glue guns and lollipop sticks to create a chassis ready to add the body design to, as well as researching car designs. As part of their work on area, the children used Post-it notes to explore how many different shapes they could make with an area of four or six Post-its.



Year 5 enjoyed a trip to Cheltenham Racecourse. The children were lucky enough to see the 'Hall of Fame' and see the trophies from the Gold Cup. Famous jockeys, Mick Fitzgerald and Daryl Jacob, were with them for the day, sharing lots of insights into the world of racing. They also walked the racetrack and saw how high the jumps are up close. The children even got to see a winning racehorse as well as some ponies while asking the jockeys some really interesting questions.



In **Year 6**, the children have begun their new Science unit on Electricity. They learnt about different types of electricity - current and static. Using plastic rulers, tissues and fabrics, they tried to generate their own static electricity to make the tissues attract to the rulers. During PE, the children have started their new dance unit, where they have been creating routines using body percussion as opposed to music. Groups have been working on their rhythm and timing to develop a "stomp and clap" performance. Finally, last week, the children were invited to the Wilson Museum to help them with their Victorian Christmas decorations. Using images from the museum exhibition, they created paper chains that will decorate the ground floor of the museum.



Remembrance Day Moments



The PTFA has been busy behind the scenes getting ready for the Christmas Fair coming up on Saturday December 7th 1pm - 3pm.



There will be Christmas crafts, biscuit decorating, raffle and even a visit from Santa! An event you don't want to miss!

If you'd like to join the PTFA please do get in touch or come join us at the next meeting November 18th, 7pm at The Strand - all ideas welcomed big and small!

ptfa@st-johns-pri.gloucs.sch.uk



We have places available at breakfast club on a Wednesday morning.

If anyone is interested please email Annette at oscastjohns@yahoo.co.uk or text on 07505411558

