



NEWSLETTER No. 9

February 2024

Dear Saint John's families,

It is only a week since we returned from the half term break, but we wanted to let you know about activities we have done not just this week but the week before half term too.

These two terms between Christmas and Easter are very short and we are trying to fit in so many things! I have been particularly delighted by the Art (and now DT) work which is going on at Saint John's. The children are being given some really interesting challenges and are learning some very specific and technical aspects of these subjects, plus the results are incredible to see!

In addition, our work in History and Geography continues to develop with staff focusing on these subjects in our meetings and training. This was one of our two areas for development from Ofsted—documenting what was being done in these subjects. The staff have been working hard to ensure that the learning is clearly sequenced. At least, the learning always has been, but we needed to have it written in a way that inspectors can come and check out. Along with our own meetings, we have been meeting with staff from other schools to look at best practice in primary school classrooms, sharing our ideas and hearing from others too.

As a result, the children have been given some brilliant opportunities to learn in different ways and to find out new concepts or discoveries!

Please do have a look at the photos in this newsletter; it is good to see the learning across the year groups, as well as for your own particular child, as it can be a real encouragement to see what might happen in the future for them! Sharing projects across year groups is a good way of children seeing others' work.



This term, there are a few special activities that might be worth putting in the diary:

Science Day

We will have a planetarium in the hall for a morning and some classes will have the chance to go inside and find out about space. The other year groups are being booked into sessions at the Science Festival later in June, so that by the end of the academic year, everyone will have had an engrossing experience of Science.

DT Day

This will happen later in the term, in the last week, when the classes will be challenged to create a DT structure in small groups. These are likely to be across year groups, so that children can enjoy working with pupils of different ages. We love seeing how well they engage with each other in these types of activities.

World Book Day

We will celebrate WBD on **Friday 8th March**. Details to follow: costumes will be allowed so get thinking now!

Wear Wellies Day

I know that many children have worn wellies this week due to the rain; however, we are going to all wear wellies on **Thursday 29th February** to support Winston's Wish.

<https://www.winstonswish.org/wear-wellies-day/>

Do have a look at the information on their website. Please allow your child to wear wellies on this day and to donate £2 towards supporting this charity. It is one that we consider very important as it supports those who have been bereaved.

Have a good weekend, from Mrs Bevers

Written by Sharon Morrow TA



Reception have enjoyed celebrating the Lunar New Year by making lanterns, hats and learning to write some numbers. The children listened to stories about why the years are named after different animals and they learnt that this year is the 'Year of the Dragon'. The children sang a Happy New Year song and found out about traditions and customs celebrated.



During Science, **Year 1** carried out an investigation to answer the question 'Do we need both eyes to see properly?' The children tried a variety of tasks using both of their eyes, just one eye and then blindfolded! Their conclusion was that two eyes are best for seeing and carrying out activities. At the end of their unit of work on colour mixing, the children painted 'Circle Tree' plates using primary and secondary colours in the style of an artist named Clarice Cliff.



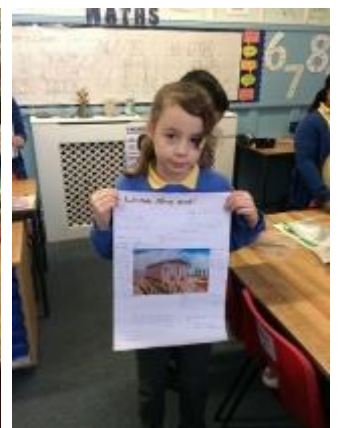
Year 2 had lots of fun acting out Edward Wilson's journey to the South Pole - the children were on the boat on their way to the Antarctic, put on warm clothes and special snow goggles, used dogs and ponies to pull their equipment through the terrible weather conditions and finally reached the South Pole. They have also enjoyed making paper collages out of their very own textured paper. They did peer and self evaluation, discussing what worked well and what they would do differently next time.



Year 3 really enjoyed their drawing unit last term. They focused on identifying shapes to help them draw objects accurately and also learnt how to add tone to their sketches using different sketching pencils. They explored the structure of flowers by sketching different parts of a daffodil before sketching a vase of flowers for their final piece. The results were very impressive.



Year 4 took part in a drama workshop based upon the Greek myth 'Demeter and Persephone'. The children learnt how Hades kidnapped Persephone and took her back to the Underworld, where she ate 4 pomegranate seeds. As a result, she had to spend 4 months of the year in the Underworld thus the Ancient Greeks believed this was how winter was created as during that time Demeter would stop nature from growing. As a finale to their topic on Ancient Greeks, the children produced projects based upon their key question - 'Would you rather be an Athenian or a Spartan?' As always, there was a variety of excellent projects created that showcased both the children's learning as well as their creative sides.



Year 5 have been using technology loaned to school by Pate's Grammar School in their Computing lessons. The children have used the web-based programme 'Make Code Editor' to programme microbits. The microbits have been plugged into halos, which light up when programmed correctly. They have been working on writing codes to make the halos light up, as well as changing and altering codes to make the halos change colour or present messages on them. The children have thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity. They also had a great time showing their end of term History projects about Greta Thunberg and climate change to Year 4. Children used PowerPoints, posters and 3D models to present their independent learning such as Fridays for Future movement, global warming and ways to reduce carbon footprints. The audience were very impressed by the quality and standard of projects.



To close their History topic, **Year 6** enjoyed a Windrush Day celebration. The children had fun taking part in a “street carnival”, singing songs, listening to readings, poetry and musical performances that others had created and even tasted a piece of Caribbean influence with some Jamaican Ginger cake to complete the party atmosphere. During Science, the children investigated reflection and refraction. Using prisms and mirrors, they investigated how light behaves when interacting with different materials and different shaped lenses. In Art, they tried their hands at chiaroscuro – a technique that creates dramatic effects using light and dark shades. It is a useful way to give illustrations a 3D quality. They used charcoal and masking tape, along with erasers to create areas of high contrast with some fantastic results.



The whole school enjoyed a wonderful celebration of learning at Highbury Church. The children were very proud to show what they had been learning about over the past few weeks.



The football development squad enjoyed an excellent win against Bishop's Cleeve, winning 3-2. The team has made a lot of progress since the first game last Autumn and it is encouraging to see players joining clubs outside school. The girls team were also in action against Bishop's Cleeve and played with great determination on a tricky, muddy surface. Despite their best efforts, Cleeve triumphed 3-1 but the team gained valuable experience and look forward to the next match against Dunalley.

